

# #267

Jan / Feb / Mar 2004

Editor:

**Christine Mains**

Managing Editor:

**Janice M. Bogstad**

Nonfiction Reviews:

**Ed McKnight**

Fiction Reviews:

**Philip Snyder**

The *SFRReview* (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 *SFRReview* 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.

Christine Mains, Editor  
Box 66024  
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4  
<cemains@shaw.ca>

Janice M. Bogstad, Managing Editor  
239 Broadway St.  
Eau Claire WI 54703-5553  
<bogstajm@uwec.edu>

Ed McKnight, Nonfiction Editor  
113 Cannon Lane  
Taylors SC 29687  
<emcknight@ac.edu>

Philip Snyder, Fiction Editor  
109 Northumberland Road  
Rochester NY 14618  
<psnyder@monroecc.edu>



## IN THIS ISSUE:

### SFRA Business

**Editor's Message 2**

### Features

**Final Chapter of SF? Part 2 2**

### Non Fiction Reviews

**Scores 6**

**Span of Mainstream and SF 8**

**Mervyn Peake 9**

**Hollywood's Stephen King 10**

**Visions of the Third Millennium 11**

### Fiction Reviews

**The Day Dali Died 13**

**Budayeen Nights 14**

**House of War 15**

**Quicksilver 16**

**Oy Pioneer! 18**

**Alphabet of Thorn 18**

**Nothing Human 19**

**Storyteller 20**

**Small Press Roundup 21**

### Advertising

**SFRA 2004 Dues Information 23**

**Help SFRA! 23**

**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 £250 will be awarded for the best unpublished essay in science fiction criticism.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. Submissions should be sent as a Word document to: Dr Farah Mendlesohn, *Foundation*, <farah@fjm3.demon.co.uk>. All submissions will be considered for publication in *Foundation*.

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, appreciations, reminiscences, .gif or .jpg (picture) files, suggested links to other sites / permission to link to your website, and study guides. Send suggestions, articles and permissions to Rich Ehrlich at <erlichrd@muohio.edu>.

The **Sci Fi Channel** has approved a four hour miniseries adaptation of the first two books of Ursula K. Le Guin's *Earthsea* trilogy, with production set to begin in New Zealand in the spring. The miniseries is scheduled to air in December 2004.

**Message from the Editor**

Christine Mains

Unfortunately, we have no message from SFRA president Peter Brigg for this issue, as he is lost somewhere in New Zealand. We know that he arrived safely, as he did send us a quick note from a cyber-café there; however, it appears that he's not quite settled in yet, and Peter knows how strict I've become about deadlines in recent months (since taking on this task, as a matter of fact).

In addition to the usual mix of fiction and nonfiction reviews, this issue features the second half of Darko Suvin's response to Brian Stableford's concerns about the future of science fiction; the first half was published in *SFRA Review* 266. We're pleased that the feature "Theory and Beyond" was able to provide a home for Suvin's article, and would like to take this opportunity to remind SFRA members that we're always looking for short articles about theory and science fiction, or about theorizing of science fiction. We also have another somewhat neglected feature, "Approaches," and I want to repeat my request from the previous issue for any member teaching science fiction in the classroom to share with *SFRA Review* readers the answer to the question "What novel or short story do you feel must be included on your syllabus and Why?" Simply email me at [cemains@shaw.ca](mailto:cemains@shaw.ca) with your response.

Mike Levy closes out this issue with a brief overview of some lesser-known titles and an offer to send a review copy to any SFRA member willing to write a more in-depth review. If you, like Mike, are familiar with the works of new writers or the efforts of the smaller genre presses, feel free to contact me about doing an interview or a brief review. Some wonderful writing finds a home in the most unexpected places, and we'd like to play a small part in finding a larger audience for that work.

THEORY AND BEYOND

**The Final Chapter?:  
On Reading Brian Stableford**

Darko Suvin

[This is Part Two: Part One can be found in *SFRA Review* 266]

3. The common denominator of Fantasy seems to me the resolute refusal of any technology, urbanization, and finances associated with the capitalism of Industrial Revolution and "paleotechnic" (Mumford) machinery, as well as the refusal of the opacity and sheer loss of synoptic overview which follow for all efforts to understand relationships between people. The most useful definition I could find for works that I'd call Fantasy is *ahistorical alternative worlds*. This is consubstantial to a full evacuation of both the constraints and of the object world of late capitalism. Carried over from the everyday pressures are, I think, three factors, which follow in ascending order of shape-shifting in relation to the reader's empirical world.

First is the omnipresent hugely *endangered status* of life and liberty, stemming from our global avalanches of unemployment, hunger, epidemics, wars—you name it.

Second, the place of any overarching historical laws, whether of bourgeois "progress" or of socialist sublation of capitalism that retains the achievements of industrialism, is taken by *power politics*, even the nostalgic collectivists of the

Tolkien kind cannot show a monotheistic religion or Saviour. Heroic Fantasy and Horror Fantasy divide according to whether personal salvation through the action of saviour-heroes is on the agenda or not. If it is, the reader's alienation is countered by the attempt to wipe the historical slate clean and try the pursuit of happiness in a rougher but more understandable environment, the landscapes and cities using 18th-Century Arabian Tales or similarly filtered legends of "harder" primitivism, and often intermingled with power from polytheistic godheads and wizardry. If it is not, the power politics are transmuted into the intervention of immeasurably superior crushing godheads or entities into everyday spacetime, which yokes the reader's alienation into the pleasure of aesthetized horror. In a further ideational compromise characteristic for our history of scaled-down hopes, parts of Heroic Fantasy may also be seen as shelving the very thought of salvation in favour of little oases of privatized survival, either still against the backdrop of a whole age (*Conan*) or simply in the interstices of a city (Leiber).

Third, and for this initial hypothesis final, the most keenly felt disenchantment (Weber) or loss of aura (Benjamin) pervading all aspects of capitalist hegemony is replaced by *new thrills or affects*. Even Lovecraftian horror maps a kind of demented causality that is more bearable than the isolation, fragmentedness, and alienation imposed by bureaucratized rationality yoked to the profit principle—and even more so the re-enchantments of Dunsany, Tolkien, and their followers.

Let me try to prevent misunderstanding: As against the Puritanical or business barbarians' discomfort at or even hate of truly new stories, there is in principle or in theory no reason to shy away from any alternative worlds. My shortcut in MOSF to reject Fantasy as a genre, though meant only for horror fantasy, has proved overhasty. But I believe there are two crucial and consubstantial preconditions if any such world depiction is to be useful beyond airport reading to anesthetize unbearable environments: 1/ that the actions and agents in this world be radically different, instead of a simple translation of (say) our empirical gang or workplace brutality to wishful heroism, and 2/ that the story in its own way throw a light on the relationships of people around the reader to each other and to their institutions, and thus permit a better orientation within them and an intervention into them. This applies to my mind equally to Fantasy and SF. Now the practical subset of what seems to be the great majority of existing Heroic and Horror Fantasy is alien to such horizons. One might excuse this by saying the proportions may not be much worse than in the really existing SF. I don't know whether this is correct, for one would have to read a good portion of the 600 new titles per year to know it; but even if it were, this would be a hollow excuse.

4. On the basis of these arguments, I can now return to Stableford's properly sociological concerns. There is no doubt the sociological bearer of Fantasy is a large group of alienated readers at the margins of the Post-Fordist social hegemony, drawn from the marginalized intellectuals, the young, the lower classes, and the women, and that a good part of them would be Benjamin's narcotized dreamers escaping its pain. Hugh Duncan exemplified this for the USA in the 1960s as follows: "[t]he American Negro, the poor [W]hite, the impecunious adolescent, are urged daily and hourly, by some of the most persuasive magicians known to history, to want everything that money can buy, yet because they are black, unskilled, or too young, they cannot satisfy those exhortations. . . . they must repress [their] desires" (in Elkins 25-26, and cf. Russ 61). But how are we to update this for the last quarter century?

My "sociological" hypothesis is: The long-range structural crisis of capitalism coincides with the mass growth of fantastic fiction in and at the end of the high modernist phase, in direct parallel to the widening of its readership from the Poe-

The final **Nebula Award Ballot** has been announced by the SFWA. The winners will be announced at the Nebula Awards Weekend in Seattle, Washington on April 17. The Nebula Awards Banquet is open to anyone. Information at <[www.sfwaworld.com/awards/2004/index.html](http://www.sfwaworld.com/awards/2004/index.html)>. Novels: *Diplomatic Immunity*, by Lois McMaster Bujold; *The Mount*, by Carol Emshwiller; *Light Music*, by Kathleen Ann Goonan; *The Salt Roads*, by Nalo Hopkinson; *Chindi*, by Jack McDevitt; *The Speed of Dark*, by Elizabeth Moon. Novellas: "Potter of Bones", by Eleanor Arnason; "The Empress of Mars", by Kage Baker; "Coraline", by Neil Gaiman; "Stories for Men", by John Kessel; "Breathmoss", by Ian MacLeod. Novelettes: "Mask of the Rex", by Richard Bowes; "Of a Sweet Slow Dance in the Wake of Temporary Dogs", by Adam-Troy Castro; "OwnzOred", by Cory Doctorow; "The Empire of Ice Cream", by Jeffrey Ford; "The Wages of Syntax", by Ray Vukcevich. Short Stories: "Knapsack Poems", by Eleanor Arnason; "The Brief History of the Dead", by Kevin Brockmeier; "Goodbye to All That", by Harlan Ellison; "Grandma", by Carol Emshwiller; "What I Didn't See", by Karen Joy Fowler; "Lambing Season", by Molly Gloss; "The Last of the O-Forms", by James Van Pelt.

The **Arthur C. Clarke Award** committee has announced the shortlist for this year's award: *Coalescent*, by Stephen Baxter; *Darwin's Children*, by Greg Bear; *Pattern Recognition*, by William Gibson; *Midnight Lamp*, by Gwyneth Jones; *Quicksilver*, by Neal Stevenson (reviewed in this issue); *Maul*, by Tricia Sullivan.

The British Science Fiction Association has announced the shortlist for the **BSFA Awards**, to be presented at Concourse on April 11. The award is presented for excellence in science fiction published in Britain. Best Novel: *Pattern Recognition*, by William Gibson; *Felaheen*, by Jon Courtenay Grimwood; *Midnight Lamp*, by Gwyneth Jones; *Absolution Gap*, by Alastair Reynolds; *Natural History*, by Justina Robson; *Maul*, by Tricia Sullivan. Best Short Fiction: "Dear Abbey," by Terry Bisson; "The Wolves in the Walls," by Neil Gaiman & Dave McKean; "Swastika Bomb," by John Meaney; "Birth Days," by Geoff Ryman; "Nightfall," by Charles Stross. Best Non-Fiction: "Nothing is Written: Politics, Ideology and the Burden of History in the Fall Revolution Quartet" by John H Arnold & Andy Wood; "The Profession of Science Fiction #58: Mapping the Territory," by Mike Ashley; "Reading Science Fiction" by Farah Mendlesohn; "A Sick Mind" by Cheryl Morgan; *Hitchhiker: A Biography of Douglas Adams*, by M J Simpson.

The **Philip K. Dick Award** will be presented on April 9 at Norwescon 27 in Seattle. This year's judges include Stephen L. Burns, Suzy McKee Charnas, Craig Jacobsen, Richard Parks, and Janine Ellen Young. The shortlist: *Altered Carbon*, by Richard K. Morgan; *Clade*, by Mark Budz; *Dante's Equation*, by Jane Jensen; *Hyperthought*, by M. M. Buckner; *Spin State*, by Chris Moriarty; *Steel Helix*, by Ann Tonsor Zeddies.

