



**Systems and
Knowledge**

 [#SFRA2016](#)

Science Fiction Research Association, 2016
The University of Liverpool
28th – 30th June

Love, 3039 A.D. –

“Darling, whenever
you’re near me, my
sub-atomic dynamo
revs faster and
faster.....”*



*From the cover of *The Satellite*, vol. 2 iss. 5, May 1939

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Conference Schedule

Tuesday 28th June, 2016				
09:00	09:45	Registration		
09:45	11:25	Welcome Address by VC Janet Beer Andy Sawyer		
11:25	11:45	Morning Break		
		Lecture Theatre 2	Lecture Theatre 6	Lecture Theatre 3
11:45	12:45	(2) Gaslighting	(2) Performance / Poetry	(2) Mapping SF on History
12:45	14:00	Lunch (buffet lunch provided)		
14:00	15:20	Time Travel / Alt Hist	Gaming Systems and Poetics	Religion
15:20	15:40	Afternoon Break		
15:40	17:00	Asimov and Clarke	Writing SF (Discussion Panel)	Epic and Myth

Wednesday 29th June, 2016				
09:00	10:00	Registration		
10:00	11:25	Andrew Milner		
11:25	11:45	Morning Break		
		Lecture Theatre 2	Lecture Theatre 6	Lecture Theatre 3
11:45	12:45	(2) Desire and Responsibility	(2) Genre Landscape	(2) American and UK Television
12:45 - 14:00		12:40 - 14:00 Lunch (buffet lunch provided)	13:00 - 13:55 Annual SFRA Meeting	
14:00	15:20	Memory and Archive	Materiality & Nature's Otherness	Alternative Media
15:20	15:40	Afternoon Break		
15:40	17:00	Records of the Future	Editing SF (Discussion Panel)	Imagining China and Japan
17:00	18:30	Liverpool University Press sponsored reception		

Thursday 30th June, 2016				
09:00	10:00	Registration		
10:00	11:25	Joan Haran		
11:25	11:45	Morning Break		
		Lecture Theatre 2	Lecture Theatre 6	Lecture Theatre 3
11:45	13:05	Posthumanism	Cli-fi	Systems
13:05	14:00	Lunch (buffet lunch provided)		
14:00	15:20	Cyberpunk and Embodiment	Unsettling Scientific Stories	Economics
15:20	15:40	Afternoon Break		
15:40	17:00	Medical Humanities	Feminism and STS (Discussion Panel)	Utopia
17:00	19:00	No Items Scheduled		
19:00		Arrival at <i>The Bluecoat</i> in Liverpool City Centre for Award Banquet (event to begin 19:30)		

Day One: Tuesday 28th June, 2016	
Time	Event
09:00 – 09:45	Registration
09:45 – 10:00	Welcome from the VC Janet Beer
10:00 – 11:25	Keynote: Andy Sawyer
11:25 – 11:45	Break
11:45 – 12:45	Gaslighting: Jeanette B. Barott and Ashley Lear Performance / Poetry: Tiffani Angus and Susan Gray Mapping SF on History: Pascal Lemaire and Stefan Rabitsch Linguistics: Bettina Beinhoff and Christopher Owen
Two-paper panels	
12:45 – 14:00	Buffet lunch provided and time to visit the exhibits Andy Sawyer curated for SFRA 2016
14:00 – 15:20	Time Travel and Alternate History: Jerry Määttä, Alfredo Suppia and Sonja Fritzsche Gaming Systems and Poetics: Stephen Mooney, Francis Gene-Rowe and Aodán McCardle Religion: Stanisław Krawczyk, Jenni G. Halpin and Suparno Banerjee
15:20 – 15:40	Break
15:40 – 17:00	Asimov and Clarke: Thomas Connolly, Jari Käkälä and Mariano Martín Rodríguez Epic and Myth: Andrew M. Butler, Varsha Jha and Tony Keen Writing SF (Discussion Panel): Tiffany Angus, Terry Jackman, Helen Marshall and Stephen Mooney

Day Two: Wednesday 29th June, 2016	
Time	Event
09:00 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 11:25	Keynote: Andrew Milner
11:25 – 11:45	Break
11:45 – 12:45	Desire and Responsibility: Christopher Cokinos and Essi Vatiolo Genre Landscapes: Sara Martín and John Rieder American and UK Television: Erin Horáková and Sharon Sharp
Two-paper panel	
12:45 – 14:00	Buffet lunch provided and Annual SFRA Meeting from 13:00 – 13:55.
14:00 – 15:20	Memory and Archive: Joan Gordon, Brittany Roberts and Will Slocombe Materiality and Nature's Otherness: Katherine E. Bishop, Andrew Ferguson and Gerry Canavan Alternative Media: Paweł Frelik, Travis Gasque and Lisa Yaszek
15:20 – 15:40	Break
15:40 – 17:00	Imagining China and Japan in Science Fiction: Popular Science, Technology, History, and Politics: Yilun Fan, Li Hua, Baryon Tensor Posadas and Yao Wang Records of the Future: Kathryn Heffner, Jeremy Brett and J.J. Jacobson and Jennifer Kavetsky Editing SF (Panel Discussion): Gerry Canavan, Sonja Fritzsche, John Rieder and Lisa Yaszek
17:00 – 18:30	Liverpool University Press sponsored reception

Day Three: Thursday 30 th June, 2016	
Time	Event
09:00 – 10:00	Registration
10:00 – 11:25	Keynote: Joan Haran
11:25 – 11:45	Break
11:45 – 13:05	Posthumanism: Patrick B. Sharp, David Contreras and Chris Pak Cli-fi: Gabrielle Bunn, Selena Middleton and David M. Higgins Systems: Ivaylo R. Shmilev, Doug Davis and Pablo Gómez Muñoz
13:05 – 14:00	Buffet lunch provided and time to visit the exhibits Andy Sawyer curated for SFRA 2016
14:00 – 15:20	Cyberpunk and Embodiment: Ángel Mateos-Aparicio, Neil Easterbrook and Melanie A. Marotta Unsettling Scientific Stories: Amy C. Chambers, Mat Paskins and Sam Robinson Economics: Kristen Shaw, Jo Lindsey Walton and Hugh C. O'Connell
15:20 – 15:40	Break
15:40 – 17:00	Medical Humanities: Nicole Cotton, Anna McFarlane and Conor Reid Utopia: Jaak Tomberg, Gary Wihl and Sarah Lohmann Feminism and STS (Discussion Panel): Joan Haran, Amy C. Chambers, Joan Gordon and Patrick B. Sharp
17:00 – 19:00	Time for delegates to prepare for banquet
19:00 onward	Arrival at <i>The Bluecoat</i> at Liverpool City Centre for SFRA Award Banquet. Banquet begins at 19:30.

Tuesday 28th June, 2016; 10:00 – 11:25

Keynote: Sawyer, Andy (The University of Liverpool) – #wearealljonsnow or, The Mystery of the Face in the Mirror: Some Problems in Research

Tuesday 28th June, 2016; 11:45 – 12:45

Gaslighting (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Sarah Lohmann

Lear, Ashley (Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University) and Jeanette B. Barott (Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE)) – Applications for Gaslighting in Reality Altering Works of Science Fiction

In “Turning Up the Lights on Gaslighting” (2014), Kate Abramson argues that the seminal definition of gaslighting as “a process of projective identification” (Calef and Weinschel, 1981) does not quite fit contemporary definitions of gaslighting because projective identification occurs when a person is “projecting onto another something *about themselves* that they cannot accept, and the second person then ‘introject[s]—take[s] on, or adopt[s] ... that which has been projected onto them” (Abramson, 2014). Most of the gaslighting cases discussed in Abramson’s article and in Robin Morgan’s *The Gaslight Effect* (2007) suggest that gaslighters more frequently find some behavior or quality in the gaslightee that they cannot reconcile with their own understanding of reality. Unable to handle the dissonant reality with which they are faced, gaslighters attempt to force their world view on their victims, occasionally without even being conscious of so doing.

As a form of discourse, science fiction continuously faces its own dissonant views and attempts to rewrite and reformulate what constitutes *authentic* science fiction. However, it can be argued that science fiction, as a literary genre, frequently interjects questions of authenticity and plausibility into narratives bent on undermining the limiting sensibilities of realistic stories that do not consider the possibilities of futuristic conflicts, changing geographical landscapes, or altered cultural norms.

Using philosophical and psychoanalytic approaches to gaslighting, this paper examines three areas of common gaslighting behaviors in science fiction works. First, it examines the reality shifting paradigms of selected works (such as *The Matrix*, Plato’s *Allegory of the Cave*, and *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells) to explore how individuals faced with major paradigm shifts in their understanding of the nature of reality face gaslighting from individuals who refuse to consider those altered worldviews. Secondly, the paper explores characters (from works like *Firefly*, *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson, and the video game series *Bioshock*) who opt out of traditional cultural norms to live an alternate, sometimes *punk*, lifestyle, and face gaslighting by characters who either fail to understand these choices or find their own life choices convicted by these purposeful rejections of cultural norms. Thirdly, the nature of sentience as presented in artificial life forms (like *Star Trek’s* Data, Marvin from *Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, and the fugitive androids from *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*) is studied, as to how these artificial life forms frequently experience gaslighting from characters refusing to accept their autonomy.

Performance / Poetry (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Paul March-Russell

Gray, Susan (Royal Holloway, University of London) - The Poetics of Science Fiction or the Science Fiction of Poetry?

If speculative poetry is to be a real genre and not just a tautology (a poem is speculative when published in a market that publishes speculative poetry), I need it to mean something in its own right, not just as reaction or perpetuation.¹

In *Strange Horizons'* feature, 'Defining Speculative Poetry: A Conversation and Three Manifestos', the senior poetry editor Sonya Taaffe makes an interesting point about the world of speculative poetry. With relatively scarce resources (say, to Television, Film and the Novel), the few texts that explore the form of Speculative poetry are quick to mention the links between Science Fiction and Poetry, but not necessarily the distinction of the form in its own right. As Jacob Korg in *Ritual and Experiment in Modern Poetry* suggests:

Because they have so much in common with each other, ritual and literature, especially poetry, have been able to exchange functions at various historical periods. Ritual is mimetic; it is a fictional, imaginative replication of an action. It endows objects and actions of the profane world with sacred significance, transforming them into symbols. It expresses intuitive ideas that cannot be embodied in rational form and bases its associations on homologies, causalities, and identifications not recognised by rational thought but often conveyed in such poetic tropes as metaphor, metonymy, and catachresis [...] It demands alterity, the capacity to adopt alien thoughts and feelings.²

The conclusion I came to, from this passage, is that both Science Fiction and Poetry seem adept at forming a thought experiment – with the space to transform and heighten with a particular set of tropes that we can read as their individual forms (for example, the act of literal time travel in Science Fiction to the use of the timeless "I" in Poetry). Other texts that address this compatibility can include Seo Young Chu's study of Science Fiction's poetics in *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?* to Adam Roberts' TED talk: 'Science Fiction as Poetry'. For instance, Seo Young Chu lists the similarities between Science Fiction and Lyric Poetry in particular, stating that:

Science fiction and lyric poetry are joined inseparably by rich affinities. The qualities that (either individually or in some combination) make a work of science fiction "science-fictional" tend to coincide with the qualities that (either individually or in some combination) make a lyric poem "lyrical." The coincidence lies in more than a shared intensity of figurative language.³

Adam Roberts goes a step further in this proposition. He argues that Poetry and Science Fiction is the same thing by its use of metaphor –they heighten the sense of reality in similar ways. So where can we, if it is even possible, draw the line between Speculative Poetry and the metaphorical form that is Lyrical Poetry? In this paper, I will attempt to answer the following questions: Is all Poetry Science Fiction? Can Speculative Poetry be distinguished from other forms of poetry by the nature of the

1 'Defining Speculative Poetry: A Conversation and Three Manifestos' *Strange Horizons*

<<http://www.strangehorizons.com/2014/20140224/poetry-a.shtml>> [Accessed 31.03.2016].

² Jacob Korg, *Ritual and Experiment in Modern Poetry* (Pennsylvania: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1995), p.11.

³ Seo-Young Chu, *Do Metaphors Dream of Literal Sleep?* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010).

trope/metaphor used? In other words, is the system of poetics inherently Science Fictional, or the other way round?

Angus, Tiffani (Anglia Ruskin University) – Performance in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writing Workshop

This presentation explores the performance aspect of critique in a science fiction/fantasy writing workshop setting, the positive and negative effects of a shared cultural literacy, and the influence of impostor syndrome. As a participant in several science fiction/fantasy writing workshops, I have witnessed first-hand the similarities between them and contributed to the group dynamic that develops among genre writers. The success of writing workshops depends upon the creation of an affinity group—a group with a common goal: in this case, the sharing of each individual’s writing and the subsequent offer and acceptance of feedback—including criticism and insight—on how to improve a manuscript. The purpose of some writing is for future performance—performance poetry and screenplays, for example—but in the case of sf/f writing workshops, the critique itself can become a performance. Unlike workshop groups focused on literary fiction, a sf/f workshop can develop an affinity group in which workshop members depend upon specific cultural literacy—of television shows, books, movies, comics, and games—to inform their feedback. Cultural literacy in sf/f can result in negative or positive performance and influence in a workshop environment. Recent controversies, such as Gamergate, have brought to light the practice of some individuals to question others’ knowledge, credibility, and commitment to a particular fandom. However, the level of cultural literacy a member has can influence the depth of their feedback as well as the quality of performance in their critique, especially in those dealing with impostor syndrome—a term all too familiar with many writers looking for approval and acceptance by their peers. Ultimately, the performative element and its effects—and fallout—is related to the affinity group’s goal and level of support of individual writers.

Mapping SF on History (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Mariano Martín Rodríguez

Lemaire, Pascal - Empire Strikes Back: The Ancient Imperial Governances Models in SF from Asimov to Scott Card

Many universes posit human empires as the core political system established to rule intersideral polities. Other types of SF novels also use the imperial model to describe the government mode of their universes. Yet the organizational model of the empire itself can take many forms, quite a few of them being inspired by various ancient models. Well known examples of intersideral empires are Asimov’s Galactic Empire, *Star Wars’* Empire or, more recently, the Crown Jewels worlds of the Herbert-Anderson trilogy collaboration *Hellhole*.

The present paper intends to look deeper at the political model of the empire and more specifically to novels that offer explicit references to ancient models. For this purpose four novels will be studied in more details: L. Sprague de Camp’s *Lest Darkness Fall* (1939), I. Asimov’s *Foundation and Empire* (1952) and O. Scott Card’s *Empire* (2006) and *Hidden Empire* (2009).

These examples from three very different eras do show different attitudes toward the ancient examples. While two of them depict the imperial form of government as an evil to be fought, both using the character of Belissarius, agent of Justinian I, as lead antagonist from the Empire, the last two novels seem to call for a new imperial authority in the US. They will be put alongside texts by noted historians that either served as sources for the authors or date from the same period to see whether

or not the views on the ancient empires expressed in those works of fiction do actually reflect (some of) the opinions of the sources and contemporary researchers.

Among the sources we'll oppose to the work of fiction will be E. Gibbon's highly influential *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-1788), A. Vasiliev's *History of the Byzantine Empire* (1929) and *Justin, the First: An Introduction to the Epoch of Justinian the Great* (1950), R. Syme *The Roman Revolution* (1939) and D. Engels *Auf dem Weg ins Imperium. Die Krise der Europäischen Union und der Untergang der römischen Republik. Historische Parallelen* (2014). While this will not be enough to provide us with a definitive study of the trends in the depiction of empires and their ancient models in SF, this study will provide us with general trends and open questions allowing for fruitful further research.

Rabitsch, Stefan (Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt) – “Horatio Hornblower’s Log, Stardate: Star Trek’s maritime future”: How British naval knowledge and myths became a cornerstone for recording a future that hasn’t happened yet

Space. The final frontier. This is the iconic opening line of STAR TREK, one of the most widely recognized science fiction universes in popular culture. Many also mistakenly perceive STAR TREK to be *just* a ‘Wagon Train to the stars’, that is a space western/space opera which projects the mythologized U.S. American frontier into outer space. Yet, language can be deceiving.

By introducing his starship captain in archetypal terms as a “space-age Captain Horation [sic] Hornblower” and by making him a descendant of “similar [naval] men in the past”, Gene Roddenberry, the creator of STAR TREK, makes it fairly clear that “the leading man and central character” in the STAR TREK continuum is anything but a simple space cowboy.⁴ In fact, the starship captains of this fictional, yet ‘historical’ future represent the central node in the decidedly transatlantic double consciousness of the STAR TREK continuum, i.e. a maritime endowment, rooted in British national myths of wind and sail, which has largely escaped scholarly attention.

As we celebrate STAR TREK’s 50th anniversary, I seek to (re)map the contours of what is commonly (mis)perceived as being *just* a U.S. American popular culture artifact by exposing the cultural practices and traditions which unmistakably historicize STAR TREK’s fictional future as a reimagined/ mythologized British Golden Age of Sail in outer space. The Captain’s Log as being both a maritime tradition and a historical archive imprinted with a *Stardate*, emerges as the single most important narratological device which facilitates the writing of future (hi)stories and the recording of knowledge of a future that has not happened yet. Being *Horatio* Hornblowers in space, the STAR TREK captains perform the onomastically encoded role of the narrator/chronicler of their future which is transferred from the archetypal model they are based on, mixing Nelsonian resemblance with Shakespearean discourse. This (re)mapping also systematically delineates the numerous naval rituals, the purposefully interweaving of maritime intertexts from both sides of the Atlantic and the perennial visual presence of nautical paraphernalia in the *mis-en-scène*, and frames them as constitutive artifacts of STAR TREK’s historical future. It is them that make STAR TREK’s future knowable and relatable. Maritime power, order, discipline and knowledge are written onto the vastness of outer space which is aesthetically and discursively constructed as an oceanic seascape.

Ultimately, this paper will take the shape of a concise historiographic primer to STAR TREK’s (re)imagined transatlantic future of wind and sail which draws on a romantic lament for the

⁴ Gene Roddenberry, “Star Trek is...” (Unpublished manuscript, 1964), p. 5.

mythologized simplicity and grandeur of the British Golden Age of Sail. After all, Roddenberry clearly stated that “[t]he situation of this interstellar society is almost exactly analogous to the Earth of the eighteenth century.”⁵

* Please note that this paper is based on research that was a central part of my dissertation and which is now under contract for publication with McFarland.

Linguistics (Lecture Theatre 4) Chair: Chris Pak

Beinhoff, Bettina (Anglia Ruskin University) – Exploring the Design and the Perception of Constructed Languages

This paper is based on data gathered through a survey among the community of language creators and on data collected in an experiment session conducted at the World Science Fiction Convention in London (Loncon3). In this experiment, participants listened to a number of constructed languages and natural languages and rated them on 6 traits (pertaining to the perceived level of pleasantness, friendliness, education, peacefulness, familiarity and naturalness).

Constructed languages (or conlangs) have a long history in science fiction and fantasy. Fictional languages, like Klingon, Dothraki or Tolkien’s Elvish tongues are an integral part of these genres and are currently gaining rising popularity. This presentation will explore the process of language creation and how it relates to our perception of ‘natural’ human languages.

Language is a system which encodes knowledge about the world explicitly in the words we use to transmit information. At the same time language carries a lot of implicit information, for example about the speaker’s origin in the case of regional accents, but also through certain sounds and sound patterns that can evoke specific attitudes and images in the listener. This phenomenon is particularly relevant for constructed languages because all associations we make about characters through their conlangs are caused by sounds and not necessarily by meaning. This implies that any such characterisation through conlangs cannot work unless there is some form of agreement between the author and the reader (or listener) as to the qualities they assign to certain sounds.

In this presentation I will present the results of a study which investigated the following:

- How do people perceive constructed languages (e.g. as intended by the language creator)?
- Is there a difference in how conlangs and natural languages are perceived?

The results suggest that for some of the traits there is not much difference between the ratings for conlangs and natural languages, rather, the perceived familiarity seems to have a bigger influence. At the same time, reactions to constructed languages were generally in tune with the intentions of the language creators, thus confirming that there is a (perhaps culturally-influenced) system of sound-meaning associations which confirms the importance of sound symbolism in language creation in particular for the science-fiction and fantasy genres.

⁵ David Gerrold, *The World of Star Trek* (New York, Ballantine Books, 1973), p. 11.

Owen, Christopher (Anglia Ruskin University) – The Wonders of WondLa: Systemic Oppression in Tony DiTerlizzi's *WondLa* Trilogy

This presentation proposes a method for analyzing systemic oppression in fantastika contexts. The analysis of systemic oppression in the West involves a deconstruction of social systems of knowledge and power that establish hierarchies and norms. These social systems of oppression provide greater access to opportunities for white people, heterosexuals, nondisabled people, and men. While this is true of the West, this is not necessarily the case in the worlds of science fiction and fantasy texts. An analysis of systemic oppression within a fictional world must consider both representation and medium of representation. This research focuses on literature specifically, and therefore considers how linguistic and rhetorical features shape representations of systemic oppression.

