

**#268**  
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The *SFRAReview* (ISSN 1068-395X) is published four times a year by the Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA) and distributed to SFRA members. Individual issues are not for sale; however, starting with issue #256, all issues will be published to SFRA's website no less than two months after paper publication. For information about the SFRA and its benefits, see the description at the back of this issue. For a membership application, contact SFRA Treasurer Dave Mead or get one from the SFRA website: <www.sfra.org>. SFRA would like to thank the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire for its assistance in producing the Review.

#### **SUBMISSIONS**

The *SFRAReview* encourages all submissions, including essays, review essays that cover several related texts, and interviews. If you would like to review non-fiction or fiction, please contact the respective editor.

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**News Items:**

The **Science Fiction Foundation** seeks entries for its annual graduate essay prize. £250 will be awarded for the best unpublished essay in science fiction criticism. The winning entry will be published in the journal *Foundation*. The judges of the competition are: Andrew M. Butler (Canterbury Christ Church University College): editor of *Vector* Elizabeth Hand: author and reviewer for *The Magazine of F&SF* Gary K. Wolfe (Roosevelt University, Chicago): reviewer for *Locus*. The deadline for submissions is 31st May 2004. Entrants must be registered for a higher degree. The judges reserve the right to withhold the award. Two electronic copies should be submitted, one anonymous, of 5000-8000 words. Submit a Word document to Dr. Farah Mendlesohn, editor of *Foundation*, <farah@fjm3.demon.co.uk>.

The **Official Frederik Pohl** website is looking for contributions, including brief scholarly essays suitable for a wide audience, book reviews, brief synopses of works by Pohl, permission to link to your website, and study guides. Contact Rich Ehrlich at <erlichrd@muohio.edu>.

**Neil Barron** is looking for websites to include in the 5th ed of *Anatomy of Wonder*. Sites must : 1) be easy to navigate, 2) be frequently updated, as necessary, including regular checking of links, 3) be reasonably balanced and intelligently edited with accurate text; 4) of general interest to the more experienced reader of SF and often to scholars as well; 5) omit clutter and advertising on the site; and 6) include an e-mail address for the webmaster or someone having primary responsibility for the site. Contact <writeneil@att.net>.

SFRA BUSINESS

**Message from the President**

Peter Brigg

This President's message is a final invitation to join us at Skokie, June 3-6, 2003, where Bev Friend and Elizabeth Anne Hull are staging SFRA XXXV. Our annual conferences reaffirm the fellowship of our studies in science fiction and fantasy and they are your executive's chance to discuss the path of the organization and its activities. If you are hovering over the idea there is still time to commit. Connie Willis, winner of six Nebula and six Hugo awards, will be guest of honor at Skokie.

In 2005 SFRA XXXVI will be hosted by Dave Mead and Peter Lowentrout at Las Vegas, so start considering your lucky numbers and planning ahead. After Las Vegas the two tentative offers are Lublin, Poland, and Brisbane, Australia. 2006 and thereafter are matters for the next executive but at Skokie or very shortly thereafter the present executive would like to hear of any other possibilities so the new executive, whom we shall elect this year from a wonderful slate of candidates assembled by Mike Levy in his role as Past President, can have some options on the table.

Your President has been doing research things in New Zealand (such as travel and viewing yellow-eyed penguins close up) and has been getting a lot of excellent support from his executive. It did not help my long distance operation of the Association that a computing error wiped every bit of the data I brought with me, but needed items have been humming across e-mail (Does email hum?). We are 15 members short of last year's final membership at present, so please rejoin or help us recruit that vital extra person you have been meaning to speak to.

This issue of SFRAR has notice of several amendments to our bylaws which your executive intends to put to a vote at the General Meeting. Please consider them before voting at the meeting. And note that should any of them prove contentious there are provisions in the bylaws for a demand for a postal vote from the membership.

I hope to see many of you at Skokie, and, as always, I welcome emails with queries, problems, etc. to be sent to <pbrigg@uoguelph.ca>.

SFRA BUSINESS

**Minutes of the Exec. Board**

Warren Rochelle

The business meeting of the SFRA Executive Board, via conference call, was called to order on December 28, 2003, at 2 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. In attendance were Peter Brigg (President), Michael Levy (Immediate Past President), Janice Bogstad (Vice President), Warren Rochelle (Secretary and Recorder), David Mead (Treasurer), and Christine Mains (Editor, *SFRA Review*). The membership of the various SFRA juried awards was announced and a brief final report on the Guelph conference was given. Each officer gave a report. Among the topics of discussion were (1) the upcoming elections for SFRA officers, (2) SFRA's current healthy financial status, (3) recruitment of new members, (3) the tax status of the organization, (4) the publication schedule of the *Review*, (5) future SFRA conferences, (6) the SFRA logo, and (7) financial assistance for conference attendance by students and overseas members.

The Pioneer Award committee members are John Clute, chair, Veronica Hollinger, and Andy Sawyer. The Pioneer Award committee members are Paul

Kincaid, chair, Pavel Frelik, and Hal Hall. The Claesron Award committee members are Mack Hassler, chair, Neil Easterbrook, and Joe Sanders. The Mary Kay Bray Award committee members are Jeff Prickman, chair, Mike Levy, and Margaret McBride. The Graduate Paper Award committee members are Joan Gordon, chair, Janis Svilpis, and Sarah Canfield Fuller. In general everything went well at the Guelph conference.

Each officer gave a report in they described their various activities, both in process and completed to date.

Mike Levy announced it was time to start looking for candidates for SFRA officers. He will solicit candidates, set up a nomination and election committee, set election dates, and run the election. The Secretary is to prepare the ballot, which must be mailed at least 60 days prior to the deadline. The candidates statements will be published in the *Review*.

Treasurer David Mead reported that SFRA is in excellent financial shape, with \$25,900 in savings. The income for 2003 was \$25,100.49 from dues, royalties, and interest, and expenditures were approximately \$23,000. Royalties from the SFRA anthologies increased by 60% and back issues of the directory were sold to a German library for \$300. It was noted the editors of the *Review* have cut their expenses in half. By the end of 2003, 50% of the membership had renewed; the other 50% is expected to review in 2004, with an expected membership increase of 4-5. Various methods of recruitment were discussed.

Christine Mains reported that most of 2003 was spent in getting the *Review* back on track and this is close to happening. There was discussion of what month of a given quarter was preferred for the mailing of the *Review*. The tax-exempt status of the organization was discussed, as this affects how the *Review* is mailed. A resolution will be drafted for the Skokie conference which would change the *Review* to quarterly status. The printing and mailing of the *Review*, thanks to Jan Bogstad, is now being handled at Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

An update on the status of the 2004 Skokie conference is forthcoming from the organizers. Dates have been set and a hotel secured for the 2005 Las Vegas conference. There was discussion of various issues with providing financial assistance to foreign and student conference attendees. The practicality of using PayPal for membership will be investigated. The project to obtain a new logo for SFRA was tabled for now. Writing a new SFRA brochure for distribution at various conferences will be investigated. Future sites for SFRA conferences were discussed, including Lublin, Poland, College Station, TX, and Brisbane, Australia.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4 p.m.

#### SFRA ELECTIONS 2004

### Candidates' Statements

Further nominations will be accepted until June 10, 2004, and may be made at the General Meeting in Skokie. Ballots, which will include candidate statements, will be mailed on or before August 1, 2004 and must be mailed by October 1, 2004 (the address will be on the ballot). Please vote. Every vote counts—don't miss this chance to participate in your organization and to help shape its future!

#### Officer Statement: President

*Janice M. Bogstad*

Janice Bogstad is a long-time member of SFRA and has served on a few committees. She is currently vice-president and managing editor of the *SFRA Review*. Janice is committed to academic studies of science fiction in English and

The **SciFi Channel** has announced plans to produce a four-hour miniseries based on Larry Niven's Hugo and Nebula-Award winning novel *Ringworld*. No dates have been announced.

Edward James will receive the **Pilgrim Award** for 2004, and Patricia Warrick has been selected as the winter of the **Thomas D. Claesron Award** for Distinguished Service for 2004. Both awards will be presented at the annual conference in Skokie June 3-6, 2004.

The **William L. Crawford Award** for best new fantasy novelist was presented at the International Conference of the Fantastic in the Arts to K.J. Bishop, author of *The Etched City*.

Richard Morgan has won the **Philip K. Dick Award** for paperback original for his novel *Altered Carbon*.

**Nebula Winners:** Best Novel: *The Speed of Dark*, by Elizabeth Moon; Best Novella: *Coraline*, by Neil Gaiman; Best Novelette: "The Empire of Ice Cream," by Jeffrey Ford; Best Short Story: "What I Didn't See," by Karen Joy Fowler; Best Script: "The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers," by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Stephen Sinclair, and Peter Jackson. The 2005 Nebula Awards will be held in Chicago, IL from April 29-May 1 at the Allegro Hotel.

The winners of Analog Science Fiction and Fact's **AnLab Awards** and **Asimov's Science Fiction's Readers' Awards** were announced on April 17, 2004 at the Nebula Weekend in Seattle. AnLab Winners: Novella: "Walk in Silence," by Catherine Asaro; Novelette: "Tiny Berries," by Richard A. Lovett; Short Story: "Lav-

ender in Love," by Brian Plante; Fact Article: "If a Tree Falls... or, The Secret History of Global Environmental Catastrophe," by Catherine H. Shaffer; Cover: December, by David A. Hardy. Asimov's Readers' Award Winners: Novella: "Ariel," by Lucius Shepard; Novelette: "The Bellman," by John Varley; Short Story: "Coyote at the End of History," by Michael Swanwick; Poem: "Alternate History," by Maureen McHugh; Cover Artist: Jim Burns.

The **British Science Fiction Achievement Awards** were presented at Eastercon on April 11: Novel: *Felaheen*, by Jon Courtenay Grimwood; Short Fiction: "The Wolves in the Walls," by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean; Artwork: Cover of *The True knowledge* of Ken MacLeod, by Colin Odell; Non-Fiction: *Reading Science Fiction*, by Farah Mendlesohn.

This year's **James Tiptree, Jr. Award** winner is Matt Ruff for his novel *This House in Order: A Romance of Souls*. The Award will be presented at Wiscon in Madison, Wisconsin during the weekend of May 28-31.

**Paizo Publishing** has announced that beginning in July, they will relaunch *Amazing Stories*. Paizo is offering a special charter subscription rate at their website, <[www.paizo.com](http://www.paizo.com)>.

NASA has announced the **discovery of a new planetoid** beyond Pluto. The object, tentatively called Sedna, is believed to be about 2,000 kilometers in diameter, which makes it larger than 2004 DW. Still smaller than Pluto, at 2320 kilometers, Sedna was discovered by Mike Brown, Chad Trujillo and David Rabinowitz on November 14, 2003 and given

other languages, wrote her dissertation on Anglo-American and French Feminist Science fiction, and continues her contacts with international scholars and literatures. She is Head of Collection Development for University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire McIntyre Library, as well as an instructor in the Women's Studies program, and member of the Graduate Faculty. She has edited journals and journal issues, published reviews, essays, and articles in newsletters, journals, anthologies and encyclopedias in SF and Fantasy, children's literature, Chinese and European medieval and modern women's studies venues such as *SFRA Review*, *Extrapolation*, *Medieval Feminist Forum*, and *Midwest Book Review* (online). As president, she hopes to expand our international appeal relationships with other national and international organizations, promoting the healthy intersections we have all been forging between scholars in the U.S. and abroad. Check it all out at: <[http://www.uwec.edu/Library/cd/janice\\_bogstad.html](http://www.uwec.edu/Library/cd/janice_bogstad.html)>.

