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Commemoration

Chris Pak

GREETINGS, ONE AND ALL, and welcome to another issue of the *SFRA Review*. The SFRA 2017 conference at Riverside, California, is drawing near, and I'm excited about the opportunity to meet with you all again at the home of the Eaton Collection, what I think of as the Science Fiction Foundation's counterpart in the US.

It was in 2014, during the joint Wiscon/SFRA conference, that I first met Michael Levy, and I—like many others, as Keren and Gerry's columns will attest—was saddened to hear of his recent passing. Shortly after Wiscon/SFRA 2014, I was delighted to continue some of the conversations with Michael at Loncon 2014. I did not know Michael well, but I knew enough to know that I wish I could have known him better. He was kind, supportive and a central figure in the sf scholarly community, and he will be sorely missed by many.

In this issue of the *SFRA Review*, we have another joint paper by Victor Grech, Clare Vassallo and Ivan Callus, entitled “‘Dread of the Masses’: Infertility in Science Fiction due to Off-Planet Population Control and as an Occupational Requirement.” This article extends their thinking about the feminist issues raised by the theme of infertility in science fiction in the last issue of the *SFRA Review*. Alongside this Feature 101, we have our regular run of non-fiction, fiction and media reviews, and announcements of calls for papers for conferences and articles.

As always, feel free to contact us should you be interested in writing for the *SFRA Review*, or if you have any sf-related news, projects or events that you would like to communicate widely through these pages.

Until Riverside, Adieu!

Let's Get Off This Train

Keren Omry

I BEGIN THIS QUARTER'S column on a sad note as I mark the passing of a former SFRA President, Michael Levy. Mike served as the Association's President and Vice-President in the 1990s; he organized and co-organized a number of the SFRA conferences. He was a longtime and highly admired editor for *Extrapolation*, and for his esteemed service and dedication to the SF community, he was awarded the Thomas D. Claerson award, in 2007. I did not know Mike well but when I met him he was unwaveringly kind, thoughtful and generous, and his presence in the field will be sorely missed. Reflecting on this loss, the current EC recognized a gaping hole in our records and we are currently working to add a page to our site that lists all previous SFRA officers. People who have, through the years, been charitable with their time, devoted their energies, and were key to the development and maintenance of the Association certainly warrant permanent acknowledgment.

The world of SF recently suffered another loss with the untimely death of Mark Fisher. Fisher, although not strictly speaking a scholar of Science Fiction per se, seemed never far from the field as he offered insights into Horror, Gothic, and other related forms of popular culture that have truly raised the bar for the study of speculative fiction. Indeed, by offering a set of terms that shed light on what has become a seeming inevitability of capitalism as the sole logical framework within which we live and create, his writing opened possibilities for imagining alternate histories for our future.

As people grow increasingly desperate in light of recent politics, with the bleak promises of a Trump America or the worrying support of Le Pen's France; recent threats to free speech—from Berkeley to Turkey; science which forecasts an environmental apocalypse; and the devastation of human rights in Syria and elsewhere, many yearn for a break with the narrative of history. If this is where we're going, let's get off this train, indeed. Writers from Kim Stanley Robinson to Matt Ruff, Steve Erickson through to Colson

Whitehead, have turned their metaphoric pens to imagining a new, different timeline. Although vastly different in style, content, and presumably intent, all of these and their ilk offer a unique perspective into the very nature of history. Who we are, where we are going and where we have been are all questions radically challenged and revisited in these novels in ways that remind us of the critical role of memory. Subjective, flawed, personal, and/or political, the stories we tell make history. Having the privilege of reading stories for a living, I am reminded again and again of loved ones lost, some very recently and others less so, and I strive to meet the impermanence of life with a cracking good story to tell.

VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Vice-President's Note

Gerry Canavan

I WAS SO SADDENED to hear of the passing last month of my *Extrapolation* co-editor and friend Michael Levy, who also once served as both vice-president and president of SFRA. Like so many other people I feel deeply indebted to Mike both personally and professionally as someone who has supported and even championed my work—and if there is any silver lining to be found in this loss to our field it is in the testimonials that filed up Facebook, Twitter, and the listservs as word spread around the community that he was gone. In the midst of a very dark time for the world and for our profession I can't help but feel inspired by the legacy of friendship and mentorship that Mike left behind. May we all strive to—some day—be so missed.

I'm looking forward to connecting with many of you in Riverside this June! In the meantime I'll be continue to tweet with Pawel Frelik and Chris Pak from @sfranews and publish on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/sfresearchassociation>. In the meantime, if you have anything to promote, or any other SF business to discuss, please don't hesitate to contact me by email at gerry.canavan@marquette.edu or on Twitter [@gerrycanavan](https://twitter.com/gerrycanavan).

“Dread of the Masses”: Infertility in Science Fiction Due to Off-Planet Population Control and as an Occupational Requirement

Victor Grech, Clare Vassallo and Ivan Callus

INFERTILITY IS COMMON, and it is estimated that the number of couples in developed countries with infertility will double within a decade, from one in seven today to one in three in ten years' time. The reasons for this increase are legion and the most important include rising age at first attempt at pregnancy when fertility has already naturally declined, an increase in sexually transmitted diseases which damage the reproductive organs, a substantial increase in the general population's level of obesity, which is known to adversely affect fertility, and a declining level of male sperm count and overall sperm quality (Ledger).

Infertility in SF is too vast a subject to tackle in any reasonable length, and therefore this paper will focus on the intersection of infertility imposed on spaceships and extraterrestrial bases and infertility as an occupational requirement. This paper will attempt a comprehensive reading of such narratives and all narrative forms will be entertained. Limitations of space will therefore preclude any more than a brief synopsis of each narrative. This study will also have an interdisciplinary slant as the author is a medical doctor who will also highlight scientific implausibilities that exceed acceptable poetic license since SF “was, or should be, integral to scientific thought and research, [...] judged on those grounds, and not on merely literary ones: or, one might say, not on literary grounds at all” (James 23).

Narratives

Issues of Population Control

A spaceship is a claustrophobic environment which does not permit any sort of overpopulation, and in Anderson's Einsteinian novel *Tau Zero* (1976), contraception is enforced by the ship's medic. The issue is exacerbated when the spaceship, a Bussard ramjet, malfunctions irreparably, progressively ac-

celerating until relativistic time dilation allows the crew to witness the contraction and collapse of the space-time, and technically therefore achieving immortality, having lived to and witnessed the end of the universe, along with the subsequent explosion of the primal monobloc in another big-bang.

A Bussard ramjet is a theoretical propulsion method that would utilise a huge (around 50,000 kilometres in diameter) magnetic scoop to charge hydrogen atoms in front of it from the interstellar medium, and use this charge to funnel atoms into an onboard fusion reactor. The reactor would use a stellar type of fusion reaction to convert hydrogen into helium and the energy thus released would accelerate the remaining reaction products to produce thrust (Bussard).

A comparable dilemma faces Captain Janeway in the *Star Trek Voyager* series (1995), set in the 24th century. The starship *Voyager* finds itself stranded 70,000 light years away from Earth, with an estimated 75 year return trip back to Earth. Janeway expresses her concerns thus:

I continue to wonder about the issue of procreation aboard the ship. Certainly, it's wrong to interfere with the private lives and decisions of the crew, yet I remain concerned about the environment we could provide for any child born here (Kolbe).

Similarly in Panshin's “Rite of Passage” (1968), spaceship crew families may only have children with the approval of the ships' councils and infraction results in exile to a colony planet.

Varley's “Titan” (1979) empowers both astronaut genders with contraceptive methods, with females taking monthly implants and also having ever-wear diaphragms, and men having ‘valves’ implying control as to whether an orgasm actually contains sperm in the resulting ejaculate or not. Contraception for spaceship crews is also outlined in Bradley's “The Wind People” (1959) wherein artificial gravity conditions completely preclude female crew conception but have no effect on libido or potency, and this effect wears off after approximately three months. Automatic contraception is naturally a desired side effect of interstellar travel and on long planet layovers between trips, spaceship crews are routinely administered a contraceptive drug called “anticeptin” to further continue to prevent pregnancies. This narrative prefigures the actual development of long-acting implantable contraceptive agents, such as Norplant (developed in 1991 with a pregnancy rate of

<1% over a five-year period). Some American states are actually attempting to persuade certain sectors of the populace to implant such agents in order to curb the population growth of the underprivileged (Moseley and Beard).

Likewise, in Taves' "Luna One" (1973), women who form part of the first moon colony are given a contraceptive pill called 'P-C pill'. This is in sharp contrast to the eagerly awaited first birth on the moon in Clarke's, "Out of the Cradle, Endlessly Orbiting" (1962).

Baxter's "Space" (2000) is yet another narrative dealing with importance of population control on a lunar colony. An implausible approach to sexuality on board the restricted confines of a spaceship is seen in Bova's "Mars" (1992). Individuals who are unable to remain abstinent on the nine month trip to Mars amidst the mixed sex crew are dosed with sexuality repressing drugs by the ship's medic and even more remarkably, contraception is never mentioned.

On a different tack, in the interest of cementing friendship between the various branches of the armed forces, in St. Clair's "Short in the Chest" (1954), sex between men and women is by roster, with women taking an "oestric" drug in order to increase libido, and men take the equivalent "priapic", with contraception ensured through women also taking an "anti-concipient."

Even structures that are literally city-sized, such as entire cities that are launched from Earth to roam the stars, are not exempt from such strictures, and in Blish's "A Life for the Stars" (1962), the city's (New York) Chief of Police and his wife are not allowed to have children due to population constraints as the citizens of the city are immortal.

A greater level of detail with regard to population control in the closed environment that constitutes a spaceship is given by Le Guin in "Paradises Lost" (2002), where "conshots" are given to both genders by the medical staff, and individuals who fail to show up for their shots are tracked down by the ship's authorities. Exempt individuals include post-menopausal females, sterilised crew and those who are strict homosexuals or who have taken a pledge of strict chastity. The intention to conceive must be formally declared beforehand by both partners, and each individual is only allowed to have one child. Irregular or extra pregnancies are stopped by a morning after drug or by forcible termination and indeed, in Aldiss' "White Mars" (1999), the perils of inade-

quate contraception are shown when stranded colonists run out of contraceptives.