To demonstrate this method, Tony DiTerlizzi's *WondLa* trilogy (2010-2014), a children's science fiction fantasy novel trilogy, will be used as a case study. A comparison is made between how systemic oppression is represented within the social system of the fictional world of Orbona, and how the position of the naïve focalizer determines linguistic prototypicality and foregrounding, and thus in turn shapes the representations of systemic oppression. The focus of this presentation is on the difference between how systemic oppression is represented and how rhetorical and linguistic techniques encourage or discourage the reader to interpret the representations of normativity and social hierarchies. A comparison of these differences demonstrates the importance of a method for analyzing systemic oppression in fictional texts. This research is part of an ongoing PhD project and employs Thematic Criticism, Foucauldian Poststructuralism, Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Poetics.

Tuesday 28th June, 2016; 14:00 – 15:20

Time Travel and Alternate History (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Glyn Morgan

Määttä, Jerry (Uppsala University) – Fabulas Out of Joint: Solving the Narratological Problems of Time-Travel Stories

Whether they're called the *fabula* and the *sjuzhet*, the *story* and the *discourse*, or the *récit* and the *discourse*, a fundamental distinction in narratology is that between the chronological order of the events depicted and the actual order in which the events are narrated. In crime fiction, for example, much of the excitement comes from the text withholding crucial information from the reader, and it is usually only afterwards that the reader can reconstruct a coherent fabula. But how does one account for the fabula or the chronological order of the events in time-travel narratives, where the characters have the ability to not only travel backwards and forwards in time, but also to change the course of history itself, and thus both the fabula and the diegesis or the fictional world?

In his insightful *Time Travel: The Popular Philosophy of Narrative* (2013), David Wittenberg has tried to solve this problem by proposing an additional level or layer, based on Gérard Genette's much-cited concept of the *paratext*. In Wittenberg's usage, the paratextual level seems to both materialise and contextualise the *sjuzhet* of the time-travel story, achieving a form of cohesion between the fabula and the *sjuzhet*. Nevertheless, his solution runs the risk of ridding the narratives of clear directions in diegetic time, crucial to many forms of narratological analysis.

The aim of this paper is to solve this and some other major narratological problems of time-travel stories by proposing two completely new ways of looking at the fabula, but also to examine what consequences these have for some other narratological concepts, and ultimately for analysing

and making sense of time-travel stories. In a larger sense, the paper can be said to illustrate how studies in science fiction can raise completely new questions and generate new knowledge with relevance outside the field of science-fiction studies.

Suppia, Alfredo (State University of Campinas) – A Case in Lo-Fi Sci-Fi: Adirley Queirós’s *White Out, Black In* (2014)

Adirley Queirós’s film *White Out, Black In* (*Branco Sai, Preto Fica*, 2015), mixes documentary and science fiction film to discuss how civil rights and citizenship are threatened by the state. Winner of the 2014 Brasília Film Festival, this feature-film adopts the time travel trope in order to tackle a real events which took place in the mid-1980s, when the police broke into a black music party in the outskirts of Brasília and violently attacked the party-goers. *White Out, Black In* is an important cinematic representation of both circuit bending and borderlands science fiction. Circuit bending because it is a hybrid documentary/science fiction movie produced with funds originating from an endowment targeted at documentary filmmaking. Furthermore, the film resorts to all sorts of circuit bending in terms of its narrative, set designs and mise-en-scène, with the aim of provoking cognitive estrangement (Suvin 1979) while employing putative familiar and ordinary circumstances or landscapes. As an amalgam of documentary and SF, *White Out, Black In* is also a borderlands film, an interesting case of genre chimera whose narrative is set in a frontier area, the one that isolates Brasília, the federal district, from Ceilândia, a working class city. Thus, *White Out, Black In* stands out in the company of previous Latin-American SF films whose fables are also set in border zones, such as Fernando Spiner’s *La Sonámbula* (1998) or Alex Rivera’s *Sleep Dealer* (2008). Finally, *White Out, Black In* might be regarded as a good example of Brazilian or Latin-American lo-fi sci-fi cinema. A category usually attached to Western independent filmmaking, the lo-fi sci-fi cinema could be defined as a cluster of “[m]ovies that have more speculation than spectacular effects. More focused on big ideas than big budgets” (<http://lofiscifi.com/>). Whereas this category, trend or cinematic style has gained momentum over the last 12 years or so in the American science fiction film scene, it seems to be quite usual and familiar in the Latin-American science fiction film context. Would lo-fi sci-fi be the “norm” in non-Western/Latin-American science fiction cinema? I suspect that a closer look into *White Out, Black In* might bring forward interesting topics concerning that question, as well as many other issues.

Fritzsche, Sonja (Michigan State University) – The Socialists Laughed Too – Comedy in Science Fiction Films of the East Bloc

While quite a bit of research exists on science fiction films within the East German context, little has been done to place the films within the broader discourse and trends of transnational science fiction cinema. East German cinema strove to take its place as a world-class film studio and its science fiction films were no exception. East German cinemas screened the majority of Eastern European science fiction productions. Filmmakers conceived of their films participating in a world dialogue on the future and contributing the unique and significant East German utopian socialist vision of that future. I look at three science fiction films of the seventies and eighties that involve time travel and alternate history: *I Killed Einstein*, *Gentlemen* (Zabil jsem Einsteina, panove, Oldřich Lipský, 1970) and *Tomorrow I'll Wake Up and Scald Myself with Tea* (Zítva vstanu a oparím se cajem, Jindřich Polák, 1977) from Czechoslovakia, and *Visit with van Gogh* (Besuch bei van Gogh, Horst Seemann, 1984) from East Germany. Time travel as a filmic device came late to Eastern European cinema as the concept did not fit within the ideological style of socialist realism. It could not be scientifically verified. I demonstrate

that it was the director Oldřich Lipský, who was well known in the East for his comedies, who successfully introduced time travel as a legitimate filmic device in Czechoslovakia. It was the genre of sf-comedy that opened up new possibilities that were able to transgress a socialist realist future. The combination of comedy and time travel was adopted in the subsequent films by Polák and Seemann. The latter, which was an anomaly in GDR science fiction film, can only be understood in this transnational context. I look forward to hopefully getting some valuable feedback on this paper, particularly on the Czech side of things.

Control - Information - Novum - Game: Knowledge Systems in the Writing of Stephen Mooney (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Jo Lindsay Walton

Gene-Rowe, Francis (Royal Holloway, University of London) – You are the hero: code, cheating and control systems in *The Cursory Epic*

In Stephen Mooney's *The Cursory Epic* (2014) two vocabularies clash, encircle and intersect with each other, before mutating into an increasingly claustrophobic and chaotic singularity. The first of these is a language of deception and coercion harvested from the Fighting Fantasy (FF) game books of the 1980s, whilst the second is taken from the formulaic political phrases used by the key figures of the 2010-2015 United Kingdom coalition government: Nick Clegg, David Cameron and George Osborne. The world which emerges from the text's poetics is one in which calculation and chaos operate in concert to sustain a static experiential and temporal homogeneity, such that the constrictive parameters of contemporary socio-political systems are exposed.

In the prefatory poem 'City of Thieves' and the opening parts of *The Cursory Epic*, a reader is drawn into a fantastical (or speculative) world built out of the fragmented kernels of FF scenes and sentences. The narrative sequences of the game books have been deliberately misapplied and relabelled over and over, with the result that attempts at hermeneutic orientation collapse under the weight of their own logic. The gradual imbrication of this deceptive, cut-throat landscape with the language of 21st Century political control is jarring and disruptive, such that the coalition vocabulary appears to be more violent and fantastical than that of the game books. The eventual merging of these two languages produces a vocabulary of trickery and falsehood which doubles as one of imposed categorisation. The result is a distributed control structure, as bodies are encoded, converted into information within an opaque system which constricts communication into an increasingly claustrophobic, paranoid logjam.

The text itself is not static; objects and bodies undergo chimerical transformations and are subjected to a violent, negating entropic process. In the final part of *The Cursory Epic* FF terms give way to a hybrid language of game/fantasy as the text accelerates towards its climax. The densely chaotic writing of this section arrives at an epistemic event horizon which fractures the "homogeneous, empty time" (Benjamin) of the Spectacle (Debord) without offering a definite completion of historical time. As such, *The Cursory Epic* destabilises present reality without creating an alternative system to replace it. As a Novum the text does not solidify a present absence so much as disestablish the obscure, overwhelming presence of control, creating a space of uncertainty, the possibility of existence free of law.

McCardle, Aodán – Recognition as intervention: the language of power in Stephen Mooney's poetry

What if you are part of a system which controls and defines the parameters of your knowledge and your likes and dislikes, which is responsible for how you understand the world? How do you know that what you are thinking are your own thoughts? What if bodies have been reconstituted as information? What if the position of power and control is situated in an inaccessible dimension, hidden behind the illusion of official communication?

China Miéville's *The City & The City* (2009) suggests that the human mind is capable of consciously changing the reality around us into one that is more pragmatically conducive to a unified, regulated society. In *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) Guy Debord describes an unconscious dilemma where our language is not our own, "for the spectacle is both the meaning and the agenda of our particular socio-economic formation."

Stephen Mooney's books *DCLP* (2008) and *663 Reasons Why* (2016) disturb and deny these structures of control through derangement of and an altered attention to language. To understand how the information we are provided with configures our society as a spectacular system, a reader must locate an alternative to apparently reasonable public language.

There are moments in Mooney's poetry when a reader is exposed to unfamiliar situations and must decide whether what they are reading is fact or fiction, and how that decision affects their sense of self. In *DCLP* and *663 Reasons Why* the official and formal language of power and control as used by governing bodies and civil authorities to define the legal or juridical parameters of the everyday are countered and picked apart. We come to understand that we must commit to an act of choosing and interpretation in order to see the world around us both physically and through language.

663 Reasons Why constructs a poetic intervention in the form of a year's worth of correspondence with Transport for London. The gap between good service and lengthy delays is contained at the level of language, as actual time and space dissolve onto the two dimensionality of page or screen. But when one challenges this difference resistance arises at a structural level which reconstitutes the language and personnel of control as a system of obfuscation and warping of knowledge, of reality. Mooney's intervention becomes a *Novum*, a moment of recognition, altering conceptions of past and future without aspiring to or demarking utopian totality.

Mooney, Stephen (University of Surrey) – Ratzinger Solo: this Trump has largely ceased to exist

Ratzinger Solo is a text concerned with shifting the methodology of resistance, a knowledge system of 'response' and capitulation to total control, on from the simultaneous interpenetration and dislocation of languages of resistance with the languages and strategies of control. It shares as a focus the slipperiness inherent in the proposition of 'response' to these languages and strategies that appears to be, but isn't, action (response as masquerade) that *663 Reasons Why* and *The Cursory Epic* explore.

This text crashes together the discourses of the Han Solo character in the Star Wars expanded universe novels and that of the Joseph Ratzinger character as holder of 'the highest office in the land' reflected through the gaming concept of Gamesmaster Armour: everything bounces or slides off. Solo can continue to gallivant around the galaxy well into his 80s, defying insurmountable odds (as indeed do all the main characters from the Star Wars films, with one much-grudged exception), while Ratzinger, an ex-member of the Hitler Youth, can become Pope. Into this linguistic tangle, and the multiple problematic equivalences highlighted, has shoved the rhetoric and language games of Donald Trump as a reality TV version of Ratzinger and Solo's invulnerability, shifting it into absurdity.

Starting with a reading from the text, I will go on to propose that there is a management of persona that this work attempts to function *within* as a methodology of resistance. It is not so much a fragmentation or a reworking as to do the former makes the resultant debris unusable to some degree (these are living, dynamic personas functioning as myths within the knowledge system of the present), and the latter is very easily reconstituted to form part of the narrative anyway (a postmodern political Trump).

Through the interfaces between Solo, Ratzinger and Trump in *Ratzinger Solo* arises not a retreat into the knowledge system (for safety, preservation, inculcation), but rather, through the demonstration of its motifs as resistance and its methodologies (motifs-as-resistance) in the context of the new text these collisions bring about an alternative knowledge system of response. This responsive quasi-Novum is connected, in a Debordian sense, to the intermezzo state that Deleuze and Guattari propose in relation to the War Machine of resistance, the interzone that Burroughs, and now Trump, locates us in. Pertinently, given the sudden making-unconventional by Disney of the 30 year-plus Star Wars expanded universe, this Han Solo has largely ceased to exist.

Religion (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Andrew M. Butler

Krawczyk, Stanisław (University of Warsaw) – Religion in Polish Science Fiction in the Early Years of the Transformation

The paper will offer a cultural sociological explanation of the changes in religious themes and motifs in Polish science fiction in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, when Poland was being transformed from a socialist state into a capitalist democracy. It will be shown how and why existential or metaphysical reflection was gradually supplemented—or even supplanted—by a social and political critique of religious institutions.

The talk will begin with a brief summative description of about thirty short stories published in professional magazines (*Fantastika*, *New Fantastika*, *Phoenix*) and anthologies (*Black Mass*, *Alternative Visions*). This portrayal will be based on research procedures similar to those that Wendy Griswold has applied in her analysis of Nigerian novels—procedures that imply aggregating information on the collected works by summarizing them and coding (categorizing) their selected features. Furthermore, the work of national literary scholars will be consulted so that the stories can be located within the tradition of Polish fantastika.

Afterwards the talk will present the relationship between the dynamic content of the stories and their immediate social context. The latter will be discussed with regard to various data sources:

1. The social positions of science fiction authors will be analyzed basing on biographical notes from magazines, on statistical data about the authors' activity in the fantastika field and on Internet datasets compiled by current Polish fans. Together with a selection of writers' critical pieces, interviews and memories, this information will allow for illuminating the writers' own understanding of their works.
2. The readers' plausible interpretations of stories will be reconstructed from readership surveys and letter sections in magazines.

The next part of the explanation will involve the broader social context: the political and economic transformation in Poland, the birth of the book market, the changes in the functioning of all literary magazines and the role of the Roman Catholic Church in public life.

In conclusion, the entire research material will be used to formulate and evaluate different hypotheses explaining the development of studied stories. Was it the new political influence of the Church that the writers responded to in their works? Did young authors use the so-called subgenre of clerical fiction in an attempt to carve out a place for themselves in a field shaped largely by older editors? Are there still other explanations to be found?

Halpin, Jenni G. (Savannah State University) – Being Worse than God: From Science and Theology to Human Failure (or Not) in *Contact* and *The Sparrow*

Why, exactly, is overhearing the aliens' music or math a call to space travel? And once there are places in the ship, how ought they be filled? Above all, what should be done with the ones who return? Mary Doria Russell's *The Sparrow* (1986) and Carl Sagan's *Contact* (1985) offer markedly different responses to these questions despite their similar inciting receipts of extraterrestrial signals at Arecibo. I will argue that these differences have less to do with the varied contents of the signals and the difference between the scientifically advanced, alien designed Machine of *Contact* and the hollowed out asteroid made into a spaceworthy *Sparrow* than they have to do with the principal characters' stances on the relationship between science and religion.

Beginning from Ian G Barbour's analysis of these relationships into four fundamental categories (conflict, independence, dialogue, and integration), with particular attention to points of failure and outright abandonment of one model for another, I'll discuss the disparate visions fostered by each model for dealing with the dismaying, the disappointing, and the unexpected. As Stephen Jay Gould has written of his more famous NOMA (nonoverlapping magisterial) model (closely connected with Barbour's independence category), the relationship comes down in large part to the kind of authority each "side" exhibits and the domains over which they purport appropriately to do so.

Banerjee, Suparno (Texas State University) – *The Ramayana* as science fiction: science, religion, myth, and syncretic epistemologies

Finding allegories of and allusions to the great epics *The Ramayana* and *The Mahabharata* or symbolic invocation of a Hindu cosmology underlying a naturalistic physical universe is common in traditional Indian literature. These mythical references play the same role in Indian culture that Judeo-Christian and Greco-Roman mythologies often play in creating the Western cultural fabric. In recent times though this Hindu cosmic system has been regularly employed in a non-traditional manner in speculative fiction. These works do not follow either the realistic / mimetic trend that employs the religio-mythical elements as metaphors, or traditional devotional / symbolic / mythological literature expounding upon the various facets of the Hindu pantheon. Rather such speculative texts create either a literal syncretism between naturalistic modern science and Hindu cosmology, or present the reader with a fantastic supernatural realm inspired by yet diverging from the Hindu myths in the form of fantasy narratives. While the first kind closely resembles Western science fiction (sf), the second type echoes high-fantasy of Tolkien. This paper will examine the ways authors use sf to reinterpret Hinduism or use Hinduism to rethink science.

I will focus on Vandana Singh and Anil Menon's *Breaking the Bow* (2012), a collection of short stories reinterpreting *The Ramayana* through speculative fiction. I argue that these works, especially the sf ones, represent the amplification of an indigenist tendency found in vernacular sf since the mid-20th century. Although not of the same nature as the works exhibiting Hindu nationalism, these

narratives present universes steeped in Hindu mythology, yet are not in conflict with known physical laws. Written in English, these stories rather show the international audience a way of thinking about the universe alternative to the dominant Western mode. However, coming at the heels of debates over Vedic science raging in such prestigious arenas as Indian Science Congress, where claims of ancient flying machines and Vedic techniques of surgery are seriously entertained by professional scientists (citing evidences from ancient literary and religious texts), this collection deserves more attention not only from a literary point of view but also from larger ideological perspectives. I will use scholars such as Edelmann, Raman, Gosling, Lal, and Nandha in navigating the debates on Vedic science, as well as Levi-Strauss's structural approach to myth, and examine how such debates in the scientific realm affect literary productions, and in its turn is affected by literature.

Tuesday 28th June, 2016; 15:40 – 17:00

Asimov and Clarke (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Andy Sawyer

Connolly, Thomas (Maynooth University) – Unknown Unknowns: Rendezvous with the End of Knowledge in the Novels of Arthur C. Clarke

As the giant cylinder of *Rendezvous with Rama* slingshots around the sun and sets out again into open space, it leaves behind it a mess of unanswered questions, a gap of knowledge left unfilled at the close of the novel. This gap recurs throughout Clarke's oeuvre, taking forms as diverse as the enigmatic intelligence from whom the Overlords take their orders in *Childhood's End* to the ambiguous fate of the ancestors of humanity in *The City and the Stars*. Where sf is so often a genre concerned with the growth of knowledge, the construction of scientific data, and the imagining of alternatives modes of seeing and knowing, Clarke consistently confronts the reader with this 'gap', symbolising the unknown and unknowable. His texts again and again force his readers to encounter the limits of epistemology, the outer rims of possible knowledge, providing in this sense an alternative to the technophilic trend emanating particularly from North American mid-century sf in which technology is regarded as near-infinite in its capacity to confront and overcome problems confronting humanity through the manipulation of nature. Yet even as his texts often portray the confrontation of humanity with some vastly superior intelligence, thereby serving as reminders of our relatively feeble position in the cosmic order, they also consistently hint at the eventual—and inevitable—evolution of humanity to this very plane of universal greatness. This is achieved precisely through the implied closure of the 'gap' separating humanity from the object of knowledge, the mysterious intelligences, or the evolutionary future, even as this closure can never itself be portrayed. Hence, I argue, Clarke's texts both acknowledge and disavow the epistemological limits of humanity—simultaneously broadminded in their realisation of the limits of scientific knowledge yet limited themselves by their consistent humanist outlook which places the evolution of humanity at centre-stage at the expense of the rest of terrestrial nature. This inconsistency over humanity's relationship to the 'gap' and how it is to be overcome, I argue, comprises one of the key conceptual conflicts in Clarke's sf novels.

Käkelä, Jari (University of Helsinki) – Systems of Guardianship in Asimov's Multivac Stories and the Robot-Foundation Series

This presentation examines how Isaac Asimov's 1950s Multivac short stories develop the theme of guardianship from his earlier *Foundation* and *Robot* stories – and how his 1980s works can be seen as a reiteration of these ideas.

During the years 1955–1977, Asimov wrote a number of stories featuring Multivac, a fictional supercomputer which gradually becomes a sentient being. While Asimov's 1980s novels are sometimes seen as a change of course, this presentation argues that the developments in these novels are foreshadowed already in his 1950s Multivac stories. Lesser known than the *Robot* and *Foundation* series and not explicitly connected in terms of plot, the Multivac stories nevertheless employ similar themes and offer a bridge from Asimov's early science fiction to the final iterations of the *Robot-Foundation* fictional world in his 1980s novels.

Asimov's original *Foundation* trilogy reflects the spirit of the 1940s Golden Age, and the editorial influence of John W. Campbell, Jr., as it proposes to solve the cycles of decline and fall of human civilization by a grand narrative of social engineering and guardianship. His early robot stories, on the other hand, draw their plotlines from the conflicts between the systematically rational robots and their often faulty human users, but they also show the initially crude robots evolve into sophisticated guardians, in a sense automatically ethical because of the laws by which they are programmed to operate. Asimov's 1980s novels connect these two fictional worlds and develop into an interconnected vision of Galaxia, a collective consciousness which encompasses all humankind and ensures its survival as species while maximising the happiness of individual humans.