#### **Officer Statement: President**

*David Mead*

I am honored to be nominated. Over the years I have had the opportunity to serve the SFRA in several capacities - as Secretary, Treasurer, and President. This is a wonderful group of scholars and teachers, and I will continue to do what I can to help it flourish if you elect me.

#### **Officer Statement: Vice President**

*Philip Snyder*

SFRA has been one of the most consistently interesting and valuable academic organizations to which I have ever belonged. The people, the programs, the nature of our enterprise, and the spirit with which we engage it, have all afforded me a great deal of personal, as well as professional, satisfaction. Over the years, I have served the association in various capacities - as a presenter at conferences, as a Pioneer Award judge, and as a reviews editor for the *SFRA Review* - and I would certainly bring the same enthusiasm and commitment to the post of vice-president, if elected. It's a great group, and I'm pleased to be of service in it.

#### **Officer Statement: Vice President**

*Bruce Rockwood*

If elected Vice President I would want to work with the membership and other officers to think about the future of the SFRA, and develop a plan to increase its membership and influence in several directions: as a resource and source of support for those of us in academia; to brainstorm and share ideas with the creative people in the SF universe about the direction and role of the genre; and to find ways to improve the way SF is understood and translated in the mundane world (e.g., the business executives who screw up films and potential t.v. series, the publishers who mishandle an author's work, and reviewers who don't appreciate the significance of SF, to name a few examples). I would also want to reach out to young readers and future writers by having a distinct young peoples' program at our annual meetings, and soliciting ideas from younger readers about what they would like to see happen. I admire what the people in the SFRA for many years have accomplished, and would like to help continue the project.

#### **Officer Statement: Treasurer**

*Joe Sanders*

My only experience with financial management for SFRA was as chair of the 2000 annual conference, which ran on budget and actually made a nice profit.

Treasurer is not a position I've been craving for years, and that's probably a sign that I ought to learn how to do it. If elected, I'll do my best for the organization.

**Officer Statement: Treasurer**

*Mack Hassler*

Treasurer was the first office I held in SFRA, when Pat Warrick was president, and I enjoyed it. Back then interest rates were high; we made well over ten percent from certificates of deposit; and we knew not Quicken. So either Joe or I will have to learn fast from the recent fine work of Dave Mead. But I know, also, that Joe is a fast learner so I am convinced that this is a choice where the organization cannot go wrong.

**Officer Statement: Secretary**

*Warren Rochelle*

I am running for re-election as Secretary because I am passionate about the teaching and scholarly study of science fiction and want to be involved in the betterment of each. With the past two years under my belt, I offer experience in the position and continuity. I want SFRA to continue to thrive and feel that active participation of the membership is essential for this to happen. If re-elected, I will do the best job that I can.

**Officer Statement: Secretary**

*Ed Carmien*

I'm an Assistant Professor of English at Rider University's Westminster Choir College. I'm enjoying my fourth year of teaching at this institution, where the sound of music is indeed always in the air. First published as a teenager, I've been a writer all my adult life. A member of SFWA and the MLA, I bring to the SFRA a growing interest in the scholarship of various kinds of fantastic fiction. I see my candidacy as an opportunity to participate in the activities of the association in a more meaningful way. I feel I owe the organization thanks for the genesis of the book I'm currently editing about C.J. Cherryh, for it was after a SFRA event featuring this fine author that I conceived of the project, due to be published later this summer. Serving as an officer of the association will both allow me to support activities I believe are important and say "thank you!"

SFRA BUSINESS

**SFRA : Bylaws Revision 2004**

The existing Bylaws of the Association can be found in the back of the 2003 *Annual Directory*.

After discussions with the Executive it is proposed that the following amendments to the bylaws be put forward to the membership at the June 2004 meeting of the Association:

**Article VIII sec. 2 a**

second sentence amended to read:

*The SFRA Review shall be published four times per year or as directed by the Executive Committee.*

This amendment was presented to the membership at the 2003 Annual meeting in Guelph but the requirement that notice be given in advance via the *SFRA Review* had not been met. It was met in Issue 263-4.

the designation 2003 VB16. It has an orbit of about 10,500 years and its highly elliptical orbit varies from 850AU and 76AU. Sedna is believed to be the first object to be discovered within the Oort Cloud.

Two new species of dinosaur have been discovered in Antarctica. A 1.8 m tall carnivore was discovered on James Ross Island near the Antarctic Peninsula. The discoverers believe it lived about 70 million years ago. Another team of paleontologists discovered the remains of a 200 million-year-old herbivore on Mt. Kilpatrick, approximately 3900 meters above sea level.

The Stamp Development program of the United States Postal Service is currently considering issuing a stamp with the likeness of Isaac Asimov sometime after 2006. Americans can write letter in support of this proposal to Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, C/O Stamp Development, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Room 5670, Washington, D. C. 20260-2437.

Luxembourg has announced a stamp with the image of Hugo Gernsback. The stamp, which notes Gernsback as a writer and inventor, has a face value of .70 Euro.

**Recent and Forthcoming Titles:**

Aggelis, Steven L. *Conversations with Ray Bradbury*. University Press of Mississippi, 2004.

Beahm, George W. *Muggles and Magic: J.K. Rowling and the Harry Potter Phenomenon*. Hampton Roads, 2004.

Booker, M. Keith. *Science Fiction Television: A History*. Praeger, 2004.

Brooks, Terry. *Sometimes the Magic Works: Lessons from a Writing Life*. Ballantine, 2004.

Chance, Jane. *Tolkien and the Invention of Myth: A Reader*. University Press of Kentucky, 2004.

Cook, Benjamin. *Doctor Who: The New Audio Adventures—The Inside Story*. Big Finish Productions, 2004.

Fitting, Peter. *Subterranean Worlds: A Critical Anthology*. Wesleyan, 2004.

Freese, Peter. *The Holodeck in the Garden: Science and Technology in Contemporary American Fiction*. Dalkey Archive Press, 2004.

Greenberg, Martin Harry. *Space Stations*. Daw, 2004.

Gwenllian-Jones, Sara; and Roberta E. Pearson. *Cult Television*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004.

Lobdell, Jared. *The Scientifiction Novels of C.S. Lewis: Space and Time in the Ransom Stories*. McFarland, 2004.

Lobdell, Jared. *The World of the Rings: Language, Religion and Adventure in Tolkien*. Open Court, 2004.

McKee, Gabriel. *Pink Beams of Light from the God in the Gutter: The Science-Fictional Religion of Philip K. Dick*. University Press of America, 2004.

Mignola, Mike. *The Art of Hellboy*. Dark Horse, 2004.

Muldaur, Sheila. *Genre Assessments for Fables, Fairy Tales, and Fantasies*. R.C. Owen Publishers, 2004.

Raham, Gary. *Teaching Science Fact with Science Fiction*. Heinemann, 2004.

Sandner, David. *Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader*. Praeger, 2004.

Stableford, Brian M. *Historical Dictionary of Science Fiction Literature*. Scarecrow Press, 2004.

Tucker, Jeffrey A. *A Sense of Wonder: Samuel R. Delany, Race, Identity and Difference*. Wesleyan University Press, 2004.

### Article III sec 2

Remove sentence 2 of the section “The time and place” due to more infrequent publication of the Review. Replace with:

*The time and place of the business meeting shall be clearly indicated on the program for the annual conference.*

### Article V sec 3

add amendment:

*The vice president shall have special responsibility for membership recruitment for SFRA (working along with the secretary who sends out annual renewal notices and reminder notice).*

This amendment is proposed in lieu of proposing adding a membership secretary to the executive. Aggressive recruiting is necessary for the future health of the organisation.

### Article V sec 7

amend second sentence

*Secretaries may succeed themselves in office for a second successive term but shall serve for no more than two successive terms. Treasurers may succeed themselves in office for up to three successive term but shall serve for no more than three successive terms.*

This change expresses the wisdom of having the sitting treasurer, who has had to establish banking practices, accounting methods, contacts with the journals, etc., possibly hold the office longer. Present reporting systems suggest that there is little risk and much to be gained from permitting the treasurer to run for a third term.

### NONFICTION REVIEW

## L. Frank Baum, Creator of Oz

Bruce A. Beatie

Katharine M. Rogers. *L. Frank Baum, Creator of Oz*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003 (orig New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002). xviii + 318 pages (notes, bibliography, index). Hardbound, \$17.95, ISBN 0-306-81297-5.

In his Preface to Raylyn Moore's 1974 *Wonderful Wizard, Marvelous Land* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press—the only previous book-length biography of Baum), Ray Bradbury compares Baum's Oz with Lewis Carroll's Wonderland: “Oz is muffins and honey, summer vacations, and all the easy green time in the world. Wonderland is cold gruel and arithmetic at six a.m., icy showers, long schools. It is not surprising that Wonderland is the darling of the intellectuals.” (xiv) Though the three decades since have seen a fair number of studies of Baum and his work, a check of the online WorldCat shows that Bradbury's argument still holds true: the subject-search for “Baum, L. Frank” turns up 235 items, while “Carroll, Lewis” produces 1332.

Katharine M. Rogers is not the first biographer of Baum. In addition to the Moore book just mentioned (which focuses more on the “land” than on its creator) and several shorter biographical accounts, there is *To Please a Child: A Biography of L. Frank Baum, Royal Historian of Oz* (1961), written by Baum's oldest son, Frank Joslyn, and Russell P. MacFall, published three years after Frank Joslyn's death. Though as long as Rogers' book, it devotes nearly two-thirds of its 284 pages to Baum's life up to and including the publication of *The Wizard of Oz*, and lacks any documentation of sources. A check of Rogers' endnotes shows that she has made extensive use of the Baum-MacFall book.

Rogers has written, however, the first biography of Baum that is likely to earn respect among the “intellectuals.” She is an experienced biographer and scholar. Among her five previous books is a biography of Frances Burney (1990), and she has contributed chapters on early British women writers to various collections. Her earlier publications (including her 1957 Columbia dissertation) were explicitly feminist, but her 1998 study of *The Cat and the Human Imagination: Feline Images from Bast to Garfield* may represent something of a transition to Baum’s Oz.

In the first nine chapters of her biography, Rogers takes us from Baum’s birth on May 15, 1856, in Chittenango, NY, to his death in Hollywood on May 5, 1919, at Ozcot, the house he and his wife named, and in which she lived until her own death. Unlike Baum and MacFall, Rogers shifts the balance to Baum’s post-*Wizard* life: 94 pages for his life through *Wizard*, 146 for the last 19 years of his life. She seems to have read every one of Baum’s published works (a chronologically-ordered bibliography appears on pages 291-296), and has made extensive use of Baum’s unpublished papers (which are scattered among libraries from South Dakota to New York). Though her account of Baum’s life is thoroughly documented (36 pages of endnotes!), it is quite readable, for enjoyment as well as enlightenment. Her feminist bent is apparent in the detailed and very positive picture she gives us of Baum’s wife Maud, née Gage, and of Maud’s substantial contribution to his success, but the focus remains on Baum’s work.