Contraceptive failure is not uncommon in SF television series, and in Watson's *Farscape* episode "Natural Election" (2002), one of the protagonists, a military peacekeeper, becomes pregnant, and the only positive aspect is that the possibility of an arrested pregnancy is mentioned, implying that pregnancy may be temporarily suspended and gestation later resumed. However, the nature of any contraception used in this society is not discussed. The scenario posed in Brooks's *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* episode "The Dogs of War" (1999) is even more implausible as one of the protagonists finds herself pregnant since her partner forgot to take his birth control injection, and yet both are meant to be taking their injections.

Infertility as an Occupational Requirement

The state may enforce infertility as a necessary qualification for a job and this may be presented, often unrealistically, as a form of celibacy, as already alluded to above. Celibacy, that is, abstention from sex for religious or spiritual reasons, is a concept found in several religions, and has been a Christian ideal since early times. The situation is similar in Buddhism and Sufism and also for Hindus who follow the Vedic way, in the final stages. Conversely, Islam is generally hostile to celibacy and Judaism does not generally advocate celibacy (Brown). Interestingly, in Bova's "Winds of Altair" (1972), both genders of a terraforming crew take voluntary vows of celibacy as part of their obedience to a multid denominational church.

In Brin's "Foundation's Triumph," members of the "order of meritocracy" and of the "order of eccentricity" are discouraged from breeding, and even more strongly, in Leinster's "Med Ship Man," the protagonists (Med Ship Men) are not allowed to marry, in the vein of knight hospitallers, somewhat naively implying that this will ensure their celibacy. Med Ship Men are portrayed as volunteer doctors, similar to *Médecins Sans Frontières International* (Hakewill), who travel from world to world with no actual enforcement powers but are so esteemed that their medical advice is strictly adhered to. It must be noted at this point that the trope of leaving it all in the hands of the male hero was not uncommon in SF, particularly in the 1950s, and especially in Leinster's works, and for a typical example wherein sweethearts are left

behind while intrepid men gallop off to high adventure, see "Space Platform" (1953).

Likewise, in the *Star Wars* universe, in Lucas's "Attack of the Clones," the "Jedi," a monastic order that utilise the "light" side of the "Force", are also celibate, as are "Life Witches" (Macbride). Equally, in Silverberg's "Nightwings" (1969), the occupation of 'Watcher' carries with it a self-imposed vow of celibacy. An inverse eugenic principle is applied in Asimov's "The Currents of Space" (1952), an all-human story where the planet Sark exploits the planet Florina, treating the Sarkites as inferiors. Intelligent Florinians are trained on Sark, and some are returned to Florina to rule over their fellows while others are retained as civil servants. Both groups are not allowed to breed, thus reducing the overall intelligence of the Florinian populace.

A political reason for enforced celibacy is highlighted in Blish's "Earthman Come Home" (1955), where a space-roaming city's Mayor is not permitted to have children by the city's controlling artificial intelligences in order to prevent the potential foundation of dynasties. Medics and their equine transport are also said to be infertile due to treatments designed to strengthen their immune systems in the ravaged Earth portrayed in McIntyre's "Dreamsnake" (1978), such that these immune systems do not recognise gametes and destroy them as they are formed.

Intriguingly, the Vulcan race in *Star Trek* only have sex once every seven years, and males are particularly affected as during this period, they experience a "blood fever" (*pon farr*) due to a neurochemical hormonal imbalance, a combination of menstrual mood problems and premenstrual syndrome. This may cause problems during long voyages in space, and in the *Voyager* episodes "Blood Fever" (Robinson 1997) and "Body and Soul" (McNeill 2000), the *Starship Voyager* crew's two Vulcans both eventually enter *pon farr* and face limited options: actual mating which is naturally impossible on this voyage as no Vulcan females are available, intensive meditation, participating in a ritual combat or dying of unconsummated lust. In the former episode, meditation solves the problem while in the latter, a 3-dimensional holographic simulation is used to defuse the situation.

Also in the *Star Trek* universe, the Deltans are highly sexually evolved humanoids, sexually irresistible to humans. Hence, before serving in Starfleet, they are obligated to take an oath of celibacy ensuring

that they would not take sexual advantage of any non-Deltan crew (Wise).

Chastity exactly modeled on the traditional Roman-Catholic Church's priesthood is seen in Simon's "Endymion" (1995) in a future where the power is based on the literal ability to grant immortality, along with complete control of the military, including military starships, with many priests being starship officers. Yet another Roman-Catholic order is depicted in Marley's "The Child Goddess" (2004) wherein the 23rd century "Magdalenes," a celibate order of women priests, tour the galaxy as anthropological investigators. Non-catholic vows of celibacy are also taken by the all-male inhabitants of a prison planet in Fincher's "Alien 3" (1992).

Religious castration is depicted in Brent's "Plastic Man" (1974) where a religious sect that worships a sentient computer advocates voluntary castration. Meaney's "Paradox" (2000) portrays surgically-altered gender neutral singers and Card's "Songmaster" (1980) shows promising young children who are removed from society, trained to sing and given drugs to delay puberty for five years, with the known side-effect of rendering them sterile. In like fashion, Varley's "The Barbie Murders" (1978) envisions a group of individuals who voluntarily surgically convert themselves into identical individuals that resemble the Barbie doll, and are female but sexless.

Simak's "Enchanted Pilgrimage" (1983) is a pastiche of SF and fantasy. In this story, one of the protagonists (a female virgin) is only allowed to ride on a unicorn, an animal that is essential to the protagonists' quest. The mythological unicorn was a symbol of chivalry, purity, chastity and virginity and was supposed to be a proud and untameable creature. According to lore, it was believed that a virgin who sat naked beneath a tree would be irresistible to a unicorn, which would be drawn to lie down with his head in the virgin's lap (White). Similarly, in Tiptree's "Faithful to Thee Terra, in Our Fashion" (1969), we are told that the sacred female warriors from the planet Myria are required to be virgin. And in Lovering's "The Inevitable Conflict" (1932), a future matriarchal dictatorship is enforced by 'Amazons' who are sterilised.

Discussion

These stories reinforce the contention that "SF is distinctly formulaic, but its formulas are multiple

and various, ranging from myth to mathematics” (Samuelson 191).

The narratives mentioned in this paper are rooted in the precepts formulated by John W. Campbell in his paradigmatic editorship of *Astounding Science Fiction* which can be said to represent a golden age of SF, an era which “valorises a particular sort of writing: ‘Hard SF’, linear narratives, heroes solving problems or countering threats in a space-opera or technological-adventure idiom” (Roberts 195). Campbell’s “ideal reader was an engineer, who would bat around ideas in stories with other engineers [...] in their search for real solutions” (Edwards 23). Thus, the science became more plausible and reasonable. This approach is not new, and was prefigured by Aristotle who stated that “we ought to postulate any ideal conditions, but nothing impossible” (*Politics* I and II 32).

These formulations are best epitomised by Godwin’s “The Cold Equations” (1954) which is particularly relevant to the trope of excessive population on extraterrestrial bases and spaceships. The story takes place on aboard an “Emergency Dispatch Ship” headed for a frontier planet with a load of desperately needed medical supplies. The pilot discovers a stowaway, an eighteen-year-old girl who wishes to meet her brother. However, the ship only just carries sufficient fuel to land with one person on board, and the girl accepts her fate and is jettisoned into space since “the laws of the space frontier must, of necessity, be as hard and relentless as the environment that gave them birth” (Godwin). Such tales therefore reinforce the futility of “society’s institutionalized delusions set against the overwhelmingly, absolutely neutral point of view of the universe” (Woodcock). Hence in the setting of closed and limited environments, a dystopia may arise as fertility is deliberately restricted in order to permit the survival of the majority. In some ways, these cautions are extensions of fears of overpopulation on a larger scale, further “[p]roof of the extraordinary influence that the fear of the population explosion had acquired” (Domingo 729).

Controls and restrictions would also apply to much large vehicles, such as generation ships. A generation ship is a theoretical spacecraft that moves slower than the speed of light, and hence would take several thousand years to reach even nearby stars due to the vastness of interstellar space, with many generations born and dying while en-route. Goddard

(1882-1945), one of the fathers of rocketry, first conceived of the notion of generation ships, and the concept was explored in further detail and popularised by Shepherd.

This sort of spaceship would have to be huge so as to be self-sustaining and have a sufficiently large crew and relevant supplies for breeding purposes and for genetic biodiversity. Alternatively, a much smaller crew could assure sufficient biodiversity through the use of sperm and ovum banks. An insufficiently large population would tend to experience a process known as mutational meltdown, whereby deleterious mutations accumulate with loss of fitness and decline of the population size, further exacerbating meltdown in a downward spiral that inevitably leads to extinction (Lynch and Gabriel).

Samuelson has argued that “[l]ike science and engineering, however, SF makes plausible models of beings, places, and times nobody has yet encountered [...] most SF stories feature a generous assortment of hypotheticals [...] hard SF mainly derives these through extensions of reigning scientific theory,” (192-3) such that in these stories, SF strives for credence through its allusion to science. Furthermore, plots require “an element of the unknown, into which writers cast a net fashioned of reigning theory.

Yet another facet that is uncovered by these tales is the deliberate imposition of infertility on individuals or on groups of people by the “State [...] the coldest of all cold monsters,” (Nietzsche 34) inexorably and sometimes draconianly enforcing infertility wherever it deems this necessary, with a “[d]read of the masses [...] , a problem for governance—a potential source of subversion [...] a product of the population explosion [...] dysfunctional and need to be avoided or perhaps even eliminated rather than managed” (Domingo 730-1).

Most of the narratives accept the Aristotlean admonition that “we must presuppose many things that accord with our highest hope, although the existence of none of them must be impossible” (Aristotle “Politics” VII and VIII). It is also simultaneously evident that SF also “prepares readers for the future, and, by offering inspiration to would-be inventors, spurs on technological progress” (James 20), in some ways preparing us for “future shock” which “is the dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future. It may well be the most important disease of tomorrow” (Toffler 14), causing “the

death of permanence" (13). Any help that SF provides in this respect will not only allay our fears, but may also, through *gedankenexperiments*, cautionary tales that help us shy away from paths whose outcomes would be disadvantageous to the individuals or to the race.