This presentation examines the way Asimov's robots with their Three Laws of Robotics, his *Foundations* with their scientific system of psychohistory, and the prospect of Galaxia in Asimov's final novels, all represent a striving toward a rational guardianship of humankind – a yearning for the ultimate system that will protect humankind from itself.

Martín Rodríguez, Mariano (Centre for Literary and Encyclopedic Research) – Asimov has Written a Single Work of (Natural) Science Fiction, A Preposterous Contention?: Scientific Discourse and Rhetorical Method in True Science Fiction from Gustav Fechner to George Saunders

If one dared to propose a further definition of science fiction after so many, it could be a definition based this time on ascertainable linguistic and rhetorical features, taking into account the two terms of the equation science + fiction. Thus, science fiction would encompass all works where fictional contents are infused into any text that methodically and consistently presents the standard rhetorical features of the scientific discourse usual in real science practice, especially in the natural sciences, allegedly the ones with a well-established scientific status. These texts would constitute true science fiction. Scientists have often cultivated, usually tongue-in-cheek, true science fiction, but the genre itself has rarely found its way from scientific publications (the so-called spoofy papers) to literary ones (e.g., books or literary journals). True science fiction is actually rare in literature. Almost none of the so-called science fiction writers has written true science fiction. Isaac Asimov himself wrote a single (and masterful) piece of it. True science fiction in literature, the first significant practitioner of which was Gustav Fechner, is rather to be found, although occasionally, in the work of mainstream writers, even among canonical ones such as Alfred Jarry, Tommaso Landolfi, Georges Perec, Umberto Eco and, in our century, George Saunders. Although scholars will probably continue on preferring debatable thematic definitions of science fiction, what we call (also tongue-in-cheek!) true science fiction exists as an independent formal genre which combines the strict method of scientific presentation with the

liberties of fiction, thus showing that the latter can present itself through a variety of discourses, not only through the novelistic ones preferred in what is usually (and inaptly?) called science fiction.

Writing Science Fiction Discussion Panel (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Susan Gray

Tiffany Angus, Terry Jackman, Helen Marshall and Stephen Mooney

Epic and Myth (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Leimar Garcia-Siino

Butler, Andrew M. (Canterbury Christ Church University) – Ex_Elefantónto: Modern Pygmalions in Alex Garland's *Ex Machina*

Ovid's *Metamorphosis* contains many myths of transformation from human to something else, with the Pygmalion section being unusual in its account of an object – ivory – being transformed into a human. The myth has come down to us in the present day with variations by authors such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and George Bernard Shaw and was likely an influence upon Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) though a confusion with Prometheus. I wish to locate the myth within Alex Garland's debut feature, *Ex Machina* (2015), a film about social media tycoon Nathan's use of a programmer Caleb to test a new embodied A.I. programme named Ava.

It is a film delicately poised between feminism and misogyny, exploring the ethical issues of the relationship between creator and created as potential lovers despite being positioned as father and daughter. The film splits the role of Pygmalion between Nathan and Caleb, as creator and educator of Ava, who both seem to view the relationship with the A.I. as preliminary to something sexual; at the same time, there is a sense of bromance established between the two male leads. Equally, Ovid's unnamed living ivory sculpture – known as Galatea or Galathea since about the eighteenth century – is split between Ava and Caleb. Caleb has been carefully chosen by Nathan – indeed, it feels at moments that Caleb is himself an A.I. – and has been manipulated, programmed and sculpted by both Nathan and Ava.

The film reuses the myth of Pygmalion – alongside Charles Perrault's fairy tale of "Bluebeard" – to examine the nature of male and female agency and their complex interaction. In allowing Ava to have agency, there is a cost to others, just as the production of Ovid's sculpture led to consequences for her descendants, their grandson Cinyras and great granddaughter Myrrha.

Jha, Varsha (Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur) – Myth = StoRetelling

The present study engages in examining the retelling of myths, specifically Indian myths and their treatment in the Graphic Book medium (comics/graphic novels). Fortunately or unfortunately, it is difficult to categorize the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. They are not just myths; they are not simply national (secular) Epics in the sense that Scandinavian epic poems such as *Beowulf* are; nor are they fictitious narratives devoid of historical truthfulness. Indian mythology treads a curious borderline within and outside of the categories of epics, drama, history, religion and literature.

This uneasy blurring of demarcations between myth and religion, history and fiction, religion and science, makes myths an eligible genre for incessant recycling in the form of retellings and adaptations to various contemporary media of what is crudely accepted as popular culture. The paper will look at how myths are retold in the media of graphic narratives, particularly the Graphic Book

medium; how Gods of ancient Indian mythology are refashioned into upgraded sci-fi 'Superhero' versions; and how the magical and the supernatural of ancient worlds morph into what could be termed as technological 'hyper-realism'.

Since both science fiction and myths (religious or not) determine the place and function of mortal beings in the 'multi'verse, it is one of the prior concerns of this study to explore the interstices between religion and science, and to delineate parallels between mythical worlds and contemporary worlds. Its secondary concern is to examine the relation between myths and retelling, which in turn would entail an analysis of the narrative structure of the graphic book adaptations of myths. This paper therefore, would discuss the art of storytelling in graphic books, and 'telling' / 'showing' of the mythical stories through 'art'.

In assessing contemporary graphic books of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* as retellings of mythology, the paper shall also seek to address the subject of cultural translation. Since graphic books, much like other cultural commodities, are susceptible to market forces of global capitalism, attention needs to be gathered at how ancient mythical matter gets molded across cultures, to suit contemporary ideas and ideologies.

Keen, Tony (University of Notre Dame, London Global Gateway) – Don't shoot me, I'm only the Goddess of Wisdom: Minerva in *The Wicked + The Divine*

Kieron Gillen and Jamie McKelvie's wildly popular science fiction/fantasy comics series *The Wicked + The Divine* is the story of twelve gods of various pantheons, reincarnated into the bodies of teenagers in early twenty-first century London, and fêted as pop stars.

This paper focuses on one particular member of the Pantheon, Minerva. The key aspect of interest is on how Gillen and McKelvie, ever-keen on intertextuality, manipulate the mythological roots and attributes of the Roman goddess for their representation of their character. Minerva's role as goddess of war is acknowledged by the character wearing military dress – but because she is a pop star, that dress takes the form of nineteenth-century hussar jackets, as worn by 1960s pop icons such as Jimi Hendrix and Mick Jagger (inspired by The Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper* uniforms), and revived by the likes of My Chemical Romance (and in a slightly different form, The Libertines). As with the ancient goddess, Minerva is a virgin – but her virginity is not through choice, but forced upon her through her not being sexually mature when 'called' (apparently not the first time this has happened), and she feels it as an imposition. She is accompanied by her namesake's symbol, the owl – but it is a mechanical owl, an intertextual reference to the 1981 Ray Harryhausen movie *Clash of the Titans*. Further aspects of her character will be explored through this mythological lens.

The Wicked + The Divine is an ongoing series, some years away from completion, so any conclusions reached in this paper can only be preliminary – but the object is to make some suggestions about how to read Gillen and McKelvie's recast mythology.

Wednesday 29th June, 2016; 10:00 – 11:25

Keynote: Milner, Andrew (Monash University) – Science Fiction and Climate Change

Despite the occasional upsurge of climate change scepticism amongst conservative politicians and journalists, there is a near-consensus amongst scientists that current levels of atmospheric greenhouse gas are sufficient to alter global weather patterns to possibly disastrous effect. Like the hole in the ozone layer as described by Bruno Latour, global warming is a ‘hybrid’ natural-social-discursive phenomenon. And SF seems to occupy a critical location within this nature/culture nexus. This lecture will take as its subject matter what Daniel Bloom dubs ‘cli-fi’. It will seek to describe how a genre defined in relation to science finds itself obliged to produce fictional responses to problems actually thrown up by contemporary scientific research. It will argue against the view that ‘catastrophic’ SF is best understood as a variant of the kind of ‘apocalyptic’ fiction inspired by the Christian *Book of Revelation*, or *Apokalypsis*, on the grounds that this tends to downplay the historical novelty of SF as a genre defined primarily in relation to modern science and technology. And it will examine the narrative strategies pursued in both print and audio-visual SF texts that deal with anthropogenic climate change.

Wednesday 29th June, 2016; 11:45 – 12:45

Desire and Responsibility (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Craig Jacobsen

Cokinos, Christopher (University of Arizona) – Space Suits: Corporations of Desire in *Gattaca*

I wish to read *Gattaca* as a film about space flight as / and commodity. To riff on Gary Westfahl’s work on “space suit” movies, I argue that *Gattaca* is a space-suit film, though the kind worn isn’t life-preserving hardware. It’s a dapper number perfectly at home at Zara. Pursuing a childhood dream to fly in space, Vincent-as-Jerome engages in a genetic charade—a mimicking of internal genetic conformity like that of the external suit’s corporate conformity.

Vincent’s childhood interest in spaceflight (he reads a book called, notably, *Careers in Space*) and the long, gold-lit shots of rocket launches evoke a nostalgic glorification of the endeavor. And yet the mission to Titan is sponsored by a corporation, whose sole motive must be for profit. The corporatization of space echoes the entrepreneurial mission of *Destination Moon*. Unlike that film, the trainees at Gattaca Corporation are ultimate conformists. It is ironic that Vincent-as-Jerome, challenging the status quo, seeks to join it in order to fulfill his less-than-articulated desire to fly. He is the marginalized other seeking to join the center. In the (C)(c)enter’s stylish environment, the trainees are all beautiful, all uniformed, all confined to cubicles, building calculations that a computer could do more readily. It’s as though the only career in space is as a eugenic navigator/accountant, if an androgynously well-dressed one.

Utilizing a Marxist reading of the film, and incorporating critical theory on fashion, performance and embodiment, from Roland Barthes to the essays in *Performance, Fashion and the Modern Interior*, I argue that the film’s culmination—Jerome’s successful passing as a genetic superior bound for Titan—is no victory at all. In seeking his dream, Vincent-as-Jerome redacts his own agency and thoroughly demystifies the romantic goal of space-faring. I will close read the film’s wardrobe (especially in relation to setting); scenes of watching rockets; scenes of training; and scenes in which corporate motives are present, even implicitly.

In presenting Vincent-as-Jerome's goal as the traditional science-fictional quest for spaceflight but in a conformist, policed and capitalist future, the film suggests that the next frontier will not be about science but about balance sheets, whether those of DNA or those of ROI. If the corporation seeks to re-inscribe a kind of Ptolemaic harmony to the heavens—via the perfect double helixes of its crews—our hero's imperfections might threaten the system. But his passing over isn't in the cause of radical social change or purist data seeking. His passing over is to become the consummate employee. He flies—*puer aeternus*, an empty suit in space—even if he deludes himself in the final voice-over that he is “going home.” Space is just another office.

Vatilo, Essi (University of Tampere) – The Problem of Heroes and Villains - Collective Responsibility in *Battlestar Galactica* and *Caprica*

In the miniseries of the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* Commander Adama makes a speech about how humanity has failed to take responsibility for its actions, especially the creation of artificial intelligence. He makes the creation of Cylons a collective responsibility shared by all humans rather than individual scientists. In today's world of fast development and cumulative consequences you cannot point to a single culprit nor can a single person solve the problems we face. Adama's speech reflects this and calls for everyone to face history and the choices that have been made.

In my presentation I am going to explore how *Battlestar Galactica* and *Caprica* present cumulative consequences and collective responsibility for the creation of the Cylons and what kinds of implications that has for the viewers' world. With collective responsibility I mean both responsibility for past choices and responsibility for the future by preventing or solving problems. I will argue that while the show reiterates again and again that the Cylons are humanity's children, both blame and corrective actions are often placed on individual shoulders. On the one hand, you have Gaius Baltar who, as Lee Adama puts it, becomes the scapegoat of all the shame and guilt the rest of the humans feel and on the other you have President Roslin and Admiral Adama who attempt to singlehandedly save the remnants of humanity even over their protests. The general populace becomes an object to be controlled and steered rather than an active participant in correcting the course of history. Collective action is for the most part reserved for the Cylons, where it could be viewed as lack of freedom and independent thought rather than a positive force. The narrative form benefits from the juxtaposition of individual heroes and villains, but what are the implications for the viewer? Does it suggest that only those in positions of power can do anything meaningful to make sure we take responsibility for our future?

Genre Landscapes (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Gerry Canavan

Martín, Sara (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona) – Improving the Cartography of SF: The Impact of National Academic Traditions on SF's Crisis of Legitimation

The aim of this paper is to trace what Rosi Braidotti calls an 'accurate cartography' as regards the limited space that science-fiction occupies in particular in the Spanish university. SF has not yet overcome in Spain what Brian Baker has called its 'crisis of legitimation'. Teaching this genre and doing research on it is, hence, still conditioned within our national borders by boundaries broken in the Anglo-American university many decades ago. Here I examine these boundaries, paying special attention to the institutional limitations preventing scholars from introducing innovations in teaching and research. Another main barrier, as I argue here, is the lack of scholarly communication among

specialists working in different language areas, both nationally within Spain and internationally. Without the necessary collective effort to promote the work of local Spanish sf authors and the inclusion in university of sf courses in a variety of languages, this genre cannot break the boundaries limiting its growth in Spain. Hopefully, the paper will start a much needed debate on the diverse 'crisis of legitimation' that SF is facing all over the world in different national academic contexts and lead to further collaboration in the breaking of boundaries.

Rieder, John (University of Hawaii at Manoa) – On Genre Systems, Literary History, and SF

This talk is a short version of the preface of my forthcoming book, *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System*, due out in early 2017 from Wesleyan UP.

The basic premise of *Science Fiction and the Mass Cultural Genre System* is that science fiction and the other genres usually associated with so-called "genre fiction," such as the detective story, the modern romance, the Western, horror, and fantasy, collectively comprise a system of genres distinct from the pre-existing classical and academic genre system that includes the epic, tragedy, comedy, satire, romance, the lyric, and so on; and that this more recently formed genre system is an important historical phenomenon worthy of, and in need of, further study. Because this newer genre system can be firmly associated with large-scale commercial production and distribution of narrative fiction in print, film, and broadcast media, I call it the mass cultural genre system.

The overriding thesis is that the field of literary production and the project of literary studies cannot be adequately conceptualized without taking into account the tensions between these two genre systems that arise from the different modes of publicity (i.e. interwoven and co-dependent practices of production, distribution, and reception) that are the "ground" or environments for those different systems.

The relation between the genre system organic to mass culture and the traditional genre system, lodged primarily in the schools, produces effects of stratification that pervade the entire field of modern literary production. I contend that instead of merely being manipulated by those effects, literary and cultural studies scholars in general, and science fiction studies scholars in particular, ought to be making them part of the object of their inquiries into the workings of contemporary culture and the powers exercised by various forms of narrative within it.

American and UK Television (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Molly Cobb

Horáková, Erin (University of Glasgow) – "You know that and I know that, but does the computer know that?": Representations of Computer Technology in 70s and 80s BBC Science Fiction Programming

It is infinitely easy to mock out-of-date technobabble and predictions about technological development that didn't end up come true. The gray plastic boxes and blinky lights that comprise the height of computing technology in BBC programs like classic *Doctor Who* and *Blake's 7* have certainly come in for their share of amused dismissal. Such depictions are often simply considered Bad Effects.

I'd like to radically reappraise these portrayals, and to suggest that the way 70s and 80s BBC science fiction depicts computing actually does sophisticated work. These programs (which often shared writing staff, prop teams, designers, actors, etc., and were very much in conversation) made some quite prescient guesses about, among other things, the development and importance of

something like the internet. Their thinking about how vital computing would become to protest, terrorism and state control, and even about some of the ways in which it would come to be so, demonstrated perhaps greater insight. I'm not interested in mounting a 'good guess!' defense of these shows against criticisms which are, without announcing themselves as such, in part predicated on rather limited visions of the 'function' of SFnal media output as predictive—I want to talk about what these programs understood about technology, labour and representation.

As Neal Stephenson's essay "Mother Earth, Mother Board" suggested in 1996, and as artist John Gerrard's 2015 work on Google's data farms reminds us, much of our modern computer infrastructure is clunky, material and physical even today: it is our front-end design that yearns towards the hermetic, our aesthetics of representation that have become sleek and seamless. The Cloud is not a post-human fantasy or an airy stream of data. Modern computing is predicated on windowless buildings, elderly satellites and cables stretching around the world: it's built and runs on a series of unequal labour relationships predicated on capitalist and post-colonial logics. It's physical and it's political, as is the extent to which we currently Unsee this materiality. The aesthetics and narrative role given to computing in these programs (the way they talk about labour and computing; the fact that during this period these shows consistently filmed on industrial sites and in quarries, included stories about mining, colonialism and industry, and cast and used Welsh actors strategically) conducted an argument about technology, class and work in Thatcher's Britain that is still deeply resonant in Cameron's.

Sharp, Sharon (California State University) – Contemporary American Science Fiction Television, Audiences, and Old and New Distribution Platforms

Recent developments in contemporary U.S. science fiction television programming and viewing experiences have largely been considered in terms of the expansion of the genre's narrative world and interactive capacities through the transmedia storytelling made possible by media convergence (Mittell, Telotte). However, few scholars have considered how the rise of new streaming video on demand (SVOD) distribution platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have influenced contemporary SFTV's narrative and representational strategies. This paper examines how SVOD has impacted SFTV's narrative design and marketing to audiences in both new and old distribution platforms by considering Netflix's 12 episode streamed series *Sense8* (US 2015) and Fox's 6 episode special event reboot of *The X-Files* series (US 2016). I argue that in different ways both series expand the SFTV genre and audience through narrative strategies afforded by SVOD technology and build a new system of SFTV knowledge that is enabled by the viewing practices of streaming video.

Created by J. Michael Straczynski and Andy and Lana Wachowski, *Sense8* is a series that slowly dips into "dreamy conspiracies" as it follows eight telepathically connected strangers from Chicago, San Francisco, London, Seoul, Mumbai, Berlin, Mexico City, and Nairobi (Stanley). The series is striking for its complex narrative, international cast and locations, as well as for the creators' intention to use the show, as co-creator Straczynski states, "to examine issues of sexuality and gender and privacy and politics and religion, not with some weird alien race but with [humans]" in order to broaden the SF audience ("Sense8"). Designed to be binge-viewed, the series is also an exemplar of a new form of SFTV that is unencumbered by constraints of networks, commercials, ratings and schedules and is therefore able to expand the genre and its audience. Conversely, *The X-Files* reboot is an example of linear television's response to the competition of SVOD services like Netflix and other media outlets. Chris Carter's series features a conspiracy story arc with stand-alone monster of the week episodes that could be viewed on Fox or streamed on the new distribution platform Hulu. The rebooted event

series banks on nostalgia for the original series as well the accessibility of the original and rebooted series through SVOD to build and expand its narrative pleasures and audience.

Wednesday 29th June, 2016; 14:00 – 15:20

Memory and Archive (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Asami Nakamura

Gordon, Joan - From Library to Genizah: Archive, Memory, and Retrieval in Gene Wolfe's *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*

Gene Wolfe has always been concerned with archive and memory. Here I will explore their relationships in the three novellas of *The Fifth Head of Cerberus*, considering how the difference between a library and a midden (or its Jewish religious equivalent, the genizah) is retrieval. A library is an archive designed to make retrieval of its contents possible, while a genizah is an archive of unorganized and randomized items whose retrieval is almost impossible. One might make the same sort of distinction in memory: sometimes memories can be retrieved with ease, either in our computers or in our heads, and sometimes it is much more difficult, even impossible. I will use the insights of Derrida's *Archive Fever* and Borges's "The Total Library" to explore the faulty archives of *The Fifth Head of Cerberus* as they tell us about the role of memory in Gene Wolfe's work.

Memory and its retrieval are compromised in all three novellas, moving entropically from the relative organization of the library to its opposite, the genizah, "the storeroom or depository in a synagogue ... in which worn-out and heretical or disgraced Hebrew books or papers are placed" (*The Jewish Encyclopedia*). Thus, in this book, as in much of Wolfe's work, "The archive always works, and a priori, against itself" (Derrida, *Archive Fever* 12). And memory is like Borges's total library "whose vertical wildernesses of books run the incessant risk of changing into others that affirm, deny, and confuse everything" ("The Total Library" 216).