I was surprised to learn from her account that Baum’s prolific writing was simply his “job,” his way of keeping himself and his family in the lifestyle to which they became accustomed after the success of *The Wizard of Oz*. His deepest interest lay, from his earliest years and to the end of his life, with the theater. He began his creative life as actor and playwright—his play *The Maid of Arran* toured successfully for at least two years, with Baum himself playing the leading role. He was utterly delighted when the musical stage version of *The Wizard of Oz* was a runaway success, and tried unsuccessfully to the end of his life to duplicate that success. That interest was, in 1914, extended to creation of the Oz Firm Manufacturing Company, later run by his son Frank Joslyn, which was never a financial success. While Rogers considers that the award-winning and much-loved 1939 film version of *The Wizard of Oz* was “false to Baum’s view that the world of imagination—whether represented by dream, fairy tale, or actual innovative invention or discovery—has its own validity” (254), she admits that the film “undoubtedly would have delighted Baum.” (253). Throughout the book Rogers has documented Baum’s willingness, indeed eagerness, to adapt his creations to what he perceived as (or was advised was) public taste. (It is interesting to note, however, that the 1961 Baum-MacFall biography ignores the film utterly.)

The final chapter of the book, titled “Baum’s Achievement: The World He Created” (241-254), is a remarkably insightful argument for the lasting significance of his work. “Baum’s greatest gifts,” she concludes, were the two most important ones for a writer of fantasy: “he could create a wonderful world, and he could make it believable.” (243) And he created that world, as it were, with his left hand; in stark contrast to Tolkien, he did no extensive research, nor did he plan out his books in any detail. Rogers has laid a solid basis for her judgment in the biographical chapters; in fact at least a third of the text of the nine biographical chapters consists of well-balanced analyses of his published works and his theatrical ventures. These analyses, often fascinating in themselves, represent something of a flaw in the book as biography; Rogers often seems to be led from one work to another by theme or other association, and a sense of chronology is sometimes lost. Though each chapter refers to a span of time in its title (e.g., chapter 5: “Successful Author, 1901-1903”), they often reach backward or forward, and readers can easily lose track of where and when they are in Baum’s life.

Waller, John. *Fabulous Science: Fact and Fiction in the History of Scientific Discovery*. Oxford UP, 2004.

Werner, James V. *American Flaneur: The Cosmic Physiognomy of Edgar Allan Poe*. Routledge, 2004.

#### CFPs:

WHAT: Blurring the Boundaries: The Trans-Real and Other Movements

WHO: ICFA 2005

WHEN: March 16-20, 2005

WHERE: Wyndham Fort Lauderdale Airport Hotel

TOPICS: Autobiography made fantastic. Reality redefined. According to trans-realist Rudy Rucker, it’s “writing about immediate reality – or your idiosyncratic perceptions of it – in a fantastic way.” At ICFA-26, we look forward to a broad range of discussions examining the trans-real and other movements that blur the boundaries between genres and between worlds, including the New Wave, Cyberpunk, Steampunk, the Interstitial Arts, Slipstream, the New Weird, and more. Our Guest of Honor is Rudy Rucker, Guest Scholar Damien Broderick, and Special Guests John Kessel and Albert Goldbarth. As always, we also welcome proposals for individual papers and for academic sessions and panels on the work of any of our guests, and on any aspect of the fantastic in any media.

SUBMISSIONS: Abstracts for 20 minute papers and panel proposals should be sent to the appropriate Division Head; a listing is available on the website.

DEADLINE: 15 October 2004.

INFORMATION: <[www.iafa.org](http://www.iafa.org)>

WHAT: Postcolonial Studies Journal: Special Issue: ‘Digital Culture’

Who: Guest Editor Mark Poster

TOPICS: Postcolonial studies is heavily affected by processes of globalisation. Among these trends is the spread of networked computing and digital culture, from email and websites, from Usenet to massively multiple online games and digital art, from net news journals to blogs. Digital culture also affects the world labour market as workers around the globe are recruited into high technology jobs as diverse as assembly line production of computers, homeworked programming of software and call centers where workers are taught the rudiments of foreign (mostly American) cultures to enable telephone support for products and services. New media, in short, are now global. This special issue inquires into the consequences of such phenomena for the postcolonial condition.

SUBMISSION: and queries to <pcs@netspace.net.au>

DEADLINE: October 30 2004

INFORMATION: Guidelines are available at <www.ipcs.org.au>.

WHAT: Tekumel and M.A. R. Barker Collection

WHO: Editor: Thomas Fortenberry

TOPICS: Open call for submissions to a new essay collection on SF-fantasy author M.A. R. Barker and his phenomenally complex world of Tekumel. Tekumel, though less well known than Middle-Earth, is the subject of numerous novels, popular games, modules, and a forthcoming film. Widely claimed to be far more complex and detailed than Tolkien's Middle-Earth, the world of Tekumel created by the linguist professor M. A. R. Barker has yet to be the subject of major critical study. This anthology hopes to provide this critical review. Essays welcomed on any topic related to Tekumel or Professor Barker.

One may hope that this biography, along with Susan Ferrara's *The Family of the Wizard: The Baums of Syracuse* (2000), heralds a renewed scholarly interest in Baum's work. The general public's interest, as Rogers demonstrates, has never wavered. Fictions using *The Wizard of Oz* as point of departure, such as Geoff Ryman's *Was* (1993) and Gregory Maguire's *Wicked: The Life and Times of the Wicked Witch of the West* (1996), or John Boorman's cult-sf film *Zardoz* (1974) document the aliveness of Baum's created world.

That last point takes me back to Bradbury's reference to "the intellectuals" with which I began. Of the 235 Baum-as-subject entries mentioned, 200 date from 1956 (the centenary of Baum's birth) or later, and 137 date from the last two decades. If "intellectual" interest in a subject is indicated by book publications (not an entirely valid premise), it occurred to me that the Internet might be a reflection of popular interest—so I tried a Google search parallel to the WorldCat one. The phrase "L. Frank Baum" produced 98,300 hits, while "Lewis Carroll" produced 414,000: not quite as strong a Carroll predominance as with the WorldCat, but significant. However, the phrase "Alice in Wonderland" showed only 597,000 hits, while "Oz" produced 1,120,000, more than the 1,110,000 hits for "Middle Earth." If "Frodo lives" in the popular mind, then Oz is at least as real.

#### NONFICTION REVIEW

### Connected

Jeff Prickman

Shaviro, Steven. *Connected, or What It Means to Live in the Network Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003. 289 pp. \$53.95 cloth, ISBN 0-8166-4362-8, \$17.95 paper, ISBN 0-8166-4363-6.

Steven Shaviro apparently wrote *Connected* as a response to science fiction and horror author K. W. Jeter's novel *Noir* (1998), although the reader must infer the motivation, for no initial plot summary, or any indication that this work will be a key focus, is provided. Shaviro bases a significant portion of his non-fiction book on interpreting quotes from the fictional character McNihil about copyright laws and intellectual property, as if the views in the story are exactly what author Jeter believes. Jeter is given no authorial leeway by Shaviro—if the character said it, then that must be what the author thinks. Perhaps his Preface, wherein he describes *Connected* as "a speculative exercise in cultural theory... (and) a work of science fiction" (x), addresses his odd blurring of McNihil/Jeter, and I should not be so distracted by this practice. After all, he asserts, we live in "a world that itself seems on the verge of being absorbed into the play of science fiction novels and films" (ix).

However, I would argue Jeter creates a dark satire of a near future society—where punishment for copyright violation or indebtedness results in varying forms of a literal living death, and the f-word has been replaced by "connect"—with all the exaggeration that entails. Shaviro makes no acknowledgment of Jeter's wicked sense of humor. Just some examples out of many in *Noir* include the corporate power handshake that stimulates arousal, an E-Christ, the influential Pimp Style Management philosophy, and a business practice dubbed Turd In A Can. For all the concern over copyright protection expressed by McNihil, he willingly alters himself so that his vision imposes black-and-white film noir imagery over all he sees, in effect becoming a constant (albeit legal) user of the images others created. As over-the-top as all of these examples sound, to Shaviro, *Noir*'s legal and political systems need to be considered seriously, and as Jeter's

literal beliefs.

Jeter might be surprised to learn that he, via Shaviro's equating him with McNihil, is a defender-to-the-death of intellectual property rights prone to violence, given that *Noir* was his first novel since *Wolf Flow* (1992) that was not set in "someone else's" world. From 1993-2000, Jeter published ten books and one graphic novel in the milieus of *Alien Nation*, *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, *Blade Runner*, and *Star Wars*. Of course, all of these works were fully authorized by the various franchises. But besides an endnote mentioning the *Blade Runner* novels, Shaviro does not provide any context on Jeter's writing career. The opportunity to consider the differences between "authorized" use of the ideas and characters of others in contrast with stealing intellectual property is lost. The lack of context for Jeter makes me wonder about the accuracy of Shaviro's analysis of the works of other science fiction authors—such as Philip K. Dick, William Gibson, Ken MacLeod and Octavia Butler—to support his claim that reality is becoming science fiction.

Unfortunately, a lack of context pervades *Connected*. The book reads like a CD player set to "Random," or a long weblog. Shaviro breezily namedrops Donna Haraway, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault and other philosophers as if the audience automatically is familiar with their concepts. Like Jeter, William Burroughs is cited without clear indications as to whether the statements are from him or his characters. There are no chapters; instead, separately titled one-and-a-half page sections jump from subtopic to subtopic exemplifying the social, psychological, and economic consequences of a society dominated by corporations and linked by computers. Also in the mix are pop culture examples of movies, musicians, digital media, and artists the author admires. While each of the short blocks of text are readable, and most are interesting, the format does not lend itself to the sustained momentum necessary for classroom discussion or student papers. If the book's design is meant to emulate surfing the web, then Shaviro has succeeded. But those seeking a clear sense of how science fiction can anticipate culture should seek a connection elsewhere.

NONFICTION REVIEW  
**Snake's-Hands**

David Carlson

Turner, Alice K. and Michael Andre-Driussi, (Eds.) *Snake's-Hands: The Fiction of John Crowley*. (2003) Cosmos Books (www.cosmos-books.com) PO Box 36503 Canton, OH 44735. 405 pages; paperback, \$19.99, ISBN 1592240518.

The chief difficulty in writing about the work of American novelist John Crowley is probably simply deciding how and where to begin. Throughout his career, Crowley's work has been characterized by its labyrinths of allusions, its metafictional playfulness, and its dense thematic crosshatching. Such qualities help to explain both Crowley's status as Harold Bloom's "favorite contemporary writer" and his relative obscurity among many less erudite readers of fantasy. With *Snake's-Hands*, the first published collection of criticism of Crowley's work, Alice K. Turner and Michael Andre-Driussi have sought to bridge this gap between elite appreciation and popular neglect. Appropriately enough, their strategy for doing so has been to produce a rhetorically and thematically heterogeneous volume. *Snake's-Hands* is a collection designed to stimulate further reading and inquiry, not to sum up Crowley's achievement in any definitive way. As one of the essayists notes (in a comment that could be the motto of the collection), "the attentive

**SUBMISSIONS:** Essays should present serious studies, but remain jargon free for consumption by the general public. .RTF attachments or snailmail documents.

**CONTACT:** Thomas Fortenberry, <kurvanas@aol.com>, snail: Tekumel Project, 6011-F Delta Crossing Lane, Charlotte NC 28212.