**MidSouthCon seminar on education:** During the 2004 MidSouthCon, to be held March 26-28 in Memphis, Tennessee, there will be a three-hour seminar featuring panel discussions by professionals in education, science

to-Morris disaffected intellectuals into a mass appeal to the marginalized social groups. In particular, this includes a large segment of the young generation whom the collapse of the Welfare State and all other organized opposition to savage capitalism has left without economic and ideological anchorage. The hugely encroaching commodification of everything means that when work is obtained, it is very rarely related to pleasure any more. Subjectivity has been bereft of most private oases (work, family) which used to alleviate subjection and marginalization: it is now sold like Peter Schlemihl's shadow. This results in a huge rise of everyday humiliations in shamelessly exploited labour buttressed by sexism and racism—up to scores of extremely dirty wars which openly institute global surveillance and reduce people to data murdering or being murdered, but carefully occult the motives. One resentful response is then hugely swelling yearning for a world where goods are not commodities and people are not alienated by the omnipervasive machinery of bourgeois war of each against each, or at least the reader's representative is top dog. In them, the sympathetic heroes are often pirates or thieves or average people faced with inexplicable opportunities or resentfully yoked to overwhelming horrors. To the empirical world out of joint there are opposed inverse worlds "in joint," though as a rule in a simplified joint (plaster cast?).

Building on Gérard Klein, I'd think SF appeals to social groups with confidence that something can at present be done about a collective historical future—if only as dire warnings. This entails as a rule (Morris was representative of possibilities of exception) a comfortable neighbourliness toward, and mostly actual alliance with or indeed commitment to technoscience. To the contrary, in a situation where people's entire life-world has in the meanwhile undergone much further tentacular and capillary colonization, Fantasy's appeal is to uncertain social classes or fractions who have been cast adrift and lost that confidence, so that they face their own present and future with horror or a resolve to have a good time before the Deluge—or both. There seems to be wide agreement among editors and writers, based on polls, that Fantasy is read predominantly by younger people, perhaps up to their mid-30s and 70% male (Kelso 440 and 445), who have internalized the experience of lacking safe and permanent employment. A number of them are university graduates (as in SF), but in Post-Fordism this no longer ensures entry into the professional-managerial class; and a number seem to be already the de-schooled generation—certainly the quality of their education is markedly inferior, especially in science subjects, to the pre-1960s. Therefore the epistemology of SF can appeal to the cognitive universalism of natural and/or social laws, however renewed, while an individualistic and pluralist epistemology of Fantasy appeals to occultism, whimsy or magic, opposing the SF model while leaning on it. Simultaneously with the symptomatic interest of anthropology for what Lévi-Strauss called the "societies without history," that is a short-circuiting of myth and mind outside of history, the young people of the urban middle classes, mostly employees and university educated, rejected the accepted (or any) cause-and-effect relations (Ben-Yehuda 75-77, 85).

Both Klein and Ben-Yehuda note how exactly parallel in time and largely overlapping in horizons are the rise of occultism and the new developments in what is by now all lumped together into the mystifying category of "speculative fiction": the SF in the wake of *Dune*, and all Fantasy. Though everybody from Klein and Clute to Kelso and Stableford lacks hard data (and what there is ends six years ago), it is clear Ben-Yehuda is correct when he cites as enabling conditions for this, first, the decomposition of the political horizons of the 60s' counter-culture (or any other oppositional mass politics) and the privatization of organizing belief, and second, the tremendous loss of prestige by technoscience because of

wars and ecological disasters (87-88, 98-102). It is not by chance that Freud's hypothesis of an unconscious out of time was published in 1915, while an entire generation was being slaughtered in the horrible stasis of the World War 1 trenches.

In these straits, SF has to my mind apparently three but in fact only two sustainable options. The first option is to continue with what Stableford calls "futuristic costume dramas" or space-operas, erasing more and more their difference with Fantasy as to any rational credibility or causality involved; the best writer of this option—which can now claim the dubious cachet of a Post-Modern sensibility—is surely, as of *Dhalgren*, Samuel Delany. The second option is to defiantly embrace the NASA use of hard sciences as the only rightful claim to SCIENCE Fiction—let me call it the Ben Bova school or wing (Benford etc.). This is going to become not perhaps commercially extinct, as Stableford prophesies (or fears), but the fiction of those engineering and science students who still read fiction—a dwindling group. For the genre as a whole, it is no option.

The third option—the only one to hold some hopes for the flourishing of that thoughtful SF whose demise is seen by Stableford—is what I'd, lacking a proper name, tentatively call the Le Guin to K.S. Robinson line. This rich and diversified line must be, whatever its present politics, called a Leftwing one insofar as it has inherited from European philosophy and the Welfare State age (from Lenin to Keynes) a commitment for the use of warm reason to at least illuminate why people live so badly together, and perhaps to think about radical changes in the way they live—possibly by ludically skewed contraries (for ex. Banks); this practically means today enmity to the new US-cum-WTO/IMF supremacy. I would prominently include here all thoughtful and self-critical feminist SF from early Russ through Charnas, Le Guin, and Pamela Sargent to C.J. Cherryh and Gwyneth Jones. In sum: either the adventure of SF will become integrally critical, or it will eventually be outflanked by Fantasy and fail as a mass genre. [2]

If this is so, it would behoove us to think about what does an integral or radical critique today mean—that is, *how* is such an SF written. Certainly not only as overt utopian horizons: satire, dystopia, and other anamorphic deformations will in fact do much better. The available modes can only be got at by feedback from the best writings. But I suspect it will have to include demystifications of unjust power and brainwashing hypocrisies.

Note [2] It would probably be very instructive to examine why SF has disappeared from the ex-USSR and GDR after capitalist "democratization," which also meant impoverishment.

#### Works Cited

- Benjamin, Walter. *Gesammelte Schriften*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980ff.  
 Ben-Yehuda, Nachman. *Deviance and Moral Boundaries*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1985.  
 Chapman, Gary. "Taming the Computer," in M. Dery ed., *Flame Wars*. Durham: Duke UP, 1994, 297-319.  
 Clute, John. *Look at the Evidence*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1995.  
 Elkins, Charles. "An Approach to the Social Functions of Science Fiction and Fantasy," in R.A. Collins and H.D. Pearce eds., *The Scope of the Fantastic*. Westport CT: Greenwood P, 1985, 23-31.  
 Gorz, André. *Métamorphoses du travail - Quête du sens*. Paris: Galilée, 1988.  
 Haraway, Donna J. *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium*. New York: Routledge, 1997.  
 Hartwell, David. *Age of Wonders*. New York: Walker, 1984.  
 Kelso, Sylvia. "Whadd'ya Mean, 'Narrative'?" *Para.Doxa* 4.11 (1998): 431-51.  
 Klein, Gérard. "Trames et moirés," in M. Thaon et al., *Science-fiction et psychanalyse*. Paris: Dunod, 1986, 47-151.

and science fiction writing. Registration for the seminar is free and includes a tour of the convention and special rates for seminar attendees who wish to attend MidSouthCon. For more information, contact <info@midsouthcon.org>.

According to Paul Brians, **The World Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame** opening this June in Seattle inside the Experience Music Project is hoping to present a number of public lectures, classes, etc. on SF, aimed at the general public, at younger readers, or at teachers. They are especially interested in presenters who are nearby (BC, Washington State, etc.) since they can't pay much. The Education and Outreach Coordinator is Leslie Howard, long involved with Clarion West. If you would like to offer your services or have suggestions, contact Leslie at <LeslieH@emplive.com>.

**Experience Science Fiction**, the SF museum slated to open in Seattle later this year, has announced that Donna Shirley has joined the enterprise as its director, overseeing the creative, programs and operations teams. She has been an SF fan since she was eleven and has more than 40 years of experience in aerospace and civil systems engineering, managing the Mars Exploration Program at JPL.

**Speculative Literature Foundation** plans to promote literary quality in speculative fiction, and to create a comprehensive resource website for outreach to schools and libraries. The winner of the SLF Fountain Award for excellence in short fiction, a \$1,000 prize, will be announced on June 1. For more information, see <www.speculativeliterature.org>.

Canadian publisher **Red Deer Press**, based in Calgary, Alberta, has announced a new imprint, Robert J. Sawyer Books. The Hugo and Nebula Award-winning Canadian author will edit the line, which plans to publish at least three books each year. The first novel will be *Letters from the Flesh*, by Marcos Donnelly, a hardcover appearing in May.

#### Recent and Forthcoming Titles:

Bradbury, Ray. *Ray Harryhausen: An Animated Life*. Billboard Books, April 04.

Brooker, Will. *Alice's Adventures: Lewis Carroll in Popular Culture*. Continuum, April 04.

Kapell, Matthew & William G. Doty, eds. *Jacking into The Matrix Trilogy*. Continuum, May 04.

Kefferman, Kevin. *Ghouls, Gimmicks, and Gold: Horror Films and the American Movie Business*. Duke UP, April 04.

Lyons, Matthew. *Here and Back Again: In the Footsteps of J.R.R. Tolkien's England*. Cadogan, April 04.

Nourmand & Graham Marsh. *Science Fiction Poster Art*. Aurum Press, Spring 04.

Robida, Albert. *The Twentieth Century*. Wesleyan UP, March 04.

Sommers, Stephen. *Van Helsing: The Making of the Thrilling Monster Movie*. Newmarket Press, May 04.

#### CFPs:

WHAT: Taking Science Fiction Seriously—but not solemnly

WHO: SFRA2004

WHEN: June 3-6, 2004

WHERE: Skokie, IL

TOPICS: Guest of Honor: Connie Willis. The focus of this year's SFRA is on humor in Science Fiction. We

Marx, Karl. *Grundrisse*. Transl. M. Nicolaus. New York: Vintage Books, 1973.

Parrinder, Patrick. "The Age of Fantasy," in his *The Failure of Theory*. Brighton: Harvester P, 1987, 109-14 and 214.

Russ, Joanna. *To Write Like a Woman*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995.

Scholes, Robert. "Boiling Roses," in G.E. Slusser and E.S. Rabkin eds., *Intersections: Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Carbondale: S. Illinois UP, 1987, 3-18.

Stableford, Brian. "The Final Chapter of the Sociology of Science Fiction." *Foundation* 79 (2000): 41-58.

Suvin, Darko. "Considering the Sense of 'Fantasy' or 'Fantastic Fiction.'" *Extrapolation* 41.3 (2000): 209-47 (somewhat augmented in *Orizzonti del fantastico*. Ed. A. Contenti. CD, Dipt. Lett. Comparete, U Roma III, June 2002).

—. *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979.

Tolkien, J.R.R. "On Fairy-stories," in *The Tolkien Reader*. New York: Ballantine, 1973, 3-84.

I suppose I owe SFRA readers an explanation why I didn't go into echoes of Stableford's mid-2000 article in *Foundation*, identified in my above list of Works Cited, including prominently his own "Postscript" in *S-F Studies* 30 (2003): 338-41. The fact is that "The Final Chapter of SF?: On Reading Brian Stableford" was written in late 2000 and sent to a periodical of criticism (which shall remain nameless) for publication. After some initial peripeties by e-mail, I didn't hear from the periodical for a year or so, and further inquiries elicited no reply. Two years later, I happened to run into the periodical editor who explained that a reply had supposedly been sent by email, saying that the article was "too academical" for them to publish... I leave the readers to judge whether it is such or not.

#### NONFICTION REVIEW

### Scores: Reviews 1993-2003

Philip Snyder

John Clute, *Scores: Reviews 1993-2003*. Essex, UK: Becon Publications, 2003. Paperback, 438 pages, UK 14 – US\$27 – CAN\$33. ISBN 1-870-824-48-2.

On the bookishness of John Clute, consider the testimonial of Neil Gaiman:

"Whenever I've been lucky enough over the years to stay at John and Judith Clute's place in Camden, it's a magnificent feeling to wake up, remove the encrusted spittle, and see a book collection far better than mine, and know that that's just some bit of the book overflow that happened to creep into their spare room; I knew (as all book people know) that somewhere under Camden Town there are strange cellar-like rooms too low for full-sized men to walk through with their heads unbowed, filled with shelves and more shelves and only with shelves, and on those shelves is stored John Clute's *Oh My God You Have That I Thought It Was Only A Legend And It's A Signed First Edition God Almighty John Real Book Collection* (as opposed to the book collection in his house, which is merely unimaginably impressive)." <www.neilgaiman.com>, Dec. 3, 2003.)

What Clute *does* with that collection—the turning of its grist in his intellectual mill—is more unimaginably impressive still. In the course of a nearly 40-year career of reviewing SF and fantasy, he has earned a reputation as one of the most formidable, witty, acerbic, magisterial, rewarding, and provocative critics we have. With *Scores*, his most recent assembling of reviews and commentary, he meets and perhaps even beats the already high standard of his earlier collections. As he did in *Strokes: Essays and Reviews 1966-86* and in *Look at the Evidence* (which collected his essays and reviews from 1987-93), Clute once again combines awesome erudition

with a dazzling style in the service of his ongoing passionate engagement with SF's achievements and its potential.