Roberts, Brittany (University of California, Riverside) – "The Present Doesn't Exist": Music, Animation, and the Rupture of Cultural Memory in Vladimir Tarasov's *The Passage*

In the mid-1980s, Vladimir Tarasov responded to the late Soviet Union's Glasnost'-era call for more transparency through his animated short science fiction film *The Passage* (1988), using generic sf conventions to explore the cultural anxieties of the late Soviet period and its uncertain relationship to the past and future by following an isolated community of human survivors who have been shipwrecked on an alien planet. Tarasov highlights the interpersonal conflicts that arise between the village's traditional, Earth-bound older generation and the tradition-less children of the diaspora, who are unable to connect to their Earthly cultural heritage and who seem far more influenced by the foreign planet. *The Passage* thus presents a stunning science fictional engagement with the broader societal confusion and anxieties of the Glasnost' era, in which every cultural signifier of traditional Soviet life began, systematically, to break down.

For the village elders and their "savage" children, several questions arise: If the children cannot remember the cultural past, how will they know how to build the future? If the past is inaccessible, why preserve it at all? For the village elders, one thing seems certain: "Either we are part of mankind, preserving its knowledge, striving for it, or we are savages with no prospects"—that is, without the preservation of the old cultural knowledges and traditions, *there can be no future at all*. For a society on the edge of dissolution, as in the village and, indeed, the larger Soviet Union, these

questions assume a critical importance. This paper will examine how *The Passage* both soothes and frustrates these questions through its use of non-diegetic music and animation, creating a paranoid intergenerational diegetic space in which the cultural present is uncertain. Between the old and the young, the past and the future, the present unravels, a temporal space marked by absence, confusion, and historical emptiness.

Slocombe, Will (University of Liverpool) – Parsing Time: Testimony and Textual Memory in Alastair Reynolds’ *House of Suns*

This paper examines the ways in which Alastair Reynolds’ *House of Suns* represents the future of record-keeping in terms of its content as well as in terms of genetic criticism around it. Throughout the narrative, various forms of archive are explored (the Vigilance, the Spirit of the Air, troves), which all seek to as “testimonies” of experience, yet the plot of the novel is centred around the very unreliability of many such sources, given the bias and serendipity that leads to their creation. Moreover, this engagement with information management and the future is examined through the literary archive—in the form of notes, blog posts, stories, and drafts that act as paratexts and supplementary materials—and this engagement with the archive “around” the text demonstrates the ways in which the literary archive is still an integral and necessary component to the act of textual scholarship, but that it is endangered, as much as it is facilitated, by current technological interventions.

Materiality and Nature’s Otherness (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Christopher Cokinos

Bishop, Katherine E. (University of Iowa) – Photosynthetic Resistance(s) in Early Science Fiction

Animal, vegetable, or mineral? Flora or fauna? As epitomized in works such as Warren Ellis’s new comic book series, *Trees*, John Wyndam’s novel *The Day of the Triffids*, and the dramatic classic *Little Shop of Horrors*, from photosynthetic processes to their reproductive means, the differences between plants and humans are frequently emphasized to highlight differences between Human and Other, humanity and inhumanity. But science—and literature—suggests that it may not be that simple. Plant neurobiologists Stefano Mancuso and Alessandra Viola’s new book *Brilliant Green: the Surprising History and Science of Plant Intelligence* (2015) joins centuries of debate and speculation surrounding plant sentience and communication. Mancuso and Viola postulate that plants are problem solvers, recognizing close kin and warning others nearby of dangers, using structural nodal systems—much like the Internet—to communicate within a root system; in the mid-nineteenth century, Charles Darwin had launched a similar hypothesis, a continuation on his work bridging natural categories in *Origin of the Species* and *Insectivorous Plants*, as had his son Francis Darwin, notably in an address to the Royal Society.

Some early science fiction, like much of the adventure genre, set humans against monstrously Othered plants in blazing tales glorifying human/Western dominance. However, scientific and social attempts to thwart, taxonomize, and contain the natural (and human) world was often met with tendrils of opposition in early science fiction, suggesting alternative ways of knowing and pushing back against hegemonic epistemologies in early science fiction. In this paper, I will discuss how some early science fiction writers drew upon and expanded on developing theories of botanical systems of knowledge and wisdom gained through botanicals resistant to ossifying narratives of American exceptionalism and British colonial superiority in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Ferguson, Andrew (University of Virginia) – Written in Stone: Science Fiction and the Inhuman Turn

It's perhaps a bit unfair to note that the recent "inhuman turn" in philosophy has allowed fields of critical inquiry to, at long last, begin catching up with science fiction—after all, savants from Jameson to Haraway to Zizek have drawn on the vocabulary and iconography of science fiction in constructing their theories. However, recent developments in speculative realism (or in Jane Bennett's term, "vibrant materialism") offer the chance to substantially reconceptualize the position within SF of matter itself—considering the basic building blocks of the cosmos not solely as tools to be exploited by "handy-men" (in Istvan Csicsery-Ronay's sense), but as substances with their own existence independent of anthropocentric manipulation, or indeed of the Anthropocene, period.

My paper contributes to this process by considering the primary component in man's first technical undertakings: stone. Drawing on the notion of *ancestrality* developed by Quentin Meillassoux's thought experiment, the "arche-fossil," as well as Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's considerations on "lithic vitality" in his *Stone: An Ecology of the Inhuman*, I offer readings of two works: the "rock books" of Richard Sharpe Shaver, actual stones which he claimed encode enigmatic narratives far predating humanity, and "Continued on Next Rock" by R.A. Lafferty, in which a single narrative carved in stone plays out, again and again, across eons.

Carrying out such a realignment to stone (and metal, and water, and petroleum, etc.) would allow SF criticism to reconnect with visions as powerful as Wells's in *The War of the Worlds*, and Stapledon's in *Star Maker*, offering an alternative to the subsequent dominance by the technocratic, John W. Campbellian hero, and allowing this most material of literary genres to once again take matter seriously.

Canavan, Gerry (Marquette University) – Everything Is Going to the Dogs: Reading Clifford D. Simak's *City in the Anthropocene*

My presentation discusses Clifford D. Simak's incredibly inventive and very unusual novel *City* (1952), which describes the emergence of a species of intelligent Dogs (*Canis sapiens*) and the subsequent total disappearance of human beings from Planet Earth. *City* is written retrospectively from the far-future perspective of the Dog civilization that has emerged in the absence of humans; the book describes Dog historians and mythologists attempting to excavate the true history behind inscrutable myths that use words like "Man" and "City" that have no meaning for them. It is only the human reader, in the present, who is able to read and understand these myths as the true story of a *Canis sapiens* whose intelligence was scientifically augmented by human beings who subsequently disappeared.

I discuss *City* not only in the context of the Anthropocene—that increasingly popular reconceptualization of the contemporary moment from the backwards-gazing futurological standpoint of human extinction—but also in the context of other, similar attempts to imagine animals that have been "uplifted" to a human level of intelligence. In particular, I discuss *City* alongside Olaf Stapledon's *Sirius* (1944) and David Brin's "Uplift" trilogies (1980s-1990s) in order to explore the relationship between science fictional theories of animal intelligence and their real-life parallels in the animal rights movement and philosophy of mind.

This project marks the beginning of my planned third book project (tentatively titled *Animal Planet*), which seeks to trace in more detail the intertwined assumptions and rhetorics of these

seemingly unconnected intellectual movements to show science fiction's unacknowledged influence on our concept of "the animal." This article, too, will hopefully have the happy side effect of drawing new critical attention to Simak, this time as an early anticipator of much later developments in ecological thinking, cognitive science, and animal studies.

Alternative Media and Genres (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Leimar Garcia-Siino

Frelik, Paweł (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University) – Other Systems, Other Knowledges: Science Fiction Outsider Art

Arguably, one of the reasons why science fiction's audiovisual media have been treated, by many scholars and fans, with suspicion and, occasionally, derision is the reluctance with which they lend themselves to the representation of the genre's ideological creeds: science, rationality, and disciplined knowledge. In some of them, these are often warped and made unlikely (film, television), while others offer reflective surfaces seemingly incapable of transmitting the kind of narratives that many science fiction fans expect (digital graphics). On the other hand, these audiovisual media can still be located on a science fiction continuum, within which there is a place for texts with higher cognitive rewards and those that offer a more affective and aesthetic experience.

There are, however, other science fiction ocularies, bodies of visual images that have always been discontinuous with other visual media of the genre. Major among these is what I call science fiction outsider art, whose tradition dates back to the very beginnings of the genre in the late 19th and early 20th century. Its course runs parallel to the mainstream visual history of the genre, with which it has very seldom, if ever, intersected. It has also resisted attempts at periodization and systematization, mostly because it is tied to individual outsider artists' outbreaks of activity, rather than any systematic artistic lineages. At the same time, sf outsider art documents and reflects distinctly non-normative ways in which the ideas of technological progress, scientific knowledges, and systems of information can permeate the society.

In my paper, I will first outline the general parameters of science fiction outsider art, noting its discontinuities with other sf ocularies. Secondly, by focusing on several selected artists, I will discuss how their futuristic fantasies diverge from the mainstream visions of the future. Finally, I will address how, by presenting alternative perceptions of science and technology, science fiction outsider art relativizes the dominant discourses for which science fiction has long been a channel.

Gasque, Travis (Georgia Institute of Technology) – The New Cosmic Horror: A Genre Molded by Tabletop Roleplaying Games and Postmodern Horror

This presentation explores how political and aesthetic systems converge in the current iteration the cosmic horror genre. Cosmic Horror is a genre adored by modern culture. Interactive mediums such as the *Bloodborne* video game and the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game system stimulate our desire to participate within a world controlled by alien ideals. Visual mediums also use the themes and visual dressings of this genre to explore dire narratives of futility and loss. However, in this paper, I argue the return to a political atmosphere similar the Interwar era of the genre's birth, and the increase capacity for communication between individuals over long distances has led to a new iteration of the Cosmic Horror genre. I explore how these changes play out in two contemporary games: From Software's horror-adventure video game *Bloodborne* (2015) and the Pelgrane Press's forthcoming *Delta Green* tabletop roleplaying game.

First I will show how both the interwar and contemporary periods mark a by widespread cultural anxiety about the lack of control over political and economic institutions. This is especially apparent in *Delta Green*, which updates Lovecraftian narratives about the destruction of individuals by alien forces to show how people might escape this fate when they work together in communities. The second part of the presentation explores how the horror genre has changed over time in relation to the increasing popularity/centrality of video games and an increasing interest in the part of game designer in postmodern storytelling techniques. This is evident in *Bloodborne*, which does not provide readers with a fully developed plot, but instead provides clues and other items that enable players to determine their level of investment in the narrative structuring of the game as a whole. Taken together, these new cosmic horror games provide players with the agency to determine the breadth and depth of their narrative experience.

Yaszek, Lisa (Georgia Institute of Technology) – “Poets of Tomorrow: The First Women of Science Fiction Verse”

In this presentation, Lisa Yaszek draws on materials from her new book, *Sisters of Tomorrow: The First Women of Science Fiction*, to illustrate the central role that women played in the creation of science fiction poetry as a special kind of technoscientific and aesthetic knowledge. While women made important contributions to every aspect of science fiction magazine production in the first half of the twentieth century, their greatest impact was in speculative poetry, where women accomplished a number of “firsts” including the publication of the first science fiction poetry chapterbooks, magazines, and fanzines. As Yaszek explains in this presentation, women typically used the well-established techniques of nineteenth-century fantastic poetry to make sense of emergent twentieth-century technocultural concerns. In particular, they drew upon the systems of poetic knowledge established by their female predecessors to critically assess the patriarchal impulses in present-day science and society and to imagine other worlds populated by female heroes as well as new futures predicted on feminine and feminist sensibilities. After reviewing the contributions of five early science fiction poets (Julia Boynton Green, Leah Bodine Drake, Lilith Lorraine, Tigrina, and Virginia Kidd), Yaszek concludes by connecting the work of these early poets with that of their present-day counterparts.

Wednesday 29th June, 2016; 15:40 – 17:00

Records of the Future (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Andy Sawyer

Brett, Jeremy (Curator, Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection, Texas A&M University) – Preserving The History of The Future

There are a growing number of institutions throughout the world that hold research collections dedicated to documenting and preserving the history of the science fiction and fantasy genres. This history is expressed through the published and broadcast works themselves, the secondary literature devoted to them, the primary materials (such as authors’ manuscripts and related materials) that are their building blocks, and the products lovingly created by fans in response to those works. Together these types of materials chart the birth, development, and evolution of the SF&F genres, and without them, researchers and scholars, as well as fans, will be unable to understand the social and literary contexts of where the genres came from and where they might be headed in the future. This panel will discuss the development of these collections (with images of some of the more important or

interesting materials), the scholarly and popular uses to which they are being put or can be put, and the crucial importance of active partnerships between SF&F creators and librarians/archivists in order to preserve their work for future scholars.

Heffner, Kathryn (University of Iowa) - A Zine of Her Own: Female Editors of Science Fiction Fanzines

Women editors of 20th century science fiction fanzines shaped and directed the dialogue of fandom within their communities. The creation and editorial work of their respective fanzines become a site of resistance against patriarchal science fiction communities while creating a space for their voices. The historical and cultural significance of women's' editorship in sf fanzines is attended to through an examination of three fanzines edited and created by women. This paper attends closely to identifying the significance of these independent publishing endeavors, and how fanzines were used as a feminine material object of resistance to limiting publishing venues.

Jacobson, JJ & Jennifer Kavetsky (Jay Kay and Doris Klein Science Fiction Librarian, Eaton Collection, UCR; PhD, UCR) – Searching Minds: Knowledge in SF Archives

SF collections preserve and generate (in one way) structured and systematic knowledge like metadata and indexes. They also, (in another way and more interestingly) preserve and generate knowledge outside of formal systems of information organization -- the scholarly and substantive knowledge that is the *raison d'être* of this conference. While for the researcher the two are intimately linked, it's useful to pick them apart and consider them separately before considering their relationship. Those interested in studying the genre and its history must contend simultaneously with an overabundance of and under-abundance of knowledge. SF's development as a genre is inextricably linked with the development of its prolific fan community. Fans often saw themselves as co-creators of the genre, but their contributions to the genre are often difficult for those who come after to access. This gap means that scholarly knowledge of the genre is partial and incomplete. Archives provide a crucial access point to these conversations. A librarian/curator and a recent SF Studies PhD use a study of fan commentary on both the genre and socio-political issues of the day, conducted through fanzines and letters to *Astounding* housed in the Eaton Collection, to examine knowledge preservation and generation about SF depictions of the human-machine relationship. We highlight ways that archives become a means for generations within the SF community to talk to each other and for scholars to understand how those conversations evolved and shaped the development of the genre.

Editing SF Panel Discussion (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Glyn Morgan

Gerry Canavan, Sonja Fritzsche, John Rieder, Lisa Yaszek

Imagining China and Japan in Science Fiction: Popular Science, Technology, History, and Politics (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Hua Li

As a genre inherently replete with a multitude of systems of knowledge generation, science fiction has emerged as a prominent mode of cultural expression across East Asia in recent decades. Meanwhile, as the region has become a leading force in global technological advances, futuristic images of both China and Japan have also proliferated in the two countries' science fiction. This panel brings together

original research on sci-fi texts with a thematic focus on futuristic visions of China and Japan, as well as exploring the interrelation between science fiction on the one hand and technology, popular science, history, and politics on the other.

The four papers in this panel approach the theme of imagining China and Japan in four different ways. The first paper explores the impact of the futuristic technical and digital revolution on Chinese young people's life in both the virtual and real world as revealed in the Chinese sci-fi novels *Everybody Loves Charles*, *The Waste Tide*, and *Tongtong's Summer*. The second paper probes the historical entanglement between popular science and science fiction in China since the early 20th century—specifically how the traditional image of ghosts have been transformed in Han Song's *An On-site Investigation of a Ghost*. The third paper discusses the changing representations of an imagined Japan in Philip K. Dick's *Man in a High Castle* and its recent TV adaptation in line with historical shifts in the US-Japan relationship, in the context of the TV version's "twinning logics of image-commodity production and capitalist realism." The fourth paper analyzes the anti-utopian quality of double-voiced discourse in the Chinese sci-fi novel *The Fat Years*, a satire of the Chinese party-state's rhetoric of a "harmonious society" and a "Chinese dream."

The four panelists analyze the above-mentioned narratives within their own sociocultural contexts. Such contextualized analyses will reveal how the genre of science fiction has delved into East Asian history and politics. In addition, by bringing some less well-known Chinese sci-fi narratives into discussion, the panelists will provide the audience with an introduction to such promising Chinese sci-fi writers as Bao Chu, Chen Qiufan, Han Song, and Xia Jia.

Tensor Posadas, Baryon (University of Minnesota) – “A Weird Time in Which We are Alive”: Orientalism and Capitalist Realism in *The Man in the High Castle*

As a system of knowledge production, orientalism operates under the logic of genre, that is, on the basis of rendering the multiplicity of cultural difference legible through its reduction to a set of recognizable motifs and images in the service of its function as a mechanism of colonial management. Given the colonial underpinnings of the emergence of the genre of science fiction, it should come as no surprise that orientalist images have frequently made appearances in science fiction texts, arguably mediating their imaginations of other worlds and constituting an important part of the genre's megatext. My paper takes up one manifestation of this orientalist legacy—specifically, the changing representations of an imagined “Japan” in science fiction in line with the historical shifts in the US-Japan relationship—by way of an examination of Philip K. Dick's *Man in a High Castle* and its recent televisual adaptation. While the representation of Japan in the satirical alternate history postwar world of the original novel can be criticized for its use of anachronistic orientalist stereotypes, the television series based on it seemingly aims to present a world characterized by a more grim and gritty aesthetic. However, I argue that the television series' very avoidance of the orientalist images that mire the original novel reveal another set of narrative constraints and generic systems—namely, the twinned logics of image-commodity production and capitalist realism—that set the limits of its imagination, thus foregrounding the challenges of thinking other worlds and other histories today.

Li, Hua (Montana State University) – Anti-utopia: Fake Paradise and Collective Amnesia in Chan Koonchung's *The Fat Years*

In his article “Utopias and Anti-Utopias,” Edward James contends that the numerous versions of classic utopia in the centuries succeeding Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516) gradually mutated within the field of sf into anti-utopias during the second half of the 20th century. As part of world literature, many contemporary Chinese sf works echo this anti-utopian trend. This article focuses on a Chinese social sf novel, Chan Koonchung’s *The Fat Years* (2009), in order to reveal its anti-utopian feature and its incorporation of famous Chinese literary motifs and imagery, such as Lu Xun’s “iron house,” “the awakened few,” and “a good hell.” *The Fat Years* is a near-future science fiction novel with a realistic exposé of the socio-political system in contemporary China. The novel’s anti-utopian quality manifests itself in Chan’s satirical double-voiced discourse of the ruling Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) rhetoric of a “harmonious society” and “Chinese dream.” The novel presents two contradictory images of China in 2013: a fake paradise and a good hell. The narrative is a simultaneous construction of the utopia or fake paradise—China’s Golden Age of Ascendancy—by the CCP and the Chinese people’s collective amnesia, and the negation and demystification of the Golden Age by an awakened few who refuse to forget the past and prefer to live in a good hell.

I have borrowed the term “double-voiced” discourse from Bakhtin. In Bakhtin’s investigation of the dialogic nature of language, he introduces the concept of double-voiced discourse, argues that in a literary text, a writer may exploit someone else’s discourse for the writer’s own purposes “by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own.” Chan’s *The Fat Years* sheds new light on Bakhtin’s concept. My analysis will show that Chan’s use of double-voiced discourse is achieved and complicated by the involvement of various layers of narrative throughout the novel—the high-ranking CCP official He Dongsheng, the first-person narrator, and various focalizers such as Fang Caodi, Zhang Dou, and Little Xi [Young Xi]. This critical approach to Chan’s satire of the CCP’s discourse of China’s Golden Age of Ascendancy teases out the novel’s complex irony and cautionary implications.

Wang, Yao (Xi’an Jiaotong University) – Our Future of Brave New World or Other Possibilities: the Digital Revolution and Its Cultural Politics in Contemporary Chinese Science Fiction

Since the 1970s, the imagined digital technology has been manifested more and more frequently in Chinese science fiction. However, in such early works as *Little Smart’s Travels to the Future* published in 1978, which envisions a technologically modernized utopian future, all the so-called “TV watch” and other gadgets are merely introduced to embellish the perfect picture of future world, without any discussion of the possible industrial or cultural revolution triggered by those technologies. Since then, during the accelerating process of globalization coupled with China’s social and cultural transformation in the past decades, the new generation of Chinese youths may find themselves living in a “brave new world” conquered by smart phones, social media and virtual reality. On the one hand, such digital revolution tends to promise these young people a cyberspace for their world mapping and self-expression, a seemingly smooth and flat future world without any barriers between languages, nations, cultures, and social identities. On the other hand, the virtual and fragmental experiences of being digital may not only render the unbalanced reality invisible, but also hinder the empathy between each isolated individual. When this contradictive situation resonates with contemporary Chinese science fiction writings, the authors inevitably internalize what they’ve experienced in everyday life as well as their own understandings of the human condition in the digital age. This paper provides a detailed discussion of different versions of future imagination in three young Chinese science fiction writers’ recent works—namely, *Everybody Loves Charles* by Baoshu, *The Waste Tide* by Qiufan Chen, and *Tongtong’s Summer* by Xia Jia—in which characters’ attitudes toward the digital revolution and their struggles vary significantly. Borrowing such some critical conceptions of the New

Left critics as the “empire”, “immaterial labor”, and “multitude”, my interpretations show how the Chinese sf writers imagine or fail to imagine any alternative future vis-a-vis the “brave new world.”