**WHAT: HARRY POTTER FAN FIC TOPICS:** Scholars from all disciplines are invited to submit abstracts or completed essays. Essays on young writers, the transnational fandom, and fan works from outside the English-speaking world are especially needed, but all submissions are very welcome. Paper topics might include, but are by no means limited to: Issues related to the source material; Studies focused on writing by young people; Studies of particular subgenres and their traditions, such as bodies of fan work focused on particular characters or relationships, or around generic constraints; Studies of the various communities (mostly on-line), and of specific issues within those communities; Fan art in visual media; Intellectual property and/in the Harry Potter fan fiction community. Because the audience for this book will come from many backgrounds (both academic and otherwise), and because it will be introducing readers to an extensive lexicon of fandom terminology, it is imperative that all essays be as free as possible of academic jargon.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Abstracts of no less than 300 words, or essays, to <glaubman@earthlink.net>.

**DEADLINE:** June 15

**WHAT:** Noreascon 4 Academic Programming: The 62nd World Science Fiction Convention

WHEN: September 2-6, 2004

WHERE: Boston, MA

TOPICS: The Academic Program Track is seeking papers, panel presentations, seminars, workshops, and poster presentations on all subjects relating to science fiction, fantasy, and horror literature, including, but not limited to: Teaching Speculative Fiction; Teaching other courses through Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror (SF, F, & H); Critical Thinking, Diversity, or History through SF, F, & H; T; Interlacing Folklore Archetypes; History of Speculative Fiction; Fan Fiction; Ethnography of Fandom; Comics as Literature; Censorship. We are more than happy to consider pre-arranged panels and presentations. These sessions will be open to the general membership of the convention, as well as those seeking to earn academic credit by way of a special course offered through Suffolk University.

CONTACT: Dr. Solomon Davidoff, <Solomon@theworld.com>. Please use the words "N4 Academic Track" in the subject line.

INFORMATION: For more information on Noreascon 4, including registration rates and other information, <www.noreascon.org>.

WHAT: Exploring the Multiverse: A Study of the Works of Michael Moorcock

WHO: Editor: Thomas Fortenberry.

TOPICS: Submissions are invited for a new collection of essays studying the writings of British author Michael Moorcock. Possible topics: The Multiverse; The Eternal Champion; The Eternal City; Reincarnation/ Immortality; Transdimensional Existence / Alternate Realities; Doppelganger; The Antihero; The Journey; The Romance of the Rose;

reader by picking up on just one detail may be able to follow paths that were obscured or covered, thereby encountering previous figures and themes in new guises and combinations. . . ." (330). *Snake's-Hands* seeks to draw our attention to a range of such "details" and motifs, thereby encouraging readers to retrace previously obscured "paths" for themselves. The final result, though not always fully satisfying in its scholarly rigor, is nevertheless quite stimulating. It is also likely to provide the impetus for future criticism of a major talent in American fantasy and science fiction.

*Snake's-Hands* is divided into seven sections of unequal length, each one dealing with different phases of Crowley's career. Taken as a whole, the volume includes interpretations of specific novels and stories, primary documents from Crowley himself (his early plot treatment for *Engine Summer*, for example), an "interview" with Crowley (which is presented, oddly enough, as a monologue), a bibliography of his work (fiction, nonfiction, and screenwriting), book reviews, and several "essays" that might be better described as source annotations (a piece that points out dozens of allusions to *Alice in Wonderland* in *Little, Big*, for example). This last category of contribution represents the least satisfying aspect of the collection. While such source notes can provide a foundation on which future critics might build interpretive arguments, in their present form they represent rather inert examples of data collection. One wishes that the authors of these pieces had gone further with the material, providing some interpretation of the patterns being uncovered.

Nevertheless, there are a number of very thoughtful essays in *Snake's-Hands*, pieces that make the collection well worth reading. The strongest contributions in the volume attempt to use Crowley's own acknowledged sources (often confirmed by personal correspondence with the author, which is also frequently reproduced in this volume) as interpretive keys for deeper explorations of his work. Jennifer K. Stevenson's essay on "Memory and the World of John Crowley" provides a fascinating treatment of the significance of the Renaissance "Art of Memory" in the still-unfinished *Ægypt* series, *Engine Summer*, and *Little, Big*. Brian Attebery juxtaposes Crowley's work as a documentary screenwriter and novelist to further consider the interplay of time and memory in his oeuvre. As Attebery notes, Crowley "presents us with both a fluid, unsettled past and a static and curiously archaic future. [His work] shows how both are mediated for us by fantasy" (237). James Hynes treats Crowley's fascination with Hermetic philosophy, Gnosticism, and alchemy, discussing the *Ægypt* series as "a sort of modern alchemist's emblem book" (283). Matthew S. S. Davis explores similar issues in his discussion of Crowley's debts to Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost* (the Bard's own treatment of Hermetecism and Neo-Platonism). Finally, Alice Turner's essay on Crowley's first novel, *The Deep* introduces us to the author's ludic sensibility. Turner analyzes the structure of this odd *roman de clef*, pointing out its complex affinities with dartboards and tarot cards (the latter a symbol that has continued to fascinate Crowley throughout his career). The actual physical layout of Turner's essay (which opens the collection) also highlights a cleverly performative aspect of *Snake's-Hands*. Her essay (like many of the other pieces mentioned above) is supplemented with numerous sidebars that provide amplification of her analysis. Throughout the collection, in other words, "doors" open regularly on the sides of main arguments. In this respect, the criticism in *Snake's-Hands* mirrors the playful, cerebral seductiveness of Crowley's own fiction.

The title of the collection comes from a comment made by the narrator of Crowley's early novel *Engine Summer*, Rush That Speaks. (This comment is included in one of the sidebars to another of Alice Turner's contributions to

*Snake's-Hands*). Rush notes that “when you run along Path, and here is something that looks to be Path, but you find it is only rooms interlocking in a little maze that has no exits but back to Path—that’s a snake’s-hand. It runs off the snake of Path like a set of little fingers. It’s also called a snake’s-hand because a snake has no hands, and likewise there is only one Path. But a snake’s hand is also more: my story is a Path, too, I hope” (qtd. in Turner and Andre-Driussi 60). This, in a sense, is a definition of a Crowley novel: it is a text that seems to move sideways as well as forwards, one full of little “rooms” (set pieces, digressions, focal shifts, etc.) that only gradually begin to reveal themselves as part of a coherent narrative line. The pleasure (and challenge) of reading Crowley’s fiction, then, is finding “Path.” This explains why the editors of *Snake's-Hands* have chosen to include, alongside the critical pieces I have mentioned, a number of book reviews and other essays (by John Clute, Bill Sheehan, Turner, and Andre-Driussi for example) that offer significant amounts of plot exegesis and speculation, mixed in with interpretive commentary. These contributions do not enable us to get the story “straight” in any final way, of course; Crowley’s snakes move just as one would expect them to. Yet as I suggested earlier, Turner and Andre-Driussi’s goal with this collection seems to have been to entice readers and critics to venture more boldly onto Crowley’s Path. In this respect, they have succeeded. *Snake's-Hands* serves as a useful introduction to Crowley’s oeuvre. Whether one has read deeply or cursorily in that oeuvre, this book will open doors.

NONFICTION REVIEW  
**Fantastic Voyages**

David N. Samuelson

Leroy W. Dubeck, Suzanne E. Moshier, and Judith E. Boss. *Fantastic Voyages: Learning Science through Science Fiction Films*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Springer, 2004. 347 + xvii pages, illustrated. ISBN 0-387-00440-8 paperback \$49.95.

Science fiction’s relationship to science has always been tenuous. I can count on the fingers of both hands the academic critics who take it seriously. The fantastic is in the driver’s seat, using science as a brake on imagination or an element of “local color.” For a wider audience, visual media show even less regard for science as a body of knowledge and a disciplined practice, however much films may foreground technology for visual (not only “special”) effects. To teach science with sf films, as this book offers to do, seems quixotic at best, though it may provide some relief from classroom boredom. Films will be more familiar to students than will other forms of sf, but they seem to provide mainly horrible examples of scientific ignorance or inaccuracy, which is hardly surprising, given their purpose of making money by supplying means of escape.

Presumably this book is doing the same, since it is now in a second edition. The authors, professors of physics, biology, and English, apparently use sf films regularly in the classrooms, but this book barely touches the basics, and needs to be greatly supplemented in the classroom. Ostensibly a primer in the physical and biological sciences, using illustrations from sf films, it does not justify the introduction’s claim: “After reading this book and working through the exercises at the end of each chapter, you will get more of out of screening science fiction films—you will have a deeper understanding of the principles presented in the films and probably a new respect for those filmmakers who depict science fiction that is close to science fact” (xv).

College freshmen in a required general science class, who know nothing of



The Grail / Grail Quest; Influence of Medieval, Biblical, and Ancient Epic Literature; Influence of Moorcock on modern fiction, music, film.

SUBMISSION: Essays should be 10 pages or less. .RTF attachments or snailmail documents.

CONTACT: Thomas Fortenberry <kurvanas@aol.com>, Multiverse Project, 6011-F Delta Crossing Lane, Charlotte, NC 28212

WHAT: Special Issue on “Ecocriticism”

WHO: Essays in Reader-Oriented Theory, Criticism and Pedagogy

TOPICS: We are interested in essays that explore and reflect upon reading-oriented theory and practical applications in composition and literary studies. What is the relationship between reading and ecological thinking? How does the practice of critical reading enrich the study of social and biological interrelationships? What pedagogical strategies for reading, interpreting, and analyzing texts (in and outside the classroom) contribute to the fundamental questions in reader-oriented theory, criticism and pedagogy? Why do we read? What do we read? How do we read? SUBMISSIONS: Essays should be 20 - 30 pages in length, and should be submitted in MLA and MS Word formats.

DEADLINE: November 1, 2004 for completed essays.

CONTACT: Mark C. Long, <mlong@keene.edu>

science or sf, and assume textbooks are badly written, may learn something new, but there is little of value to a reader with more than a nodding acquaintance with both science and sf. The style of each section is distinguishable, but not distinguished, and the book feels “unfinished,” as if the authors wrote in isolation, rarely attempting clear continuity or connections. Physics gets twice the space of biology, and roughly the same as the film summaries, which infiltrate the first two sections as well. The physicist, Dubeck, alludes to a plethora of films and TV shows in ten chapters, while the biologist, Moshier, treats a much smaller number, at the end of each of her six. Boss, the English professor, makes few allusions to science in her summaries of feature films.

Given so little space, the chapters on science are necessarily compressed, which does not excuse fragmentary presentation, or paragraphs with more than one subject, let alone insistent use of equations for English phrases. These same equations are largely omitted from the exercises that conclude each chapter, and which may be the best part of the book. Many pages of text consist largely of definitions of terms, from units of measure and the characteristics of living things to black holes and evolution, with few suggestions of the complexity or controversy that dog some of these concepts in both lay and scientific circles. The only apparent factual error I can find is a statement about near earth objects striking the earth, where “highest” probability should be “lowest” (47). If Dubeck indeed meant “highest,” he should explain the counterintuitive contrary meaning. In many other cases, however, clarity is lost in the rush to cover so much material in so little space.

Of the three authors, Dubeck seems least concerned about the first rule of technical communication: know your audience. Employing vocabulary above the largely rudimentary nature of the information presented, he frequently uses technical terms—including everyday words given a technical sense—before introducing and defining them. He is also the least attentive to grammar and rhetoric, though all three betray lapses which should have been corrected, such as misleading commas and false statements of causality.

Unlike Dubeck, Moshier does not attempt a unified view, which my colleagues in biology actually find hard to come by, both within and among university departments. Since she argues justifiably that topics in biology have more immediacy for the average reader, however, it is somewhat surprising that her section is the smallest. She is more attentive than Dubeck to written communication, but her virtual taxonomies are grating, especially with so few examples to back them up. Sf films alone cannot serve that purpose.