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Star Trek: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Theory and Practice

Cait Coker

Victor Grech, David J. Zammit, and Mariella Scerri, eds. *Star Trek: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Theory and Practice*. SciFi Malta, 2013. Paperback, 237 pages. \$15.00 ISBN 978-1514762073.

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IN 2014, a group of academics held a Symposium in Malta on *Star Trek* for what may have been the first academic meeting (though thankfully it will not be the last) devoted solely to the franchise. From that symposium sprang this volume, edited by the organizers, and though the material is copywritten for 2013, the book itself was published through CreateSpace/Amazon in September 2015 (though that date appears nowhere on the book itself). Functionally it is little more than a vanity press volume with all of the editing and typesetting errors this would imply; the chapters are the presenters' papers with minimal or no editing, such that "Star Trek" appears variously as "Star Trek," "ST," "Trek," and even "star trek" according to each author's usage. There are also several sections of text that are printed in gray rather than black, presumably because of some color usage on the part of the individual author that was never corrected as part of the work as a whole. As a result, the book itself is at times painful to read even before we get to the individual chapters themselves.

The subtitle of *Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Theory and Practice* promises a wide variety of material: Joseph Cacciottolo and Victor Grech relate the fictional medical tricorder to the evolution of real technologies to create a similar device; Ivan Callus analyzes the Prime Directive primarily in terms of theory and *Star Trek Into Darkness*; Cynthia Farrugia-Jones discusses Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and science fiction; Victor Grech looks at the use of *Star Trek* in the television comedy series *The Big Bang Theory*; Pierre Mallia looks at teletransportation and

physics; Damien Marsic considers the spread of intelligent life in the galaxy; Charles Savona-Ventura and Victor Grech look at the ethics of reproduction (and abortion) in the series; Mariella Scerri considers nursing as a profession; Emmanuel Sinagra looks at silicon-based life forms; David J. Zammit looks at sentience; Martha Zammit and Stephen Mattocks connect the Hippocratic Oath to the Prime Directive; and Patrick Zammit considers the warp drive. If the reader is feeling rather breathless after this enumeration of the book's contents, then you know something of how I felt too while making my way through this collection: The chapters are highly individual but not cohesive, and there is no narrative through-point to the volume. The essays are simply placed one after another with no editorial apparatus. Further, the Introduction by U.S. Ambassador to Malta Gina K. Abercrombie-Winstanley at the beginning of the volume, presumably pulled from the speaker's remarks at the beginning of the symposium, misspells Uhura's name as *Uhuru*, lending an amateurish feel to the book that is well-deserved but thoroughly irritating.

In response to all of this, I have to ask: *Why?* Given our current scholarly context in which the Humanities are consistently belittled at large, in which Science Fiction Studies has reached something like respectability but where our scholars still have to defend their publishing and teaching choices to administrations (indeed, at a recent conference a colleague related how prior to teaching a class on genre she was expected to give a weekly demonstration to her college's *Dean* so that he could be assured that her students were *learning* something), in which too often mainstream media is happy to imply that there's something just a bit off about people who deign to take popular culture seriously, *why* would you produce a book of academic material that is so shoddily done?

Please note, I do not blame the individual authors for this: it is an editor's job to guide writers through revisions and to help them craft essays from conference papers, to make sure that all spelling, punctuation, and formatting is uniform and consistent, to take parts and make them into a whole. Further, it is an editor's job to make sure that an author's research is as up-to-date as possible, and that the material cited is suitable and reflects the broader state of the field. This year is the fiftieth anniversary of *Star Trek*, and a multitude of academic and popular

books have been published examining it, so it would have made sense for at least a little bit of this work to have been reflected in the contents. Exactly five scholarly works on *Star Trek* are cited across three essays; a handful of other academic studies are cited across the book as a whole, but the vast majority of bibliographies include references only to individual episodes or online sources. That is sloppy scholarship at its worst. If this had been a popular collection it would have been problematic, but in an academic one it is absolutely egregious.

This book cannot be recommended to scholars, and as for libraries, it would be of interest only to those institutions that have the space and funds to approach collecting for completionism. It may be of interest to readers of popular material, but such readers would also be better off with almost any other book; of recent publications I would most highly recommend Nancy Reagin's 2013 collection *Star Trek and History*, but there are reams of possibilities out there and undoubtedly more forthcoming.

The Politics of The Hunger Games

Amanda Lerner

Jamey Heit. *The Politics of The Hunger Games*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2015. Paperback, 200 pages, \$29.95, ISBN 978-0-7864-9658-7 E-book ISBN: 978-1-4766-2104-3.

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

JAMEY HEIT appears to have a variety of careers, among which is publishing works on popular culture. His latest offering, *The Politics of the Hunger Games* (McFarland, 2015), follows *Imagination and Meaning in Calvin and Hobbes* (McFarland, 2012), and *The Springfield Reformation: The Simpsons, Christianity, and American Culture* (Continuum, 2008). However, Heit also highlights his position as co-founder and CEO of Essay Assay, Inc., an "automated assessment company." His study is similarly ambitious, juggling many different themes and questions. Heit succeeds in answering some questions, raising others, and adding an important contribution to the conversation surrounding dystopian YA literature.

Politics begins with an introduction covering, es-

entially, the formation of the political sphere in the Roman Empire, through biblical moral code, into the fictional realm of Panem. The study has eleven chapters, the strongest of which focus on individual characters within the franchise. While the first three chapters cover Heit's analysis of the political framework of Panem, the first chapter specifically serves as an introduction to those readers who may not be familiar with either the novels or the film franchise. The existence of *The Hunger Games* both as novels and as films raises a larger issue within Heit's study: while many of his arguments are applicable to both the films and the novels, there is often little delineation between the two realms when Heit discusses them. Though the films generally stay true to the plot and character development that Suzanne Collins has crafted in her trilogy, there are significant deviations in the films. Heit misses an opportunity by discussing them interchangeably; both can stand on their own, and should be addressed as separate, though obviously linked, sources. However, putting the conflation issue aside, Heit uses the language of politics very effectively to illuminate the characters that populate Panem.

In addition to laying out the political sphere of Panem, Heit also uses the first three chapters to argue the relevancy of such a landscape to the intended contemporary American audience. For example, Heit opens Chapter 3, "The Social Contract," with a quotation from President Bush's post-9/11 federal budget. He notes that Bush needed to balance the two truths of freedom and security in his approach to national security. As Heit explains, 'Framed within the specific context of the attacks on 9/11, those two truths—security and freedom—are probably the definitive considerations of modern political thought' (Heit 41). Indeed, Heit's approach to modern political thought throughout the study seems to switch between the classical Roman mode and the contemporary American one, with some European thinkers such as Machiavelli thrown in for good measure.

Politics makes its strongest arguments not in the abstract, but in the specific—such as when Heit uses Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* to illuminate the character of President Snow in the eponymous fourth chapter. In both the films and the novels, one of President Snow's defining characteristics is that he does not lie to his enemy, Katniss Everdeen. Heit draws a direct line from Machiavelli's advice to leaders to ensure that they are told the truth and not

merely flattered, to Snow's insistence that Katniss—one of the few citizens of Panem who recognizes his "politics of fear," as Heit puts it—never lie to him in return for his honesty. Heit uses Machiavelli's tract to point out the flaws in Snow's political plan; he argues that, though Snow finds a "spark of hope" to be imperative for keeping his population complacent, Snow should have extinguished any hope in order to guard his security of power.

The following chapter, entitled "Katniss," is one of the shortest at only sixteen pages. However, since the majority of the study, by nature of the franchise, revolves around Katniss's actions, the rather slim chapter devoted solely to the main character does not read as short shrift. Heit succinctly and, I would argue, accurately pinpoints Katniss' role in the political development of Panem. He writes, 'Katniss's role is not to oversee the liberated population; like Moses, she will fade into the background eventually. Her goal is to initiate the process of recovering a politics that others will fight for. She encourages people across the districts to connect political dots in a way President Snow works hard to keep apart' (Heit 80). Heit closes the chapter by claiming the Katniss will lead the new Panem towards recovering a "moral politics"; a lofty goal for a character that is, Heit rightly stresses, deeply flawed.

The chapters on Haymitch, The Rebellion, and President Coin similarly focus on single characters or groups thereof, and as stated above, are among the strongest in Heit's study. Somewhat less convincing is Chapter 9, "The Capitol's Residents," largely because of the underdeveloped nature of that population in both the novels and the films. Heit acknowledges this flaw himself in his introduction, stating, 'We know little of their perspective, but as citizens of the same country that sees the rebels emerge, trying to understand their political mindset provides an alternative to some of the questions that emerge in the previous chapters' (9). However, the chapter feels like more a contemporary political statement than an analysis of the residents of the Capitol of Panem; Heit discusses the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri at length. Such powerful comparison would have been more useful in the introduction or conclusion. Putting aside the placement of the Ferguson section, however, Heit's effort to keep his study both contemporary and relevant to the larger American political conversation is especially strong in Chapter 9, as well as in his chapter on "The Media."

Heit cautions the casual reader, again in the introduction, that the final chapter, "Public Violence," may be too dense and academic and can be skipped without causing undue harm to his argument. I would not recommend skipping over the last chapter; I found the final chapter to be, perhaps, the most illuminating of the entire study. Heit lays out clearly what the Hunger Games, in his view, really are: 'The Games are a manufactured way of justifying an existing political reality. Once this truth is broadcast live, President Snow's collapse is inevitable' (Heit 166). In my view, this final chapter is a strong, if admittedly academic, means for Heit to tie together all of his observations and arguments from the previous ten chapters.

Heit's study on the politics of *The Hunger Games* raises almost as many questions as it answers. The timing of the work is also interesting; though Heit relies heavily on the films, the final film had yet to be released when I read the finished work. As an avid dystopian YA fan, I found myself watching the newly released final movie in a new light after having read *Politics*. Heit engages with the existing scholarship on *The Hunger Games* franchise—mostly included in the 2012 anthology *The Hunger Games and Philosophy: A Critique of Pure Treason*. However, with his rigorous political history and political critique, Heit has made a unique contribution to the body of work currently available on *The Hunger Games*.