Fan, Yilun (University of California, Riverside) – Ghosts as Imagination: Science Fiction and Popular Science in Han Song’s *An Onsite Investigation of Ghosts*

This article investigates the relationship between popular science and science fiction in China as manifested in Han Song’s *An Onsite Investigation of Ghosts* (鬼的现场调查, 2001), a book difficult to categorize. Science fiction has been intertwined with popular science since its introduction in China in the early 20th century, and their boundary still remains ambiguous today. Although a prolific writer for both genres, Han Song is mostly famous for Kafkaesque nightmarish exploration of China’s reality through the lens of science fiction. Contrary to the sublime aesthetics of Liu Cixin, there are various ghosts haunting Han Song’s gloomy fictional world, while at the same time, Han participated in a scientific investigation of ghosts in a remote country of Southwest China in 2000. Rather than simply denying the existence of ghosts, the book he co-authored based on this experience not only manifests a complex attitude towards ghosts but also internalizes the tension between the two genres.

Taking this book as a starting point, I will first track the historical entanglement between popular science and science fiction in China, trying to explore the fundamental cause of their intertwined relationship. Secondly, by pointing out Han’s complex of ghost, I will then decipher the proliferating meanings of ghosts in his works. I examine how “pseudoscience” is misconceptualized in China due to translation, and how ghosts are suppressed by scientism, an ideological hegemony that Han Song manages to deconstruct in his own science fiction writings. I argue that in Han’s fictional and non-fictional writings, ghosts can be read as a signifier of three layers: they are misunderstood in China as superstition and pseudoscience, and hence indicate the hegemonic discourse of science, yet in the kernel of Han’s conception of science fiction, ghosts represent the power of imagination, which is embodied in, and should be conveyed through the genre. I summarize that in Han’s opinion, popular science and science fiction should be blended together to free Chinese people from the hegemony of both science and traditional culture.

Although Han Song is as highly acclaimed as Liu Cixin in China, he still remains mostly unknown in the English-speaking world despite the fact that some of his short stories have been translated for overseas audience. This paper is the first attempt to create a dialogue between his science fiction and popular science writings.

Thursday 30th June, 2016; 10:00 – 11:25

Keynote: Haran, Joan (Cardiff University) – TBC

Thursday 30th June, 2016; 11:45 – 13:05

Posthumanism (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Neil Easterbrook

Sharp, Patrick B. (California State University) – Angels, Amazons, and Darwinist Feminism in Early SF Magazines

This paper examines the work of women authors who published in SF magazines in the late 1920s and the influence of Darwinist feminism on their storytelling practices. As Kimberly Hamlin notes, Darwin's account of sexual selection inspired feminists of the late nineteenth century who embraced it as a scientific alternative to the myth of Eve and the concomitant dismissal of women's rights based on religious fables. Though Darwinist feminism became marginalized from mainstream U.S. feminist movements, secular-minded feminists such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Margaret Sanger continued to appeal to evolutionary concepts in their arguments to liberate women's bodies from patriarchal control. In magazines such as *Amazing Stories* and *Air Wonder Stories*, women such as Lilit Lorraine, Leslie F. Stone, and Minna Irving continued this science-minded feminist tradition in their tales that defied masculinist assumptions about technology and progress (among other things). Lilit Lorraine's SF stories were unabashedly feminist and utopian, filled with strong female characters who were full partners in technoscientific progress. Lorraine also had a penchant for romances where enlightened male characters came to appreciate strong, intelligent women on their own terms. Leslie F. Stone updated the sprawling adventures of Edgar Rice Burroughs with a feminist approach to evolution. Her stories included Amazons, angels, and battles between the sexes that ended with females taking their well-earned place as leaders in shaping the evolutionary destiny of (post)humanity. Minna Irving's "The Moon Woman" (1929) imagined an evolutionary future where women use technology to fly freely and defend themselves against the dangers posed by men. These women expanded the scope of Darwinist feminism and made it a regular feature of magazine SF.

Contreras, David (University of California) – *Apocalypse 1900* (1965): Posthumanism meets Subalternity

Apocalypse 1900 is an experimental short film (30 min) directed by the Mexican director Salvador Elizondo (1932-2006). The film was intended for a French Film Festival audience (the film is in French), however, due to personal issues between the producer of the film and the director, the film never made its way to the screen. Eventually, in 2007, one year after the passing of Elizondo, the film was discovered in Elizondo's personal library, and in that same year it was projected in Mexico City's prestigious Palacio de Bellas Artes. The film is known exclusively among the elite of Mexican academic circles, and it is also known to a small YouTube community of about 4,000 (as measured by the numbers viewed). However, *Apocalypse* hasn't received critical and aesthetic assessments of its cinematic contents, which fall under the lens of science fiction and fantasy scholarship.

Elizondo's film is similar to Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1963) in that it employs the narrative of still-images. However, unlike Marker, Elizondo does not use photography imagery to construct the narrative, instead, his film uses 19th century anatomy drawings, surrealist images of giant insects, technological portraits and paintings from the French *Belle Époque*, which Elizondo combines with photo-realist images of naked subaltern tribal people. At one point of the film, the omniscient narrator states that "Man is a Machine" and that there is "nothing else to live for, for Man's spark plug no longer functions". Given that Anatomy, Technology, Surrealism/Fantasy, Cyborg Topology, and Ethno-Anthropology compose the multidimensional imaginary of Elizondo's film, I propose to use the critical tools as provided by posthumanist approaches along with a more historical and existential grounded subaltern studies. In my analysis of the film, I draw from John Rieder's *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (2012) and articulate certain aspects of his book with a Frankensteinian posthuman and subaltern theoretical model. *Apocalypse 1900* does not only project the

systematization of humankind by certain technological knowledge, but it also illustrates the precariousness of the subaltern others (as suggested by the suggestive organic nakedness of the subaltern tribe) that fall under the weigh of the power and discursive practices of those who classify systems and produce knowledge.

Pak, Chris (Independent) – ‘A Horrible Global Narcissism, Permanent and Inescapable’: Discourses of Posthumanity in Karl Schroeder’s *Ventus*

This paper extends the analysis of terraforming that I undertake in my book, *Terraforming; Ecopolitical Transformations and Environmentalism in Science Fiction* (Liverpool University Press, 2016), and complements my analysis of pantropy and the grotesque in Joan Slonczewski’s *A Door Into Ocean*, which is forthcoming from *Science Fiction Studies*. In this talk, I consider how the paired science-fictional themes of terraforming and pantropy are used to interrogate ideas about posthumanity and nature. Both terms were coined in 1942: “terraforming,” coined by Jack Williamson, refers to the adaptation of landscapes to facilitate habitation, while “pantropy,” the genetic (and now cyborgian) adaptation of bodies to facilitate the habitation of hostile environments, was coined by James Blish. These two tropes often co-occur, and are used to reflect on what it means to be human when technological adaptations to both the body and the environment transform the foundations of that humanity. This critical examination of what it means to be human is cognate with discourses of posthumanity that emerge from Human-Animal Studies. I consider Karl Schroeder’s debut novel *Ventus* from the perspective of Haraway’s figure of the cyborg in “The Cyborg Manifesto” (1985) and her analysis of multispecies flourishing in *When Species Meet* (2008).

Cli-Fi (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Paul March-Russell

Bunn, Gabrielle (University of Nottingham) – Cosy Catastrophe or Ecological Apocalypse: Science Fiction and Ecocriticism in J. G. Ballard’s *The Wind from Nowhere* (1962)

This paper demonstrates how an understanding of contemporary science fiction conventions facilitates an ecocritical reading of J. G. Ballard’s first novel, *The Wind from Nowhere* (1962), by comparing and contrasting Ballard’s use and application of scientific knowledge with John Wyndham’s approach in *The Day of the Triffids* (1951) and *The Kraken Wakes* (1953).

The Wind from Nowhere was written by Ballard in a period of just three weeks to fund his subsequent shift to full-time writing and he deliberately utilised all the ‘cliches’ and ‘conventions’ of the disaster story sub-genre which Brian W. Aldiss described as the ‘cosy catastrophe’ in order to expedite this process. The brevity of the text’s construction and Ballard’s own dismissal of it as a piece of ‘hack-work’ has ensured that the novel has remained largely out of print and absent from critical discussion. Nicholas Ruddick and Dominika Oramus, however, have both demonstrated how awareness of Ballard’s deliberate use of genre conventions can be used to situate *The Wind from Nowhere* within a useful critical framework.

This paper builds upon their work by demonstrating how this approach can be extended to explore the relationship between scientific knowledge and the natural world in this sub-genre by comparing *The Wind from Nowhere* with *The Day of the Triffids* and *The Kraken Wakes*, two well-known disaster novels by John Wyndham, the ‘master of the cosy catastrophe’ according to Aldiss and an acknowledged influence on *The Wind from Nowhere*. By analysing *The Wind from Nowhere* alongside these prominent precedents, I expose their similarities and differences, demonstrating how

Ballard satirizes earlier narratives of British progress, technological achievement and scientific knowledge through his representation of nature run wild despite superficially conforming to the same expectations. Understanding of nature and knowledge of the natural world is therefore presented and explored very differently by the two authors.

Ultimately, I argue that despite his supposed adherence to the 'standard narrative conventions' of the disaster story tradition, the way in which Ballard constructs, conveys and considers scientific knowledge in *The Wind from Nowhere* is very different from John Wyndham's approach, which has considerable implications for an ecocritical comparison of their disaster narratives.

Middleton, Selena (McMaster University) – Generative Exile: Homelessness and Desire on Two Interstellar Ships

The destabilized system of progressive anthropogenic climate change forces us to consider our lives in exile—without the comforts and securities that transform a mere “environment” into a home, and, perhaps, even without a home itself. This is a concept explored in science fiction, such as through the destabilization and defamiliarization of the alien or the world ruined beyond recognition. In this paper I briefly explore religious and post-colonial texts to establish the concept of exile, before examining Jaak Panksepp's neuroscientific work and its implications for desire and belonging in exilic spaces.

Alongside “cli-fi” science fiction narratives, this theoretical foundation demonstrates the effects of ecological exile on human affect. What is the function of desire in exile? How does desire influence connections to others—and to oneself—within the context of homelessness? In addressing these questions, I consider the exilic space of the generation ship: the temporary home of a spaceship seeking out an inhabitable planet. In James Tiptree Jr.'s *A Momentary Taste of Being* and Molly Gloss' *The Dazzle of Day* human characters are physically alienated from their evolutionary environment. In these narratives, desire becomes a tendril to support characters who are emotionally adrift as they float through space toward either a new home or oblivion.

Desire for security—the drive that Panksepp suggests ensures we continually move through unstable spaces, ironically ensuring that the state of exile become a kind of home—renders us simultaneously woefully unprepared and perfectly positioned to navigate anthropogenic climate change. While *A Momentary Taste of Being* and *The Dazzle of Day* fully encapsulate the horror and alienation of the generation ship experience, they also suggest, as Panksepp's scientific work does, the idea of exile as a generative space, a space in which desire provides a structure which is otherwise denied. Affective neuroscience suggests that it is not the attainment of an object of desire that brings pleasure to the animal brain, but the *search* for the object. Panksepp posits that the animal brain—from which the human brain evolved—is stimulated by the search, by anticipation, by curiosity and desire, not by satisfaction. Desire ensures that we are rewarded for pressing into insecure spaces and seeking the answers to unknown questions. While the desire for more (comforts, security, or simple material possessions) can certainly be blamed for our encroaching state of environmental exile, both *A Momentary Taste of Being* and *A Dazzle of Day* suggest that there is something more to be taken from this state. Can desire, then, also be integral to our salvation?

Higgins, David M. (Inver Hills College) – Slow Weird Reverse Colonization: Warren Ellis and Jason Howard's *Trees*

Warren Ellis and Jason Howard's *Trees* (published by Image Comics) offers a new and unique version of a reverse-colonization narrative. Reverse colonization narratives have become a dominant SF mode in the aftermath of World War II because territorial colonization is now often viewed as an expression of domineering aggression rather than as a heroic undertaking in the Western popular imaginary. This specific reverse-colonization narrative, however, explores the idea that humans have extraordinary difficulty conceptualizing phenomena that occur outside human perspectives of size and scale. The trees arrive and seem to do nothing, so humans adapt to their presence and adapt to a new normal. One of the story's insights, however, is that the trees *are* having a profound influence: They're transforming ecologies, water flows, capital flows, social environments, political systems, and much more – but many of these changes happen in ways that are difficult for human perception to register. They also operate slowly, over a long period of time, and thus *seem* inactive from the perspective of human temporality.

This essay draws upon the work of Morton, McGurl, Selisker, and others in order to suggest that *Trees* uses the trope of reverse-colonization in order to invite readers to viscerally experience (from the receiving end) the magnitude and weirdness of human ecological impact during the era of the Anthropocene. The trees in Ellis and Howard's narrative affect humans in strange, disruptive, and catastrophic ways just as humans affect nature in ways that can be invisible from conventional scalar perspectives. Ellis and Howard present the colonizing trees as alien in a Lovecraftian sense; rather than having comprehensible motives, they are *truly* alien, like Lovecraft's elder gods, or more recently, like the alien presence within Area X of Jeff VanderMeer's *Southern Reach Trilogy*. Ultimately, Ellis and Howard offer a startling hybrid of science fictional genres: Slow apocalypse melds with reverse colonization to produce figurative hyperobjects – the alien trees – that capture the literal impact of human ecological activity during our contemporary moment.

Systems (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Andrew Milner

Shmlev, Ivaylo R. (Goethe University Frankfurt) – The Knowledge and Practice of Galactic War: Warfare As a Complex System in the Culture Series of Iain M. Banks

An undoubtedly popular theme in science fiction, war is very often depicted exclusively in dystopian contexts of wide-ranging devastation. This begs a counter-question: how would a utopian society wage war? Iain M. Banks's Culture series offers unexpected and highly complex answers to that inquiry. Although largely relegated to the covert-ops organisation within the Culture, Special Circumstances, warfare remains a central preoccupation in the sociocultural and philosophical life of the Culture. This paper will attempt to holistically examine the depictions of traditional / physical and virtual-reality wars as elements and manifestations of the complex system of galactic warfare, of its diverse practices and the multifaceted knowledges and repercussions it produces in its emergent mode. The paper will first introduce central notions from complex systems theories such as emergence, self-organisation, the scale continuum and its effects, etc. (Bar-Yam 1997; Skyttner 2005), and will clarify the methodological links between the cultural / literary study of a novel series and the study of complex systems from a sociocultural (Byrne 1998; Luhmann 2013) viewpoint (in contrast to a mathematical-scientific one). The analysis will then locate and explicate the connections between fighting massively destructive physical wars (*Consider Phlebas*), engaging ideological enemies in game-like virtual-war conflicts (*Surface Detail*), the long-term consequences for the armed-conflict participants (*Use of Weapons* & *Look to Windward*) and the self-reorganisations of the Culture in reaction to warfare's emergent properties (*Inversions*, *Excession* & *The Hydrogen Sonata*). These self-reorganisations represent a plethora of unanticipated developments in the practice of war: the

separation of ultra-pacifist factions who prefer the Culture's extinction to harming other intelligent beings in acts of war; self-reproof of Culture individuals and groups, in forms ranging from peer-assigned reputation loss to extremes such as suicide (due to a perceived personal/group responsibility for an armed conflict); the amassing of surprising and very diverse non-technoscientific knowledges, such as shocking allies' secrets and revelations about the unsuspectedly brutal nature of high-tech warfare; 'cheating' behaviours of various kinds which accelerate and/or bring about war victories; etc. The unpredictability of emergence and self-adaptation in the complex system of galactic warfare causes such surprising developments not only in the complex social system of the Culture, but of course also in its collective conscious, its self-knowledge. Warring entity and warfare can even begin to merge, forming a war-based complex social system. Because of this, the Culture not only exhibits, but also actively, self-referentially encourages emergent creativity in its striving to avoid armed conflict.

Davis, Doug (Gordon State College) – Cybernetic Systems in the American Deep South: Reading Flannery O'Connor as Science Fiction—Again

At last year's annual meeting of the SFRA in Stonybrook I read Flannery O'Connor's classic southern gothic novella, "The Displaced Person," as a work of cold war science fiction. In his "Dynamic Subspace" blog, Dr. Jason Ellis judged my presentation to be "the best presentation of the conference" (<http://dynamicsubspace.net/2015/06/29/2015-science-fiction-researchassociation-conference-wrap-up/>). For SFRA 2016, I propose to return to the project of reading O'Connor's canonical southern literature as science fiction, this time merging my studies of O'Connor with the conference's theme of "Systems and Knowledge." In particular, I propose analyzing O'Connor's second novel, *The Violent Bear it Away*, as a work of cold war science fiction that draws from her era's emerging cybernetic paradigm. Through this analysis, I will show how the tools of SF genre theory are essential to not only recognizing but also interpreting the significance of the cybernetic elements in O'Connor's southern gothic fiction.

In particular, I will explore Flannery O'Connor's representations of integration in her novel, arguing that O'Connor uses the trope of cybernetic integration as a master metaphor to denote not only her era's politics of racial assimilation but also futurity itself. I set O'Connor's novel within an expanded concept of integration drawn from cybernetics and science and technology studies that treats the 20th century's history of science, militarization and globalization as a process of integration into technologically mediated networks and systems. I show how O'Connor employs cybernetic imagery and metaphors of technological integration throughout her fiction to represent not only integrated race relations but also the entire process of modernization. Through using cybernetic imagery and metaphors of technological integration, I conclude, O'Connor creates science-fiction flavored interpersonal dramas out of many of her era's major and nascent transformative forces, including not only the civil rights movement but also the cold war, the development of an increasingly technoscientific society, and the economic and cultural globalization attendant to the postwar era.

Gómez Muñoz, Pablo (University of Zaragoza) – From Latency to Prominence: Transnational Systems in Dystopian Cinema

Although science fiction has always produced narratives that look beyond the scope of the nation (Csicsery-Ronay 2002: 218), this paper argues that, until the twenty-first century, the genre (particularly systemic dystopias) seldom dealt with transnational interactions and globalization in an

explicit manner. After considering a series of recent technological, economic, and sociocultural changes that have contributed to a major leap in the scope and scale of globalization, the paper introduces the notion of systemic dystopias (as different from, for example, viral, environmental, or technological dystopias). Systemic dystopias imagine models of socioeconomic organization and their impact in the lives of citizens. This term is particularly helpful for studying the development of discourses within the genre (especially discourses on globalization as a system), as it allows to focus on a specific set of films and to identify a series of common historical concerns. The paper first points to some key historical themes in systemic dystopias such as authoritarian human and technological powers, oppression, and violence and then considers to what extent films such as *Rollerball* (Jewison, 1975), *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982), *They Live* (Carpenter, 1988), *Until the End of the World* (Wenders, 1991) have engaged in debates about globalization. Taking Mark Bould's work on neoliberal spaces and globalization (2012) as a departure point, the paper moves on to show how twenty-first century systemic dystopias are exploiting the potential of sf to deal with transnational socioeconomic interactions in more obvious ways than the aforementioned films. My analysis suggests that films such as *Code 46* (Winterbottom, 2003), *Sleep Dealer* (Rivera, 2008), *In Time* (Niccol, 2011), *Total Recall* (Wiseman, 2012), *Upside Down* (Solanas, 2012), *Elysium* (Blomkamp, 2013), and *Jupiter Ascending* (The Wachowskis, 2015) (among others) situate their narratives in an explicit transnational context by combining previous dystopian motifs such as economic exploitation, stratification, class hierarchies, and corporate control with less common themes such as borders, (im)mobility, territoriality, sovereignty, transnational networks of power, market incorporation, and capital flows.

Thursday 30th June, 2016; 14:00 – 15:20

Cyberpunk and Embodiment (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Paweł Frelik

Mateos-Aparicio, Ángel (University of Castilla-La Mancha) – “System Failure”: A Political Reading of the Images of System Collapse in Science Fiction

The exploration of alternative fictional worlds is one of science fiction's essentials. The genre has constantly created a wide variety of imaginary settings, often envisioned as technological and/or simulated environments which offer an insight into alternative conceptualizations of the world and of reality. The aim of this paper is to read these alternative science fiction worlds from a political perspective, that is, as a criticism of the existent dominant political (and economic) system. In order to do so, it will focus on a motif that repeatedly appears in science fiction literature and film: the notion, or even the feeling, that the system has broken down.