*Scores* offers a generous helping of Clute, collecting about 125 separate reviews published in the last decade, covering nearly 200 books, and including three additional essays with a wider focus, plus a helpful preface. As Clute notes in that preface, a dumbbell graph of the reviews therein "would show lots of coverage of 1993-94, and an increasing intensity of coverage after the beginning of 1997, but a thin zone in the middle, when I was going kind of crazy with a couple big books and life stuff and wasn't reading much new." (Since that "thin zone" includes elegant reviews of such novels from 1995-96 as Christopher Priest's *Prestige*, William Gibson's *Idoru*, and Jonathan Lethem's *Amnesia Moon*, we may be inclined to forgiveness.) Represented here is work published in a number of venues, including the *Times Literary Supplement*, the *Washington Post*, *Salon*, *Foundation*, the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, and others, though most appeared originally in *Interzone*, the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, and *Science Fiction Weekly* (the collection assembles nearly all of Clute's "Excessive Candour" columns from March 1997 through February 2003).

Although the book's strictly chronological organization yields few clues about the patterns of thought within, readers can assemble in their heads a thematic anthology of sorts, as Clute's central preoccupations emerge throughout the volume. In a goodly number of reviews, for instance, he wages an ongoing war with "First SF," his term for the American SF of the pulp era which set the agenda for so much science fiction – quite a wrong-headed and unfortunate agenda, in his estimation — prior to the 1960s. It's a gallant conflict to behold, a skirmish conducted with wit and brio, pitting the Ancients and Moderns of SF against one another with a bite and gusto reminiscent of the great 18<sup>th</sup> century Battle of the Books. Another of Clute's great themes is his devotion to "the storyable," a concept that may elude sharp definition, but which nevertheless proves eminently illuminating whenever he points it in the direction of a text. Various other "Clute-isms," many of them instantly recognizable to insomniac browsers of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* and the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, thread their labyrinthine way through these reviews, pleasing and instructing as they go.

As always when reading Clute, at least half the pleasure derives from savoring his frequently arcane and occasionally sesquipedalian lexicon, his often acrobatic syntax, his capacity for gnomic utterance. Yet another delight is his positively Himalayan range of reference, with any given essay's commentary displaying only the snow-capped peak of an argument resting on an implied Everest of knowledge. These reviews also impress with their sheer passion, their unflinching insistence that SF *matters*. In some of these essays, to be sure, what brings this passion to the fore is Clute's taking up the task of savaging the sloppy and the meretricious. Such acts of critical mass destruction are surprisingly rare here, however; more often than not, Clute's judgments are uncommonly generous, especially when he conscientiously points out the hidden and surprising silk purses in works which he otherwise regards, regretfully, as being pretty much sows' ears.

*Scores* is required reading, certainly, for scholars of science fiction and fantasy, and will be pure ambrosia to Clute fans. It would also be a wonderful volume, I think, to place in the hands of students. At the very least, it would provide capsule introductions to some of the most important work in the field in the last decade, along with very teachable specimens of a number of critical approaches and methods of analysis. And for students ready to move beyond a vague appreciation of "sci-fi," *Scores* offers more than a hundred models of the rewards that a serious and intelligent commitment to this literature can give.

also welcome proposals for individual papers and for academic sessions and panels on any aspect of the fantastic.

CONTACT: Beverly Friend,  
Oakton Community College,  
Faculty Support Office, #B206  
7701 Lincoln Ave, Skokie, IL 60076  
<friend@oakton.edu>

SUBMISSIONS: Proposals should include an abstract no longer than 200 words.. Paper presenters should plan to speak for 20 minutes or less to allow ample time for questions and discussion. The presentation may be a (self-coherent) excerpt of a longer paper. To be listed in the conference program, participants must preregister for the conference by May 1, 2004. Review the information needed and complete the forms on the SFRA website. Conference registration forms will be sent to all current SFRA members. Electronic correspondence is welcome.

DEADLINE: April 10, 2004.

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

WHAT: Postfeminist Gothic

WHO: special edition of the *Gothic Studies Journal* (Manchester UP).

TOPICS: This collection of essays aims to consider the intersection of two much debated and contentious concepts, postfeminism and Gothic. Ever since the word 'postfeminist' sprang to the pages of the *New York Times* in October 1982, the term has had a contested history. On the one hand, postfeminism is perceived as a pro-patriarchial, anti-feminist stance, a backlash against feminism and its values, whereas, on the other hand, it is seen to reflect the postmodern age of uncertainty that we live in. Likewise, from the moment Horace Walpole applied the sub-heading 'A Gothic Story' to *The Castle of Otranto* in 1765, the Gothic has resisted a

monolithic definition and a rigid categorization. Thus, Postfeminist Gothic demands fresh perspectives and speculative interventions into these controversial areas of research. Essays should discuss the interactions and complexities of postfeminist ideas and Gothic texts. Contributions on contemporary Gothic writing and movies will be particularly welcome. Further areas for consideration might include the instability of gender boundaries, parodic femininities/masculinities, the posthuman body, sadomasochism, pornography, freaks, Gothic 'supergirls' in contemporary culture and representations of masculinity in crisis. Contributions are also welcome on specific authors (such as, Fay Weldon, Chuck Palahniuk, Emma Tennant, Angela Carter, Alice Thompson, Laurell K. Hamilton, Poppy Z. Brite) and TV series and films (such as, 'She Devil', 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer', 'Dark Angel', 'Charmed').

SUBMISSIONS: 200-300 word abstract proposing articles between 3000-9000 words to: Stephanie Genz & Benjamin Brabon, Department of English Studies, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA Scotland or e-mail <Stephanie.genz@stir.ac.uk> and <b.a.brabon@stir.ac.uk>.

DEADLINE: March 22, 2004

WHAT: Theatres of Science

WHEN: September 8-11, 2004

WHERE: University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, Wales, UK

TOPICS: The 'Theatres of Science' conference will address some of the many exciting and innovative ideas and practices taking place at the intersections between drama/theatre and science. We are concerned with an eclectic field ranging from plays about scientific issues, to theatrical biography, from public dissections to

## The Span of Mainstream and Science Fiction

Janice M. Bogstad

Brigg, Peter. *The Span of Mainstream and Science Fiction: A Critical Study of a New Literary Genre*. McFarland, 2003. 195 p. \$32.00, paperbound, ISBN 0786413042.

In this sometimes in-depth exploration of 1980s and 90s literature and genre theory, Brigg suggests that a new generic classification will improve our understanding of certain works of fiction. His work is eminently worth reading for its interpretations as well as its insights on genre. In the course of his argument, he links texts that are recognized by authors or readers as either generic science fiction or mainstream fiction. He both argues for and validates 'Span,' a fiction that is embedded in modern science and technology without being dominated by the positivist tropes of modern generic science fiction. The term names fiction that spans the distance between mainstream and science fictional literary conventions, and consequently the expectations readers have for the texts.

I cannot predict if 'span' will prove to be a useful generic indicator, any more than has 'slipstream' or 'cross-genre fiction.' However, Brigg's essays are of interest. After setting the groundwork for defining this new genre firmly in internal characteristics of the works rather than in marketing classifications, he uses as exemplary texts several novels of Doris Lessing, including, of course, the *Canopus in Argos* series as well as *Four Gated City* and *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (Chapter Two). Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, *V* and *Crying of Lot 49* (Chapter Three) allow Brigg to focus on the culture of science. These are his two major examples of works by writers who either succeeded first outside of science fiction or are still considered mainstream writers. Each constitutes a chapter within which he sets the ground rules for span fiction—that it makes use of a post-enlightenment understanding of the world while also exploiting the potentials of non-representational fiction of the modern era. Of the two, the Pynchon chapter is a more intriguing and thorough articulation of this author's work, but both offer useful interpretations.

Having established characteristics for span, he then evaluates a long list of mainstream novels that exemplify it in part in a chapter entitled "A Bridge Takes Over." Here he briefly articulates the span elements in an otherwise disparate range of texts such as Gordimer's *A Sport of Nature* (1987), Julian Barnes' *Staring at the Sun* (1986), Fowles' *A Maggot* (1985), Boyd's *Brazzaville Beach* (1990), Ackroyd's *First Light*, Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Carter's *Heroes and Villains*, Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, as well as Hoban, Tevis, Burgess, P.D. James, Vonnegut, and more. As we know, a number of these writers and novels have already been admitted to the universe of science fiction criticism, but each is by an author whose reputation is largely outside the field and also outside of the definition of span. In most cases, the explications are quite brief, with Gordimer, Vonnegut, Fowles and Atwood as central.

Predictably, his next chapter concerns texts that have been identified firmly within science fiction, usually because their authors published other science fiction. These works aren't so easily classified. Examples that come to mind quickly are Delany's *Dhalgren* but other writers, as expected, include Le Guin and Dick. All three get significant attention in relation to the rest of the novels discussed.

Span as a concept is an attempt to explain, in my estimation, the difference

between 'science' as a theme and the scientific *episteme*, close to what Suvin calls the *Novum*, as the worldview out of which these fictional explorations come rather than, as in 'regular' science fiction, the subject matter of the fiction. In relation to his own arguments, it is a definition that fits Pynchon more perfectly than any of the other novels discussed, and Brigg's final word on the subject is: "The genre of writing that is span fiction combines the overwhelming presence of science and technology in our lives with the consideration and critique of that presence in a variety of literary experiments" (191). He is very careful throughout to specify that it is not meant to be a term of valorization, privileging span over other types of science fiction.

In fact, this work could be profitably examined in relation to two others that explore the nature of genre in relation to science fiction. Susan Strehle's *Fiction in the Quantum Universe* (U of N. Carolina Press, 1992) is mentioned in the course of Briggs' argument. Marlene Barr's *Genre Fission: A New Discourse Practice For Cultural Studies* (U of Iowa, Iowa City, 2000) is another useful juxtaposition which handles the validity of contemporary genre conventions by looking at the episteme of distrust of science as conveyed in contemporary fiction. Whether we need a new generic classification, expanded definitions for science fiction, or just the recognition that generic classification is always a limited method of evaluating works of fiction, it is clear that Brigg, along with Barr, Strehle and a number of other critics in the last 15 years, has found the glib distinction between mainstream fiction and science fiction to be both inadequate and misleading. Even if they haven't found the answer, and they may have, they are articulating questions to be answered as authors explore a range of tropes and conventions in their attempts to explain the modern world in their fictions.

NONFICTION REVIEW  
**Mervyn Peake**

Janice M. Bogstad

Yorke, Malcom. *Mervyn Peake: My Eyes Mint Gold: A Life*. The Overlook Press. July 2002 ISBN: 1-58567-211-4. 368 p. \$37.50.

In this lavishly illustrated, anecdotal biography of Mervyn Peake, Yorke strives to present the whole man rather than the one known to casual observers as the author of the Titus Groan Trilogy. The work is a chronology of Peake's life, from his early childhood in Tientsin, China (1911-1923) to his last creative works before he died of Parkinsons in 1968. It places his vast body of writing, illustration, plays, novels and poetry into the context of a short, sometimes tragic, but always interesting life. Peake was a missionary child, an English Schoolboy, a bohemian, artist, illustrator, father, poet, playwright, and novelist. While he made most of his living in art, it is the trilogy that has made him famous, as exemplified partly by the six+ hour BBC production that brought Gormenghast to life in 2000, as chronicled on their webpage: <[www.bbc.co.uk/drama/gormenghast/std/char/gertrude.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/drama/gormenghast/std/char/gertrude.shtml)>.

This work would be valuable alone for its wealth of original art by Peake, over 120 drawings and illustrations, many of which have never been previously published. The author also uses quotations from letters, poetry and other written material, which he viewed with the full cooperation of Peake's wife and children. He is also careful to place the triumphs of this writer's career within the context of his many troubles, as an unsuccessful soldier in World War II, an illustrator who wanted to be an artist, a father who tried valiantly to provide for his family while also pursuing his many talents. Yorke's chronicle of Peake's last commissions,

scientific lecture-demonstrations, from performance art interrogating science to drama in science museums, amongst many others. Key questions are: how can different knowledge systems and ways of understanding and/or describing the world be brought into confluence or conflict to produce new meanings, insights and experiences? What are key approaches, challenges and obstacles in arts/science collaborations? The focus for papers and workshops is likely to include - but is not limited to: Plays dealing with scientific issues, themes, histories and personalities; Collaborations between artists and scientists; Science as performance; Radio & Television drama and science; Science on film; Ethics and Experimentation; Drama/Theatre, Science and Education; Science Communication and drama. The conference is aimed at academics, artists, scientists, teachers, researchers, writers, performers, and educationists. It is envisaged that the programme will include a combination of formal papers, practical workshops, discussion groups and performances.