Both scientists seem concerned with trying to make science fiction what it cannot be. They refer to films mainly to point out scientific errors and mildly chastise the filmmakers for producing fiction rather than fact (or widely accepted theory). At no point does any author consider what the cost in audience alienation or emotional resonance might be to correct these errors, though they do sometimes acknowledge filmmaking costs. Dubeck does applaud *2001* and *2010* for accuracy, however, and Moshier recognizes value in some issues raised in films, however unsure their footing. They even manage to salvage some banal correctness from dreadful examples of filmmaking as well as science, like *Them* and *The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai*. Neither pays much attention to speculative or cutting edge issues, the stock in trade of written sf, if not of cinema. What is by nature unproven may be a research interest of some scientists as well as sf writers, but hardly the stuff of general science courses, such as biocomputers, cloning, nanotechnology, and the “minimalist” sort of time travel proposed by Kip Thorne at Cal Tech.

In their endeavor to bring sf films down to earth, however, the authors never make clear why films that violate the rules should help college students understand science, but Boss’s section on films is the most disappointing. It does nothing either to make sf attractive or show how science helps in understanding science fiction, nor does it discuss what and how films mean, in their handling of tropes derived from science or Gothic horror stories. Over half the films are merely summarized, and what passes for “literary commentary” is comparisons to prose fiction sources or novelizations, which are two rather different things. Although her credit on the inside back cover says she has “written extensively about science fiction films based on prior literary works,” she makes limited use of that experience here.

A glossary and a bibliography would be useful supplements if this book were really intended as a serious effort, but I don’t see how either would make up for the shoddiness of the enterprise.

## NONFICTION REVIEW

**Beowulf and the Critics**

Philip Kaveney

J. R. R. Tolkien and Michael D. C. Drout. *Beowulf and the Critics: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies*, Vol. 248 (December 2002). 461 pages. Hardcover, \$38.00, ISBN 0866982906.

This is a study of two earlier manuscripts of J.R.R Tolkien's 1936 talk which later became "The Monster and the Critics," still the most cited essay on *Beowulf*. Some might say: "What next? Will they be publishing J.R.R Tolkien's laundry list?" Well I think that's just sour grapes on the part of some scholars who wish they had devoted their lives to something more interesting than the pursuit of tenure.

I believe that well-written and affordable scholarly books, particularly by or about J.R.R Tolkien, have a broader appeal than might be expected. Their appeal is much broader than to just the few specialists who might work professionally in a field such as Anglo-Saxon, or even Modern English, for that matter. This premise (perhaps even an axiom) has developed over the last quarter of a century in my careers as both a bookseller and later an academic critic specializing in books by or about J.R.R Tolkien. In the process, I have watched a number of important books reissued after being consigned to the oblivion of the remainder table, Goodwill stores, and, in at least one case, the dumpster at an American Association of University Women Booksale. The dumpstered book was a pristine 1965 three-volume Ace paperback set, now selling for more than \$250.00 on ABE.Com—but not by me. I placed it in the proper hands at only a modest gain to myself. I am the bookseller that does not hoard anything. It is sort of a self-defense thing because I have only a 305 square-foot office.

To develop this thought further, I am going to use a bit of space to report on a little empirical study I've completed on just a few Tolkien items that have been resurrected from publisher's remainder status and reissued. The remainder editions are now demanding collectors' prices. Here are examples of books of which I have owned sometimes hundreds and even thousands of copies. The price quotations are courtesy of ABE.Com <http://www.abebooks.com>. Note that I did not list ISBNs in this case because I wanted to avoid confusion, and not send folks running off on wild goose chases:

J. R. R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien [foreword and notes]. *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. Very good. First American Edition. Fine hard cover Price \$305.00—*The Lost Road and Other Writings: Volume 5 of The History of Middle-Earth* J. R. R. Tolkien Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Illustrated with maps. 455 p. Price \$350.00—*The Return of the Shadow - The History of the Lord of the Rings Part One* Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company (8)+498p. Publisher's cloth in dust wrappers. Near fine/fine \$170.00—*The Annotated Hobbit or There and Back Again* J. R. R. Tolkien Illustrated by J. R. R. Tolkien Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Jacket design by Michaela Sullivan \$ 300.00—*Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* edited by Humphrey Carpenter with the assistance of Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen and Unwin. With a ALS facsimile frontispiece \$160.00.

I think first editions of "Beowulf and the Critics," by Michael D. C. Drout will be selling for collectors' prices within a couple of years, without having to even touch a remainder table, because it is a fascinating and well-written book. It takes us through the process by which Tolkien developed his academic-discipline-defining essay "The Monster and Critics" in the early 1930s. It is well-written because of Drout's nearly transparent style, and clear and informative supporting annotations, which inform the reader but at the same time allow J.R.R Tolkien to speak in his own voice. It is also a history of Anglo-Saxon Literary Scholarship up to the 1930s, which, if nothing else, establishes that what we know as post-modernism (the treatment of a text as a cultural artifact, rather than an artistic creation) was really a very old and wheezing horse even in the early 20th Century.

The other aspect of the book which I love is the opportunity to hear Tolkien speak in a literary and artistic voice which convinces me over and over that the best writers also make the best critics and that J.R.R. Tolkien was just an order of magnitude smarter than any of his critics, with the exception, of course, of Douglas Anderson, Tom Shippey, and Richard West, who we all wish would retire so that he could produce more work.

## NONFICTION REVIEW

**The Long Recessional**

Philip Kaveney

David Gilmour. *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling*. Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2002. 368 pages. Hardcover, \$26.00, ISBN: 0374187029.

I liked David Gilmour's work a great deal primarily because he kept close to his subject and made informed use of his sources. His work is both sympathetic and well written, but it is not really a literary biography of Rudyard Kipling's life. Rather it is a literary biography of Rudyard Kipling's ideology of imperialism across his life and half-century career, from the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century through the first third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

David Gilmour's book is very timely since the concept of an empire seems to be back in fashion on a number of levels. This becomes clear as we listen to media talk-show hosts on both public and commercial broadcast media, and as we gossip over our morning coffee. The other morning, I shared my morning coffee with a retired, local, right-wing politician in Eau Claire (a sleepy little college town in Western Wisconsin). After disagreeing on just about every thing of substance, we both sadly agreed that we missed the stability of the Cold War, when we at least had a very good idea how civilization as we know it might end. However, that is not the end of it.

In a sense, this is a kind of melancholy bittersweet book, as one sees the dynamic energy of Rudyard Kipling's life (1865-1936) rapidly unfold in section one (A Child of Empire), in spite of his sickly childhood. Rudyard Kipling's life seemed to escalate through several stages of development from childhood to early manhood in little more than a double handful of years he spent after his return to England a second time as a sickly and yet rowdy six-year-old in 1871.

Born in 1865 in Bombay, British Imperial India, Rudyard Kipling spent most of the first six years of his life absorbing the sights, sounds, languages, and culture of British India with his British parents. However, in 1871 his parents were forced to return with his sister to England for health reasons. It was during this time in England that Rudyard Kipling was to experience his "House of Desolation" period. Rudyard Kipling returned to India as a seventeen-year-old to work as a journalist with only the secondary school education that his family could afford. In one sense his early years make one think of the American writer Mark Twain who also started out by having to write for a living. One of my favorite aspects of this book was Gilmour's sense of immediacy as he brought forth the spirit of the last few decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

One gains the feeling that the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was not a time when someone spent their life studying to be something. One simply became something, without having to spend a decade, or perhaps two, of post-secondary education in the process of getting there. Rudyard Kipling was at the height of his literary power when he returned to England in 1889. I feel that this is true because he was writing from his senses rather than his memories. Later in his life he seemed to write more like Joyce, or like Proust in *Remembrances of Things Past*.

Rudyard Kipling shared some aspects of his early life experience with two other fantastic writers who might be considered children of the British colonial period: J.R.R. Tolkien (1892-1973, born in South Africa), and C.S. Lewis (1898-1963, born in Ulster Ireland, technically part of the UK, but de-facto a colonial possession). All three writers shared a British Colonial childhood. All three were separated from their parents at about the same age, Tolkien and Lewis by death and Kipling by distance. All dealt in the fantastic in a highly successful manner, but only Kipling was trapped in his fantasy of an empire, for which he became a popular spokesman. I would add, but cannot prove, that along with Shakespeare, these three writers probably have the highest level of popular name recognition of any English language writers.

This book is not a literary or personal biography. It is a kind of an ideological biography which links the personal with the artistic, political, and finally, the grand historical narrative of Rudyard Kipling's life, and represents for us the world he wished for. This is a daunting task, but David Gilmour succeeds because he presents the international geopolitical context of 1882-1936 as Rudyard Kipling saw it, not as it was rendered after two generations of historical analysis, after the seals have been broken on the secret documents of fallen empires. In the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, after several visits on my part to the Indian section of The Royal Armouries in Leeds England, and to The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and some intense discussion with military historian specializing in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British India, it seems quite clear that the idea of British cultural superiority, even Rudyard Kipling's constructs of the White Man's Burden, were historical constructions at best. I don't think one could refer to what Kipling had as an ideology but rather certain formalized preferences.

Perhaps the saddest and paradoxically most wonderfully informative part of *The Long Recessional* is Gilmour's

foregrounding of Kipling's unrelenting hatred of Germany and the Germans before, during, and after World War One. Part of this was of course motivated by the loss of his son, Lieutenant John Kipling (1897-1915), first missing in action and then presumed dead. This tragedy colored all of Kipling's remaining years. It is strange that combatants often will forgive and associate with each other sensing their essential shared humanity in a wartime situation, where non-combatants can only scream for revenge. At the same time, one must honor Kipling for the work he did with the Imperial Graves Commission, memorial design, and inscription, and feel a certain resonance with his inconsolable loss for what came before. This is particularly true in post-9-11 America, as many Americans honestly feel that our only choice is to pick up the fallen European Colonial standard.

Yet, in the final analysis, I like Gilmour's work because the clarity, frankness, and openness serve the memory of Kipling very well indeed. In spite of everything it is almost a guilty little pleasure how much we all like Kipling, at least in his early years. Yes, we agree he loved the idea of a British Empire, and hated and mistrusted Winston Churchill as a liberal. Yet Churchill, undaunted by Kipling's opinion of him, drew great inspiration from him for his "Finest Hour" speeches. Ironically enough, the British people thanked Churchill for his great sacrifice in 1946 by voting him out as Prime Minister. Too bad the Russians could not do that with Stalin.

#### NONFICTION REVIEW

### **Readings on Stephen King**

Rebecca Janicker

Karin Coddon, ed. *Readings on Stephen King: The Greenhaven Press Literary Companion to Contemporary Authors*. Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press (2004). 188 pages. Paperback, \$22.45, ISBN 0-7377-1667-3.

In this companion to Stephen King, editor Karin Coddon has brought together a diverse range of in-depth analyses of King's work, as well as biographical accounts of his life, in order to build up a complete picture of the best-selling contemporary author. The book begins with a brief biography of the author, after which "Chapter 1: Stephen King, Portrait of the Artist" continues with a four-part essentially chronological account of King's life, combining biographies from authorities on the author with excerpts from his own non-fiction works *Danse Macabre* (1981) and *On Writing* (2000). "Chapter 2: Overarching Themes and Conventions in King's Fiction" presents an array of articles exploring major themes and influences upon his work, and "Chapter 3: Reading The Books" seeks to provide a comprehensive insight into several of King's novels.