From classics like E. M. Forster's "The Machine Stops" to the famous "system failure" message of the *Matrix* trilogy, science fiction has tried to re-produce the experience of the moment when a well-established vision of reality collapses and, together with it, the political and economic structure that supports it, opening an alternative world of possibility. In this sense, what this paper intends to do is to use the poststructuralist and postmodern idea of discourse (code, computer programming) to interpret the narrative moment of the system's collapse as a "literalization" (McHale, "Towards a Poetics of Cyberpunk") of the collapse of the superstructure (understood in Marxist critical terms), which from that moment on appears to be the result of the imposition of a utopian, totalizing political system.

The breakdown of the system, of the computer-simulated environment, or of the "code" in novels such as Philip K. Dick's *Time Out of Joint* and in films such as *The Island of The Matrix* has to be

read as the moment when the dominant superstructure, late capitalism (as Fredric Jameson would put it), collapses as a legitimized discourse and utopia.

Easterbrook, Neil (TCU) – Contradictions of Embodiment, or When Nature Became Technology

A funny thing happened to me last fall. Ok, really just a surprising thing. I was teaching a survey of sf for students seeking their general education requirement in literature. So they weren't dedicated to literature, nor were they dedicated to sf; most were business majors and nursing majors and anything-but-literature majors looking for a course they thought might be marginally more entertaining than Introduction to Shakespeare, say (Though how someone might respond to Shakespeare as anything other than fantastically entertaining is beyond me.) One of the books I'd asked the students to read was William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, which I'd not taught for years since I felt like I'd taught it a thousand times before. The best student in the class (and our sole literature major) hated the book, saying it was "unreadable" because "it contains so many clichés."

Initially, I was astonished, but soon I came to understand my student's response. Cyberpunk, once sf's hottest, newest wave has become completely assimilated; in some respects, its topoi and tropes now represent the very complacent establishment it once actively opposed, its specific "system" (genre / subgenre) appearing as "knowledge" in (and about) sf. My paper will be a short version of the essay on Cyberpunk and the 1980s that I'm writing for *The Cambridge History of Science Fiction* (eds. Eric Carl Link and Gerry Canavan), which should appear in 2017. I will recall some of the reasons cyberpunk shocked and enthralled us back then, and how it still might strike us innovative and remarkable. While much of my article will consider Gibson, whom I've published on several times before, for the SFRA conference my emphasis will be on Bruce Sterling, Pat Cadigan, Richard Kadrey, Lewis Shiner, and George Alec Effinger. Not as famous or as important as Gibson, nevertheless their writing suggests an alternate model of cyberpunk's historical importance, in this case the paradoxes or contributions of human embodiment that parallel sf's traditionally problematic treatment of nature and technology (what the classical Greeks called *physis* and *technē*). In my view, cyberpunk was the point in sf history not just when technology became nature, but more significantly *nature became technology*, something that is never said about "the movement."

Marotta, Melanie A. (Morgan State University) - The Reformation of the "Plastic Girl": Cyberpunk Prostitute/Killer Characters

In traditional high-tech, low-life cyberpunk fashion, two of the primary characters in Walter Jon Williams' *Hardwired* (198) and William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) are loner rebels that take on their adverse environments in favor of improved living conditions. Significantly, these characters are female—Sarah and Molly Millions—not male, which is what is considered the standard focus for the cyberpunk text. In early cyberpunk narratives, the female cyberpunk character construct is created and repeated often: these characters tend to be highly sexualized and commodified, even appearing as prostitutes. Interestingly, cyberpunk is littered with references to the American West, authors going so far as to refer to hackers as console cowboys (see William Gibson), thereby invoking the famed frontier loner hero image. On the surface, these female characters appear like arm candy for the hackers, but beneath these female characters have the ability to make choices much like their male counterparts do. They are empowered, but only to a certain degree. The examination for this study is

as follows: while Sarah and Molly are reminiscent of the American Western prostitute character, they are, in fact, much more like the frontier pioneer woman who dared to choose to protect herself and her community in the face of unforeseen dangers. This is not an act of self-sacrifice, but rather one of self-preservation.

This presentation is to be a section of a larger work, a chapter essay which will go into a co-edited collection from another academic and myself about the science fiction western and the portrayal of female characters. In the chapter I will look at both cyberpunk and post-cyberpunk, attempting to determine if there is any alteration to the female characters' constructions from one genre to another. For this presentation due to time constraints, I will examine Sarah and Molly as the prostitute/killer characters.

**Unsettling Scientific Stories: Imagined Futures, Cultures of Science, and Fiction (Lecture Theatre 6)
Chair: Joan Haran**

The presenters on this panel are all post-doctoral researchers on the AHRC-funded project "Unsettling Scientific Stories: Expertise, Narrative, and Future Histories" (unsettlingscientificstories.co.uk). Their research explores the many uses and notions of the future which shaped scientific cultures during the long technological twentieth century, bringing together insights from Sociology, Science and Technology Studies, History and Philosophy of Science, and Science Fiction Studies. The three papers on this panel are connected by a shared concern with the overlap between fictional representations of scientific futures – in works ranging from Biblical epics, to SF in magazines, to Kim Stanley Robinson's novel *Aurora* – and the social and political uses to which they are put. They pay particular attention to the details of scientific practice as they circulate between fiction and non-fiction.

Chambers, Amy C. (Newcastle University) – "Nature Strikes Back!": Cycles of Environmentally Conscious Science Fiction

Concerns over nature have been embedded into Hollywood films with increasing frequency over the past few years, and across a range of seemingly disparate genres. For example, religious epics such as *Noah* (2014) and *Exodus* (2015) have used science to help explain miraculous events (global flooding, plagues, and parting of the Red Sea), alongside more traditional science-based movies such as *Interstellar* (2014), and *The Young Ones* (2014), and earlier examples such as *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), *The Happening* (2008), and *WALL•E* (2008). The 1970s cycle of eco-cinema was grounded in science futures and post-apocalyptic worlds that imagined the consequences of humanity's ecological failures. With films such as *The Omega Man* (1971), *Soylent Green*, *Silent Running*, *No Blades of Grass* (1970), *Frogs* (1972), *Z.P.G.* (1972), and *Earthquake* (1974) filmmakers responded to growing concerns over the irreparable damage being inflicted upon a fragile Earth.

Many 1970s eco-films were adapted from and inspired by both non-fiction and fiction literature that articulated fears about an unsettled future best by pollution, overpopulation, and a loss of natural resources. But more contemporary examples use fears of climate change and 'vengeful' natural forces across a broader spectrum of genres. 'Cli-fi' movies openly engage with social concerns about climate and taking the core concepts of dystopian science fiction and underpinning them with an environmentalist message. As climate change becomes an increasingly crucial topic of public discourse it will take an even deeper hold upon cinematic and literary narratives. Can cli-fi help

environmentalism to gain a wider audience and political traction, or is this just the beginning of another cycle of a SF subgenre?

Robinson, Sam (University of York) – John Carnell’s system of British Science Fiction: SF writers gaining scientific knowledge through *New Worlds*’ non-fiction articles

Finally hitting the shelves as a professionally published magazine in 1946, *New Worlds* (1946-1970) launched a new British style of Science Fiction. Under John Carnell’s editorial leadership (1946-1964), the publication fostered a new generation of British SF writers who were able to challenge the perceived dominance of US pulp SF. Unable to pay the same rates as established North American publications, Carnell needed to create a community of British writers who were, essentially, prepared to write for less money. Carnell wanted to attract new writers to SF, but he also felt that he should scientifically educate British SF writers so that they could hopefully produce a higher quality hard-SF product in contrast to the majority pulp SF and its questionable science content.

To this end *New Worlds* began to publish regular non-fiction articles alongside its novellas and short stories. These differed from traditional science journalism as they sought to both inform *and* inspire. These non-fiction pieces speculated on future STEM advances and discoveries, and reported on contemporary innovations, thus suggesting potential plot points and unsettling imagined futures. This paper will analyse these scientific futures, and the SF responses to them. The cultural dichotomy of Cold War apocalyptic SF alongside the scientifically utopic sociological futures that were politically mythologised in post-war Britain have not been studied in relation to non-fiction work in SF publications. From this source base this paper will demonstrate the scientific basis of the specifically British futures presented by *New Worlds* authors, and the key role this publication played in post-war British SF magazine culture.

Paskins, Mat (Aberystwyth University) – The Spaceship Cares for All the Animals Inside

Kim Stanley Robinson’s 2015 novel *Aurora* takes up and challenges the conventions of the ‘generation-ship’ genre to suggest that the prospect of human beings establishing life beyond the solar system is extremely remote, even in the long-term future. It is also a remarkably fraught and tender story about mothering, and the environments needed to sustain meaningful care: of parents for children, of humans and their systems for the well-being of other animals, and of the artificial intelligence – Ship – who acts as narrator for much of the novel. Ship poses as an omniscient narrator but also belongs to the family romance of the novel, and articulates the ways it gropes towards meaningful attachment according to the specific parenting it received.

In this paper I explore the ways in which mothering and care are embodied through physical constraints and narratives of physical, mental and environmental degradation in the novel. I argue that the didactic thrust of Robinson’s scepticism about the settlement of distant planets, and the disgust which his protagonists experience at their enforced inter-generational exile from Earth, are considerably complicated if we focus on the novel’s representations of both effective and despairing care.

Existing critical studies of mothering in SF have focused on its utopian manifestations, on discussion of a literalised vision of Freudian horror at the mother’s body, and the prospect of technologically-mediated transformations of the mother-child doublet. By focusing instead on the novel’s *environments of care*, I suggest that the novel invites us to engage imaginatively with the scientific

details of the techno-social matrix required for human and non-human animals to thrive. This relational context has important consequences, I argue, for the ways scientific knowledge is represented and contested in this novel, and in environmentally focused SF more broadly.

Economics (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Andrew Ferguson

Shaw, Kristen (McMaster University) – Challenging the Virtual-Real Dualism: An Examination of Economics, Labour and Space in *Reamde* and *For the Win*

Geographic space and virtual space are frequently considered to be distinct and separate systems. The latter is linked to disembodied knowledge and circuits of information, while our understanding of geographic space is linked to cartographic and material knowledge of specific sites. This dualistic line of thought leads to the assumption that what happens in virtual space has little to no impact on cultural and economic flows in the real world, and that the two function independently of another.

This paper examines two speculative texts – Neal Stephenson’s 2011 novel *Reamde*, and Cory Doctorow’s 2010 novel *For the Win* – to argue that the distinction between real and virtual space is a false one, and that, if we understand human geography as a “system of knowledge,” science fiction demonstrates how we must fundamentally reconsider how to read geographical spaces in relation to virtual spaces. The role of online virtual networks and economies continues to demonstrate how the relationship between “real” and virtual space and economies is becoming increasingly porous. In combination, these shifts have altered what it means to be a citizen and to operate in an increasingly globalized world.

In order to examine this shift, I focus on the role of MMOs (Massive Multiplayer Online Games) within Stephenson’s *Reamde* and Doctorow’s *For the Win*. Both novels focus on the effects of gold farming in MMOs, a growing industry in which predominantly Chinese workers will play a game extensively in order to stockpile large amounts of the games’ virtual currency. This currency is then sold to other players for real money, thus acting as a clear example of how the virtual is embedded in the real (and vice versa).

The interrelation between the virtual and real does not stop here, however – both novels demonstrate how gold farming groups, and virtual communities in general, are not isolated online, but rather, how their economic and social activities are embedded in and become tangled within “real” socio-economic systems and how these flows are inscribed and made visible in material geographies. As such, I focus specifically on the relation between virtual and material labour, the associated interrelation of virtual and real economic systems, and the socio-spatial effects of those economic flows. To conclude, I examine how the increasingly porous boundary between real and virtual socio-economic flows results in a new understanding of geography and globalization.

Walton, Jo (Northumbria University) – Marvellous Moneys and Financial Familiars: Transactional Orders as Knowledgeable Systems

This paper explores some of the exotic currencies and currency-like phenomena of mostly contemporary science fiction and fantasy, asking what such representations can teach us about money as it actually does exist. In the first third of the paper, I discuss definitions of money, briefly outlining the canonical two (sometimes four) functions of money described by mainstream economics, and situating these functions within a historical context that is so often lacking. I consider why narrative

modes of explanation have such influence where money is concerned, comparing the commodity theory of money, chartalism, and the credit theory of money, and tracing the shifting emphasis from production, to exchange, to contract, to the rise of the new socio-technological nexus of platform capitalism, with its emergent practices of quantification, visualization, securitization, and mediatization.

I then apply these theoretical tools within a tour of a variety of marvellous moneys. These include: biological currency, including the leaf currency of Douglas Adams's *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* (1980), Adam Roberts's *Stone* (2002), and Nalo Hopkinson's 'Money Tree' (1997); time currency, including the time capsules of Andrew Niccol's *In Time* (2011) and real-world LETS currencies; reputation currency, including the masks of Jack Vance's 'Moon Moth' (1961), the millie trust network of Michael Swanwick's 'From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled' (2008), the Kudos of Iain M. Banks's *The Algebraist* (2004), and the social credit of Karen Lord's *Galaxy Game* (2015), as well as recent nascent phenomena such as Peeple and China's government-mandated sincerity scoring system; the Whuffie of Cory Doctorow's *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom* (2001), which I argue can be more usefully thought of as an affect-based currency than purely as a reputation-based currency; the golem-backed currency of Terry Pratchett's *Making Money* (2007); ; the calorie currency proposal in Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars* (1993); and the slow, medium, and fast money of Charles Stross's *Neptune's Brood* (2013).

My paper concludes by turning to economic anthropology (drawing on David Graeber and Viviana Zelizer), and examining so-called 'primitive' or special-purpose moneys, which may strike many contemporary Western capitalist money-users as every bit as strange and fantastical as some of the fictional currencies explored. Such moneys are imbued with the knowledgeable "relational work" (Zelizer) of their users, forming transactional orders that are counterintuitive to non-users. I suggest that the thought experiments of science fiction and fantasy help us to see how no money is perfectly homogeneous and fungible, and that perhaps there are ways in which all money should be considered special-purpose money.

O'Connell, Hugh C. (University of Massachusetts Boston) – Speculative Conceits: The Intersections of Speculative Fiction and Speculative Finance in Contemporary British SF

This paper explores the relationship between speculative fiction and speculative capitalism. More than coincidental modifier, it is my contention that the nature of the speculation in each is related through their shared vocation in fictive, ideological system-building that belatedly gives shape and coherence to the present. Within each, then, is an implied admission that the concrete world of the here and now to which they correspond is, in effect, actually an after-image of future systemic operations yet to reveal themselves. David Graeber makes a similar argument in his paradigm-shifting analysis of the relationships between debt, finance and productive capitalism, arguing that the forms of debt and speculative finance displace notions of material barter and precede coinage in the construction of productive capitalist economies. Following this stunning revision of economic history in which speculation rather than an aberration becomes not only the effective heart but also the actual progenitor of the capitalist world-system, this paper seeks to make a preliminary effort in tracing the relationship between the speculation of speculative fiction and speculative finance.

My argument, therefore, will principally consider how sf theory can be applied to speculative finance as a speculative fiction. If Graeber is correct in that it is the form of speculation, "the dreams of the system," that drives the development of the material structure, than one should begin with the

analysis of financial nova, such as derivatives and credit default swaps, or the invention of new accounting methods that fictively instantiate future profits as capital accrued in the present. Moreover, given the way that financialization has outstripped production in the core of the capitalist world-system, it is no surprise that sf's technological nova have either been outstripped by their economic function or simply replaced altogether. In order to flesh out these relationships, I will look at two recent, but very different sf texts: Ian McDonald's *The Dervish House* (2010) and Charles Stross' *Neptune's Brood* (2013). With the first, I'll explore how the technological novum of AI is narratively constrained and subsumed by the emphasis on global market trading in the fairly realistic, extrapolative near-future narrative. In the second, I'll examine the way that the quasi-fantastical trappings of space opera allow for the instruments of speculative finance to fulfill the role of the hegemonic novum with the literal materialization and embodiment of financial instruments. However, rather than resting on producing easy equivalents, the goal of this paper is instead to see to what extent speculative fiction can begin to help us formulate productive lines of inquiry into the nature of our Lazarus-like speculative economy that seems to have survived its own death in the 2008 global crash.

Thursday 30th June, 2016; 15:40 – 17:00

Medical Humanities (Lecture Theatre 2) Chair: Will Slocombe

Cotton, Nicole (Ohio State University) – Sunrise to Sunset: The Relationship between Science Fiction and Medical Advances in Reproductive and Longevity Technologies

Sponsored by Stephanie Brown

Science fiction builds on contemporary advances in the scientific world to explore new technologies, surgeries, medications and complementary therapies, thus reflecting reality. But is it also possible that science fiction can be shown to predict, even to inspire, real world medical advances as well? While many ideas that are presented in science fiction novels at the time seem far-fetched, later on many become a reality. Existing scholarship focuses on the biotechnological and medical themes presented in science fiction novels and the issue of bioethics in the representation. The purpose of my research is to show the relationship between science fiction and medical advances, showing that the primary influence is the literature. The methods for this research include archival research and scrutinizing the timing of fictional and real-world advances in the fields of reproduction- and longevity-related technologies. This scrutiny specifically used the 7 rules of method revised by Susan Squier, a method that has been used to compare science fiction to science writing. The storyline of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* compared to the true story of Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* connect in the discovery of how to create life, although separate by genre (fiction vs. science writing) and 133 years. *Never Let Me Go* was influenced by the medical literature of the time regarding cloning. However, the novel has since influenced the continued debate over the bioethics and moral implications of cloning humans. Future direction of the research focuses on the medical research and its influences. By focusing on the influence of science fiction on medical discoveries, my work will not only further the understanding of the tie between science fiction and medicine but also contribute to understanding the origin of specific representations and identifying future influences.

McFarlane, Anna (University of Glasgow) – Naomi Mitchison's Science Fiction and the Medical Humanities

[#SFRA2016](#) – sfraliv@liv.ac.uk

The Scottish writer Naomi Mitchison lived to be a hundred years old and she took on many roles during her life: a nurse during WW1; a geneticist, working alongside her brother J.B.S. Haldane to find the first proof of genetic linkage in mammals; a Labour activist promoting reproductive rights; correspondent of Olaf Stapledon, H.G. Wells, and Aldous Huxley; and perhaps most importantly, a writer of historical fiction and science fiction. In this paper I draw on original research funded by a Wellcome Trust Small Grants Award to explore the impact of medical and scientific systems of thinking on Mitchison's work, particularly focusing on her use of science fiction and fantasy in novels such as *Memoirs of a Spacewoman* (1962), and *Not By Bread Alone* (1983). I will also touch on Mitchison's 'historical novel of [her] own time', *We Have Been Warned* (1935) a fascinating combination of science fiction, memoir, and fantasy which uses modernist techniques to explore the connections between the personal and political. By using science fiction to explore the intersections between medical progress and political oppression Mitchison troubles the simple correlation made in science fiction, particularly before the New Wave, of scientific and social progress, an issue that is just as important now as the posthumanism debate threatens to make the same conflation. By analysing Mitchison's engagements with these systems of thought – medical, scientific, political and social – I will engage with contemporary debates in science fiction while celebrating the contribution of an important figure in the history of science fiction to the discourse that we now call the medical humanities.

Reid, Conor (Trinity College Dublin) – “What was his big animal-like body beside my immense brain?": Myth, Madness, and Morality in Early Twentieth-Century American SF

The widespread myth that we use only ten percent of our brain capacity is a ubiquitous trope of popular culture. Accessing this vast reserve of untapped potential has a very obvious appeal, as evidenced by countless online purveyors of dubious brain enhancement theories and related products. The idea has also proved particularly attractive as a plot device and is commonplace in science fiction. In stories of this type, accessing the alluring and unused ninety percent of the human brain allows for anything from enhanced intelligence to superhuman abilities such as telepathy or telekinesis. Examining this myth and its use across a variety of popular culture forms, this paper will look in particular to its origins in early twentieth-century American sf. Intelligence is depicted in a variety of ways in the sf of this period but enhanced brain use, and the closely-related concept of brain size, are frequent indicators of the villainous and morally corrupt. The mad scientist, the emotionless super-evolved human, or the alien creature whose oversized cranium comes at the cost of a hypertrophied body all reflect a number of contemporary debates surrounding evolutionary theory and heredity, masculinity, and developmental psychology. In this context, there are very real dangers to over-emphasising intellectual development at the expense of a more balanced education which focuses on robust physical training, particularly for the young American male. This anti-intellectualism is also seen in the figure of the large-brained mad scientist whose ruthless and selfish pursuit of abstract science comes at the expense of more practical, pragmatic invention. This paper, therefore, in keeping with the theme of the conference, will examine knowledge in the form of brain use and brain size, tracing the origins of a pervasive trope of sf while exploring its more specific cultural setting in early twentieth-century America.