**SUBMISSIONS:** abstract of no longer than 300 words, along with A/V requirements and contact details, via mail or MSWord attachment to Michael Carlin, School of Humanities, Law & Social Sciences, Ty Crawshay, University of Glamorgan, Ponypridd, CF37 IKL, UK or <[dramasci@glam.ac.uk](mailto:dramasci@glam.ac.uk)>.

**DEADLINE:** 19 March 2004

**WHAT:** Science Fiction and Fantasy Session

**WHO:** South Central Modern Language Association Convention

**WHEN:** 28-30 October 2004

**WHERE:** New Orleans

**TOPICS:** This panel seeks papers that

examine science fiction and fantasy narratives dealing with cultural interactions, particularly those employing a strong historical awareness of the material contexts within which these narratives are produced. Possible focuses of papers include but are not limited to: Definitions and meanings of gender/transgender; Varieties and implications of race and/or ethnicity; Representations of work and economic class; Narratives of environmentalism; Functions and meanings of "space"; Functions and meanings of "time" The role of history and historical awareness.

SUBMISSIONS: 500-word abstracts to <dlensing2002@yahoo.com>  
DEADLINE: February 28, 2004

WHAT: Celtic Science Fiction  
WHO: Celtic Studies Discussion Group, MLA

WHEN: MLA Convention 2004

WHERE: Philadelphia

TOPICS: This session explores retellings of Celtic literature, specifically those that adopt Celtic literature for Science Fiction/Fantasy. How does Celtic Science Fiction/Fantasy corrupt or modify original texts? What are the pedagogical implications for Celtic Studies? Possible subjects may include the fiction of Morgan Llywellyn, Kenneth C. Flint, 'Caiseal Mór', Lynn Flewelling, Rick Sutcliffe, Andrew M. Greeley and Patricia Kennealy-Morrison.

SUBMISSIONS: 300 word abstract  
<brianoconchubhair@yahoo.com>  
DEADLINE: 17 March 2004

WHAT: The Undiscovered Country: Science fiction in culture and the canon

TOPICS: There have been several milestones met and passed since Edgar Rice Burroughs, the grandfather of science fiction, introduced us

when he tried to work in spite of advancing Parkinsons, is particularly poignant.

While this is an artistic biography, it cannot be called a critical biography. The author's approach is to represent the range of work, decry Peake's difficulties as one whose creative 'styles' are out of synch with the popular sensibility and offer his own interpretations of author and work. Significantly, the biography does not end with Peake's death in 1968 but with a chapter on his cult following from 1968-83 and another on his 'revival' from 1983-2000. His focus here is on Peake's wife Maeve and her promotion of Peake's works, as well as his cult status, Winnington's founding of Peake Studies in November of 1988, and radio and television productions of the first two books of the trilogy. It is clear that Yorke is familiar with both Peake and the modern fantasy tradition that has finally given him an audience, and that his work has a more popular tone than the also recent critical biography, *Vast Alchemies*, by G. Peter Winnington. They stand together as profitable approaches to the whole picture of Peake and his many creative endeavors.

#### NONFICTION REVIEW

### Hollywood's Stephen King

Rebecca Janicker

Magistrale, Tony. *Hollywood's Stephen King*. New York, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (2003). 10 illustrations, xix + 233pp. Paperback, \$17.95. ISBN 0-312-29321-6.

In January 2004, the *Radio Times*, as Britain's biggest-selling TV guide, published the results of an online survey on 'spooky' television in which the mini-series *Stephen King's IT* was voted the scariest television experience ever. This shows, as does Tony Magistrale's work, the impact that King has had on popular culture, both as an author and as an originator of film and television adaptations.

The book comprises seven chapters, six of which examine a cluster of films or mini-series on the basis of a shared theme. Themes consist of: children, maternal and paternal archetypes, heroic codes, the role of technology, and the mini-series. The first chapter is an interview with King conducted by Magistrale, tackling issues such as inspirations for King's work and his reactions to adaptations of his work, both on the small and the large screen. The author draws on Marxist and feminist theory in his evaluations of King's written work and screen adaptations. He is particularly concerned with the occurrence of shared themes, characters and motifs. In Chapter 2, the first chapter devoted to in-depth case-studies of films, Magistrale draws attention to a hallmark of King's work; namely the depiction of the essential goodness of childhood and of child-like qualities in adults. He quotes from King himself, who says "I really do believe in the White force. Children are part of that force, which is why I write about them the way I do" (49).

Magistrale draws on the work of feminist scholars in his discussion of maternal archetypes in Chapter 3. Amongst other works, the novel *IT* (published in 1986) came under criticism from Karen Thoens on the basis of its negative treatment of female characters, whilst a later work like *Dolores Claiborne* (1993) served to redress the balance in its depiction of a strong female protagonist. In the film adaptation of *Cujo* (1983), when Donna Trenton and her son Tad are besieged by the huge rabid dog, the mother is allowed to save her son. This is a marked departure from the novel, where the boy ultimately loses his life. Magistrale notes that, in so doing, she "defies the stereotypical Hollywood formula of the besieged female as an object of terror, the victim" (60). He also notes another shift

in King's style: His first fifteen years of writing wove history, myth and aspects of contemporary culture into bleak epics of postmodern America. Later books became more focused, with fewer characters and a more realistic account of women. There is also a shift from an emphasis on supernatural horror and fantasy to one on domestic dysfunction. The novel *Misery* (1987) marks the first in this trend. Magistrale makes an interesting argument here for the case of Annie Wilkes as "the reader-response critic pushed to its ultimate extreme" (65), occasionally drawing parallels between King's depiction of writers within his novels (including *Misery*) and his own personal experiences as a novelist.

Chapter 4, addressing the subject of paternal archetypes, examines *The Shining* (1977) as a novel and a film. He describes various ways in which the work has been analysed, typically as either a social allegory or psychological profile of a disintegrating mind: Frederic Jameson interpreted Kubrick's 1980 film as a Marxist account of American capitalism, whilst Thomas Allen Nelson saw Kubrick's use of maze imagery as a depiction of Jack Torrance's encroaching madness. The author uses both this work and *Apt Pupil* (1997), in which a young boy blackmails a Nazi officer into telling him about his brutal past, to show King's tracing of male initiations into evil. However, whilst generally comprehensive and insightful, Magistrale occasionally over-generalises about the works he has grouped together, apparently in order to homogenize them. For example, he claims that these two films, plus *Pet Semetary* (1990), "are films that trace the inextricable diminution of their male protagonists into varying states of madness" (114). Whilst the first part of this statement appears correct, his assertion that the characters are losing their grip on sanity seems too strong: it is surely debatable whether *Apt Pupil's* Nazi protégé Todd Bowden is 'mad' or 'bad'.

Chapter 5 comprises a collection of films including *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) and *The Green Mile* (1999), which are described by Magistrale in terms of Christian allegories. This may serve to account for their nomination for Oscars in the Best Picture category by Hollywood's Academy Awards: They are morally uplifting tales, where greatness clearly stems from unity. In Chapter 6, Magistrale turns to King's depictions of technology overthrowing humanity in such films as *The Mangler* (1994). The seventh and final chapter provides a detailed examination of mini-series developed on the basis of King's work, including the television re-make of *The Shining* (1997).

Taken as a whole, this work constitutes an in-depth, thorough analysis of Stephen King's work. Magistrale provides perceptive accounts of the novels and their critical treatment, using this background to contextualise the screen adaptations and the ways in which they have been received. His arguments are persuasive and clearly expressed, with reference to other works on the subject. Occasionally he makes less careful generalisations, but overall provides a useful analysis of one of Hollywood's more lucrative canons.

NONFICTION REVIEW

## **Visions of the Third Millennium**

Ellen Rigsby

Sandra Grayson. *Visions of the Third Millennium. Black Science Fiction Novels Write the Future*. Africa World Press, 2003. x + 132 pp. ISBN 1592210228. \$21.95.

Sandra Grayson's *Visions of the Third Millennium* will serve two audiences—those who know little about science fiction written by African/Caribbean-Ameri-



to extra terrestrial life on Mars. Through science fiction we have engaged our minds and souls in the modern manifestation of philosophy and often crossed the line into technical prophecy. Wearing the mask of a mere genre in a sea of conventional literature, science fiction has been able to discuss social and scientific taboos long before such open discussion was considered acceptable. With the Internet, fan fiction, cloning, gene splicing, global media, machines on Mars and an all too tangible Big Brother, what frontiers remain for science fiction to explore? Topics could include: Fan communities and their contributions to the genre; The relevance/obsolescence of science fiction in our modern world; Understanding the roadmaps of social and technical progress as charted in works of science fiction; The role of science fiction in the literary canon; Science fiction as social control; The technical gap between science fiction and science fact.

SUBMISSIONS: Beam over your submission <submissions@nasty.cx>.

DEADLINE: April 15, 2004.

WHAT: Post•hu•man•ous: A Special Edition of *Reconstruction* (4.3, 2004)  
WHO: Guest Editors: C. Jason Smith, Ximena Gallardo C., and Geoff Klock.  
TOPICS: Post•hu•man•ous, adj. From the combination of "posthumous" and "posthuman"; 1. Occurring or continuing after the death of the human: a posthumanous writing. 2. Published after the death of the Author: a posthumanous book. 3. Born after the death of the patriarchy: a posthumanous child. 4. Any activity which presumes the fatal limitation of the rational-humanist subject: a posthumanous subject.

The guest editors for *Reconstruction*

4.3 invite submissions on any aspect of the posthuman. Essays, cultural criticism, theory, book and media reviews, interviews, and creative works will be considered for this special edition. *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* is an innovative culture studies journal dedicated to fostering an intellectual community composed of scholars and their audience, granting them all the ability to share thoughts and opinions on the most important and influential work in contemporary interdisciplinary studies. The website, *Reconstruction: An Interdisciplinary Culture Studies Community* is meant to include both the journal (and those things published through it), as well as the other projects that are carried on by the contributors and editorial board. *Reconstruction*, the journal, is published quarterly, in the third week of January, April, July, October. Submissions must be received one month prior to the publication date for consideration; *Reconstruction*, the website, should be in constant flux, depending upon the activities of contributors to change it.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Please send via email to all three co-editors: C. Jason Smith, <dr\_c\_jason\_smith@yahoo.com>; Ximena Gallardo C, <Ximena.gallardoc@yahoo.com>; Geoff Klock, <geoffklock@earthlink.net>.

**DEADLINE:** 1 March 2004

**INFO:** <www.reconstruction.ws>

**WHAT:** Book Chapters: Film and Comic Books.

**WHO:** Edited by Ian Gordon, Mark Jancovich, and Matthew P. McAllister

**TOPICS:** Comic book characters such as Superman and Batman appeared in B movies and film serials long before the blockbuster adaptations of the 1970s and 1980s. Like

cans, and those who know little about the themes of African mythology in science fiction. The first group will find useful summaries of the novels of Octavia Butler, Tananarive Due, Nalo Hopkinson, LeVar Burton, Samuel R. Delany, Steven Barnes, and Charles R. Saunders. The second will appreciate the connections Grayson makes between African mythologies and the characters the authors in her study create. However, Grayson's book is not theoretical in its analysis. She neither proposes an account of race that carries through the novels, nor does she make use of any consistent theory of race or of colonialism to bring to the novels, though she does cite several, including those of Frantz Fanon and Derrick Bell, and she brings out connections to several pieces of literature by and about Africans and the African Diaspora.