The sections in Chapter 1 and the preceding biography serve as an excellent, insightful account of ways in which King's own experiences and early upbringing impacted upon his fiction. Whilst this part of the book does much to contextualize King's work, it is Chapters 2 and 3 that are the most interesting in terms of literary analysis. In Chapter 2, Coddon unites articles from Garyn G. Roberts, Edwin F. Casebeer and James Egan to provide an overview of those themes and motifs so prevalent in the fiction. Roberts' article addresses the horror heritage and King's own place within it, acknowledging his debt to twentieth-century writers such as H. P. Lovecraft and Richard Matheson, as well as to early folkloric tradition. Casebeer addresses the issue of King's mastery of his craft as a genre novelist, capable of the kind of breadth in his fiction that makes for a wide reading audience. Furthermore, King "becomes a modern shaman employing magic . . . to lead his culture into self-discovery where it most needs to look while maintaining commitment to love, family and community" (98). In his exploration of the Gothic tradition in King's work, Egan notes that traditional Gothic themes such as the power of the unknown, the irrationality of the human psyche and the struggle between good and evil are typically present but with a twist, as when Jack Torrance's inner demons (*The Shining*, 1977) turn his character from protagonist to antagonist. This is interesting to compare with Casebeer's argument that traditional horror fiction sees the antagonist overcome whilst postmodern horror fiction sees more interplay between antagonist and protagonist; King's novels tend to balance the two with his reluctance to "embrace the monstrous and let it transform him" (97).

Chapter 3 comprises accounts of a diverse array of King's novels, ranging from sagas concerning the fate of whole nations to taut psychological dramas focusing on the interaction between mere handfuls of characters. Here, Reino's discussion of *The Stand* (1978) as an epic battle between good and evil in a post-apocalyptic world contrasts effectively with Senf's account of *Cujo* (1981) as the story of an ordinary woman's bittersweet triumph over punishing circumstances. A salient theme in these analyses is King's focus on psychological terror in juxtaposition with the more traditional focus of supernatu-

ral horror. Schroeder's account of Annie Wilkes in *Misery* (1987) as a kind of naturalistic vampire sits well beside both the *Cujo* analysis and Colling's article on *Rage* (1977) as examples of King's ability to find the horror in everyday life as well as in the realm of the supernatural. In contrast, Winter's study of *Pet Sematary* (1983) examines the author's use of the supernatural, embodied here in the form of "the Wendigo ... malevolent spirit-being of north country Indian folklore" (174) as a means of examining the fragile boundaries of life and death and the consequences of disturbing the natural order.

In summary, this companion text contains a comprehensive selection of articles chosen to elucidate key themes in King's work, provide a background to his interest in horror fiction, and explore a diverse range of his fiction. It provides a useful guide to those seeking an introduction to King's work, yet contains a sufficiently disparate selection of articles to interest a more scholarly reader, plus a bibliography of King's own fiction and of secondary works.

#### NONFICTION REVIEW

### **The Arabian Nights**

Christine Mains

Robert Irwin. *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*. TaurisParke Paperbacks, 2004. 355 p. \$15.95, paper, 1-86064-983-1.

This volume is a reprint of a book originally published in 1994. The only new information is contained in the Preface, which, after a few intriguing speculations on the possible connections between the stories and images of *The Arabian Nights* and the situation in the Middle East today, provides a brief survey of titles published in the area of *Nights* scholarship in the past decade, both by Irwin and by others.

Irwin's original motivation in preparing this companion to the tales known to most Western readers as *The Arabian Nights* was to provide an alternative to the usual formalist approach. In order to properly situate *Nights* as a product of a highly literate culture, he felt that it was necessary to provide a great deal of background information about the social history of that culture in both medieval and early modern times, and to contextualize the work as part of a literary genre unknown in the Western tradition. Certainly this volume accomplishes that task, and in addition manages to provide valuable insights applicable to the study of other folktale collections and of the art of storytelling as a crosscultural activity.

The first few chapters focus on the difficulties faced by scholars in tracing the paths of narratives across temporal and cultural lines. Irwin discusses the problems confronting translators, describing in detail some of the particular problems posed by the Arabic language as well as the difficulty in translating poetry from any culture. Of particular interest is the question about the proper aim of translation of literary works, whether the translator should simply make the work accessible or should attempt to improve upon the original. Irwin also describes the differences in versions of the work resulting from the imposition of personal bias, noting in particular the impact of Burton's racist and misogynist views; the simple description "black slave" in the original Arabic becomes "a big slobbering blackamoor. . . a truly hideous sight" in Burton's hands, for example (32). Even the most casual reader of *The Arabian Nights* seems to know that the tales contain a number of erotic elements; Irwin argues that many of these elements were added or expanded upon by the compilers for various reasons. Also of interest is Irwin's description of the quest to find or to recreate, through a kind of textual archaeology, the original source manuscripts for the versions of the tales used by the European translators.

In Chapter 3, titled "Oceans of Stories," Irwin traces the connections between the tales of *Nights* and those found in other cultures, particularly during the same time period: eleventh-century Sanskrit, twelfth-century Latin, Chaucer, the Decameron, and others. He also looks further back in time in an attempt to trace possible routes of transmission between cultures and languages, noting the similarities between episodes in *Nights* and in Homer, for instance. Important to his argument here is that Eastern cultures did or do not make the same distinction between the oral and written traditions that Western scholars take for granted; even café and street tale-tellers referred to written tales, and even the most popular tales were recorded and transmitted by important scholars of the time.

The middle chapters, although containing occasional references to external sources about history and cultural practices, mainly use the tales themselves as a possible source of information about the culture in which they were told. Irwin draws on details from several tales to speculate about storytelling practices and street entertainment, the activities and punishment of criminals, and sexual practices including the place of homosexuality and pederasty in medieval Middle Eastern culture. Although only a historian extremely familiar with that time and place could know for certain how accurate Irwin's suppositions are, it does seem that such a circular practice – using the tales to reveal a cultural background by which

to better understand the tales – could be a problematic practice at best. But my niggling doubts were allayed for the most part by the fact that the original publication of this companion was well received by critics who are familiar with both the literature and the culture.

The last few chapters are likely of most interest to scholars of the fantastic, as Irwin discusses the influence of the tales on SF and fantasy authors. The main problem here, of course, is that he is not primarily writing for an audience of SF scholars, and so some of the points he makes seem clumsy, insubstantial or incredibly obvious to us. Take, for example, his use of Brian Stableford's (sic.) argument regarding the beginnings of science fiction with *Frankenstein*.

Although one must respect the purist's insistence that there could be no true genre of science fiction until Mary Shelley, Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne had established the ground rules of the genre, nevertheless the *Nights* and science fiction stories treat of similar themes, draw on similar techniques and share common aims. The medieval audience of wonder-tales and the modern readers of science fiction, who marvel at the scale and complexity of the universe and who speculate about how it might be otherwise, share a state of mind. (208)

Irwin's basic structure is to compare well known works of fantasy and science fiction to *Nights* in terms of the treatment of magic and marvels (including space travel), but the balance of the comparison is of course heavily weighted towards *Nights*. However, it should still be possible to make use of his insights in our own teaching and research by simply supplying the counterweight from our own knowledge base. The same caveat applies to his overview of formalist and psychoanalytic theories in relation to speculative fiction and to the tales of *Nights*; he quickly surveys Aarne, Thompson, Propp, Todorov, Betelheim, and Campbell, and even manages a mention of Richard Dawkins' 'selfish word-string.' Overall, his analysis in these chapters is rushed but an intriguing starting point worthy of fuller development by other scholars interested in the field.

Irwin closes the volume with a survey of authors who have been influenced by *The Arabian Nights* across the centuries, from Voltaire and Samuel Johnson to Byron and Coleridge to Joyce and Proust to Borges and Barth. *The Arabian Nights: A Companion* is useful and interesting reading for anyone studying not only Arabic literature in general and the tales known as the *Nights* specifically, but also provides valuable insights to postcolonial critics and to scholars of the folktales of many cultures.

#### FICTION REVIEW

### **The Ethos Effect**

Richard McKinney

Modesitt, L. E., Jr.: *The Ethos Effect*. New York: Tor, 2003. Hardcover, 509 pages, \$27.95. ISBN 0-765-30802-9. (Reviewed in uncorrected proofs.)

L. E. Modesitt's latest military space opera, *The Ethos Effect*, narrates the story of one Van C. Albert. At the beginning of the novel, Albert is a relatively low-placed, under-appreciated Commander in the Space Forces of the Taran Republic, but by its end he comes to exert a major determining influence on the lives and destinies – even the survival – of entire worlds and cultures. Albert is demonstrably one of SF's excessively competent heroes: strong, brave, resourceful, honest, self-sacrificing, and able to cope with and survive not only physical and economic but also psychological and even bureaucratic threats to his honor and well-being. Not to mention his being the possessor of secret enhancements given him by an alien race which make it possible for him to listen in to, and at times control, advanced civilian and military communications and computer networks. Nor is he a man without conscience, as is clearly demonstrated early on by his anguish over his responsibility for the unavoidable and unintended deaths of a large number of civilians following a space battle.

Modesitt obviously intends this novel to deal seriously with a number of thorny moral issues, rather than being simple escapist fare. From the level of racism and gender/sexual discrimination (e.g. Albert is black in a white-dominated culture, and he has same-sex parents), through some subtle comments on life in an environmentally-aware world, to the question which appears to be the main focus of the novel: whether the literal destruction of an entire human culture (including a relatively large number of innocent bystanders) is justifiable when that culture is actively and threateningly aggressive, and sufficiently and irremediably evil at its core. There is no doubt that these issues are indeed of the utmost ethical import. Therefore, whether or not one agrees with the conclusions eventually reached by Albert in support of his actions, Modesitt should be commended for confronting these questions explicitly.

Unfortunately, the novel is quite weak in a number of ways. First of all, though a number of ethical problems are indeed brought to the fore, the manner in which they are handled often lacks both depth and subtlety. A single example will have to suffice to illustrate what I mean: it concerns the introduction of a character, Trystin Desoll (another competent-hero protagonist from Modesitt's earlier book, *The Parafaith War*, from 1996), whose actions are crucial to the plot of *The Ethos Effect* and whose motivations are decisive for the moral decisions made by Van Albert. (We are, incidentally, explicitly told that *The Ethos Effect* can be read independently of *The Parafaith War*, although it does take place in the same future universe, approximately two centuries after the events of the first novel.) Unfortunately, since Desoll is only a secondary character in the latest novel, it is difficult to gain a deeper understanding of his thinking and feelings without having read the first book. The extremity of Desoll's ultimate action comes across as insufficiently explored or justified, despite the fact that what he does is pivotal not only for the plot, but, most significantly, for understanding Albert's own ethical decisions. In fact, the relatively simplistic manner in which the ramifications of the ethical questions are examined is perhaps the novel's major weakness. Nor does Modesitt take advantage of the strengths of fiction: he has told (in expository lumps which are sometimes difficult to swallow) rather than shown his readers the moral arguments he wishes to convey.