Feminism and STS Discussion Panel (Lecture Theatre 6) Chair: Lisa Regan

Amy C. Chambers, Joan Haran, Joan Gordon and Patrick B. Sharp

Utopia (Lecture Theatre 3) Chair: Asami Nakamura

Tomberg, Jaak (University of Tartu) – Utopian realism in Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Science in the Capital trilogy*

My presentation will delineate and relate two parallel historical tendencies emergent in science fiction at the beginning of the 21st century: the current close proximity of SF and realism; and the dislocation of the utopian impulse from static/ideal visions to dynamic/pragmatic action.

My first presupposition is that as the contemporary late-capitalist cultural environment becomes increasingly technological, its literary realism, aspiring towards a plausible encompassing reflection of this environment, becomes increasingly science-fictional. Thus, several recent works attest to the current poetic and generic proximity of SF and realism: William Gibson’s *Blue Ant trilogy*, Spike Jonze’s *Her*, Alfonso Cuarón’s *Gravity*, and so on.

My second presupposition is that in such an environment, static/ideal utopian visions have become less relevant than dynamic/pragmatic utopian action. In a way, *Occupy Wall Street* is a good example: rather than conceiving an ideal, fully fleshed-out, unified vision of a better world, it tested, in actuality, the readiness of a heterogeneous community to engage in a discussion over the possibility of better principles of social organization. In a sense, much of what the critical utopia used to convey fictionally was now enacted “on the street”.

These two tendencies converge in Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Science in the Capital trilogy* – on one hand, in its deployment of realist metonymy instead of science-fictional metaphor; on the other hand, in its direct pragmatic engagement with the possibilities and limitations of science to stop global warming in a world-system ruled by capital.

Wihl, Gary (Washington University) – Title: William Morris and the Return to Utopia

Many scholars of science fiction have observed the dominance of dystopian thinking in the literature. In an age of genocide, torture, surveillance and perpetual regional war, science fiction has shifted the balance between utopian and dystopian science fiction in favor of a rather bleak, catastrophic vision of the future. As Peter Fitting writes, in an essay in *Science Fiction Studies*, the “critical consensus” is that there is a “paralysis of utopian thought and imagination.” Science fiction was originally the most powerful “literature of alternatives” that could question social reality. Contemporary science fiction appears to lack political critique by capitulating to the portrayal of technology’s destructive potential. Fredric Jameson’s writings on science fiction (*Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*) stands out for its effort to reestablish the utopian strain in science fiction. (In this respect, Jameson draws on more than the tradition of science fiction writing, linking his efforts to the theoretical writings of Bloch, Marcuse and Engels, but nonetheless grounding utopian critique in the imaginative potential of science fiction.)

Building upon Jameson’s efforts, this presentation will return to William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* and offer a fresh interpretation by reconsidering the foundation of its utopian appeal to readers. The novel’s utopian content is blurred by associations with Morris’s aestheticism and neo-medievalism. Do the idyllic, harmonious dream visions of a perfectly ordered society truly rest on a firm Marxist grasp of historical change? And is the vision of human happiness a romantic ideal or one grounded in a deeper critique of alienated labor and dehumanization that would ring true today? This presentation will argue for a positive reconsideration of Morris as a political writer, and, by extension, for the reawakening of science fiction’s utopian possibilities.

Lohmann, Sarah (Durham University) – “Everything is One”: Complex Systems as Utopian Science in Feminist Utopian Literature

Utopian literature presents an ideal arena for the development of alternative, utopian forms of science. However, the focus in traditional utopias has arguably been more on social development than on presenting coherent scientific approaches – as Patrick Parrinder suggests in *Utopian Literature and Science*, ‘science and utopia are frequently at odds’. In certain feminist utopian novels of the 20th century, on the other hand, new forms of feminist science are explored, as Jane Donawerth points out in *Frankenstein’s Daughters* – here, women participate in science ‘as subjects and not objects’, thus ‘creating it as a dialogue with and critique of contemporary feminist ideologies and practices’.

In my paper, I will suggest that this feminist approach to science can also be identified on a more abstract level in these utopias, in that their societies both function as and inherently value the idea of complex adaptive systems as described by complexity theorists such as Ilya Prigogine and Paul Cilliers. Such systems demonstrate self-organising behaviour that is arguably only possible in an environment of social equality; moreover, complex systems can be seen as giving rise to certain forms of ethical behaviour in themselves, as suggested by Frederick Turner, Heesoon Bai and Hartley Banack. As such, I suggest that the utopian societies described in feminist utopias such as Naomi Mitchison’s *Memoirs of a Spacewoman*, Marge Piercy’s *Woman on the Edge of Time* and Joan Slonczewski’s *A Door into Ocean* can be seen as demonstrating an inherently egalitarian and dynamic feminist scientific worldview that is intimately connected with their inherent complexity.

In doing so, I hope to stimulate further discussion on the employment of complexity theory as an analytical device in the study of literature, and to provide an impetus for renewed consideration of the feminist utopias in question.

Biographies

Angus, Tiffani

Dr. Tiffani Angus is a Lecturer on the Publishing MA and also lectures in Creative Writing—postgrad and undergrad—at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. She has published short fiction in a several genres (science fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, horror, and erotica) in a variety of anthologies and online at *Strange Horizons*. Her PhD research on time and space in gardens in fantasy fiction has influenced her most recent short stories, and her current research includes women in post-apocalyptic fiction and the history of garden book publishing.

Banerjee, Suparno

Suparno Banerjee is an Assistant Professor of English at Texas State University, San Marcos, specializing in science fiction and postcolonial studies. His scholarship has appeared in many academic journals including *JFA*, *Extrapolation*, *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*, and *South Asian Popular Culture* and in multiple anthologies of critical works on science fiction including *SF 101: A Guide to Teaching and Studying Science Fiction* published by SFRA. His latest scholarly work on Ian McDonald is forthcoming in *Science Fiction Studies* in 2016. He has also presented his research at such venues as SFRA, ICFA, and ACLA.

Barott, Jeanette B.

Jeanette B. Barott is a Senior Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE) and the Chair of its Daytona Section. She has degrees in English Literature and in Software Engineering, and is an active advocate of STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) education throughout the educational pipeline. One of her primary projects is a week-long course in using computer-assisted technology for the animation of speculative fiction stories for girls ages 12-14. Recently, she has been spearheading initiatives for the integration of the liberal arts throughout the traditional post-secondary engineering education at a primarily technical university.

Beinhoff, Bettina

Dr. Bettina Beinhoff is a Senior Lecturer in Applied Linguistics at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge (UK). Her main research interests are in the fields of sociolinguistics and second language acquisition. She spends most of her time listening to people while studying how the way we speak contributes to our sense of identity and to who we are. Much of her previous research has been on attitudes and stereotyping through language. She has recently started research into the sociolinguistics of constructed languages – a line of investigation which she is keen to develop further.

Bishop, Katherine E.

Katherine E. Bishop received her Ph.D. from the University of Iowa. She currently teaches literature as a Fellow of Comparative Culture at Miyazaki International College, found on the verdant island of Kyushu, Japan. Her recent publications have appeared in *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture* and the *Mark Twain Annual*.

Brett, Jeremy

Jeremy Brett is the Processing Archivist as well as the Curator of the Science Fiction & Fantasy Research Collection at Texas A&M University. He received an M.L.S. and an M.A. in History from the University of Maryland-College Park, and a B.A. in History from George Washington University. He has also

worked as an archivist for the Wisconsin Historical Society, the National Archives and Records Administration, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and the University of Iowa.

Bunn, Gabrielle

I am a current PhD student based at the University of Nottingham working within the field of speculative and science fiction literature. My primary focus is upon the apocalyptic landscapes of J. G. Ballard in his first four novels, known as his 'Environmental Quartet', exploring how they reflect the growing ecological concerns of the 1960s and 70s and the rise of the environmental movement. I argue that in doing so Ballard engages with a rich literary tradition, both within and beyond the science fiction genre, concerning the relationship and dominance of man over nature.

Butler, Andrew M.

Andrew M. Butler is author of *Solar Flares: Science Fiction in the 1970s* (2011), *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2014), "Human Subjects/Alien Objects? Abjection and the Constructions of Race and Racism in *District 9*" in *Alien Imaginations* (2015), "Sleeping/Waking: Politicizing the Sublime in Science Fiction Film Special Effects" in *Endangering Science Fiction Film* (2015), as well as books on Philip K. Dick, Cyberpunk, Terry Pratchett, Postmodernism and Film Studies. He is coeditor of *Extrapolation*. He is the non-voting chair of judges for the Arthur C. Clarke Award. In his spare time, he investigates real ale and collects shiny trousers.

Canavan, Gerry

Gerry Canavan is an assistant professor of twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature in the Department of English at Marquette University. His research focuses on the relationship between science fiction and the political and cultural history of the post-war period, with special emphasis on ecology and the environment. Additional current projects include a critical monograph on science fiction and totality, and another on the work of legendary African-American science fiction author Octavia E. Butler for the Modern Masters of Science Fiction series at University of Illinois Press. He also serves as an editor at *Extrapolation* and *Science Fiction Film and Television*.

Chambers, Amy C.

Dr Amy C. Chambers is a research associate at Newcastle University for the inter-institutional AHRC-funded project 'Unsettling Scientific Stories'. As part of this project she will explore the projected futures of women within scientific cultures in Anglo-American entertainment media. Her current book project explores post-Hollywood science-based cinema and how mainline religious groups have influenced, responded to, or appropriated cinematic science.

Cokinos, Christopher

Christopher Cokinos is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Arizona, where he directs the creative-writing program and is Affiliated Faculty with the Institute of the Environment. The author of three books of literary nonfiction, a poetry chapbook and, most recently, co-editor of *The Sonoran Desert: A Literary Field Guide*. He has published popular and peer-reviewed work on SF in such venues as *Orion*, *Orbiting Ray Bradbury's Mars*, the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, *Extrapolation* and *Science Fiction Film & Television*.

Connolly, Thomas

Thomas Connolly is a third year doctoral candidate at Maynooth University in Co. Kildare in Ireland. His research explores the intertwining and conflicting motifs of technological and biological evolution

in Anglo-American sf from Wells to Ballard. He completed both his BA in English and Mathematical Physics and his MA in Twentieth-Century Irish Literature and Cultural Theory in Maynooth University, and was the recipient in 2012 of the John and Pat Hume Scholarship.

Contreras, David

David Contreras is an advanced beyond degree doctorate student at the University of California, Irvine, where he is currently finishing his dissertation entitled Posthumanism and Subalternity in Latin American Science Fiction. He has presented his work at various conferences in the United States, Latin America and Spain. Contreras hails from the small agricultural town of Santa Paula, California, known as the citrus capital of the world. It was there among the aromas of lemons and oranges, that he became a voracious reader of science fiction and fantasy.

Cotton, Nicole

Nicole Cotton is an undergraduate student at The Ohio State University in the United States. Her double major is in Psychology and English with a minor in Integrative Approaches to Health and Wellness. She is interested in the relationship between science fiction and medical advancements. Specifically, her current research *Sunrise to Sunset: The Relationship between Reproductive and Longevity Technologies* focuses on cell reproduction and medical cloning. In 2015, Nicole was awarded four grants for her research: Ohio State University's Research Scholar Award, OSU Newark Undergraduate Research Grant, OSU's Arts and Sciences Honors Committee Undergraduate Research Award and International Research Scholarship.

Davis, Doug

Doug Davis is Professor of English at Gordon State College in Barnesville, GA where he teaches 20th century American and British literature and writing. His scholarly interests include cold war studies, cultural studies of science and technology, science fiction, and the fiction of Flannery O'Connor. He has published essays on science fiction in edited volumes such as *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction* and *Reading Science Fiction* and essays on O'Connor and other southern writers in the journals *The Flannery O'Connor Review* and *The Southern Quarterly* and in the edited collections *Critical Insights: War and Flannery O'Connor in the Age of Terrorism*. He is currently editing a special issue of *The Flannery O'Connor Review* on the topic of science and technology in O'Connor's fiction and criticism.

Easterbrook, Neil

A member of the editorial advisory boards at *Science Fiction Studies*, *Science Fiction Film and Television*, *Extrapolation*, and *JFA*, I have published widely, and received the 2009 Pioneer Award from SFRA for an essay about Geoff Ryman's *Air*. I am currently slogging toward the finish of two books, one on China Mieville and another called Keywords in Science Fiction.

Fan, Yilun

Yilun Fan is a PhD student of comparative literature at the University of California, Riverside. Her research interests include Chinese and Latin American science fiction, comparative philosophy of science, and creative writing. She has published an article on Liu Cixin's "The Poetry Cloud" in *Frontiers of Literary Studies in China*. Her novelette "The Unspeakable Love" won second prize at the 3rd national University United Science Fiction Writing Competition. She has been nominated for best new writer by 2015 Xingyun Award for Global Chinese Science Fiction and is now a columnist for *Science Fiction World* magazine.

Ferguson, Andrew

Andrew Ferguson is an assistant editor of *Foundation* and a PhD candidate in English at the University of Virginia. His dissertation applies strategies developed in videogame play, such as glitching and speedrunning, to novels ranging from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* to Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* to Ursula Le Guin's *Tehanu*. His work has appeared in *Textual Cultures*, *Science Fiction Studies*, and the *WisCon Chronicles*, and he is writing a biography of R.A. Lafferty for the University of Illinois Press's Modern Masters of Science Fiction series.

Frelik, Paweł

Paweł Frelik is Associate Professor in the Department of American Literature and Culture and Director of the Video Game Research Center at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University (Lublin). His research interests include science fiction, video games, fantastic visualities, digital media, and transmedia storytelling. He has published widely in these fields, serves on the advisory boards of *Science Fiction Studies*, *Extrapolation*, and *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds*, and is the co-editor of the *New Dimensions in Science Fiction* book series at the University of Wales Press. In 2013-2014, he was President of the Science Fiction Research Association and now serves as SFRA's Immediate Past President.

Fritzsche, Sonja

Sonja Fritzsche is Dept. Chair and Professor of German in the Department of Linguistics and Languages at Michigan State University. Her research focuses on (East) German literature and film, Heimat discourse, ecotopia, and science fiction. She is the editor of the new book series *World Science Fiction Studies* with Peter Lang. Her publications include: *The Liverpool Companion to World Science Fiction Film*, editor (Liverpool University Press, 2014), *Science Fiction Literature in East Germany* (Peter Lang, 2006); articles in the *German Quarterly*, *German Politics & Society*, *German Studies Review*, *Women in German Yearbook*, *Film & History*, *Extrapolation*, *Utopian Studies* and *Filmforum*. She has received grants from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and Fulbright, among others. She served as the 2015 President of the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL). She is also on the editorial advisory boards of *Extrapolation* and the Brazilian science fiction journal *Zanzalá*.

Gasque, Travis

Travis Gasque is a graduating Digital Media masters student at the Georgia Institute of Technology. He hosts and produces the *Science Fiction Laboratory*, a weekly radio show at Georgia Tech discussing Speculative Fiction research, and *Ugly Talks*, a monthly podcast that investigates transmedia storytelling techniques for game masters of tabletop roleplaying games. His current research focuses on techniques for world building, character creation in interactive narratives, and player agency within games.

Gene-Rowe, Francis

Francis Gene-Rowe is a doctoral candidate at Royal Holloway, University of London, researching Phillip K. Dick, William Blake and Walter Benjamin. He has given conference papers on a range of topics, including alternate history, weird fiction and religious discourses in science fiction. He is an assistant editor at *Fantastika Journal*, and previously directed *ORRA* magazine, for which he interviewed Brian Aldiss, China Miéville and Tom McCarthy. Additionally, he co-organises the London Science Fiction Research Community.

Gómez, Pablo

Pablo Gómez is a PhD Research Fellow in Film at the Department of English and German at the University of Zaragoza (Spain). In his dissertation, he uses cosmopolitanism as a theoretical framework to study how twenty-first century science fiction films represent borders, economic globalization, transnational mobility, migration, and climate change. Pablo has been a visiting scholar at the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy of the University of California, Riverside, from March to June 2016. He has recently published an article on the film *In Time* in the journal *Geopolitics* and has a forthcoming article about *Upside Down* in the *Journal of Transnational American Studies*.

Gordon, Joan

Joan Gordon is an editor at *Science Fiction Studies* and *Humanimalia*. She was the first community college professor to receive either the Fulbright Distinguished Professor Chair or the SFRA Pilgrim Award. She writes on the intersection of sf and animal studies, feminist sf, utopian impulses, and, of course, Gene Wolfe.

Gray, Susan

Susan Gray is a Science Fiction Poet/Playwright. She is currently in the corrections phase of her PhD in Creative Writing at Royal Holloway, University of London, focusing on Science Fiction and the Theatre. She has a theatre company called Stars or Mars Theatre and is currently working on a poetry project for the crowdfunded space mission Lunar Mission One. Her introductory poem for this mission, Artist Signature, is currently nominated for the Long Form Rhysling Award.

Halpin, Jenni

Jenni is an assistant professor of British literature at Savannah State University, teaching primarily in the general education curriculum. She has wide ranging research interests, radiating from contemporary science drama to postcolonial literature, to nerd culture, to Golden Age science fiction, and elsewhere.

Haran, Joan

Joan Haran has a BA in Literature and History, an MA in Gender, Society and Culture, and a PhD in Sociology. She was appointed as a Research Associate at the ESRC Centre for Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics (Cesagen) in 2004 and promoted to Research Fellow in 2007. As part of this project, she co-authored *Human Cloning in the Media: From Science Fiction to Science Practice* (Routledge 2008).

Her research interests revolve around gender, representation and technoscience, and she is particularly interested in the policing of boundaries between science fact and science fiction. One strand of research has involved monitoring the media relations and public consultation exercises conducted by scientists and policymakers with regard to the governance of embryological research. Another major strand examines the representation in fiction of contemporary and emerging biotechnologies and the social, political and ethical challenges they pose.

She is currently developing a monograph provisionally entitled *Genetic Fictions: Genes, Gender and Genre*.

Heffner, Kathryn

Kathryn Heffner serves as the 2015-2016 Iowa Center for Undergraduate Research fellow for Special Collections at the University of Iowa. She is pursuing an English Education degree with a special focus

on twentieth century science fiction fanzines. Her research examines the intersection of feminism and science fiction fandom, more specifically: how women resisted patriarchal attitudes and behaviors within distinct fandoms. Her research is influenced by the University of Iowa's recent acquisition of the Rusty Hevelin Collection. She applies her knowledge of fanzines and science fiction in zine workshops catered to adolescents.

Higgins, David M.

David M. Higgins teaches at Inver Hills College in Minnesota, and he is the Speculative Fiction Editor for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. He is a specialist in 20th century American literature and culture, and his research explores transformations in imperial fantasy during the Cold War period and beyond. David's article "Toward a Cosmopolitan Science Fiction" (published in the June 2011 issue of *American Literature*) won the 2012 SFRA Pioneer Award for excellence in scholarship. He has published in journals such as *American Literature*, *Science Fiction Studies*, *Science Fiction Film and Television*, and *Extrapolation*, and his work has appeared in edited volumes such as *The Cambridge Companion to American Science Fiction*.

Horáková, Erin

Erin Horáková is a PhD student in English at the University of Glasgow. Her interdisciplinary, cross-period thesis explores charm as artifact, literary effect and affect, and traces how ideas of charm shift over time. She's written academic articles and reviews for various journals, including *Intensities: the Journal of Cult Media* and *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction*, and she reviews genre literature for publications including *Strange Horizons*, *Tor.com* and the *LA Review of Books*. Her research interests include fan studies, feminism, psychoanalysis, genre literature and media, 19th century literature, fairy tales and folklore, food history and the Gothic.

Jacobson, JJ

JJ Jacobson holds a MS in Information from the University of Michigan School of Information. Since 2005 she has been a metadata librarian, cataloger, director of a virtual library system, rare books librarian, and collection curator. In 2015 she was appointed Jay Kay and Doris Klein Science Fiction Librarian at UC Riverside, curating the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy (and other genres too numerous to mention). She has previously published and presented on metadata, virtual environments, role play as a concomitant of research, virtual world librarianship, and American culinary history.

Jha, Varsha

Varsha Jha is presently a doctoral student in English Literature, affiliated to the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, India. This paper is part of a Chapter in her thesis which is committed to exploring the graphic book representations of Indian epics, namely the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

Käkelä, Jari

Jari Käkelä has recently submitted his PhD dissertation on Isaac Asimov's work for evaluation at the Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki. In addition to Asimov's work, his research interests include Golden Age science fiction and the pulp publishing context. He has worked as a teacher at the University of Helsinki and as a freelance translator, presented at ICFA and SFRA conferences, and published e.g. in *Extrapolation* and *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*.

Kavetsky, Jennifer

Jennifer Kavetsky recently received her Ph.D. in English from the University of California, Riverside. Her dissertation focused on the 1940s science fiction community and its conversations about technology and gender. Much of the research for the dissertation was conducted in UCR's Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy including its extensive fanzine collection. Jennifer has presented portions of her research at several academic conferences including SFRA, the Eaton Science Fiction Conference, and the Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Conference.