The lack of a consistent theoretical approach will no doubt annoy scholars who are looking for a more traditional method of literary analysis, but Grayson seems to be after a different kind of pay-off. She tries to create a notion of the community of African-American readers and writers of science fiction by pointing to a common set of experiences of African themes: that of being Black in science fiction as well as outside of Africa. According to Grayson, the authors respond to these common experiences by incorporating aspects of African cultures in their books. She begins with the supposition that racism and themes of alienation and colonialism impact writers of the African Diaspora, and then she leaves theorizing that impact to others. Instead she collects the shared mythology and ideas from African countries that each of these authors deploy through recourse to pre-colonial cultural traits to provide a template, perhaps through which to see the richness of African/Caribbean-American science fiction.

A scholar of science fiction might ask why one would take this path in a work of science fiction criticism. And while Grayson does not answer that question directly, one can see that by bringing the author's shared experience of the field of science fiction together with the fact that the authors write about themes of African mythology and culture, Grayson takes the first steps to show that there is a developing community of African Diaspora writers of science fiction. What this thesis lacks in nuance it makes up in a positive contribution to the reading public's knowledge about science fiction. One can see that Grayson has a message for the readers of science fiction: she points out that there is a substantial voice in science fiction by and about the African Diaspora. Or, to put it another way, there are representations of difference in the world of science fiction available for those who seek them beyond the most hackneyed ones that make people of color into aliens.

Grayson's first chapter begins by pointing out the comments several of her authors make about the pervasive whiteness of the worlds of science fiction—worlds in the sense of its fan culture and the universes created by many authors of science fiction. The next two sections of the first chapter provide biographical information about her authors, and the final section is an informal bibliography of artists of African descent who have done work with science fiction. This section will be of particular interest to anyone wishing to see those connections brought into relief. This chapter, though, suffers from the nebulous quality of the overall theme. Because the chapter lays the groundwork for African/Caribbean-American relationships to science fiction, it is somewhat unfocused as it gathers those experiences from several places at once. But if the reader will persevere through to the chapters on authors and their works of science fiction, he or she will be rewarded with a detailed listing of African themes, myths, names, and cultural landmarks in the works of the authors mentioned above.

The succeeding chapters focus on specific themes that appear in the work of one or more authors. Chapters two through five examine the African-related themes in Octavia Butler's work. Of particular interest is the breadth of her analy-

sis, pointing out both utopian aspects of African-based community, and the limits of any such community that require change over time. Chapter six examines activism and Black women in Due, Hopkinson, and Burton. This chapter feels incompatible with the more detailed analysis of Butler's work, and does not make connections between the three authors, but examines them in turn. Chapter seven looks too briefly at two of Delany's works. In summarizing them Grayson manages to get across the basic themes of colonialism, racism, and difference in the brief treatment she gives of the books, but fails to express the depth of the works apparent in her description of Butler's novels. Grayson gets back on track with her analysis of Barnes' *Far Beyond the Stars* and his quite similarly themed novel *Firedance*. It is this analysis that seems to focus what I am calling the purpose of her book—to call attention to the place of the African Diaspora in science fiction. Barnes is interested in relationships of Black people to their history, and Grayson brings out this theme in her summary of the novels carefully enough that there are hints of her own concerns with the very white-oriented history of science fiction. The last chapter, on two novels written by Charles R. Saunders, brings home Grayson's theme. The first sentence quotes Saunders saying he wanted to adapt African storytelling traditions to Western genres, and this adaptation is what Grayson chronicles in her study with regard to science fiction.

In the conclusion, Grayson refrains from calling the tropes of science fiction any kind of "solution" to the fraught complexities of the history of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism in Africa and its Diaspora. But she does not take the next step to state the implied conclusion of her study: that the novels she discusses are changing the genre of science fiction to reflect some of the diversity that it seems to lack for her authors when they read science fiction. Her book is a small reminder of this fact, and as such will be useful to those readers seeking more information about African/Caribbean-American writers and African-derived themes in science fiction.

#### FICTION REVIEW

### **The Day Dali Died**

Michael M. Levy

VanderMeer, Jeff. *The Day Dali Died*. Canton, OH: Prime, 1993. 122 pages. \$9.99. ISBN 1-894815-92-0

Readers familiar with VanderMeer's World Fantasy Award-winning short stories, as represented in his 2001 collection *City of Saints and Madmen*, will also want to take a look at this latest, brief selection of poetry and what the author calls flash fiction. Among the most impressive poems are the Rhysling Award-winning "Flight Is For Those Who Have Not Yet Crossed Over," which relates some strange goings on in a Guatemalan prison cell, and the delightfully transgressive "Lassie (the lost episode)," in which the faithful collie, "gone mad under the bright lights/of retake after retake," and the repetitious need to rescue his owners from "owls/horses/flash floods/major earthquakes/international terrorists," fantasizes about how they "can be fattened up,/then there will be no need for ratings,/only teeth and guile."

Among the best short stories in the volume are the intensely surreal "A Social Gathering," in which an automobile dies and is buried at a downtown intersection while everyone and everything in the neighborhood throws a party; the fairytale-like "Kaeru," which serves as a lesson on why Princesses should not necessarily spend their time talking to frogs while their father's kingdom is under

wise Superman, Batman, Spider-Man, and the Hulk featured in low production value television series from the 1950s to the 1970s. In recent years film makers have adapted a plethora of comic books for the screen including Marvel's the X-Men, Spider-Man, Blade, and the Hulk, Alan Moore's From Hell and The League of Extraordinary Gentleman, and Road to Perdition and Ghost World. Production deals for comic book character-based movies have multiplied rapidly. Beyond Hollywood, Asian film makers have joined the trend with Jet Li appearing in Black Mask and Michelle Yeoh in the self-described "comic book style" Silver Hawk. Critical acclaim has flowed for many of the recent efforts and respected directors such as Sam Mendes and Ang Lee have lent their talents to films based on comic books. At the same time, particularly since the success of Maus, comic books have gained increased critical respectability even attaining the dizzy heights of favourable reviews in the New York Times and the New York Review of Books, albeit accompanied by discussions of what constitutes a comic book. We are looking for articles of between 6,000 and 8,000 words that address the changing and interrelated dynamics of film and comic book production and reception.

**SUBMISSIONS:** Proposals to Ian Gordon, Dept. of History, National University of Singapore, 11 Arts Link, ASI 05 - 27, Singapore 117570 <hisilg@nus.edu.sg>.

**DEADLINE:** March 15, 2004, Acceptance by May 1.

**WHAT:** Bridges to Other Worlds: Thirty-five Years of Mythopoeic Scholarship

**WHO:** 35rd Annual Mythopoeic

Conference (Mythcon XXXV)  
 WHEN: July 30-Aug 2, 2004  
 WHERE: Ann Arbor, Michigan  
 TOPICS: Guest Scholar Charles Huttar. Guest of Honor Neil Gaiman. Papers on the work of the Inklings or on any mythopoeic fantasy. Suggestions: Bridges between fantasy and other literature (cross-genre writing; influence of fantasy on mainstream art forms); Bridges between artists (collaborations; illustrated books; influence of the Inklings on each others' works); Bridges between literary forms (book-to-movie; movie-to-comic; hypertext); Bridges between text and reader (fan fiction; criticism).  
 SUBMISSIONS: 200 word abstract for 20 minute papers to Janet Brennan Croft, <jbcroft@ou.edu> or Judith Kollman, <jkollman@umflint.edu>.  
 DEADLINE: April 30, 2004  
 INFO: <<http://www.mythsoc.org>>

WHAT: Space and Fandom  
 WHO: Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media  
 TOPICS: This issue of Refractory explores the spatial dynamics of fandom, conceived broadly to encompass works addressing issues of internet culture, globalization, travel, conventions, private/public sphere, nationality, and spatial metaphors within fandom, including fanfiction. Articles are sought that examine fandom on macro and micro levels. As a journal of entertainment media, a range of fan texts across various media are welcomed, as well as both contemporary and historical works. Papers are sought that take new approaches to texts that have a history of fan scholarship, but also less-known or less-studied texts that might bring a new perspective to fan

attack; "The Songs a Dead Whale Sings," a satire with its origins in J.G. Ballard's classic "The Dead Giant"; and "A Few Notes on Finding a Green Alien Baby Figure . . .," a distinctly off-kilter but also rather chilling tale of strange doings at a science station in the Antarctic.

VanderMeer, who a year or two ago was listed as one of the ten best short story writers in the field in an article on *Locus Online*, is a talented but decidedly odd writer who never does anything in a conventional fashion. His work can be lyrical, hysterically funny or deeply creepy—sometimes it can be all three at the same time—but it's like nothing else you're likely to run into. If you've never previously read his fiction, I'd recommend starting with *City of Saints and Madmen*, or perhaps his recent novel *Veniss Underground*, but once you've finished those books, *The Day Dali Died* is an excellent place to go for another fix.

#### FICTION REVIEW

### **Budayeen Nights**

Jeff Prickman

Effinger, George Alec. *Budayeen Nights*. Urbana: Golden Gryphon Press, 2003. Hardcover, 235 pp, \$24.95. ISBN 1930846193.

In "The City On The Sand" (1973), poet Ernst Weinraub sits in a café, staring "at the smudged handwriting on a scrap of paper: an *ébauche* of his trilogy of novels. . . . 'This was the trilogy that was going to make my reputation,' thought Ernst sadly" (209). The scene fits the author, George Alec Effinger, and the anthology *Budayeen Nights*, nearly perfectly. For the trilogy that made Effinger's reputation and functions as the springboard for all the stories collected here went far beyond a napkin outline.

*When Gravity Fails* (1986), *A Fire In The Sun* (1990), and *The Exile Kiss* (1991) featured the misadventures and mixed victories of would-be club owner Marid Audran in the down and dirty streets, alleys, and bars of the Budayeen. Effinger wrote Audran in a compelling first person voice and brought a cyberpunk world of personality modules (moddies), corymbic implants, and data decks to vivid life. All the more impressive (and unsurpassed to date) was his detailed yet matter-of-fact depiction of a Muslim society. The attention the trilogy brought to Effinger (Hugo nominations for *Gravity* and *Fire*) may have surprised no one more than him. Barbara Hambly, the book's editor, describes in her Foreword that as a result of the trilogy, the self-described fantasy writer "reinvented himself as one of the founding fathers of Cyberpunk" (ix). Her introductions to each story are just as insightful.

Hambly's candid perspective as Effinger's ex-wife and longtime companion provides invaluable details about how each piece fits into the trilogy. Indeed, the Budayeen series was intended to be five novels! The previously unpublished start of the unfinished fourth book, *Word Of Night*, is represented here as "Marid Throws A Party." Although the segment ends just as it gets interesting, it is clear that Effinger had lost no momentum in his character and setting, especially given the surgery Marid is about to have. Hambly also explains how "The World As We Know It" (1992) is the aftermath of the unwritten fifth book. Even the earliest piece included, the stifling (literally) yet elegant "The City On The Sand," expanded to the novel *Relatives* (1973).

While all of this connecting of the plots was quite entertaining and informative to a fan of the original trilogy, herein lies the only flaw of *Budayeen Nights*—familiarity with the source of all eight stories (not including the reprint of the first

part of *A Fire In The Sun*) is a necessity. Unless there was endless time in a semester, this book would not be ideal in the classroom without the three novels that it sprouts from. However, a couple of selections not set in the Budayeen would make great additions to a science fiction syllabus. "Slow, Slow Burn" (1988) presents a sexy take on the toll of creating erotic moddies. And with its depiction of a lone technologically-enhanced soldier slaughtering rebels at will atop a mountain pass, "King Of The Cyber Rifles" (1987) resonates all too truly with our current wars.

FICTION REVIEW  
**House of War**  
 Christine Mains

Tarr, Judith. *House of War*. New York: Roc, 2003. Trade paperback, 376 pages, \$16.00. ISBN 0-451-52900-6.

Judith Tarr's novel *House of War* is the sequel to *Devil's Bargain* (reviewed in *SFRA Review* #265) and continues the alternate history of Richard Lionheart and his illegitimate half-sister, the Welsh witch Sioned, several years after Richard's victory over Saladin and his coronation as King of Jerusalem. Unlike its predecessor, *House of War* more clearly belongs to the genre of historical fantasy, particularly in its adaptation of the historical conflicts between followers of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and its theme of religious intolerance.