The Age of Lovecraft

Steve Nash

Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (eds). *The Age of Lovecraft*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. Paperback, 268 pages, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-8166-9925-4. Kindle, \$14.49, ASIN: B01DEIFVC6.

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WITH THE *AGE OF LOVECRAFT*, editors Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock promise to offer the 'first sustained analysis of Lovecraft in relation to twenty-first-century critical theory and culture.' From as early as the foreword by Ramsey Campbell

there is evidence of a very deliberate attempt to provide an original perspective on H.P. Lovecraft's life and works. Campbell's foreword gives primacy not to Lovecraft's position as a great influencer of much contemporary fantasy, science fiction, and horror writing (though naturally a rundown of the usual suspects is offered), but to the quality of Lovecraft's work itself, a subject still often referred to with cynicism or outright scorn even in critical works of recovery.

The introduction gives an overview of Lovecraft through the lens of the scholarly reception of his work to date. This is a prudent approach as the names most frequently associated with the critical reading of Lovecraft and his work are largely absent from the list of contributors. This emphasises the originality of the included approaches to Lovecraft, while offering due acknowledgement of the dedication to the recovery, reappraisal, and reinvigoration of the American author of Weird tales by the likes of Joshi, Cannon, Harman, Houellebecq, etc, and creates an overall quality of an opening up of the hermeneutic space, and an encouragement of new lines of enquiry, rather than a rejection of previous thought.

To proceed this far without mentioning the giant squid in the room is not to suggest that the major detraction from Lovecraft and his writing—his unquestionable racism and xenophobia—is ignored by Sederholm and Weinstock (or the contributing writers); in fact, this subject is met directly and acknowledged as a major aspect of Lovecraft's psyche that should be addressed and then left for each individual critic to decide the level to which it should be brought into the reading of the work.

The diversity of the essays here is testament to the openness of Lovecraft's oeuvre to multiple interpretations (partly due to his refusal or inability to describe Things in explicit detail), and its surprisingly inclusive approach to genre. Yes, Lovecraft's work can be described as fantasy, horror, or science fiction, but within these obvious major genres Lovecraft's stories offer fertile ground for linguistic, topographic, posthumanist, phenomenological, feminist, and psychoanalytical approaches—not to mention the various fantasy subgenre fields Lovecraft is finding renewed popularity in.

For a relatively slim volume, a great deal of critical ground is covered throughout the eleven concise essays here. There are works that focus upon the tangibility of Lovecraft's fictional spaces and their con-

tents, a topic made particularly intriguing in James Kneale's examination of Lovecraft's Weird geographies. There is also a keen focus upon the synaesthetic appeal of Lovecraft's use of imagery, colour, and sound. Both Jessica George and Brian Johnson utilise Lovecraft as a counterweight in comparative discussions of Neil Gaiman and Ridley Scott respectively, and the energy with which the subjects are approached in both cases affords each essay the dexterity to avoid traps that comparative analyses can frequently succumb to. This is not a collection that flaunts a rigidly affirmative response to its main subject, but the delight in its analysis does afford the reading a vigour that is difficult not to be persuaded by. Even an essay that promises to engage Lovecraft through a scaffold of "Race, Species, and Others" delivers on its promise of adding something new to the expanding horizon of theory regarding the once-derrided author, and it is here that main thread running through the collection is made explicit.

Despite the diversity of the essays and approaches here, it is striking that Lovecraft appears to draw all of these critical responses toward a similar focal point. It is a question of the border that seems to beat at the heart of Lovecraft's elder gods and less ethereal tales of terror. The recurrence of Kristeva, and Deleuze and Guattari as theoretical touchstones throughout this thoughtfully compiled collection emphasises this obsession with borders and the fear of that which dares to transgress them. Lovecraft's weird geographies, dialogues, cacophonous sounds, all of the Things that should not be, it seems *should be* after all. What they should not be is within our realm of perception. Perhaps for a man so intent on segregation, with such a palpable fear of the Other, it should be little surprise that the basis for the majority of his horror tales lies in the fear of the transgressor of the border. Lovecraft's Weird worlds are not fantasy worlds from far off galaxies. They are realms adjacent to ours just beyond a threshold, and, in a world of popular fantasy and science fiction that boasts novels such as Gaiman's *Neverwhere*, *Mi-ville's Un Lun Dun*, films like *Pan's Labyrinth*, and *Midnight Special*, and most recently the hugely popular (and critically lauded) Netflix original TV show *Stranger Things*, perhaps the title *The Age of Lovecraft* is not such a Weird thought after all.

Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction

Jerome Winter

André Carrington. *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016. Hardcover, 304 pages, \$87.50, ISBN: 978-0816678952. Paperback, 304 pages, \$25.00, ISBN 978-0816678969. Kindle, 304 pages, \$16.99, ASIN: B01CTOJSOI.

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ANDRÉ CARRINGTON'S *Speculative Blackness* is an exemplary piece of scholarship at the intersection of fan studies, popular culture, science fiction studies, and critical ethnic inquiry. In limpid, jargon-lite prose, Carrington interrogates the overrepresentation of white perspectives in science-fiction popular culture — what he terms the whiteness of science fiction— that often takes its privilege for granted even when attempting to forge intimacy and empathy across ethnic boundaries. Cannily avoiding the critically complex term “Afrofuturism,” Carrington takes a strikingly original stance that figures “speculative blackness” as rooted in social conditions and forces that make mediations of black identity “halting and deeply compromised” (113) but nevertheless buttresses his deft critique of race thinking in popular science fiction with a nuanced inquiry into the role of participatory media in making possible a self-elected, black-identified space of utopian promise.

Delving into archival research from the Eaton Collection of Science Fiction and Fantasy housed at UC, Riverside, the first chapter explores the Carl Brandon controversy in which a young Terry Carr impersonated an imaginary black fan in part to defend science-fiction fanzines against charges of being monolithically white. Carrington productively compares this so-called “hoax” perpetuated against unwitting science-fiction fans to the Beat subculture’s co-optation of black authenticity in the same 1950s cultural milieu. Brandon was in fact such a beloved, if elusive participant of 1950s fan culture that in August 1958 he was leading the votes for the official editor of Fantasy Amateur Press Association (FAPA), and Carr had to finally come clean; Carrington nicely illuminates the fascinating racially charged fallout of

this bombshell revelation.

The second chapter concerns the career of Nichelle Nichols, who portrayed Uhura in the original *Star Trek* series and subsequent movies. Carrington analyzes scenes from the television series and Nichols’ memoir *Beyond Uhura* to show how the show attempted to project a utopian future of racial harmony and international cooperation while at the same time marginalizing Uhura to functioning little more than as a mini-skirted prop blandly repeating “hailing frequencies open” in the background of shots, while at the same time subordinating the actor Nichols to a day-player contract. Carrington then discusses Nichols’s public-relations recruitment and consulting work for NASA and the blow it helped to strike against the prohibition against female as well as black NASA astronauts prior to the shuttle program.

The third chapter investigates the black female Marvel comics superhero Ororo Munroe, also known as Storm, primarily examining her character arc in *The Uncanny X-Men* series during the Chris Claremont and John Byrne era of 1977-1991. Carrington tracks the reimagining of Storm through the dynamic shifts of characterization from her status as a tokenized mutant superhero, to her moody disaffected punkish phase, to a more mature re-exploration of her African roots. It is very possible to interpret Claremont’s fudged historical context for Storm’s origin story as evidence of the stereotyped construction of this exotically desirable superhero, whose given name of Ororo is Swahili for “beauty,” as a vicious ahistorical vision of the non-Western “magical negro” projected by the gaze of the adolescent white male reader. Carrington, however, chooses to move beyond a straightforward hermeneutics of suspicion, keenly observing a speculative blackness in his reparative reading of Storm as a formative black superhero. In Carrington’s sympathetic reading, which does not overlook Claremont and Byrne’s troubling exoticizing of the character, the discourses swirling around Storm effectively constitute a form of cultural production in which race, gender, diaspora, and nation signify precisely in terms of specific imaginary and non-realist genre conventions.

The fourth chapter switches gears toward the direction of independent comics with the black-owned publisher Milestone Media’s superhero comic *Icon*, which, Carrington does not fail to point out, was nevertheless distributed as an imprint of DC com-

ics. Carrington documents how Milestone Media exploited the collector fan craze in the early 1990s comics-industry bubble in its savvy deployment of crossover marketing, advance fan copies, and letter-to-the-editor columns and contests to wedge into the predominately white comics industry. Remarkably, *Icon* was a black superman, i.e., Augustus Freeman—also known as Icon, produced by black artists for an at least partly black audience. Speculative blackness, in this instance, occurs in its mixture of superhero tropes — the crime-fighting, super-powered alien attended by a plucky ace reporter — with an anti-gentrification message and the promotion of professional black literacy that belies a stereotypical representation of black realness.

Perhaps the most compelling chapter of the book, the fifth chapter returns to the *Star Trek* franchise in a discussion of the critically neglected *Deep Space Nine* series, its innovative episode entitled “Far Beyond the Stars,” and a novelization of the episode by noted SF writer Steven Barnes. In the *Deep Space Nine* episode, Benjamin Sisko, a black male space-station commander, played by Avery Brooks, travels back in time in a dream vision, ancestrally inhabiting an imaginary 1950s SF digest-magazine writer

Benny Russel who struggles through his mundane everyday experience of racial discrimination, harassment, and violence during the pre-Civil Rights segregation era of American history. Carrington then insightfully analyzes Steven Barnes’ novelization of the episode in terms of the phenomenon of media tie-ins, the larger oeuvre of this overlooked African-American SF author, and Barnes’s rich, challenging adaptation of the episode.

The final chapter explores *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and Harry Potter fan fiction from the online Remember Us archive that Carrington helped create. Carrington interprets the diasporic cyberculture of this fan faction as contributing to the decolonizing of spectatorship in the era of globalization. Through non-canonical origin stories and Hurt/Comfort formulas involving the minor black characters of Kendra, Olivia, and Angelina from these respective media products, Carrington contends that this new brand of online fan fiction upends the Anglo-American bias of *Buffy* and Harry Potter. Overall, this final chapter centered on the creative, counterhegemonic output of fans themselves offers a fitting conclusion to this superb investigation into contemporary representations of blackness in SF popular culture and media.