Alas, there are also other problems with the book. With the partial exception of Albert himself, the characters in the novel are sketchily presented and poorly developed. The story moves forward unevenly, and we are too commonly treated to repetitious and relatively pointless segments of text which neither develop the ethical issues, nor advance the story, nor add to our knowledge of the characters. Albert's seemingly endless meetings and meals with other characters, for instance, provide us with little other than descriptions of offices and restaurants, although we do learn that our hero has a fondness for pale ale. Especially annoying are the many conversations between Albert and diverse space stations just prior to docking (or, sometimes, departure) where the information conveyed to the reader consists of: a request for authorization to dock, authorization to dock, an acknowledgement of the authorization to dock, the location for the approved docking, acknowledgement of the approved docking, docking itself, info on payment of docking fees, info on switching from ship to station power, and acknowledgement of the completed switch to station power. Or something very much along those lines, often in italics, and seldom of any value to the progress of the novel. Portions of text such as these are, quite simply, examples of clumsy, sloppy writing. Such sections may present relatively accurate transcriptions of what might actually be said under such conditions, but that doesn't necessarily make the verbatim presentation of them of interest to the readers of a novel. That Modesitt is capable of better work is apparent by simply looking at *The Parafaith War*, a superior novel on most levels.

All in all, *The Ethos Effect* is a thematically interesting book dealing with important issues, which are unfortunately explored in an inadequate manner.

FICTION REVIEW  
**Little Gods**  
 Philip Snyder

Tim Pratt, *Little Gods*. Canton, OH: Prime Books, 2003. Trade paperback, 228 pages, \$17.95. ISBN 1-894815-83-1.

Only 27 years old, Tim Pratt has been making quite a splash the last few years in genre magazines both little and large. The earliest publication in *Little Gods*, his debut collection, is a poem published by webzine *Strange Horizons* in March 2001; the most recent is the story "Down with the Lizards and the Bees," which appeared in *Realms of Fantasy* in August 2003. Of the four poems and 15 stories gathered in this impressive package, four were published online by *Strange Horizons*, four in *Realms of Fantasy*, the rest in a variety of magazines and anthologies which include *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *Weird Tales*, and *Brainbox II: Son of Brainbox*. It's a real treat to have this work together in one place, and its publication is a major harbinger of good things to come.

Pratt is never less than entertaining, as evidenced by even the lightest of the stories here assembled. In "The Fallen and the Muse of the Street," for instance, two fallen angels encounter a muse in New Orleans, and the result is a playful, jokey take on the artistic impulse. "Bleeding West," in turn, finds its comedy in a gleeful mix of demons, spirits, and mythic powers, together with nearly every cliché of the rootin', tootin' West: Stephen Crane's "Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" as retold by H. P. Lovecraft (with a nod to Stephen King's *Gunslinger*.) Even a relatively weak story like "Entropy's Paintbrush, which seems more an ambitious exercise than a fully achieved story, manages to put a pantheon of gods through some fairly entertaining

paces in a colorful far-future setting, while the much stronger “Bone Sigh,” a vignette in eight fragments about a mad father’s love for his daughter, is perfectly chilling.

This young writer really hits his stride, though, in the stories planted deep in the loamy soil of fairy tales, folklore, and mythology. Among the best of these are “The Witch’s Bicycle,” a cleverly archetypal tale of a Boy, a Girl, a Rival, and a Witch; “Annabelle’s Alphabet,” a haunting twist on the faerie changeling motif, and “Fable From a Cage,” a creepy fairy tale of sorts, old-fashioned in its touches of gruesomeness and very modern in its sly humor. (It will appear this summer in Hartwell and Cramer’s *Year’s Best Fantasy*.) Also of interest are “Unfairy Tale,” Pratt’s reworking of Sleeping Beauty’s kiss as a horror story; “Down with the Lizards and the Bees,” which re-enacts the Orpheus myth on a Berkeley BART train; and “The Secret of Copper Pennies,” a romance wherein many-worlds theory meets voodoo myth.

Several of the stories inspired by folklore and mythology, in particular, have their counterparts in the poems interspersed through this collection. Thematically related to “The Scent of Copper Pennies,” for instance, is “The God of the Crossroads,” a gentle and quietly funny meditation on the difficulty of making choices and the necessity of moving on. “My Night with Aphrodite,” likewise, stands as a comic companion piece to the story “Entropy’s Paintbrush”: the poem offers a refreshingly amusing perspective on the notion of the perfect love – and why you really don’t want one. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice powers both “Down with the Lizards and the Bees,” discussed earlier, and “Orpheus among the Cabbages,” a hilariously bawdy poem to put on your shelf next to Allen Ginsberg’s “A Supermarket in California.” Rounding out the poems that grace this collection are “Daughter and Moon,” a father-and-daughter piece that works its magic with a wonderful voice, and “The Heart, A Chambered Nautilus,” which can be read as either a condensed fable or an extended prose poem.

The stars of the book, though, are “Captain Fantasy and the Secret Masters,” and the Nebula-nominated title story, “Little Gods.” The first of these, which Pratt in his afterword calls his “gay-superhero-vs.-Nazi story,” is on one level a pulpish extravaganza that should appeal strongly to fans of Alan Moore’s graphic novel, *Watchmen*. It is also, by the time Pratt is through, both thought provoking and genuinely moving. “Little Gods,” by contrast, is a story that dares to wear its heart on its sleeve right from the beginning, but never falters in the honesty of its feelings. The story of a man who loses his wife in an armed robbery, “Little Gods” is a touching journey through grief and recovery, a quiet celebration of “the small gods of waking up in the morning, the small gods of drawing breath, the small gods of holding on.”

One final story, a previously unpublished novelette, affords a glimpse of Pratt’s future work. “Pale Dog” features Marla, the protagonist of his unpublished novel *Blood Engines* (better known to followers of Pratt’s weblog as “the Frog novel”). A “sorcererpunk” story, he calls it in his afterword, full of “ghosts, sorcery, vintage clothing, death, dogs, and divination.” Like the whole collection in which it appears, it’s fast, fun, and whets the appetite for more. With *Little Gods*, Tim Pratt becomes a writer to watch.

#### FICTION REVIEW

### **The Resurrection Man’s Legacy and Other Stories**

Warren G. Rochelle

Bailey, Dale. *The Resurrection Man’s Legacy and Other Stories*. Urbana, IL: Golden Gryphon Press, 2003. 332 pages, cloth, \$24.95 ISBN: 1-930846-22-3.

Don’t read this collection of short stories—Dale Bailey’s first collection—alone or at night. That was my first thought as how to begin this review. There are things out there in the dark—and some may be dead—or once were, or—? And Bailey knows them. Don’t think you will be safe in your backyard or your garden. The former is likely to be haunted, the latter home to incarnate spirits of nature whose sense of morality might be a bit different than your own. Rest assured, however, that you will be exploring the human condition in these stories of death and grief, of loss, of the variations of love, of the pain and heartache and pleasure of family life.

Just what kind of stories Bailey is telling is another matter. Dark literary fantasy is the first term that comes to mind, and it does work for most of the stories in the collection, including the title story, “The Resurrection Man’s Legacy.” What if a dead person could be copied as an android? Could such a *copy*, if that is the right word, fill in the place a father’s death leaves in a son’s heart? Weave in such elements of the American mythos as baseball and the reader has a story that will echo as do “the

empty stands, the endless empty stands” for the story’s protagonist. Perhaps darker is “Quinn’s Way,” inspired by Bradbury and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*—only this time one of the boys gives in to the dark, to the shadow

Shadows, the Shadow, seems to be a motif in the collection—as a place to wait, a place to be if one is uncertain whether one is human or not, or as a place to grieve. In the last story, “In Green’s Dominion,” the shadow is green and occupying another border space, between the garden and the wood, between the tamed and the wild. Taking the idea of “vegetable love” from Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress,” Bailey takes the reader into the myth of the green man, an “English fertility archetype,” and past the garden and the wood and into the tensions between “order and chaos . . . between sexual impulse and puritanical morality, between, especially, life and art” (332). Sylvia, a retired professor and poet, must navigate this in-between space, these tensions, even as she is called out into the green darkness of her own garden. In “Death and Suffrage,” the dead rise and head for the ballot box; rest assured the world is not the same place. Need spare organs? Grow them in the bodies of anencephalic children, “infants born without a brain,” in “Anencephalic Fields.”

Yes, dark literary fantasy, but what of the stories that are under a different shadow, that inhabit the blurred and shadowed territory between the fantastic and the mainstream? Is the backyard in “Home Burial,” which is both a retelling of Frost’s poem and an homage to Frost, a haunted place? Does the grieving mother, Rachel, hear her dead child crying because it is cold in its grave, or doesn’t she? And does it matter that only she hears the cries? What of Gerald, the soon-to-be-father in “Cockroach”: does a creature he made up as an advertisement haunt him? Or is it guilt? Both? Is he safe in his own home? Is anyone? And there are still stories I have not mentioned (and yes, worth reading).

What, then, is Bailey writing? Dark literary fantasy, yes. Crossover stories? Yes. Stories of ghosts and the risen dead and old people living way past their time or a mentally-challenged boy who can bring back the dead—no doubt, these are of the fantastic. But then, these are also stories of jealousy, of grief for a dead parent, of regret for not choosing a full life, of warnings against handgun misuse, of fear, of child abuse.

What is Bailey writing? He answers, at least in part, in the “Story Notes” at the end, which provides the scholar an excellent starting place for interpretation. What is Bailey writing: stories, stories with lyrical and beautiful and dark prose, of the fantastic, of the haunted, stories worth a sleepless night or three—human stories. His short fiction has been published in *The Year’s Fantasy & Horror Fiction*, two editions of *The Best from Fantasy & Science Fiction*, nominated for a Nebula, among other awards and honors, and one novel, *The Fallen*, was a finalist for the International Horror Guild Award. Bailey is a writer worth checking out. And if you do so at night, at least light a candle.

FICTION REVIEW  
**Extremes**  
 Richard McKinney

Rusch, Kristine Katherine: *Extremes. A Retrieval Artist Novel*. New York: Roc, 2003. Paperback, 373 pages, \$6.50. ISBN 0-451-45934-2. (Read in uncorrected proofs.)

Kristine Katherine Rusch introduced her readers to the world of Miles Flint in a novella entitled “The Retrieval Artist” in the June 2000 issue of *Analog* magazine. The novella (subsequently reprinted in the author’s collection *The Retrieval Artist and Other Stories* (Five Star, 2002) received a well-deserved nomination for a Hugo award and Rusch has returned to and further developed the future it introduced in (so far) three novels, *The Disappeared* (Roc, 2002), *Extremes* (Roc, 2003), and *Consequences* (Roc, 2004). The original shorter piece of fiction takes place at an indeterminate point in the life and career of Flint, former member of the Armstrong Police Department (Armstrong being the domed lunar city where much of the action of the series take place), and currently a Retrieval Artist. Flint’s future is one in which humanity has regular trade and diplomatic contacts with a number of alien civilizations, and in which individual human beings sometimes (albeit, not always knowingly) irritate, insult, or break the laws of certain of these alien races. Thanks to agreements between humans and the extraterrestrials, this can make those humans who have overstepped the customs or laws of aliens subject to alien punishment, which can include quite draconian measures, extending at times not only to the individuals involved, but to their families, friends, and even associates. Such people, therefore, when they are able, join the Disappeared, becoming outlaws on the run from both Earth and alien authorities. The job of a Retrieval Artist is, for diverse reasons, to find these refugees but it is *not* to turn them over to the authorities. In fact, one of the major problems is to avoid leading alien or human Trackers to the Disappeared in question.