Historical fantasy can allow for thought-provoking exploration of the events of history, peeking behind the scenes and into the minds of key actors in moments of political, religious, and ethnic conflict. Much historical fantasy re-examines the role that Christian institutions have played in the suppression of earlier pagan beliefs and in oppressive actions against Jews and Muslims. The best of these works present these complex struggles fairly and comprehensively, transcending simple binaries of good and evil, right and wrong, by refusing to privilege one viewpoint over another; the worst tend to oversimplify matters by merely switching the terms of the opposition, demonizing all the Christian characters, for example. Tarr's re-imagining of the years following the Third Crusade falls somewhere between these two extremes, as Richard and those who are loyal to him in Jerusalem demonstrate religious tolerance while the Pope in Rome, "blindly irrational in his hatred of the Jews" (228), is explicitly compared to the dark lord Sinan, killed at the end of the previous volume but here able to act from beyond death to threaten Richard, his family, and all those whom he claims as his followers.

Historical fantasy explores moments of conflict; that conflict provides not only thematic but also narrative tension. Tarr's too-easy resolution of conflict drains the story of all dramatic impact and disappoints the reader looking for deeper significance. There is no real conflict explored in *House of War*, as Jews, Muslims, pagans, and most Christians come together easily to defeat an enemy who never seems to become a potent narrative or thematic force. Will the Jews use the power of the Ark of the Covenant? Except for a couple of dissenting voices from young Jews recently arrived from York, voices which are quickly dismissed, the Jews agree to support Richard instead of reclaiming their inheritance. Will the Knights Templar and the Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Pope's representative, join forces with the Jews in defence of the city? Sure, with not even a whimper of protest although Sioned expects some resistance. Has the Sultan of Damascus, the son of Richard's former enemy Saladin, turned against Richard to threaten him with an army? Nope, just a misunderstanding. The final battle is supernatural

studies. The aim of the special edition is to bring together articles examining a wide range of texts.

**SUBMISSIONS:** completed articles of 3,000-7,000 words to the guest editor Djoymi Baker

<djoymib@unimelb.edu.au> as RTF format, or c/o Cinema and New Media Program, The School of Art History, Cinema, Classics and Archaeology, The University of Melbourne, Victoria 3010 Australia.

**DEADLINE:** March 31, 2004

**INFORMATION:** re style details, <<http://www.ahcca.unimelb.edu.au/refractory/>>.

rather than political, between dark and light magic, and such a simple opposition rarely results in dramatic tension; of course the forces of light, representing what can be accomplished when those of different faiths come together, defeat the evil darkness symbolizing hatred and intolerance.

What seems of most interest to Tarr is not so much the religious intolerance that resulted in the Crusades but rather the figure of Richard Lionheart in the role of King of Jerusalem, the city that is “the heart of the world” (137). Given the changing historical understanding of Richard’s actions and character, Tarr’s representation of Richard as the site of tolerance and of considered rather than blind faith could be an interesting project to undertake. Something of significance seems to underlie Tarr’s observation that “[the Pope’s] kind preached Crusades. Richard’s kind, who fought them, often thought like soldiers, of enemies and allies rather than evildoers and servants of the god. Allies could become enemies, enemies transform into allies, but to the righteous there was only one good and only one evil” (146).

Magic, more prevalent here than in the previous volume, is another area of interest to scholars of the fantastic. Unfortunately, Tarr does not further develop the view of magic as diplomacy or commerce hinted at in *Devil’s Bargain*, but the incredible proliferation of magic workers from all cultural backgrounds and at all social levels is intriguing in itself. Magicians are everywhere, entire families of them; even characters who previously demonstrated no aptitude at all suddenly become important players in the supernatural struggle. Even Richard, firmly committed to the use of physical rather than magical force, seems to develop some sort of power, due, perhaps, in part to Tarr’s thematic linking of magic and religious faith. More troubling, however, is the occasional suggestion that magic, specifically predestination or visions of the future, serves to keep those of other faiths content to serve Richard; when it is suggested that the Jews use the Ark of the Covenant to depose Richard and retake Jerusalem for themselves, the response is that the time is not yet theirs (68-9). Continued acceptance of a subordinate position to the invaders of their land is conveniently written in the stars.

Despite its narrative weaknesses, *House of War* could be of interest to scholars of historical fantasy, particularly when read alongside other works dealing with similar historical concerns, such as Guy Gavriel Kay’s *The Lions of Al-Rassan*, which also explores, albeit with much less magic and much more complexity, the effects of religious hatred on the relationships between Christians, Jews, and Muslims. Given our own recent history, such analysis could prove insightful, especially within the college classroom.

FICTION REVIEW  
**Quicksilver**  
 Douglas Barbour

Neal Stephenson, *Quicksilver*. New York: William Morrow. Hardcover, 927 pages, \$27.95, ISBN 0380977427.

Here’s the history, as most of us know it: in 1992, Neal Stephenson published a fairly short novel, *Snow Crash*, and suddenly joined William Gibson as a genre-bending writer of cyberfiction; 1995’s *The Diamond Age, or A Young Lady’s Illustrated Primer* was both better and more mature, a strangely moving tale of how a street waif, given the best if most eccentric education her 21<sup>st</sup> century culture could provide, grows up able to navigate the many levels of her society.

Then in 1999, *Cryptonomicon*, a huge door-stopper of a book, went back to the origins of cyberculture, the crypto-analysis by which Alan Turing and others helped the allies win World War II. In one of the at least three ordinary-sized novels which make up this massive volume, a young American mathematician, Lawrence Pritchard Waterhouse, meets Turing and later, because of his skills, ends up working with an ultra-secret military detachment whose mission is to keep the Nazis from figuring out that the allies have cracked the Enigma code. Waterhouse’s story is linked to another narrative, concerning Marine Raider Bobby Shaftoe, fighting in the Philippines as the war begins. Meanwhile, in 1998, Waterhouse’s grandson, a hacker business type, and his partners are developing a company to create a “data haven” in Southeast Asia. *Cryptonomicon* itself becomes a kind of narrative crypto-analysis, slowly untangling the complex connections among the various and varied characters involved willy-nilly in its various plots.

Segue to 2003 and *Quicksilver*, another door-stopper, another volume made up of at least three standard size novels, and the first book in what promises to be a massive trilogy, *The Baroque Cycle*, and what do we have? Well, for one thing, this learned, witty, weirdly torqued, and often frustratingly evasive novel of the doings of scholars, rogues, inventors, and kings in the 17<sup>th</sup> century demands a lot of its readers. Not least, it asks them to take in an immense amount of information while not really getting any further than the bare beginning of the apparently huge and world-spanning story *The Baroque Cycle* will tell.

But for the many readers who loved *Cryptonomicon*, there are clues that may be enough to keep them working their way through this 900-page maze concerning the ways in which alchemy slowly died while science as we know it was born. One reason is that some of its central characters are named Waterhouse and Shaftoe, so we begin to surmise that this trilogy is some kind of slightly altered historical vision of how the world of *Cryptonomicon* came to be. Daniel Waterhouse is a scientist of sorts, an intelligent man unlucky enough to be born in the age of Newton, Hooke (his friends), and Leibniz, all geniuses. Meanwhile the Shaftoe brothers, born to be rogues, grow up to wander across Europe as either vagabonds or soldiers, and inevitably cross paths with Waterhouse and his cohort. There's also an ex-slave girl, Eliza, who becomes a spy for various factions, eventually siding with William of Orange, and helping him to the throne of England. Thus *Quicksilver* offers intrigue, war, sexual escapades, high court gossip, theological conflicts, and, perhaps most importantly, an insight into the thinking of the greatest sages of the period. Personally, I enjoyed most of this.

Someone who didn't is John Clute, who in his review for *Science Fiction Weekly*, expressed his displeasure thus: Deep inside the 900 pages of Neal Stephenson's vast novel can be discerned, pacing the prison yard, a small slim underlit curtain-raiser of a tale whose task it is to warm us up for the real performance to come, the massive drama Stephenson is presumably planning to unfold in stages two and three of what he is calling The Baroque Cycle. Volume Two of this cycle is to be entitled *The Confusion*, and Volume Three *The System of the World*, a phrase already associated here with Sir Isaac Newton, who loomed large over late 17th-century Europe, where almost all of *Quicksilver* is set. The next stages will depict in story form the re-coding of the ancient world into the modernized world we think we know; they will unfold the story of the making of the System of the World, whose lenses are the way we look now (I guess). But whether or not these proposed volumes do in fact fulfill a remit of this sort, what seems clear at this point is that the quicksilver heart of *Quicksilver* beats solely to rouse us for this full drama, this panoptic staging of thought, this new story of the world (I guess). It is also clear that most of the carapace—the jail—the bulk of the book is an ash-heap of the been, a burden of detritus that Stephenson must wish us, in our minds' eyes, to shuck before we really start. *Quicksilver* is a small tale of astonishing, nightmarish, arousing acumen caught inside a gigantic tome whose badness is of such deliberated immensity that it beggars description.

Although I understand something of Clute's frustration, and, as always, admire his own quicksilver way of stating it, I finally don't agree. There are, as perhaps there almost must be, problems, different ones for every reader, even. Stephenson has made a highly intelligent young woman one of his protagonists, but his characterization of her is nowhere near as sure as it is with his male figures.

Nevertheless, and although many of the readers who loved *Cryptonomicon* may dislike *Quicksilver*, not least for the way it keeps cutting off the story you're getting interested in (and not coming back to it!), I still think it's a fascinating book. It isn't trying to do the *Cryptonomicon* rag, that dance of interlocked stories in a thriller mode, but perhaps something with a deeper gravitas. Stephenson has done his research, and brings to life in his marvelously fluid and adaptable prose the new knowledges of the Newtons, Hookes, and Leibnizes, and of such groups as The Royal Society, as well as the ways of Puritans and Catholics in England and France, the new economic manners of what would become the Stock Exchange in Amsterdam and London, and much else about that turbulent period. The other thing he does well is capture the feel of such towns and cities as Boston, London, Paris (and the court at Versailles), and Amsterdam, rendering not just the styles of life and the rhetoric of those who had power to speak, but also the sights, sounds, and especially smells of that world.

In one sense, *Quicksilver's* various stories may strike many as just a series of extended throat-clearings before the real story starts, but I confess that I became fascinated by its various plots, the thinking of those historical great minds that Stephenson makes palpable in his prose, and the slightly askew history that he has constructed for his epic tale of the beginnings of the science and technology that would eventually lead to our computerized world. It's not for everyone, but *Quicksilver* is something special.

FICTION REVIEW  
**Oy Pioneer!**

Andrew Gordon

Barr, Marleen S. *Oy Pioneer!* Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2003. 264 pp. hc, \$19.95, ISBN 0-299-18910-4.

Members of SFRA know Marleen Barr as a pioneering feminist critic of science fiction and fantasy and winner of the 1997 Pilgrim Award. Now she has pioneered in fiction as well with her first novel, which shows the same originality, humor, and *chutzpah* we have come to expect in her criticism. Two of Marleen Barr's recent books of criticism are *Feminist Fabulation and Genre Fission*, and *Oy Pioneer!* is an entertaining work of both feminist fabulation and genre fission, part Jewish feminist autobiography, part academic satire, and part fantasy. It blends elements of Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying* with David Lodge's *Small World*, with some mock-fantasy and science fiction thrown in for good measure.

The protagonist-narrator Sondra Lear is a "pioneer" who epitomizes what Erica Jong calls "the whiplash generation": women raised to be Betty Crocker, then trying to be Gloria Steinem. Sondra lives the paradox of a husband-hunting Jewish-American Princess who is nevertheless a fiercely feminist and ambitious academic intellectual, a tenured radical. When she isn't chasing the men, she is battling the patriarchy and scaring them off. Escaping from both her nagging mother in New York City and the benighted Southern university of "Blackhole," where she has the bad luck to be the last surviving feminist, Sondra gallivants across Europe on a Fulbright, following the international conference and lecture circuit, caught in the whiplash of fighting the phalocrats while simultaneously searching for a husband. She wins a few victories but also suffers through many erotic misadventures in which she is used by married men.

The novel candidly exposes the bedhopping of the conference circuit and the often ludicrous politics of the contemporary academic scene. Sondra is an appealing standup comedian, tossing off wisecracks even as she stumbles through a sex farce.

Some sections are amusing, as when Sondra introduces the marshmallow roast to an appalled German, and others are laughing-out-loud funny, like the Chairmen of the Southern English Department who keeps a pig wallow in his office.