Down Among The Sticks and Bones

Hanna Clutterbuck-Cook

McGuire, Seanan. *Down Among The Sticks and Bones*. New York: Tor, 2017. 192 pages, cloth, \$17.99. ISBN 0765392038

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

Down Among the Sticks and Bones is Seanan McGuire's follow-up to/expansion of her magnificent 2016 novella *Every Heart a Doorway*. The second entry in the Wayward Children series tells the story of Jack and Jill, who were first encountered in *Every Heart* as the snappily dressed scientist who lurks in the basement and the frilly princess doll with a habit of loitering around corners. It turns out that, as in all good stories, the truth of the two sisters is infinitely more complicated than first appears.

Every Heart was in many ways the story of all the children at the Home for Wayward Children, using the experience of otherworld returnee Nancy Whitman as a gateway into a general exploration of McGuire's universe. *Sticks and Bones*, on the other hand, is entirely focused on Jack and Jill. This is not to the exclusion of all other characters—the housekeeper Mary, for instance, has a story of her own which perhaps McGuire will be kind enough to give us some day—but the sisters are truly the core of everything that happens in this story.

Sticks and Bones could be read very straightforwardly, as a book that frames Jack and Jill's backstory as a fairly simple and familiar fairy tale, from the time their parents decide to have children, to the moment the girls discover stairs descending out of an old trunk in their grandmother's room, to the time they are unceremoniously dumped back into the 'real' world as teenagers. This last event hooks us into the world of *Every Heart*, as the response of the girls' parents, Chester and Serena Wolcott, is to deposit their returned children with Eleanor West at the Home. However, a reading at this level would be to miss the marvelous complexity and density of McGuire's story, the simplicity of which is entirely

misleading.

Jack and Jill are the children of shallow, thoughtless parents who have children simply because the couples around them are doing the same. Both husband and wife have dreams of the perfect child-shaped accessory: a son who will visit his father's office, a daughter who will go with the mother to charitable events. When the parents prove absolutely unequal to the task of childcare after the birth of their daughters, the son's mother—'Gemma Lou'—moves in to look after the girls for their first five years. When the parents decide that the grandmother is a social embarrassment, she is evicted from the house and the girls told that 'Gemma Lou' doesn't love them anymore.

Until the age of twelve when they find the stairs leading down, Jack and Jill are involuntarily wedged into the roles their parents imagined for their children: Jack is the princess doll to accompany her mother; Jill, the tomboy to take the place of the son the father failed to get. The girls themselves are given no options, no choices, and McGuire makes it clear that the afternoon of exploration which leads them to the Moors is one of the last days in which they will have any understanding of or sympathy with each other. Each girl suffers under the weight of her own denied self and, given no other outlet, blames her sister for her own pain.

Those who have read *Every Heart* will remember the range of other worlds the various children at the home had visited. Jack and Jill end up on "the Moors," a distillation of high Gothic horror (vampires, werewolves, the risen dead)—with a tinge of Lovecraft (drowned temples and ancient gods). As in any good fairy tale, choice is critical, and the fateful choice of the girls to go left rather than right leads them to a certain village that faces a windmill over a stretch of moorland with the seacoast not far away. The village is watched over by the Master; the windmill by Dr. Bleak—one girl goes with each man and the story unfolds from there to the horrific climax, one made no less terrible by the fact that anyone who has read *Every Heart* will be able to guess what is coming.

Sticks and Bones has deep roots in the genre of the retold fairytale as presented, notably, in Terri Windling and Ellen Datlow's wonderful Fairy Tale Anthologies series that began with *Snow White, Blood Red* in 1995 (Neil Gaiman's 1995 short story "Snow, Glass, Apples" also comes particularly to mind as a model for McGuire's kind of tale). Like Gaiman, Mc-

Guire does much more than retell an old story. She makes no concessions to the source material in terms of telling her *own* story, bringing the individuality of her characters to the fore at every opportunity and making it clear that the personal decisions of the characters—or their lack of ability to make them—are what shape the story as a whole.

The framework of the novel—the sticks and bones, to coin a phrase—is pure fairy tale: the magic portal, the endless descent, the entry into another world. However, the meat of the story is where McGuire does her most interesting work, in taking those sticks and bones and creating something different out of them, in the process pushing her readers to reconsider what they thought they knew.

Last Year

Dominick Grace

Wilson, Robert Charles. *Last Year*. New York: Tor, 2016. 351 pages, cloth, \$27.99. ISBN978-0-7653-3263-9.

Order option(s): [Hard](#) | [Paper](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audible](#)

Robert Charles Wilson's *Last Year* revisits one of his enduring interests, time travel, which has featured in one way or another in *Bridge of Years* (1991), *The Chronoliths* (2001), and the *Spin Cycle* (2005–2011). Time travel here contributes to his larger thematic interest in the juxtaposition of the familiar and the strange, whether as a piece of one world transplanted into another (e.g. 1994's *Mysterium*), as one world being given a window into another (e.g. 2003's *Blind Lake*), or as travellers moving between worlds, as in 1986's *A Hidden Place*. *Last Year* offers interworld travellers again, this time by combining the idea of time travel with the many-worlds model. Wilson posits a portal that carries people from one world to a different, historically earlier instantiation of the world. Consequently, we have something like time travel, but into an alternate reality, a concept that has been used before, but which Wilson handles better than some of his predecessors (e.g. this novel can be instructively contrasted with Michael Crichton's conceptually-similar but execrable 1999 novel *Timeline*).

Wilson uses the conceit to combine the trappings of the thriller with a critique of the ultimate in commodification culture, with glances at interventionism, privilege, and even identity politics. While time travel tourism is hardly a new idea (we have all read Bradbury's "A Sound of Thunder," after all), here Wilson (perhaps unsurprisingly, given the current political and economic world in which we live) imagines the primary use made of technology allowing such travel would be economic exploitation. Wilson presents an entrepreneur named August Kemp, whose name echoes Donald Trump metrically and whose surname offers a slant rhyme, allowing us to view him as an alternate-world version. Kemp gains control of the portal technology via unclear—but almost certainly—underhanded means and uses it to exploit as a source of wealth generation the alternate nineteenth-century America to which it provides access. It is a concept somewhat reminiscent of Bruce Sterling's and Lewis Shiner's 1985 short story "Mozart in Mirrorshades," in which alternate timelines are ransacked for natural resources badly needed in the home timeline.

Kemp builds a Disneyland version of the future (the 'City of Futurity') in 1872 America, selling sanitized glimpses of the future to the well-heeled natives while also offering a sort of time-travel tourism to folk from his own time. Think *Westworld*, but with the real West, not an ersatz version; one in which actions have real-world consequences, just not for the tourists' real world (a point the novel develops slowly but clearly).

The novel's protagonist is Jesse Callum, a nineteenth-century man hired by the City of Futurity. Many locals are thus employed and given sensitivity training to ensure that their nineteenth-century political and social attitudes do not offend the visitors—an amusing glance at the relative priorities of Kemp, who is careful to protect the sensibilities of his own people at the expense of those he is exploiting, who are expected to subsume their own values and accept those of the dominant culture—not really a colonizing power, but analogous to one, given Kemp's exploitative and paternalistic agendas. Callum is remarkably enlightened for a nineteenth-century man, being fairly open to twenty-first-century sexuality and racial pluralism, unlike most of the other nineteenth-century characters. Wilson is thereby able to acknowledge that past attitudes about many things are abhorrent from a twenty-first-century

perspective, but also to have as protagonist a figure from that nineteenth century who can provide some sort of outside commentary while also not alienating modern readers with rampant racism and sexism. A more daring choice might have been to have a black or female, or black female, or indigenous, protagonist—and indeed, one might object to Wilson’s stereotypical depicting of nineteenth-century Chinese—but he is interested in examining the dynamics of cultural domination and economic exploitation, even if that focus drifts as the novel progresses.

Most interesting are the ways in which Wilson critiques how privilege informs one’s view of the other. Notably he describes, on the one hand, twenty-first century nostalgists who want to relocate to the nineteenth century because they conceive of it as a lost golden age (the flip side of the classic 1957 Jack Finney story, “The Thirst Level,” about precisely such a nostalgist who flees to just such a past, or perhaps a companion piece to Richard Matheson’s 1975 novel *Bid Time Return*). On the other hand he writes of twenty-first-century crusaders who object (rightly, it must be admitted) to Kemp’s exploitation of the past yet create their own problems via comparably paternalistic attempts to protect the past by ill-advised revelation of information and provision of modern weapons. This leads to considerable chaos and bloodshed. They are in their own way exploiters, as a means of demonstrating their own moral superiority to the crooked entrepreneur—one of them (naturally) is his rogue daughter, a familiar cliché, though Wilson makes some effort to give this daughter a bit more to do than simply rebel against Daddy. The novel could serve as a fruitful way of discussing the complex and problematic challenges represented by both colonialism and objections to it, in the context of an alternate-world time travel fantasy that distances the discussion from the tendentious realities of today. This might thereby allow for a focus on the underlying issues and ideologies rather than on the messy and of necessity partisan contemporary realities.

This is not, however, a thesis novel. These issues are there, but Wilson does not stress them. Indeed, he could have emphasized them a bit more, especially as the latter third of the novel shifts into a homecoming/revenge story in which Callum’s quest to find Kemp’s missing daughter takes him back to his childhood stomping grounds, where he has a protracted and violent confrontation with an old neme-

sis. As this point, the bigger ideas of the novel recede and page-turning action takes over. One can still read this section ideologically—Callum’s confrontation with his own, horrific, *real* past offering a counterpoint to the sanitized concept of the past sold to time tourists, who are as carefully shepherded and monitored as are the nineteenth-century denizens given glimpses of the future—but that seems to be a stretch.

Regardless, this is a thoughtful and thought-provoking novel that uses time-tested SF tropes to offer new insights into twenty-first-century post-colonial economics and neo-liberalism.

The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.