Rusch's first novel in the cycle, *The Disappeared*, an interesting and important piece of background to the series, and an entertaining mystery-SF story on its own, tells us how and why Flint left the police force and became a Retrieval Artist. *Extremes* is a much more accomplished work, worth serious attention and deserving of significant praise as both good science fiction and good fiction. The book, which starts as a murder story about an unexplained and mysterious death during a marathon race on the lunar surface, mixes genres efficiently and effectively, with elements of police procedural, private-eye detective tale, social and technologically extrapolative science fiction, suspense story, character study, and even sports story. (This is, of course, reflective of the multiple talents and experience of the author, who has written successfully in a number of genres, including SF, fantasy, mystery, and historical fiction.) The main transmimetic or science fictional extrapolation in the story (aside from the series background of alien contact, space exploration, and life on the moon) deals with the danger of a deadly, genetically-engineered virus. Apparently less important (when examined in the larger context of the issues taken up in the book, however, not without some sharp social and ethical barbs) is speculation about the nature and possible future developments of extreme sports.

As the plot develops, we follow, in parallel narratives, the activities and thoughts of a number of well-developed characters. Other than Flint himself, the most interesting of these is Flint's former partner, the independent-minded Noelle DeRicci, still working for the Armstrong police, a good cop whose talents are under-appreciated or resented – or both – by her superiors. This narrative technique allows Rusch to explore her principal characters with an engaging degree of intimacy, while presenting their diverse viewpoints and perspectives in some depth. Yet it also makes possible a breadth of background information and a greater amount of social and ethical speculation than would otherwise have been easily available. Interestingly, the focus of the novel is on interactions and inter-relationships among human beings, while human-alien connections, though vital to the basic setup of Rusch's imagined future, become mainly background material for the various stories being told here. Ethical responsibility – on both a personal and a social level – is a central theme of the novel, reflected especially in issues of trust and accountability. The possible dangers of biological experimentation and the potentially decisive role and responsibility of the individual (scientist) are major questions explored in the appropriately (and multivalently) entitled *Extremes*. That Rusch is also speaking to the inhabitants of 2003 is clearly underscored by various explicit and implicit comments on terrorism, a theme all too relevant for the contemporary world. The novel is not only intelligent, it is also enjoyable to read, successfully suspenseful when need be, and not seldom humorous in an understated way. Perhaps the greatest strength of *Extremes* is its multiplicity on numerous levels: it successfully blends, smoothly and thoughtfully, in a not overly-long narrative, diverse genres, numerous and serious ethical themes, multiple story-lines, interesting characters about whom we care, exciting story-telling, and complexly-developed extrapolation about possible futures. I await the next novel in the Retrieval Artist series with great anticipation.

FICTION REVIEW

## **The Killing of Worlds**

Richard McKinney

Westerfeld, Scott: *The Killing of Worlds*. New York: Tor, 2003. Hardcover, 336 pages, \$25.95. ISBN 0-765-30850-9. (Read in uncorrected proofs.)

*The Killing of Worlds* continues and completes *The Risen Empire* (Tor, 2003), the initial book of Scott Westerfeld's two-volume space opera, *Succession*. With the publication of *The Killing of Worlds*, it is quite clear that these two novels should really be seen as a single work, and it must be quite awkward to read – and even more difficult to understand and appreciate – the second volume without the background information found in the first. *The Killing of Worlds* takes up the story immediately following the cliff-hanger conclusion of its predecessor, at the beginning of major space combat between the Imperial frigate *Lynx* (commanded by Captain Laurent Zei, one of the novel's protagonists) and space forces controlled by an AI compound mind, of the same kind which also steers the human but cybernetically-enhanced Rix warriors who are the sworn enemies of Zei and his commander, the Risen Emperor. In Westerfeld's future, the elite which governs the galaxy are known as the risen, a reference to the manner in which they have been resurrected following their deaths. The battle in space, described in considerable detail and taking up almost one-third of the book's total length, is both a set-piece and the showpiece of the novel. The author's undeniable facility with language is of no little value here, since too much military SF proves to be poorly

written. Westerfeld handles the inherent suspense of the situation quite effectively, keeping the human and military aspects of the developing combat well balanced, knowing when to throw his readers an unexpected twist or turn. Although a long explication of a space battle may be off-putting to some readers, the outcome of said battle is central to the story line, and it seems to me that Westerfeld presents it with sufficient style to retain most of his audience, even those normally prone to be critical.

The rest of the novel follows up on and eventually joins the other plot threads left hanging from *The Risen Empire*, most significantly those concerning an enhanced Rix agent and her human partner, and the fate of Senator Nara Oxham in her dangerous contest with the powerful Risen Emperor, who has turned out to be quite evil. A final confrontation between Oxham and the Emperor, and the public revelation of the Emperor's darkest secret, spells the end of the Empire at the conclusion of the novel (but could well lay grounds for further fictional exploration of Westerfeld's future). Unfortunately, the final sections of the novel didn't seem quite as imaginative, nor as plausible, as did earlier portions of the two *Succession* books. Most disappointing, perhaps, was the Emperor's secret, about which hints had been dropped since early in the first book of the duo, and which seemed far too weak and even predictable, at least in its general thrust, if not in detail. As is also true with respect to the first book, I would have appreciated seeing considerably more character development of the protagonists of *The Killing of Worlds*, not least since Westerfeld's few explorations along those lines were interesting and well-done. One would also have liked to see something more of the future social world only hinted at here. Nonetheless, *Succession* is a largely successful space opera, clearly an adequate and positive addition to the subgenre, well-written and intelligently thought out. At its best it is original and fresh, sharp in its attention to detail and subtle in its methods of presentation.

FICTION REVIEW

## **The Last Light of the Sun**

Christine Mains

Guy Gavriel Kay, *The Last Light of the Sun*. New York: Roc, 2004. Reviewed from Uncorrected Proofs, 501 pages, \$24.95. 0-451-45965-2.

Canadian fantasist Guy Gavriel Kay began his writing career with *The Fionavar Tapestry*, an epic fantasy trilogy inspired by, but certainly not a slavish imitation of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Recounting the coming-to-selfhood adventures of five Toronto university students in the world of Fionavar, Kay adroitly mixed Tolkienesque elves, dwarves, and wizards with elements of the Arthurian mythos to create something uniquely compelling.

Unlike other writers of epic fantasy, however, Kay has resisted a return to his first fictional world in favor of exploring his own variation on historical fantasy. In an interview in the May 2000 issue of *Locus*, Kay argues that an "examination of themes and trends, moments in history, can be *intensified* by dealing with them through fantasy." Rather than setting his tales in worlds wholly imagined, Kay has chosen to re-imagine key moments in Western history, changing the names of people and places, and occasionally including elements of magic, in order to create a fantastic setting for the consideration of themes ranging from religious and ethnic intolerance to the impact of war on culture and on human relationships. Kay has recreated Renaissance Italy in *Tigana*, Moorish Spain in *The Lions of Al-Rassan*, and Byzantium in *The Sarantine Mosaic*. I'd expected, given the seeming pattern of working backwards through time, that his next work would explore the cultures of Rome or Greece; instead he's turned his attention North, to pre-Norman Britain, a world marked by the collision of Anglo-Saxon (Anglcyn), Viking (Erling), and Gaelic (Cyngael) cultures.

Kay follows his usual narrative structure here, composing separate tales told from separate points of view which eventually come together and intertwine. One tale belongs to Bern Thorkellson, a young Erling punished for his father's crime by being made a servant in another man's home. Chafing against the restraints of this less-than-heroic life, Bern steals a magnificent horse brought to the island by traders, and, with the aid of an ambitious young woman, escapes to build a new life as a warrior. Farther west, two young princes of the Cyngael, Dai and Alun, cut short a cattle-raiding expedition against their neighbor when they meet the cleric Ceinion who invites them to eat at the table of Brynn ap Hywll, called "Erling's Bane" for his past exploits. After an evening in which both brothers fall in love with Brynn's daughter Rhiannon, Alun's view of the world is forever changed when Dai is killed during an Erling attack. He follows Ceinion, accompanied by the Erling

bondsman Thorkell, to the court of the Anglcyn king Aeldred, who spent his youth hiding in the mountains, suffering from strange fevers, and burning cakes. Another Erling attack, this time on the Anglcyn capital, leads to Alun, Thorkell, and Athelbert, Aeldred's son and heir, joining together to undertake a dangerous journey through the godwood, a forest haunted by mythical beings and superstitions.

Kay's use of this narrative structure serves an important thematic purpose in all of his works. The protagonists are usually antagonists in each other's stories; they represent opposing factions whose normal response to each other is one of conflict and hatred. But because each is the hero of his own story, because each is presented sympathetically, it is impossible for the reader to take sides in the larger conflict. We feel that we should hate the Erlings because of their slaughter of Alun's brother and Aeldred's lifelong companion, but we cannot because both Thorkell and his son Bern are shown to be honorable men with their own needs and goals. There is, unfortunately, no scene in *The Last Light of the Sun* to rival the ritual combat between heroes in *The Lions of Al-Rassan*, but the quest of the three men through the godwood, and the final confrontation between factions at Brynn's stronghold, fulfills a similar function, forcing the reader out of the simplistic binary opposition of good against evil. As usual, Kay does single out one character to serve as a scapegoat, a focal point for the reader's desire, roused by countless repetitions of the theme in less complex works of genre fantasy, to identify a villain and thus dispatch the evil forces, but that character cannot be said to represent any of the factions, any of the opposing viewpoints.

A theme commonly explored in Kay's work is the relationship between fathers and sons, between brothers and blood-brothers, between men who respect each other as enemies and rivals. Kay's depiction of masculine bonds is always fully realized and emotionally moving; unfortunately it is not always possible to say the same thing about his depictions of women. He does seem to make an honest attempt to view his recreated cultures through female eyes, to portray strong female characters who play important albeit secondary roles, but his wives and daughters, lovers and prostitutes, seem all too often idealized and mere accessories to the men's stories, which is perhaps to be expected given that the grand tales of Western history, of the lives and deaths of great men, are the foundations upon which he builds.

Another hallmark of Kay's historical fantasy is the consideration of the role played by poets and artists in the recording and construction of historical memory, and while this work does not give art and culture the same level of importance as in *The Sarantine Mosaic*, some attention is paid to the Cyngael bards and to Aeldred's desire to recreate the beauty and civilization of Rhodias (Rome), to bring peace to the island long enough for the Anglcyn to become more than "a precarious, dispersed, unlettered people" (173). Given that the examination of the role of the artist in history is one of Kay's strengths, and given the significance of art and music in Celtic culture, it seems an odd omission to have included so little in this novel.

Given that Kay's body of work is considered to be fantasy, despite the lack of most of the familiar markers of the genre, it seems fitting to close with a brief consideration of the use of magic in *The Last Light of the Sun*. Very little of Kay's work since *Tigana* has contained more than the slightest traces of magic. But it seems impossible that any author could set a story in any version of pre-Norman Britain and not include at least a touch of that culture's myths and legends. The godwood through which Thorkell, Alun, and Athelbert travel is dangerous because it is an Otherworld inhabited by fairies and ruled by their queen, who takes the souls of fallen heroes, including Alun's brother Dai. The expected conflict between the old pagan forces and the newer faith is referenced; however, it carries very little weight in the overall storyline, a seeming afterthought rather than a balanced and interconnected part of the whole.

Because this work touches on but does not advance any of his usual concerns, I can't say that *The Last Light of the Sun* is Kay's best work; overall it feels like a pencil sketch without the depth of color and texture I normally expect from him. However, it is a well told tale that will stir readers' emotions and also leave them thinking. His earlier works, especially *Tigana* and *The Lions of Al-Rassan*, are more likely to reward close study, but certainly this latest offering belongs on the bookshelves of scholars both of British-inspired fantasy and of the intersections between history and speculative fiction.

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