The elements of fantasy and science-fiction are justified by the fact that Sondra is a feminist science-fiction critic. Moreover, the only way to resolve the impossible contradictions with which she lives is through a flight into fantasy. So it seems entirely fitting that at the end she fly off to the stars as the first Fulbright in outer space.

The novel is clearly written, often witty, and moves quickly from scene to scene. It takes some familiar elements and gives them a new twist through a blend of genres. It should appeal to feminists, to academics, and to Jewish-American readers. In particular, as a *roman à clef* it might become a *succes de scandale* within the academic SF community, since SF scholars may enjoy speculating about the real-life models for the academic types she satirizes.

FICTION REVIEW  
**Alphabet of Thorn**

Christine Mains

Patricia A. McKillip. *Alphabet of Thorn*. New York: Ace, 2004. Reviewed from Uncorrected Proofs, 314 pages, \$22.95. 0-441-01130-6.

World Fantasy Award-winning author Patricia A. McKillip is a fantasist who never fails to enchant. When I open a new novel with her name on the cover, I know that I am about to experience thought-provoking meditations on the nature and exercise of personal and social power, lyrical language, and a damned good story. While I would hesitate to rate *Alphabet of Thorn* above some of her earlier masterpieces, such as *Sorceress and the Cygnet* or *Ombria in Shadow*, McKillip's latest novel is more than worthy of attention from both the scholar and the casual reader.

The structure of two separate stories that come together near the climax is unusual for McKillip, but effectively presented, and consistent with an oft-explored theme in McKillip's work, the power of the narrative art, of storytelling. In the primary fictional world of Raine, representatives from the lands owing fealty to the Crown of Raine gather for the coronation of Tessera, the young daughter of the recently deceased king and now the land's queen. As the mage Vevay attempts to prepare

her absent-minded young charge for her new responsibilities, the transcripator Nepenthe, a foundling taken in by the palace librarians after her mother's apparent suicide, comes into possession of an ancient book written in an unknown alphabet, a book that not even the masters of the mages' school can read. Nepenthe feels strangely drawn to the book, and becomes obsessed with translating and researching the legends contained within it.

The book that Nepenthe reads, in effect a secondary fictional world for the reader of McKillip's novel, is a series of tales about a long-dead conqueror, Axis, and Kane, the mage who aided his quest to dominate the known world and new worlds beyond the known. In Raine, Axis and Kane are nothing more than a "pair of names chiseled into a broken sandstone tablet in a language so old no one remembers it anymore" (35); the tales in Nepenthe's book raise more questions about history and legend than they answer, identifying Kane as a woman and the conqueror's secret lover rather than the male shadow or possibly even twin brother of the legends, and suggesting that the pair might have lived far longer than history records.

As Nepenthe reads about invasions of the past, Tessera must deal with revolt in the present. Not all of the Twelve Crowns under her rule are content to remain her subjects, and the tale is as much about her growth from a frightened and bereaved girl into a budding mage able to protect her realm and maintain her power as it is about Nepenthe's discovery of her true identity. Coming-of-age, the quest for selfhood and autonomy, is always an important theme in McKillip's texts. An equally important concern, however, is the individual's response to the imposition and obligations of social power. McKillip's characters are often faced with complex and conflicting loyalties, with the need to choose between fidelity and betrayal. How Tessera, Nepenthe, Kane, and other characters decide to act when Raine is threatened by both external invasion and internal feuds reveals much about fantasy's potential to explore the individual's responsibility towards the community.

Any scholar interested in the role of women in traditional fantasy should be acquainted with McKillip's work, and this novel features a number of powerful female characters. The land's ruler, the scholar, the powerful mage: all are female and all hold positions of power within their fictional world and within the narrative. Even the heroes of legend take female form, as the Masked One, the supposed twin brother of the conquering Emperor of Night, is revealed to be his female lover, and the Sleeping King of Raine's distant past, who will "rouse himself from his dreams to rescue" the land (79), is in reality a Sleeping Queen. The recent revival of interest in *The Lord of the Rings* has served as a reminder of what bothered me, and Patricia McKillip, about reading Tolkien as young(er) women: the lack of strong female characters. In the August 2001 issue of *NYRSF*, McKillip remarks of Tolkien's world, "There was no place in it for me. . . . I was left looking, among castle walls and spider webs, for my own face" (5). It is interesting that the historians and tale-tellers of Raine have erased the female face from their histories, that Tessera and Nepenthe must rediscover the powerful women within the tales, just as McKillip had to resort to creating her own fictional worlds in which to find a place.

During a recent email discussion with another McKillip scholar, I lamented the fact that her books, like many works of fantasy, go out of print so quickly that it's often difficult to include her texts on a course syllabus. That's unfortunate, as McKillip's work deserves far more attention from researchers and teachers. If I can just convince my department to give me a section of the fantasy course this year, *Alphabet of Thorn* will be on my syllabus.

#### FICTION REVIEW

### **Nothing Human**

Thomas J. Morrissey

Kress, Nancy. *Nothing Human*. Urbana, IL: Golden Gryphon Press, 2003. Hardcover, 300 pages, \$26.95. ISBN: 1-930846-18-5.

Since quitting her day job about fifteen years ago, Nancy Kress has turned out an astonishing quantity of good writing, including the trilogies that begin respectively with *Beggars in Spain* and *Probability Moon*; the eclectic short story collection *Beaker's Dozen*; two books on writing SF; the two novels that appeared in 2003, *Crossfire* and *Nothing Human*; as well as short fiction. Nancy Kress thinks big, conceptually and artistically. Fictional extrapolations based on genetic manipulation in the *Beggars* books or on quantum theory in the *Probability* trilogy certainly established her as an important writer of hard SF. She is also an excellent prose stylist who has mastered and sometimes parodied multiple genres and megatexts. The stories in *Beaker's Dozen*, for example, include detective fiction, hard SF, historical fantasy, and pseudo mythology.

*Nothing Human* appeared in September 2003, sandwiched in between the cliffhanger *Crossfire* and its intended sequel.

As her readers have come to expect, *Nothing Human* displays Kress' formidable knowledge of contemporary science and her authorial versatility. *Nothing Human* is one of the many new fictions to capitalize on the widespread belief that the year 2000 began the century of biology. In it, Kress explores human evolution and the possibilities for alien-engineered adaptation to a negatively changing terrestrial environment. That's serious stuff. Reading Greg Bears' *Darwin* books, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, or M. T. Anderson's slick YA blockbuster *Feed* can certainly dampen one's enthusiasm for the new millennium. *Nothing Human* offers an engagingly far-fetched solution to the environmental dilemma without letting humans off the hook for having created the crisis.

Unlike the aforementioned books, Kress' *Nothing Human* is a light-hearted look at potential disaster as well as a gentle send-up of the alien intervention megatext. Like Octavia Butler's *Oankali* (*Xenogenesis*) or Pam Sargent's *Aedae* ("Shadows"), the pribir come to earth to save us from ourselves by changing us at the genetic level. Like Clarke's *Overlords*, the pribir defy conventional preconceptions (if there is such a thing) of what aliens might look like or how they might act. Pribirs Pam and Pete could be driving their Hummer to a sushi bar or flashing perfect teeth in a self-improvement infomercial. They are ludicrously perfect in appearance but flawed psychologically, at least from a human perspective. Their condescension is understandable given the mess humans are making of their world, but their depiction clearly satirizes the smugness of those who know better than the natives how the natives should live their lives.

Another distinctive feature of this novel is that, like *Beggars*, it begins with a focus on young people and follows them through several generations. In fact, the centrality of teenagers gives the book a YA flavor that belies its clever homage to adult SF intertexts. When the teens awaken from mysterious comas and announce to the world that the pribir are on the way, they become the sole sources of information regarding the alien advent. Here is how Kress renders one teen's response to adult inquiries: "Well, they're not angels or ghosts," Lillie said with disgust. She had the TV on while she ate a bowl of cereal and a Fun Bun for breakfast" (33). The teens will sorely try the aliens' limited patience, subjecting them to the same treatment that occasionally drives parents and substitute teachers around the bend.

I suspect that some readers will have trouble with this book because of its generic and tonal slipperiness. My advice is to roll with it, just as the book's humans must do as they confront the unlikely fruit of the aliens' manipulation of the human genome. I will be reading this book with my SF classes this spring because it is a very readable excursion into environmental degradation and human self-definition and because it interacts so successfully with other SF texts. The prose style is crisp and engaging and the plot fast moving. It's a much more cohesive and, in a strange way, credible book than Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. *Nothing Human* is a serious yet whimsical treatment of what should be a central concern of our species, how we must change our thinking before we so degrade the global environment that only the aliens can save us.

FICTION REVIEW  
**Storyteller**  
 Warren G. Rochelle

Thomson, Amy. *Storyteller*. New York: Ace Books, 2003. 384 pages, uncorrected proofs, \$14.00 ISBN: 0-441-01094-

6

In her 1970 *Living Light: A Christian Education Review* essay, "Prophets and Mirrors: Science Fiction as a Way of Seeing," Ursula K. Le Guin argues that "the story—from *Rumpelstiltskin* to *War and Peace*—is one of the basic tools invented by the mind of man for the purpose of gaining understanding. There have been great societies that did not use the wheel, but there have been no societies that did not tell stories" (111-112). In her latest novel, *Storyteller*, Amy Thomson takes this idea a step further. The society of Thalassa, a planet whose landmasses are islands and archipelagoes, is not only a story-telling society—it is a society that, with deliberate intent, has been built by storytelling and is held together by storytellers and their stories. Thalassa's history "is passed on from generation to generation, village to village, by Storytellers" (back cover), who traverse the planet, telling—for food, for money, for love—stories of the human community's history, stories that teach, stories that heal. This indeed is a novel about stories and their telling. And as Le Guin has argued, it is a story about being human. It is a story about humans coming to understand the human condition through the stories that explain and interpret this condition, that relate the experiences that comprise it.

I find it very appropriate then, that *Storyteller* is a fairy tale, complete with a fairy godmother, Teller, the title character, (who, in the end, is replaced by a fairy godfather), and her animal helper, a telepathic Thalassan native sea-beast, Abeha, a

harsel. The long-lived, many-times-rejuvenated Teller, once a space pilot, has, through the stories she has told over the centuries, and through seemingly random acts of charity, her benign interventions, nurtured Thalassa to be a kinder, gentler world. She passes on the stories of the Pilot cycle, of the shipwrecked space pilot—herself—who came to the planet before the first settlers, leaving them caches of food and growing Terran fruit trees, the first act of kindness on Thalassa. This same Pilot was the first to bond with the harsels. Her relationship with Abeha becomes both a model for all such relationships and the foundation of a global transportation system that is truly part of Thalassan ecology. The huge whale-like harsels carry, in the natural hollows or “holds” of their bodies, human passengers and cargo in enclosed boat-shaped pods. And the telling of the first bonding, and the journeys that followed, created the mythos of a world founded on generosity and cooperation.

*Storyteller* is also a love story. It is about Teller’s love for the planet. It is about the love Teller and Abeha have for each other and the love Teller has for Samad, the street urchin she takes in and raises as her son and her successor as planetary guardian. It is about the love Samad has for his foster mother and his love for men, the last a love he is slow to accept, as apparently homophobia persists even into this far future. And also Samad’s love for Thalassa as he has to choose whether or not he will take his foster mother’s place as the behind-the-scenes mythic protector, when it becomes apparent Teller will not be able to rejuvenate another time.

*Storyteller* fits rather neatly into the thematic concerns that Thomson has explored in her first three books, *Virtual Girl* (1993), *The Color of Distance* (1995), and *Through Alien Eyes* (1999). While not, apparently, in the same fictional universe as the first three, *Storyteller* is about the importance of protecting and preserving a living ecology, love in its various permutations, and humans and the Other. Teller has nurtured Thalassa to be a world on which humans coexist, rather than conquer. As Teller travels and tells her stories, the reader travels and learns of the Thalassan ecology and the particular symbiotic relationship between humans and their living ships, the harsels. The reader has made this same journey in Thomson’s fiction before: with Maggie, the “virtual girl,” a sentient robot, an Other herself, as she learns how to coexist in a human world, and with Juna, also marooned on an alien world, who has to become Other to survive with the Tendu in *The Color of Distance* and again, still Other, on her own world, Earth, in *Through Alien Eyes*. Juna finds an ecological utopia on the Tendu’s planet and on her return to Earth, brings knowledge that might help in the repair of our battered ecology in our dystopia. Teller is attempting to nurture a utopia on Thalassa. And *Virtual Girl*’s Maggie, a new lifeform, must learn how to survive in a sometimes hostile and indifferent dystopic world, and become part of its ecology.