Jonathan P. Lewis

Stephenson, Neal and Nicole Galland. *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.* New York: William Morrow, 2017. 768 pages. Hardcover. \$35.00, ISBN 9780062409164

Order option(s): [Hard](#) | [Paper](#) | [Audible](#) | [CD](#)

Neal Stephenson’s and Nicole Galland’s *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.* is a time-travel fantasy narrative in which government agents discover that America’s enemies may be using witches to affect the past. Suddenly facing a potential “magic gap,” the government forms the Department of Diachronic Operations (D.O.D.O.) to discover why magic stopped working in the first place, how America’s unnamed foes revived the art, and what can be done to get America up to speed. In a clever play with the time-travel narrative, Stephenson and Galland explore the nature of time and human consciousness, the often terrifying dangers of the unintended consequences of emerging technologies, and our era’s fascination with recording and editing history in real-time.

As Stephenson and Galland’s compelling story develops, a wide array of characters are drawn into D.O.D.O.’s net, including such typical Stephenson characters as computer programmers, linguists, quantum physicists, academics, soldiers, engineers, bankers, and experts in making and using swords. Galland brings her considerable talents for historical narrative to bear in the various eras that include

11th century Normandy, 13th century Constantinople, 17th century London and Boston, and Victorian England. While the collaborative nature of the text makes assigning a voice to either author here difficult, there is, overall, a return to the humor and lighthearted tone that has been largely missing from Stephenson's recent novels *Reamde* and *Seveneves*.

The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O. is a raucous yarn and Stephenson's most fun-filled work since *Snow Crash* (1992), but he leaves behind neither his career-long interests in cognition and language nor more recent forays into the poly-cosmic interpretation of quantum mechanics. Galland's career interests in historical fiction, court-and-commoner intrigue, and the flows and restrictions of feminine power are especially welcome in this collaboration, since of late Stephenson's work has often focused on practices like video games and orbital mechanics rather than the people involved in them. While readers may find protagonist Dr. Melisande Stroke's lack of agency in some of the various plots problematic, even clichéd, I found her character to be the most complex and interesting woman in a Stephenson text since Eliza in *The Baroque Cycle* (2004–05). Historical-era witches Gráinne and Erzebet are also intriguing characters with compelling, competing agendas of their own, but the novel's contemporary witches, such as Rebecca East-Oda and Julie Lee, are fairly flat and the book's only real missed opportunities.

Overall, *D.O.D.O.* fits squarely into Stephenson's body of work (especially *Snow Crash* and *Anathem* (2009)), in the ways that language shapes how we think and the larger implications of quantum mechanics on the flow of time. Unlike *Snow Crash*, *The Diamond Age* (1995), or *Seveneves* (2015), there is not a realizable technological innovation such as the Metaverse, nanotechnology, or genetic engineering in *D.O.D.O.*—the novel's chief technological invention is the "ODEC" or "Ontic Decoherence Cavity," which allows a witch to perform her magic. We are very much in a work of fantasy here. That said, the novel's exploration of history as a series of "Strands," each occurring at the same time but in different "world-tracks" which all converge in whatever present we are experiencing as "now" is a fascinating application of the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics. Here, to affect change in their present Strand, Stokes and other Agents are sent back to the same moment in multiple Strands to amplify small changes—a book must be stolen and subsequently

buried in the same patch of earth in many Strands of 1640 Cambridge to be disinterred in contemporary Cambridge.

Visually, time-travel in this novel is more James Cameron than H.G. Wells or Octavia Butler—whereas, for example, Butler's Dana Franklin moves in and out of the past without personal agency, D.O.D.O. agents need a witch to send them where they want to go from inside the ODEC. But unlike Wells' Traveler, who emerges from his machine exactly as when he leaves Surrey no matter where in time he goes, Stephenson's and Galland's agents come and go through time like Cameron's Terminators—naked. Nothing artificial, including tattoos, clothes, piercings, pace-makers, or fillings can depart from or arrive in the ODEC, so D.O.D.O. agents must cultivate a network of helpful witches across time who can supply them with period clothes, weapons, and other supplies.

Among the novel's other amusing elements is how the present-day characters watch Wikipedia entries to observe whether what they know as history undergoes changes, and the novel thus raises questions about the legitimacy of remembered histories and digitally alterable histories, and thus opens the novel for scholarly interest in alternative history SF, speculative fiction, and time-travel.

For me, *The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O.*'s chief value lies in exploring an iteration of Stephenson's interest in Hugh Everett III's theory of the poly-cosmic nature of the universe resulting from quantum effects. This interest began in *Anathem*, where Stephenson engaged Everett's ideas directly through characters like Fraa Paphlagon and Fraa Jad and the competing orders on Arbore, the Rhetors and the Incanters, and their abilities to affect changes in the past and the future. In that work, characters spoke of "causal domains," and the alien space craft, the *Daban Ur-nud*, takes advantage of the universe's preventions of space-time paradoxes by moving the ship from one consciousness-bearing cosmos to another. In *D.O.D.O.*, such paradoxes result in "Diachronic Shear," defined in the novel's glossary as an "infernal, catastrophic response of the universe to too-extreme changes being wrought as a result of diachronic activity" and known among Irish witches as "*lomadh*" and Hungarian witches as "*diakrónikus nyírás*" (750). Such explosive events are rather to be avoided as when a supposedly murdered celebrity appears in public years later. In the novel, the universe allows for small changes worked out gradually and slowly

through actions in various Strands. It does not, apparently, allow agents to go back in time and kill Hitler as an art student or send great supplies of uranium to American weapons labs.

Stephenson's engagement with the nature of cognition and of consciousness being shaped by shared languages and group dynamics deserves greater critical attention, as these have been at the heart of his fiction going back to *The Big U* (1984). Since *Anathem*, his use of Everett's conceptions of the nature of the universe both connects with and complicates this long-standing interest in the long-term opera-

tions of societies and the technologies and military actions used to preserve them.

The Rise and Fall of D.O.D.O. connects to both *Anathem* and William Gibson's *The Peripheral* (2014) through ideas of unstable histories, quantum cross talk, and narratives as "strands," "stubs," or "forkings" that can be visited or engineered. Further, it may prove interesting to examine these and other recent texts examining the manipulation of time and history through questions of our age's focus on digital records, instant communications, and the immediate and contested nature of record keeping online.

Doctor Strange

Amanda Dillon

Doctor Strange. Dir. Derrickson. Perf. Benedict Cumberbatch, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Rachel McAdams, Benedict Wong, Mads Mikkelsen, Tilda Swinton. Marvel Studios/Disney. 2016.

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

'What if I told you that this reality is one of many?' asks The Ancient One (Swinton) in Scott Derrickson's 2016 adaptation of Marvel's *Doctor Strange*. What if, indeed. This is the central question of all fictional texts, and of science fiction and fantasy texts in particular. Though *Doctor Strange* certainly foregrounds the issues of world-building, time, reality, cause and effect, and questions about the multiverse, it is far more noteworthy for the more mundane issues that speak directly to the state of science fiction and fantasy in general.

We are presented with Stephen Strange (Cumberbatch), an arrogant, sarcastic brain surgeon who finds his pride—his hands—destroyed in a car crash. Ironic hubris is a central trope of the Marvel Cinematic and Comic Universes (MCU), and doubly so with Strange. In the search for a cure for his disfiguring, painful, and career-ending injury, Strange follows a lead on a miraculous cure of a paraplegic and ends up in Kathmandu. He trains as a master of the mystical arts under the guidance of The Ancient One. Along with masters Mordo (Ejiofor) and Wong (Wong), Strange eventually meets and battles Kaecilius (Mikkelsen), his followers, and his mystical master, Dormammu (also played, uncredited, by Cumberbatch).

Along the way, like all good heroes on a quest, Strange gathers objects that aid him in the climax of his journey: the Cloak of Levitation and the Eye of Agamotto, which allow him to fly and control the flow of time respectively. This journey comes with humility: the rekindling of the broken relationship with Strange's ex-lover, Christine Palmer (McAdams), and a realisation that there are, as the film says, 'other ways to save lives'. In the end, Strange becomes the Sorcerer Supreme we all know from

the comic books: a defender of Earth from mystical and supernatural enemies, and a counterpoint to the Avengers. There is quite a lot more to this, but the interesting part of this movie has little to do with the underground societies protecting the Earth from demagogues on some astral plane.

This film's scholarly and classroom potential divides neatly into three categories: that of the political climate surrounding the film in terms of racial representation, the continuing question of how to place superhero films in terms of genre, and that of the world-building thematics that link this film with others it resembles in terms of spectacle: specifically *Inception* (Nolan 2010), *The Matrix* (Wachowski 1999), *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (Lee 2000), *Hero* (Zhang 2002), and *House of Flying Daggers* (Zhang 2004). The folding cityscapes seen in the battles with Kaecilius and the martial arts-based fighting cannot help but echo these recent classics: many of these are also about the fluidity of the real, and the building of worlds for specific narrative purposes.

As such, *Doctor Strange* fits, mid-sequence, into a cycle of science fiction and fantasy films specifically concerned with the nature of reality and a human being's ability to change reality through special powers. The astral weapons the masters use are eerily reminiscent of those used in the much-maligned film adaptation of *Green Lantern* (Campbell 2011). The cinematic *Strange's* intertextual tendrils stretch beyond film, however. For example, the importance of magical books stretches across such diverse texts as *Harry Potter*, *The Kingkiller Chronicles*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and many more. Such intertextuality is ripe for unpacking.

What is interesting about this is not so much the intertextuality itself—as that is part of the science fictional and fantastic mega-text—but that such intertextuality moves across genre boundaries. Thin and dotted as the line between science fiction and fantasy is, superhero films go to great pains to present themselves as specifically science fictional, providing montages of scientific inquiry, engineering, and more traditional tropes like aliens, space, and so forth. This runs across the MCU, but may be seen most interestingly problematised in *Thor* (Branagh 2011), a film which places Clarke's dictum at the centre of its world-building. *Doctor Strange* moves one step further, and positions its action purely on the fantastical plane: astral projections, alternate realities that are not the result of a scientific experi-

ment gone awry, and (unfortunately) an Orientalism that underlies so many fantasy texts. It is a science fiction film—because we have been shown it exists in an overtly science fictional universe—but almost entirely uses fantasy tropes. Such blending of tropes reflects the current state of science fiction and fantasy film, where we now have one enormous box of toys to play with, but also their increasing difficulty in terms of genre definition and categorisation.