Keen, Tony

Tony Keen teaches course on London in the Literature of the Fantastic for the University of Notre Dame's London Global Gateway, where he is an Adjunct Assistant Professor, and has taught Greek and Roman mythology for the Open University and the University of Roehampton. He has written about the use of the triple goddess in Neil Gaiman, and on Classical elements in the *Sinbad* movies of Ray Harryhausen. He also writes regular comics reviews for comiczine-fa.com and theslainsandarrows.com, for both of which he has reviewed *The Wicked + The Divine*.

Krawczyk, Stanisław

Stanisław Krawczyk is a graduate in psychology and Polish literature, currently pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University of Warsaw. Apart from science fiction studies, he is interested in the sociology of literature, cultural sociology, and game studies. His research concerns the social context of fantastika and video games, and his dissertation is focused on the social world of fantastika in Poland between the late 1970s and the early 2000s. He has recently published a chapter "'You must gather your party before venturing forth": Why did computer games from around 2000 become so important in Poland?' in the proceedings of the Central and Eastern European Game Studies Conference (CEEGS). His Polish papers are about the sociology of fantastika, fan communities, violence in video games, and tabletop RPGs.

Lear, Ashley

Ashley Lear, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of the Humanities at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, where she teaches Interdisciplinary Research methods through science fiction. She has published pedagogical work on her science fiction course in the *College English Association Forum* and has presented student projects and research methodology in science fiction at the local chapter of IEEE. She has just completed her first book manuscript with UP of Florida on Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings and Ellen Glasgow and is beginning to research disciplinary areas that intersect with science fiction to correspond with her current teaching area. Dr. Lear earned certification in digital pedagogy from Georgia Tech as a Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow in 2007.

Lemaire, Pascal

With formal training in both Ancient History and ICT, and a job in the later domain, I now study how the ancient world meets modern literature, especially in the SF and Fantasy genres. From there grew a secondary interest in how literature plays with History and especially in uchronia. Present at various recent conferences on the presence of the Classics in SFFF or Alternate History (Rennes/Paris 2012, Liverpool 2013, Chateau Gaillard 2013, Tel Aviv 2014, Tacoma 2015, Liverpool 2015), I've also published articles in *Helice* and have various papers currently submitted or in edition phase.

Li, Hua

Hua Li is Associate Professor of Chinese at Montana State University. She published her monograph *Contemporary Chinese Fiction by Su Tong and Yu Hua: Coming of Age in Troubled Times* in 2011, and has also authored several journal articles on contemporary Chinese fiction and cinema. She is currently carrying out research on Chinese science fiction, and has published articles on the fiction of Liu Cixin and Xu Nianci in such journals as *Science Fiction Studies* and *Forum of World Literature*.

Lohmann, Sarah

Sarah Lohmann is a second-year PhD student at Durham University, working on 21st-century feminist utopias under the supervision of Professors Patricia Waugh and Simon James. Before coming to Durham, Sarah completed an MA (Hons) degree in English literature and philosophy as well as MLitt degrees in both 'Women, Writing and Gender' and analytic philosophy at the University of St Andrews. She is using this background to inform her interdisciplinary PhD thesis, which spans science fiction, utopianism, feminist theory, analytic and continental philosophy and complexity theory.

Määttä, Jerry

Jerry Määttä, Ph.D, is a senior lecturer at the Department of Literature, Uppsala University, Sweden. He wrote his doctoral dissertation on science fiction in Sweden in the 1950s and 1960s and has since written on literary prizes and awards, and British and American apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives in film and literature. Among recent publications: "Keeping Count of the End of the World: A Statistical Analysis of the Historiography, Canonisation, and Historical Fluctuations of Anglophone Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Disaster Narratives", in *Culture Unbound* (2015).

Marotta, Melanie A.

Melanie A. Marotta is a Lecturer in the Department of English and Language Arts and the Interim Director of the Writing Center at Morgan State University. She received her PhD in English from Morgan State University. Marotta has previously published an article in *Theory in Action* titled "Liberation through Acceptance of Nature and Technology in Octavia E. Butler's *Parable of the Sower*" and most recently "The Resurgence of the Cowboy Figure: Raylan's Utopian Quest in *Justified*" in the peer-reviewed journal, *Popular Culture Review*. Marotta's research focuses on sf, the American West, American Literature, and Ecocriticism.

Martín Rodríguez, Mariano

(Toledo, Spain, 1966, martioa@yahoo.com) is a PhD in Philology (Romance literatures) from the Universidad Complutense of Madrid (Spain). He is an associate researcher at the Centre for Literary and Encyclopedic Research (Babeş-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania) and he co-directs with Professor Fernando Ángel Moreno (Universidad Complutense of Madrid) the online journal on science fiction and speculative fiction Hélice (www.revistahelice.com), which also publishes texts and essays in English. He has published several critical editions of 20th century Spanish scientific romances, as well as a number of studies on scientific romance (for example, an outline of Spanish scientific romance at the journal *Foundation*), utopian fiction, lost worlds romance, literature on imaginary cities, modern drama (including the first complete edition of the early Romanian version of Eugène Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano*), etc. He has also translated speculative fictional works from Romanian into Spanish, such as Gheorghe Săsarman's *Cuadratura cercului*, subsequently translated into English from Martín Rodríguez's Spanish version by Ursula K. Le Guin (*Squaring the Circle*, 2013).

Martín, Sara

Sara Martín is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature and Cultural Studies at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain (1991-). Dr. Martín specialises in Gender Studies, particularly Masculinities Studies, which she applies to the study of popular fictions in English, with an emphasis on science fiction and horror. She has published extensively on Gender Studies, popular fictions and film adaptations. Among her books are *Monstruos al Final del Milenio* (2020), *Expediente X: En Honor a la Verdad* (2006), *Recycling Cultures* (ed., 2006), *La Literatura* (2008) and *Desafíos a la Heterosexualidad Obligatoria* (2011). She is currently co-editing with Fernando Ángel Moreno a monographic issue on Spanish SF for *Science Fiction Studies* (Summer 2017).

Marshall, Helen

Helen Marshall is a critically acclaimed author, editor, and medievalist. Her creative writing aims to bring the past into conversation with the present. Her two collections of short stories – *Hair Side, Flesh Side* (2012) and *Gifts for the One Who Comes After* (2014) – have collectively won the World Fantasy Award, the Shirley Jackson Award, and the British Fantasy Award. Her debut novel *Everything that is Born*, which draws parallels between the literature of the Black Death and contemporary post-apocalyptic literature, will be published by Random House Canada in 2018. She lectures on creative writing and publishing at Anglia Ruskin University.

Mateos-Aparicio Martín-Albo, Ángel

Ángel Mateos-Aparicio Martín-Albo obtained his PhD at the University of Castilla-La Mancha (Ciudad Real, Spain), where he currently holds a position as associate teacher. His dissertation has been recently published in book form with the title *Visiones sombrías de un país inexplorado: Ciencia-ficción y humanismo en la narrativa norteamericana y británica de posguerra: W. Golding, K. Vonnegut, R. Bradbury y J.G. Ballard*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag, 2008. His main research interests focus on the intersection of science fiction and mainstream postmodern literature in postmodern culture. Among his recent publications are “The Cyborg and the Representation of Masculinity and Femininity in the American Science Fiction Literature and Film of the 1980s,” in José María Armengol (ed). 2013. *Embodying Masculinities: Towards a History of the Male Body in U.S. Culture and Literature*. New York: Peter Lang, “The Frontier Myth and Racial Politics,” in Masood Ashraf Raja, Jason W. Ellis and Swarapili Nandi (eds). 2011. *The Postnational Fantasy: Essays on Postcolonialism, Cosmopolitics and Science Fiction*. Jefferson (NC) and London: McFarland, 100-124 and “The Symbolism of Synthetic Space in Cube: Postmodern SF Film as ‘Consensual Hallucination,’” in *BELLS* 17 (Autumn, 2008).

McCardle, Aodán

Aodán McCardle is a writer, artist and poet whose practice locates the body and actions of reading and writing as extemporisations capable of exploring the dilemmas of any present moment. His PhD, ‘Action as Articulation of the Contemporary Poem’, presented physicality as the site of meaning, and doubt as the stance where action (of poetry, of transformation, of politics) operates. As well as being a published poet – *Shuddered* (2010) and *IS ing* (2011), the former co-authored with Stephen Mooney and Piers Hugill, were published by Veer Books, while Smithereens Press have published *LII OovVee* (2013) – he writes critically about poetry and art and is an editor at Veer Books, a publisher of avant garde, experimental and radical poetry.

McFarlane, Anna

Anna McFarlane is the research assistant on the Wellcome Trust-funded Science Fiction and the Medical Humanities project at the University of Glasgow and is currently researching Naomi

Mitchison's science fiction in a project funded by a Wellcome Trust Small Grant Award. She holds a PhD from the University of St Andrews and her thesis concerned the role of gestalt psychology in William Gibson's science fiction novels. She is the co-editor of *Vector: The Critical Journal of the British Science Fiction Association* and *Adam Roberts: Critical Essays* (Gylphi, 2016).

Middleton, Selena

Selena Middleton is a 3rd year PhD student in the Department of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada. Her working dissertation title is "Old Myths in the New Anthropocene: Negotiating the Terms of Exile in Ecological Science Fiction." This project explores the ways in which exile is the primary environmental and psychological landscape of "cli-fi" science fiction, and how these futuristic texts envision the affective turn of human lives within these spaces, which are quickly becoming our present in an anthropocentric ecology. Selena's essay "Utopia and the Colonized Pastoral: Africa, Myth, and Blackness in Greg Bear's *Queen of Angels*" recently won the Foundation Essay Prize and will be published in 2016.

Milner, Andrew

Andrew Milner is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at Monash University. In 2013 he was Ludwig Hirschfeld Mack Visiting Professor in the Institut für Englische Philologie at the Freie Universität Berlin. His recent publications include *Tenses of Imagination: Raymond Williams on Utopia, Dystopia and Science Fiction* (2010) and *Locating Science Fiction* (2012).

Mooney, Stephen

Stephen Mooney is a lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of Surrey. He is an associate member of the Contemporary Poetics Research Centre at Birkbeck, University of London, and co-runs the small poetry press, Veer Books. His poetry has appeared in various places and web-places, including as part of the performative poetry grouping 'LUC'.

DCLP (2008) and *Shuddered* (2010), the latter co-authored with Aodán McCardle and Piers Hugill, were published by Veer Books, while Contraband Books have published *The Cursory Epic* (2014) and *663 Reasons Why* (2016). *Ratzinger Solo* is forthcoming later this year.

O'Connell, Hugh Charles

Hugh Charles O'Connell is an assistant professor of English at the University of Massachusetts Boston. His research examines the intersections of Marxist utopianism, postcolonialism, and economic globalization in contemporary science fiction and mainstream literatures. He was the guest-editor of the *CR: The New Centennial Review* special issue on the British SF Boom, and received honorable mention for the SFRA's 2013 Pioneer Award. Recent articles have appeared in *Paradoxa, Modern Fiction Studies*, and *The Journal of Postcolonial Writing*.

Owen, Christopher

Christopher Owen is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in English Literature at Anglia Ruskin University under the supervision of Farah Mendlesohn. Christopher has a Master of Arts in Children's Literature from the University of British Columbia. His Master of Arts thesis, "Systemic Oppression in Children's Portal-Quest Fantasy Literature" is published and available online. Christopher is a member of the International Research Society for Children's Literature and has presented his research in systemic oppression in children's fantastika literature globally. He was recently an invited speaker at the Second Cambridge Symposium on Cognitive Approaches to Children's Literature at the University of Cambridge.

Pak, Chris

I am the conference director of SFRA 2016, the editor of the *SFRA Review* and co-founder of CRSF: Current Research in Speculative Fictions. My research focusses on ecology, environmentalism and Human-Animal Studies, and I have additional research interests in Science and Technology Studies (including the Medical Humanities) and the Digital Humanities (Corpus Linguistics). My book, *Terraforming: Ecopolitical Transformation and Environmentalism in Science Fiction*, has been published by Liverpool University Press this month. More information can be found at chrispak.wix.com/chrispak.

Paskins, Mat

Mat Paskins is an historian of science and technology with particular interest in the narratives and material cultures of science. His PhD, *Sentimental Industry*, was about cultures of invention and improvement in eighteenth century London. He is currently a post-doctoral researcher on the AHRC-funded “Unsettling Scientific Stories” project at Aberystwyth University. He is studying representations of techno-scientific futures and narratives of progress in twentieth century periodicals.

Rabitsch, Stefan ‘Steve’

Stefan ‘Steve’ Rabitsch currently serves as visiting postdoc lecturer and researcher in American Studies at the Department of English and American Studies at Alpen-Adria Universität Klagenfurt (AAU). He received his Ph.D. summa cum laude in English and American Studies from AAU where he also completed his B.A. and M.A. in English and American Studies with honors. He spent some time abroad studying at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) and working as an intern at the Embassy of Austria in Washington, DC.

Reid, Conor

Conor Reid teaches in the School of English in Trinity College Dublin, where he also completed an MPhil in Popular Literature followed by a PhD on the interaction of science and popular fiction. His research interests are in popular literature, particularly science fiction and adventure fiction, and in the field of literature and science. His monograph, *The Science and Fiction of Edgar Rice Burroughs*, is forthcoming next year.

Rieder, John

John Rieder is a Professor of English at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, where he teaches courses in science fiction and cultural theory. He is the author of *Colonialism and the Emergence of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan UP, 2007) and a member of the editorial board of *Extrapolation*. He is co-editor, with Grace L. Dillon (Anishinaabe) and Michael Levy, of a Spring 2016 special double issue of *Extrapolation* on Indigenous Futurism.

Roberts, Brittany

Brittany Roberts is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Comparative Literature and Foreign Languages at University of California, Riverside, where she studies Russian and Anglophone horror, science fiction, and weird fiction. Specifically, her research investigates the relationships between humans, animals, technology, and the environment, with particular attention to the human/non-human binary and questions of ontological difference. She is interested in how dark speculative fictions can be harnessed for ecological purposes to promote interrelationality, materialist

philosophies, and more ethical futures for humans and non-humans rooted in non-hierarchical conceptions of difference.

Robinson, Sam

Dr Sam Robinson is a research fellow at the University of York in the Department of Sociology. As a member of the AHRC-funded 'Unsettling Scientific Stories' project his research explores the relationship between real-world and fictionalised scientific futures in post-war Britain. With a particular emphasis on ocean environments, and the relationship between scientists, SF writers, and government/political figures and officials. He completed his PhD in the history of science from the University of Manchester in 2015.

Sawyer, Andy

Andy Sawyer is the Science Fiction Collections Librarian at the Special Collections and Archives, University of Liverpool Library. He is responsible for the Science Fiction Foundation Collection, the largest resource of sf and material about sf in the UK. Until 2012, Andy was Course Director of the MA in Science Fiction Studies offered by the School of English, University of Liverpool.

In 2011 Andy curated the British Library's sf exhibition, "Out of this World: Science Fiction but not as you know it."

Sharp, Patrick B.

Patrick B. Sharp is a Professor in the Department of Liberal Studies at California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA). He earned his doctorate in the Department of English at the University of California at Santa Barbara (1999) and completed a Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Georgia Institute of Technology before moving on to CSULA. He served as Secretary (2009-10) and Treasurer (2011-12) of the SFRA, and was coordinator of the SFRA's international conference in 2013. His recent publications include an essay on Leslie Marmon Silko in the anthology *Black and Brown Planets* (2014) and an essay on Darwinism in the *Oxford Handbook of Science Fiction* (2014). He co-edited the new anthology *Sisters of Tomorrow: The First Women of Science Fiction* (2016) with Lisa Yaszek, and is a founding co-editor of the book line *New Dimensions in Science Fiction* with the University of Wales Press.

Sharp, Sharon

Sharon Sharp is an associate professor of Media Studies and chair of the department of Communications at California State University, Dominguez Hills. She is an editorial advisory board member of *Science Fiction Film and Television* and has published on gender, genre and television. Her research interests include television studies, science fiction studies and animals and media. She is currently working on a manuscript on nonhuman animal actors in film and television.

Shaw, Kristen

Kristen Shaw is a PhD Candidate in the English and Cultural Studies program at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada. Her dissertation examines spatial politics and human geography in contemporary science fiction, with a particular focus on urban space and social justice. Kristen also examines race, gender, and class in pop culture. Her most recent publication is a chapter in the collection *For Her Eyes Only: the Women of James Bond*, edited by Lisa Funnel. She has a chapter forthcoming in the collection *Anomalous Embodiment in Young Adult Speculative Fiction*, edited by Sherryl Vint and Mathieu Donner.

Shmiev, Ivaylo R.

Born in Bulgaria; German resident since 2001. MA (2010): English Studies (major), American Studies, Geography (minors); MA thesis on globalisation in anglophone sf. Since 2011: dissertation “Contact, Scarcity, Empire: Armed Conflicts and Cultural Entanglements in Anglophone Science Fiction”, Goethe University Frankfurt; supervisor Frank Schulze-Engler. Publications: “Environmental Imagination and Ecological Narratives in Anglophone Science Fiction from Contemporary Media Cultures outside of the UK and the USA” in *Just Politics: Ecocritical Perspectives in the Postcolonial Space* (Unrast, 2014; in German); (forthcoming) “From a Galactic War to a Hydrogen Sonata: Warfare and Ethics in the Culture Novels of Iain M. Banks” (Foundation, 2016).

Slocombe, Will - TBC**Suppia, Alfredo**

Alfredo Suppia is Professor of Film Studies at the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP), Brazil. He is a member of the Brazilian Society for Film and Audiovisual Studies (SOCINE), and author of a number of articles on world science fiction cinema, Latin-American and Brazilian science fiction film. He is also author of the book *Rarefied Atmosphere – Science Fiction in Brazilian Cinema (Atmosfera Rarefeita: A Ficção Científica no Cinema Brasileiro)*. São Paulo: Devir, 2013), and co-editor, with Professor Ewa Mazierska (University of Central Lancashire, UK), of *Red Alert: Marxist Approaches to Science Fiction Cinema* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2016, forthcoming).

Tensor Posadas, Baryon

Baryon Tensor Posadas is an assistant professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. He is currently at work on two book-length projects: the first on the doppelgänger motif in Japanese film and literature, and the second on the intersections of science fiction and empire in the Japanese context. His writing has previously appeared in such journals as *Japan Forum*, *Poetica*, *Positions: Asia Critique*, and *Science Fiction Film and Television*.

Tomberg, Jaak

Jaak Tomberg is a researcher of contemporary literature in University of Tartu, Estonia. His topics of research include the poetics of science fiction and realism, utopianism, and philosophy of literature. He is SFRA’s 2014 *Pioneer Award* winner for “On the Double Vision of Realism and SF Estrangement in Gibson’s Bigend Trilogy,” *Science Fiction Studies* 40.2 (July 2013).

Vatilo, Essi

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Tampere, Finland. My dissertation explores responsibility and technological development in the reimagined *Battlestar Galactica* (2004) and Dan Simmons’s *Hyperion*-novels.

Walton, Jo Lindsay

Jo Lindsay Walton is a final year PhD student at Northumbria University. He has written the fantasy novel *Invocation* (2013) as well as some short fiction and poetry. He keeps websites about science fiction and fantasy (jolindsaywalton.blogspot.com), the economic humanities

(economichumanities.wordpress.com), and tabletop roleplaying games (www.sadpressgames.com). He sometimes writes reviews for *Interzone*.

Wang, Yao

Yao Wang is the Associate Professor of Chinese at Xi'an Jiaotong University. She received her Ph. D from Peking University with the dissertation entitled "Chinese Science Fiction and its Cultural Politics since 1990" in 2014. In addition, she has been publishing speculative fiction since college in *Science Fiction World* and other Chinese sf magazines with pen name Xia Jia. Several of her stories have been translated into English, Japanese, Polish, Italian and French. Her first English short story "Let's Have a Talk" was published in *Nature* in 2015.

Wihl, Gary

Gary Wihl is Professor of English at Washington University in St. Louis, USA. He has published studies of John Ruskin and of literature and political philosophy. He teaches courses in the Victorian novel and Victorian science fiction.

Yaszek, Lisa

Lisa Yaszek is Professor and Associate Chair in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at Georgia Tech as well as past president of the Science Fiction Research Association. Her areas of expertise include science fiction, cultural history, critical race and gender studies, and science and technology studies. Professor Yaszek's essays on science fiction as a global language appear in journals including *Extrapolation*, *NWSA Journal* and *Rethinking History*. She is the author of books including *The Self-Wired: Technology and Subjectivity in Contemporary American Narrative* (Routledge 2002/2015) and *Galactic Suburbia: Recovering Women's Science Fiction* (Ohio State University Press 2008) and co-editor of anthologies including *Science Fiction: Reading, Writing, and Teaching the Genre* (McFarland Press, 2010) and *Sisters of Tomorrow: The First Women of Science Fiction* (Wesleyan Press 2016).