That Thomson is not merely revisiting a favorite theme is seen with the additional element of stories and storytelling and a living myth that takes *Storyteller* in a somewhat different direction than Thomson’s first three novels. Also, Thalassa is planned; the Tendu aliens evolved theirs, becoming mindful over eons, not in a mere five hundred years. The character of Samad further expands Thomson’s repertoire, as his is a gay coming-of-age story, making it a likely Gaylactic Spectrum Award nominee. It could also be argued that she is taking a theme from *Virtual Girl* and taking it further and in a slightly different direction in *Storyteller*. In both novels she is working with the idea of story as a creative force and an information carrier. Maggie is a living story, a sentient program, a collection of integrated data with free will. On Thalassa the stories are given life through their telling and retelling, their passage through time.

Yet, one does wonder why Samad never finds a lasting partner, unlike the various straight characters—does he always remain the Other? Also, one wonders why Thalassa’s ecology is not as richly evoked as is that of the alien world of the two Tendu novels. And this fits my overall evaluation of *Storyteller*: good, but a bit short of what Thomson is capable of.

I can easily see *The Color of Distance* and *Through Alien Eyes* being included in a course focused on ecological or nature literature. *Virtual Girl* would easily fit into a course focused on artificial intelligence or even more generally on the Other—indeed, I can see how it could be a bookend for a course beginning with *Frankenstein*. *Storyteller* could join *The Color of Distance* *Through Alien Eyes* in the nature course, and it could join *Virtual Girl* in the course examining the human relationship with the Other. But, it wouldn’t be a first choice.

## Some Recent Winners from Small Presses

Michael Levy

Although I can enjoy the latest major novel from Ursula K. Le Guin, Kim Stanley Robinson, or Gene Wolfe as much as anyone, I also like books that are a bit odd and out of the way. I’ve discovered over the years that some of the best fantastic fiction available is being written by people who you’ve probably never heard of and published in the small presses. These

writers are often enormously talented, but their work is too intellectually dense or stylistically quirky to attract editors from the commercial houses who are forced to think in terms of the bottom line. Not that these writers can't make a certain amount of money from their fiction, both for themselves and their publishers, but they need to be carefully marketed. Generally, you'll only find their novels and short-story collections for sale in the genre specialty stores, at cons, or on the internet.

One of the interesting things about small-press publishers and authors is that they're dying to be reviewed. When you do a piece on a book from HarperCollins or even Tor and it's published in the *SFRA Review*, the authors and publishers, secure in the knowledge that their books will also be reviewed in more prestigious places, aren't likely to pay much attention to what you've written. When you write a review of a book from a small press, however, you tend to get noticed, particularly if it's an intelligent review. Over the years I've developed a number of acquaintances and friendships with talented small press writers who really appreciated receiving a bit of long overdue attention. As a result, I seem to have gotten on a number of lists to receive new small-press publications for possible review. Frankly, it's impossible for me to do justice to all of the books that I receive, but I thought that *SFRA Review* readers might be interested in some quick notes on a number of the worthwhile publications I've seen in the last few months. The books I'm going to mention today come from two publishers, Prime and Night Shade, and they're all, without exception, worth reading. To see Prime's entire catalogue, by the way, go to <[www.primebooks.net](http://www.primebooks.net)>. Night Shade is located at <[www.nightshadebooks.com](http://www.nightshadebooks.com)>.

Jeffrey Thomas's novel *Monstrosity* (Prime 2003), is science fiction with a strong touch of Lovecraft. Earlier stories by this author have appeared in the *Windling/Datlow Year's Best Fantasy and Horror* and DAW's *Year's Best Horror*. The book is set in the metropolis of Punktown (the title of an earlier and equally good Thomas collection) on the planet Oasis, and concerns a young man who, in typically Lovecraftian fashion, gradually comes to terms with the lurking horrors that surround him. Thomas's work often reminds me of that of Jeff VanderMeer, although he's a bit darker and his style is somewhat less mannered. Although not particularly graphic, this is strong, scary stuff.

Ann Tambour's collection *Monterra's Deliciosa & Other Tales* (Prime 2003) is a grab bag of wonderfully witty, occasionally somewhat decadent stories by a talented new Australian writer. Some of these pieces might seem a tad precious, but most are well worth the effort. Tambour is fond of retelling fairytales, but with a twist, as in her "Temptation of the Seven Scientists," and she loves odd narrators, as in her "Travels with Robert Louis Stevenson in the Cévennes," which comes to us directly from the mouth of the great writer's donkey. Then there's "Call Me Omniscient," which is told, to quote from the introduction, "from the viewpoint of a story-telling mode: the omniscient." Yep, a point of view tells its own story!

Night Shade books tend heavily towards horror fiction, and they've issued two recent books that are particularly worth mentioning. Nick Mamatas's *Move Under Ground* (2004) also makes use of H. P. Lovecraft. The blurb on the back of the book says it all: "The year is nineteen-sixty-something, and after endless millennia of watery sleep, the stars are finally right. Old R'lyeh rises out of the Pacific, ready to cast its damned shadow over the primitive human world. The first to see its peaks: an alcoholic, paranoid, and frightened Jack Kerouac, who had been drinking off a nervous breakdown up in Big Sur." Gonzo high concept, yes, but it works, and it's fun seeing Kerouac, Cassady, and William S. Burroughs going up against Cthulhu!

Considerably darker is Conrad Williams's truly disturbing short-story collection, *Use Once, Then Destroy* (Night Shade 2004). Sporting blurbs from well-known horror writers Graham Joyce and Nicholas Royle, the book features a variety of disconcerting tales, including "City of Aspic," which features a serial killer who removes his victim's hands, and "Nearly People," in which, to quote from the book, "a woman's search for food in a nightmarish city brings her attention from an enigmatic man known as The Dancer, and a host of terrible epiphanies." Some of these stories feel a bit over-written, but they scared me quite adequately, thank you.

Also out from Night Shade in 2004 is the first volume of their *The Collected Jorkens*, by Lord Dunsany. I wonder how many SFRA members are familiar with these tales by the author of *The King of Elfland's Daughter*. This volume, which features an Introduction by S. T. Joshi, and a Foreword by Arthur C. Clarke, combines the first two Jorkens collections, *The Travel Tales of Mr. Joseph Jorkens* (1931) and *Jorkens Remembers Africa* (1934). The Jorkens stories are quite witty, some with the feel of Kipling, others more fantastical. They all start out at the Billiards Club, of which Mr. Jorkens is a member. Clarke's own *Tales from the White Hart* used the Jorkens stories as models. I'd read some of these pieces back when I first discovered Dunsany, in the late-1960s, and was enormously pleased to see that, taking into account the casual racism of the 1930s, they still hold up.

If anyone would like to do a more serious piece on of these books for the *SFRA Review*, and doesn't mind receiving a slightly used copy, I'd be glad to pass them on to you.

Dues:	USA	Canada (in US \$)	Overseas (in US \$)
Individual <sup>1</sup>	\$80	\$85	\$90
Joint <sup>2</sup>	\$90	\$95	\$100
Student <sup>3</sup>	\$60	\$65	\$70
Institution <sup>4</sup>	\$100	\$100	\$100
Emeritus <sup>5</sup>	\$50	\$55	\$60

1 all standard listed benefits

2 two members in the same household; two listings in the Directory, one set of journals

3 category may be used for a maximum of five years

4 all privileges of individual membership except voting

5 receives the *SFRA Review* and Annual Directory

If you wish to take advantage of the optional benefits listed on the back cover, please add the appropriate amount to your standard membership fees. Complete the form (mailed to current members and also available online at <[www.sfra.org](http://www.sfra.org)>) and send a cheque for the total membership plus optional benefits to Treasurer Dave Mead.

## **SFRA NEEDS YOU !!!!!!!**

WELL, SFRA ALREADY HAS YOU, IF YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS REVIEW.

BUT WE DO NEED YOU TO HELP US WITH RECRUITING.

IF EACH OF US COULD RECRUIT ONE MEMBER IT WOULD DOUBLE OUR MEMBERSHIP.

So make that one extra person your objective this week. Guide, urge, gentle, cajole, order someone whom you know really ought to belong to send in their form with money NOW.

### **METHODS:**

1. SEND THEM TO THE WEB SITE <<http://www.sfra.org>> WHERE THE MEMBERSHIP FORM IS AVAILABLE (as a pdf file) UNDER "join sfra today".
2. BETTER YET, PRINT OUT THE FORM AND PRESS IT INTO THEIR PALM.
3. MENTION THAT JOINING SFRA INCLUDES *SFS*, *EXTRAPOLATION*, *SFRA REVIEW*, THE LISTSERV, THE WEBSITE, LISTS, OTHER BENEFITS.

YOUR ORGANISATION NEEDS YOUR HELP. ACT NOW.

Peter Brigg, President, SFRA.

## Science Fiction Research Association

[www.sfra.org](http://www.sfra.org)

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

Visit the SFRA Website at <<http://www.sfra.org>>. For a membership application, contact the SFRA Treasurer or see the website.

### SFRA Benefits

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

*Science-Fiction Studies*. Three issues per year. This scholarly journal includes critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, review articles, reviews, notes, letters, international coverage, and an annual index.

*SFRA Annual Directory*. One issue per year. Members' names, addresses, phone, e-mail addresses, and special interests.

*SFRA Review*. Four issues per year. This newsletter/journal includes extensive book reviews of both nonfiction and fiction, review articles, listings of new and forthcoming books. The *Review* also prints news about SFRA internal affairs, calls for papers, and updates on works in progress.

### SFRA Optional Benefits

*Foundation*. Discounted subscription rate for SFRA members. Three issues per year. British scholarly journal, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, reviews, and letters. Add to dues: \$31 surface; \$36 airmail.

*The New York Review of Science Fiction*. Discounted subscription rate for SFRA members. Twelve issues per year. Reviews and features. Add to dues: \$26 domestic; \$35 domestic first class; \$28 domestic institutional; \$32 Canada; \$40 UK & Europe; \$42 Pacific & Australia

*Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts (JFA)*. Discounted subscription rate for SFRA members. Four issues per year. Scholarly journal, with critical and bibliographical articles and reviews. Add to dues: \$30 domestic; \$40 overseas.

*Femspec*. Discounted subscription rate for SFRA members. Biannual publication. Critical and creative works. Add to dues: \$25.

*SFRA Listserv*. The SFRA Listserv allows users with e-mail accounts to post e-mails to all subscribers of the listserv, round-robin style. It is used by SFRA members to discuss topics and news of interest to the SF community. To sign on to the listserv or to obtain further information, contact the list manager, Len Hatfield, at <[lhat@ebbs.english.vt.edu](mailto:lhat@ebbs.english.vt.edu)> or <[len.hatfield@vt.edu](mailto:len.hatfield@vt.edu)>. He will subscribe you. An e-mail sent automatically to new subscribers gives more information about the list.

## SFRA Executive Committee

### President

Peter Brigg  
#120 Budgell Terrace  
Toronto, ON M6S 1B4, Canada  
<[pbrigg@uoguelph.ca](mailto:pbrigg@uoguelph.ca)>

### Vice President

Janice Bogstad  
239 Broadway St.  
Eau Claire, WI 54703-5553  
<[bogstajm@uwec.edu](mailto:bogstajm@uwec.edu)>

### Secretary

Warren Rochelle  
2111 Cowan Blvd. #16C  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401-1076  
<[wrochell@mwc.edu](mailto:wrochell@mwc.edu)>

### Treasurer

David Mead  
Arts and Humanities  
Texas A&M Univ.-Corpus Christi  
6300 Ocean Drive  
Corpus Christi, TX 78412  
<[Dave.Mead@iris.tamucc.edu](mailto:Dave.Mead@iris.tamucc.edu)>

### Immediate Past President

Michael M. Levy  
Department of English  
University of Wisconsin—Stout  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
<[levym@uwstout.edu](mailto:levym@uwstout.edu)>