As an adaptation, *Doctor Strange* also proves interesting for some of the changes that were made in terms of casting. The most problematic is the casting of Swinton, a white woman, as a character that, in the comics, is a man of Eastern origin. Though this was done to avoid any stereotyping of those of Asian origin, there has been a backlash against Swinton and many question the appropriateness of her in the role. A similar undercurrent focused on Cumberbatch, who was plagued once again with accusations of whitewashing that proposed Strange to be of non-

white origin. Despite these issues, *Strange* also promotes several problematic characters of colour to the foreground: Mordo is now of African origin, and Wong has a much larger and less stereotyped role than he does in the comics. *Strange* does fall down in terms of gender portrayals—though The Ancient One is female, Swinton provides the role with an ageless and androgynous quality—and Palmer is sadly minimised in her role of care-taking ex-lover. Such problems of representation provide fascinating fodder for those studying ethnic and gender representation in contemporary film in terms of industrial process, particularly given the changes in the adaptation process.

While *Doctor Strange* is about the possibilities that surround us, such speculation is about more than the mere fighting of bad guys. It plays a part in the continuing dialogue about how we create fictional worlds—and what those worlds ought to contain.

Call for Papers—Conference

Title: *Generation BioWare: Story-Driven Games in Contemporary Humanities.*

Deadline: 30th September 2017.

Contact: jakub.krogulec2@uwr.edu.pl or jakub.krogulec5@gmail.com.

Dates: 5–7 December 2017.

American Literature and Culture Section (Department of English Studies, University of Wrocław) and New Media and Popular Literature Section (Department of Polish Studies, University of Wrocław) invite paper abstracts for “Generation BioWare,” a conference focused exclusively on the Canadian developer and their games.

Founded in 1995, BioWare have been responsible for some of the most acclaimed titles in the history of the industry. The studio’s games are famous for multi-layered narratives and complex characters, both of which originated in titles set in the well-established worlds: Faerûn from the *Dungeon and Dragons* pen-and-paper RPG system and the *Star Wars* universe. Since their release, *Baldur’s Gate* (1998), *Baldur’s Gate II: Shadows of Amn* (2000), and *Knights of the Old Republic* (2003) have enjoyed critical and commercial success and the two franchises have enabled the studio to create its own proprietary worlds in *Jade Empire* (2005), *Mass Effect* (2007), and *Dragon Age: Origins* (2009) as well as to further refine story-telling structures, character writing, karmic mechanics, and worldbuilding techniques.

The positive reception of BioWare titles has been accompanied by the development of a dedicated fanbase, whose general video game literacy was centrally shaped by BioWare’s design decisions and techniques. As a result, BioWare games have come to be regarded as templates for many western RPGs: the recent Kickstarter success of *Divinity Original Sin* (2014), *Pillars of Eternity* (2015), and *Tyranny* (2016) can be partly ascribed to the impact the *Baldur’s Gate* series had on these titles.

Consequently, BioWare’s impact on the medium as well as the industry can be perceived as nothing short of critical. To address this influence, we would like to create a platform for academic exchange and

invite submissions from scholars and researchers across disciplines, including game studies, literary studies, linguistics, fan studies, media studies, sociology, and cultural studies.

Suggested areas of research include but are not limited to:

- narratology and character research;
- literary and ludological dimensions;
- sociology of BioWare games and their fan communities;
- BioWare games and classic RPGs;
- worldbuilding techniques;
- narrative techniques;
- gameplay design;
- poetics of BioWare games;
- ethical and moral issues in BioWare games;
- localization and adaptation;
- paratextuality and transmediality;
- video game market and the evolution of BioWare as a studio;
- Interplay; BlackIsle; Troika; and Obsidian as competitors and creators of alternative worldbuilding
- and narrative techniques;
- narrative and character design methods; and
- visuality and sound in BioWare games.

Submission: Abstracts not exceeding 600 words can be sent via the registration form.

- Abstract submission deadline: 30.09.2017
- Notification of acceptance: 10.10.2017
- Conference registration due: 15.11.2017

Conference fee: 100 EUR (fee transfer details will be provided with the notification of acceptance).

Main event: 5-7.12.2017.

All questions regarding the event should be sent to: jakub.krogulec2@uwr.edu.pl or jakub.krogulec5@gmail.com.

The event is organized by the American Literature and Culture Section (Institute of English Studies, University of Wrocław), the New Media and Popular Literature Section (Institute of Polish Studies, University of Wrocław), “Trickster” Association, and the PGW initiative.

The conference will be held at the University of

Wrocław, pl. Uniwersytecki 1, in Oratorium Marianum.

Call for Papers—Articles

Title: *Science Fiction Studies Special Issue: Science Fiction and the Climate Crisis.*

Proposal Deadline: 1st June 2017.

Contact: Brent Ryan Bellamy <bbellamy@ualberta.ca> and Veronica Hollinger <vhollinger@trentu.ca>.

SFS is planning a special issue on “Science Fiction and the Climate Crisis” that we see as part of an urgent and ongoing conversation with colleagues in the humanities, the social sciences, and the sciences. In the energy humanities and other interdisciplinary fields, the climate crisis unfolds differentially as description, allegory, abstract model, immanent materiality, slow apocalypse, and the end of humanist philosophy. We welcome submissions that address the intersections of science fiction and the climate crisis in historical and/or theoretical terms and in multiple media forms from the pulps to science-fiction media and art. We encourage papers that reflect on and explore genre hybridity, including modalities such as climate fiction, petrofiction, and slipstream.

What does one look for when science fiction overlaps with the climate crisis? Is it the punctual events of the thriller genre or the slower pacing of a carefully considered *longue durée* that grabs critical attention? Moreover, how does climate figure in sf—as foreground or background? Which sf authors or texts stay nervous about the climate crisis? Is there a parallel between science-fictional estrangement and the defamiliarization of neologisms such as the Anthropocene, hyperobjects, necrocapitalism? Contributions might also consider how the climate crisis figures in sf in light of the energy regime. For instance, what differences obtain between figurations of coal crisis and depictions of nuclear disaster? How does the way we use energy affect the reach and scope of sf writing? Conversely, what impact, if any, does climate crisis have on our understanding of the role of science fiction in technoculture?

We are looking for submissions that contribute substantial overviews of the current situation and that explore a variety of sites and authors. In addition

to papers focused on the ways in which sf engages the climate crisis, energy regimes, and multiple ecologies (real or imagined), we are interested in discussions that draw on feminist and queer futurities, swerve with the nonhuman turn, analyze the vicissitudes of capitalism’s secular crisis, and follow the utopian impulse. We see immediacy in climate crisis—we must act now—and yet we appreciate a long view of global warming as well—the slow accretion of carbon that has so recently tipped the atmospheric balance of the planet.

Submission: Please send proposals (300-500 words) by 1 Jun. 2017 to Brent Ryan Bellamy (<bbellamy@ualberta.ca>) and Veronica Hollinger (<vhollinger@trentu.ca>). Completed papers (6000-8000 words) will be due by 1 Dec. 2017.

Title: *Feast of Laughter.*

Proposal Deadline: 1 June 2017.

Contact: Gregorio Montejo <montejo@bc.edu>.

Feast of Laughter is a journal dedicated to the American writer R.A. Lafferty, the creator of a modern literary mythos informed by Western, Irish, Native American, Catholic and other literary traditions. Even though Lafferty ostensibly wrote fiction from within the SF genre, his work routinely transcends generic boundaries and subverts conventional science fictional tropes and topics.

We are in the process of planning our fifth volume, and are actively looking for scholarly articles about Lafferty, his work, its reception, and his influence. All disciplinary and theoretical perspectives and diverse research methods are welcome. Authors who are interested in submitting a paper for this volume should send a short abstract-length proposal to Gregorio Montejo (montejo@bc.edu). Any general enquiries can also be directed to this address.

Submission: The deadline for proposals is June 1, 2017. The deadline for submissions is September 1, 2017.

Title: *Messengers from the Stars: On Science Fiction and Fantasy.*

Manuscript Deadline: 15th June 2017.

Contact: ed. Martin Simonson & Raúl Montero Gi-

lete; co-ed. Angélica Varandas, Ana Daniela Coelho & José Duarte <mfts.journal@gmail.com>.

"Messengers from the Stars" is an international, peer-reviewed journal, offering academic articles, reviews, and providing an outlet for a wide range of creative work inspired by science fiction and fantasy. It aims at promoting science fiction and fantasy in the humanities while, at the same time, providing a forum for discussion on all aspects of science fiction and fantasy by welcoming innovative approaches and critical methodologies to the critical and creative landscape. The journal covers the following topics:

- Artificial Intelligences;
- Comic Books/Graphic Novels;
- Fantasy and Children's Literature;
- Fantasy and Science Fiction on Screen (cinema, Web, video games, etc...);
- Fantasy and the Gothic;
- Imagination and Fantasy;
- Journey;
- Medieval Fantasy;
- National and International Fictions;
- Place and Non-place;
- Popular Culture;
- Science and Fiction;
- Steampunk; and
- Television Studies and Utopias/Dystopias.

However, for our 2018 issue we are particularly interested in essays that cover the intersections of science fiction, horror and fantasy/secondary worlds—such as the suggestive *mélange* found in King's "Dark Tower" books and exploited to great effect in other more recent novels, TV-series (*Lost*; *Stranger Things*; and *Westworld* to name but a few mainstream examples) and films over the last few decades.

In addition, you can propose a book or film review. We welcome book and film reviews on current science fiction and fantasy research and PhD dissertations.

Submission: Submissions, between 4000 and 6000 words in English, must be sent to mfts.journal@gmail.com by June 15.

The authors will be notified by the end of July.

Reviews should be between 500 to 1,000 words.

Longer reviews, e.g. dealing with more than one book, should be agreed upon with the Editorial Board.

Title: *Fafnir—Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research*.

Proposal Deadline: 15 June 2017.

