I average roughly one Worldcon out of every three or four, mostly those that happens on the West Coast. This year I went way west, to Aussiecon Three in Melbourne. I went mainly because the convention was a good excuse to visit Australia for the first time, but I was very pleasantly surprised by the quality of the convention itself.

Indeed, Aussiecon Three (or Worldcon 57) felt a lot like our SFRA Conference 30 in Mobile. At Aussiecon Three there were, of course, the inevitable Trekkers in Next Generation uniforms, plus various fan events and more Japanese anime than anyone should be expected to endure in one week. But there was also a strong “academic track” program, well organized by SFRA member Russell Blackford and kept running smoothly by Russell and his wife Jenny. Greg Benford was the literary Guest of Honour (same as in Mobile, except for that “u”), and David Hartwell was again much in evidence. The ac-track program featured several American SFRA members, including Joan Gordon, Ian Bahn, and me, plus presentations by at least half our Australian membership, including Peter Nicholls, Jack Dann (who moved to Australia several years ago), Jancee Webb, and Helen Merrick (who “launched” her new coedited book, Women of Other Worlds: Excursions through Science Fiction and Feminism).

The convention’s biggest and best party was an invitation-only affair for SF professionals (including “critics,” which included us academics), held at Peter Nicholls’ wonderful Victorian mansion in a classy Melbourne neighborhood. Co-sponsored by Peter and his wife Clare Coney, Jack Dann, and Jancee Webb, and Charles Brown’s Locus, the party was packed with nearly everybody who’s anybody in Australian SF, plus assorted Americans, New Zealanders, and an Englishperson or two. I enjoyed talking especially with Terry Dowling, who shares with me a passion for the work of Cordwainer Smith. Terry himself has written some of the most distinctively Australian science fiction and fantasy, but thus far his work hasn’t gotten much circulation in the United States. (See, however, his recent story “Jenny Come to Play” in the latest Datlow–Winding Year’s Best Fantasy and Horror anthology. Better yet, see the full breadth of his work in his new collection, Antique Futures: The Best of Terry Dowling, available from the publishers at <www.sf.org.au/mpbooks>, or from Australia’s largest SF bookstore, Slow Glass Books, at <www.sf.org.au>.)
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SUBMISSIONS
The SFRA Review editors encourage submissions, including essays, Review Essays that cover several related texts, and interviews. Please send submissions or queries to both coeditors. If you would like to review nonfiction or fiction, please contact the respective editor. The general editorial address for the SFRA Review is:
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Like several other Australians I met at the party or the convention, Terry Dowling teaches college-level courses but doesn’t teach science fiction. (He did his master’s thesis on J. G. Ballard.) Australia’s largely public higher educational system is experiencing hard times right now, with recent severe cutbacks in government funding. Class sizes have been enlarged, teaching loads for full-time faculty have increased, and (as in the United States) more and more courses are taught by low-cost part-time faculty. Science fiction courses are not seen by administrators as “practical” and so are little taught. Science fiction scholarship is mainly done on the side by people who work full-time at something else.

Nonetheless, this is a lively time for science fiction in Australia (its golden age, some say). Small presses and semiprozines busily publish Australian work, and several Australian writers are gaining wide readership outside the country: Greg Egan, who was not at the convention, and George Turner, who would have been one of the Guests of Honour had he lived long enough. Judging from the papers presented at the convention and from the new biography of him launched there (by Judith Buckrich), Turner has become to SF scholars in Australia what Philip Dick and Ursula Le Guin are to American SF scholars.

One young Australian scholar at the convention is working on quite a different project. Justine Larbalestier (who’s not yet a member of SFRA but ought to be) gave a preview of the work she’s already done on the history and influence of the Futurians, one aspect of her current research. In her impressive doctoral dissertation, The Battle of the Sexes in Science Fiction, she ranged all the way from the early pulps to recent Tiptree Award nominees. Partly on the strength of that dissertation, she got a rare postdoctoral research grant to do a book on the Futurians and the Hydra Club, subtitled “A History of Science Fiction in New York City: 1939–1959.” At the convention, Justine adeptly led the other members of her panel (David Hartwell and Gordon Van Gelder) and an assortment of elderly fans in a discussion of Futurian legends and differently perceived realities. She’ll be glad to hear other accounts of the Futurians and the Hydra Club, firsthand recollections if possible; her e-mail address is <jazza@english.usyd.edu.au>.

Addendum to an Addendum
In the August issue of the Review, I attached an addendum to the Thomas D. Clareson Award presentation transcript. In presenting the award to David Hartwell, I had tried to emphasize the breadth of David’s many services to the field by saying that when the award’s “formal description was drawn up several years ago, the assumption was made that each winner would have rendered distinguished service in any one of those [nine] areas on the list, or perhaps two or maybe even three.” In the addendum, I said, “After the Awards banquet, Alice Clareson told me that when the description of the Clareson Award was first developed, its authors really did intend that each awardee would be chosen on the basis of an outstanding record in all nine service areas listed.”

Alice has now called to tell me I overstated her position, and that of the committee on which she served to draw up the award’s description. The original expectation, Alice says, was that the award would be given each year to someone who has an outstanding record in most (but not necessarily all) of the nine areas. I appreciate the clarification, agree with Alice’s position, and hereby transmit it to future Clareson Award committees. And I’m still glad that we have so far been able to...
Our reasons for this have been doubly practical. First of all, we figured that these books were likely to stay in print and be of continuing use in the classroom, and of continuing interest to scholars. We also knew that many of you would have possible submissions handy (though some of you—you know who you are—had good intentions, but never quite got the stuff into email).