Contact: submissions@finfar.org.

Fafnir—Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research invites authors to submit papers for the upcoming edition 3/2017. Theme for the edition is 'reception, audience/s and fandom studies' (e.g. The World Hobbit Project). *The theme issue has been moved from issue 2/2017 to issue 3/2017*. We invite papers that focus on all aspects of the study of 'audiences' for cultural and media products and practices that are connected to speculative fiction. As Finland is hosting the 75th Worldcon in 2017, for this edition we would also be interested in studies of fan societies, conventions, and their history in Nordic countries and beyond. 'Audience' is here understood broadly without any specific theoretical orientations.

Fafnir—Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research is a peer-reviewed academic journal which is published in electronic format four times a year. *Fafnir* is published by The Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research (FINFAR) from 2013 onwards. *Fafnir* publishes various texts ranging from peer-reviewed research articles to short overviews and book reviews in the field of science fiction and fantasy research.

Submission: The submissions must be original work, and written in English (or in Finnish or Scandinavian languages). Manuscripts of research articles should be between 20,000 and 40,000 characters in length. The journal uses the most recent edition of the MLA Style Manual. The manuscripts of research articles will be peer-reviewed. Please note that as *Fafnir* is designed to be of interest to readers with varying backgrounds, essays and other texts should be as accessibly written as possible. Also, if English is not your first language, please have your article proof-read by an English language editor. Please pay attention to our journal's submission guidelines available in: <http://journal.finfar.org/for-authors/submission-guidelines/>

The deadline for submissions is 15th June 2017.

In addition to research articles, *Fafnir* constantly welcomes text proposals such as essays, interviews, overviews and book reviews on any subject suited for the journal.

Please send your electronic submission (saved as RTF-file) to the following address: submissions(at)finfar.org. For further information, please contact the editors: jyrki.korpua@oulu.fi, aino-kaisa.koistinen@juu.fi, bodhisattva.chattopadhyay@ikos.uio.no. More detailed information about our journal is available at our webpage: journal.finfar.org.

This edition is scheduled for the end of September 2017.

Title: *Brumal: Revista de Investigación sobre lo Fantástico/ Brumal: Research Journal on the Fantastic.*

Proposal Deadline: 30th June, 2017.

Contact: <http://revistes.uab.cat/brumal/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.

Monographic Section: "The Fantastic and the Urban" (José Duarte and Ana Daniela Coelho, Coords).

There is a special connection between the Fantastic and the Urban, particularly in a subgenre like the Urban Fantastic, which describes works that are mainly set in the urban space. These matters have become increasingly popular since the late 90's with well-known works as, for instance, *Neverwhere* (Neil Gaiman, 1996) or *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer* (Joss Whedon, 1997). Exploring themes like the coexistence between the real and imagined worlds or the inscription of myths, magic or the supernatural in real cities, these works subvert the codes of reality with increasing complexity, presenting alternatives and visions that question identities and representations, and also reflect upon the cultural and social values of the nations they personify.

The objective of this monographic issue is to offer, in a series of essays, a broader but still specialized view on the urban and the fantastic, as well as the possible and the impossible, by focusing on different artistic expressions (literature, cinema, television series, comics/manga, among others), to analyze in depth the urban fantastic produced around the world. The monograph will consider works that not only explore the Urban Fantastic subgenre, but also those focusing on specific relationships between the urban experience and the fantastic, the real and the

imagined, the futuristic and the historical settings, and other genres/works related to this topic.

Brumal will only consider works of a fantastic nature as [defined by the journal](#), hereby only accepting papers on other non-mimetic genres such as the marvellous or science fiction if and when they are related to fantastic narrative.

Some areas of research include, but are not limited to:

- Urban Fantastic and the City;
- Cities: between reality and Fantasy;
- Place, Space and Liminality;
- Underground Tales/Real and Fantastic Urban Creatures;
- Adaptations (different perspectives: television, cinema, visual arts, comics, etc.);
- Past and Present Representations of the Urban Space;
- Videogames;
- Adult/Teen Fiction;
- Utopias/Dystopias;
- Possible and Impossible Urban Worlds.

Miscellaneous Section: this Miscellaneous section is open to any type of article on any of the diverse artistic manifestations of the fantastic (narrative, theater, film, comics, painting, photography, video games), whether theoretical, critical, historical or comparative in nature, concerning the fantastic in any language or from any country, from the nineteenth century to the present.

Submission: scholars who wish to contribute to either of these two sections should send us their articles registering as authors on our web page. The Guidelines for Submissions may be found on the Submissions section of the web page.

Title: *World Science Fiction Studies.*

Manuscript Deadline: Ongoing.

Contact: Dr Laurel Plapp, Senior Commissioning Editor: L.PLAPP@peterlang.com.

The book series *World Science Fiction Studies* understands science fiction to be a global phenomenon and explores the various manifestations of the genre in cultures around the world. It recognizes the importance of Anglo-American contributions to the

field but promotes the critical study of science fiction in other national traditions, particularly German-speaking. It also supports the investigation of transnational discourses that have shaped the science fiction tradition since its inception. The scope of the series is not limited to one particular medium and encourages study of the genre in both print and digital forms (e.g. literature, film, television, trans-medial). Theoretical approaches (e.g. post-human, gender, genre theory) and genre studies (e.g. film shorts, transgenre such as science fiction comedy) with a focus beyond the Anglo-American tradition are also welcome.

Submission: Proposals for monographs and edited collections in either English or German are invited. For more information, please contact Dr Laurel Plapp, Senior Commissioning Editor, Peter Lang Ltd, 52 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LU, UK. Email: L.PLAPP@peterlang.com. Tel: +44 (0) 1865 514160.

Title: Museum of Science Fiction Call for Submissions for New Triannual *Journal of Science Fiction*.

Manuscript Deadline: Ongoing.

Contact: Register on website: <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.

The Museum of Science Fiction, the world's first comprehensive science fiction museum, will publish an academic journal of science fiction using the University of Maryland's journal management system. The first issue of the Museum's new *Journal of Science Fiction* will be launched in January of 2016 and will serve as a forum for scientists and academics from around the world to discuss science fiction, including recent trends in the genre, its influence on the modern world, and its prognostications of the future.

Greg Bear, member of Museum of Science Fiction's Board of Advisors and Hugo award-winning science fiction author said, "Science fiction as literature has real staying power and has been a huge influence on our modern world. It's only fitting that we attempt to understand the cultural and mythic roots of our need for anticipation, adventure, and imagination."

"We want readers everywhere to consider the science fiction genre they love from new angles. We want them to ask questions and to have fun doing so," said Monica Louzon, managing editor of the

Museum's new *Journal of Science Fiction*. "We're encouraging anyone who considers themselves a science fiction scholar to send us their original articles, essays or book reviews for our first issue."

The *Journal of Science Fiction* will be published online and freely accessible to everyone -- no subscription or submission fees are required. The Museum's *Journal of Science Fiction* welcomes original work from writers around the world, with an emphasis on the interdisciplinary and innovative aspects of science fiction. Issues will be published three times a year and each will feature between eight and twelve peer-reviewed academic articles as well as several book reviews and essays.

Submission: submission information for the *Journal of Science Fiction* can be found on the Journal's homepage at the University of Maryland: <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/index>.

Submissions for the *Journal of Science Fiction* can be sent to: <http://publish.lib.umd.edu/scifi/about/submissions#authorGuidelines>.

Any Journal-related questions can be emailed to Monica Louzon, Managing Editor: journal@museumof-sciencefiction.org.

More information about other activities are available on the Museum's website: www.museumof-sciencefiction.org.

About the Museum of Science Fiction: the non-profit Museum of Science Fiction will be the world's first comprehensive science fiction museum, covering the history of the genre across the arts and providing a narrative on its relationship to the real world. The Museum will show how science fiction continually inspires individuals, influences cultures, and impacts societies. Also serving as an educational catalyst to expand interest in the science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) areas. The Museum uses tools such as mobile applications and wifi-enabled display objects to educate and entertain. For a full press packet on the Museum of Science Fiction's vision and other information, please visit: www.museumofsciencefiction.org/presspacket.

Title: *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*.

Manuscript Deadline: Ongoing.

Contact: Debbie Felton: felton@classics.umass.edu;

<http://www.editorialmanager.com/preternature/>.

The journal *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural* is currently seeking original submissions. *Preternature* is indexed by both JSTOR and Project MUSE.

Preternature provides an interdisciplinary, inclusive forum for the study of topics that stand in the liminal space between the known world and the inexplicable. The journal embraces a broad and dynamic definition of the preternatural that encompasses the weird and uncanny—magic, witchcraft, spiritualism, occultism, esotericism, demonology, monstrosity, and more, recognizing that the areas of magic, religion, and science are fluid and that their intersections should continue to be explored, contextualized, and challenged.

A rigorously peer-reviewed journal, *Preternature* welcomes submissions of original research in English from any academic discipline and theoretical approach relating to the role and significance of the preternatural. The journal publishes scholarly ar-

ticles, notes, and reviews covering all time periods and cultures. Additionally, *Preternature* is pleased to consider original editions or translations of relevant texts from contemporary or ancient languages that have not yet appeared in scholarly edition or been made available in English.

Submission: contributions should be roughly 8,000–12,000 words (with the possibility of longer submissions in exceptional cases), including all documentation and critical apparatus. If accepted for publication, manuscripts will be required to adhere to the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th edition (style 1, employing footnotes).

To submit a manuscript to the editorial office, please visit <http://www.editorialmanager.com/preternature/> and create an author profile. The online system will guide you through the steps to upload your article for submission to the editorial office.

Inquiries may be directed to the Editor, Debbie Felton, at: felton@classics.umass.edu.

Science Fiction Research Association

www.sfra.org

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

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

SFRA Listserv

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

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

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

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Three issues per year. Critical works and reviews. Add to dues: \$59 (e-issue only); \$73 (airmail).

Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts

Four issues per year. Scholarly journal, with critical and bibliographical articles and reviews. Add to dues: \$40/1 year (US); \$50/1 year (international); \$100/3 years.

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Critical and creative works. Add to dues: \$50 (US); \$95 (US institutional); \$60 (international); \$105 (international institutional).