Our choices were relatively safe ones, and, sure enough, we received not one complaint about the selections, no cries that any of the works were unworthy. As we move out of the 1900s and into the 2000s, we would like to begin thinking not about what books have been taught, but which ones we think will or should be taught. Accordingly, we’d like our six books for next year’s Approaching feature to be no older than 1990, and we’d like the help of the membership in deciding which books those will be. What recent books are you teaching now that you think you’ll teach again? What deserves attention that isn’t getting? Write us an email and tell us. Then we’ll probably write you one and ask you to submit something.

Of course the danger of blazing new trails instead of taking well-established roads is that you can’t use cruise control. Instead of sending along what you’ve been using, some of you will have to create what you will use or even what you would use if you taught it. Yes, that’s extra work, but it is interesting work, and valuable. It may even spark heated debate. Let’s hope so.

**Approaching**

*Walter M. Miller Jr.’s A Canticle for Leibowitz*

*A Canticle for Leibowitz,* by Walter M. Miller, Jr.
Bantam Spectra ISBN: 0553379267

**APPROACHING A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ**

**STUDY GUIDE**

*Bill Dynes*

I was wondering what there is about the refrangible property of light that you thought might be offensive to religion?

---Canticle, p. 173

The question elicits laughter from the other monks, but one of the hearts of *A Canticle for Leibowitz* is precisely this tension between the explanatory nature of science and the spiritual nature of religion. This tension is probably more poignant for us today than it was for Miller himself in 1959. The Cold War threat of nuclear annihilation may not seem quite so overbearing as it did then, but with holes growing in the ozone and rain forests “disappearing at a rate of 80 acres per minute, day and night” [http://www.davesite.com/rainforests/review4.shtml](http://www.davesite.com/rainforests/review4.shtml), it’s as clear as ever that our technological prowess has given us the ability to destroy ourselves pretty thoroughly. Yet our scientific and technological advances have given us a standard of living that would have been unimaginable a century ago. So I suppose the question is, do we know too much . . . or not enough?

Science fiction tends to be dismissive, if not downright antagonistic, toward religious faith, and for many, faith and reason are two completely different ways of thinking about the world, ways that have little in common. *A Canticle for Leibowitz* on the other hand, takes the faith of its characters seriously, and in fact suggests to some readers that faith and science need to be considered together if we are to survive ourselves.

**Internet Excursion 1**

There are a number of interesting sites on the Internet that are designed to promote a responsible dialogue between scientists and persons of faith. The **MEMBER UPDATES**

Neil Barron has approximately twenty-five new review copies, mostly nonfiction, at 40–60% off list price; he will provide a list free on request. He also has a personal collection of about 250 used SFIF books, mostly fiction, a great many of them $2 mass market reprints of better SF, plus some collectibles, all reasonably priced. $1 brings both lists, credited to any order of $25. His contact information is found within these pages.

Kyle Friedow, formerly of Kent, Ohio, has a new address: 5306 Manitowoc Parkway, Madison, WI 53705-4711; his phone number is (608) 238-6586, and his e-mail address is <kfriedow@aol.com>.

James Gunn reports that White Wolf is holding up the reprinting of *The Road to Science Fiction 3: From Heinlein to Here* until they can pair it with another paperback. However, copies of *Road 3* can be ordered directly from White Wolf, which is filling orders from returns. He also reports that examination copies of *Road 3–6* are available to anyone who sends a request on school stationery or official academic forms. Send requests to White Wolf, 735 Park North Boulevard, Suite 128, Clarkston, GA 30021; fax (404) 292-9426.

New member Paul R. Hays can be reached at Sugiyama University, 17-3 Hoshigaoka Motomachi, Chikusa-ku, Nagoya, 464, Japan; e-mail <hays@lit.sugiyamo-u.ac.jp>. His current work in progress is the examination of the creation of meaning and image through metaphorical extension and conceptual blending.
Donald M. "Mack" Hassler reports a new e-mail address: extrap@kent.edu.

New member De Witt D. Kilgore's address is 3925 E Saratoga Drive, Bloomington, IN 47408. He is working on a book entitled Beyond Earth: Popular Science, Science Fiction and the Cultural Construction of An American Future in Space.

New member Terry A. Murray has just published the Science Fiction Magazine Story Index, 1926-1995 (McFarland 1999). He would like to offer a current errata sheet to anyone who sends him a self-addressed, stamped envelope to 2540 Chapel Hill Road, Durham, NC 27707-1463. He also encourages anyone who finds further corrections to write him.

**DEATH NOTICE**

James White, 1928-1999

Irish SF writer James White died Monday, August 23, 1999. He is best known for his "Sector General" stories and novels set aboard a space hospital. His last novel, Double Contact, is due out in October.

**MCFARLAND AND COMPANY ACCEPTING BOOK INQUIRIES**

Robert Franklin, president of McFarland and Company, writes: We too view wistfully, and there-but-for-the-grace, the demise of Borgo Press. We would like to remind interested parties that nonfiction works in the SF and related fields are an established line with

**FAITH Movement** is a Roman Catholic movement seeking to promote a synthesis between orthodox Catholicism and our modern scientific culture. A site with a similar orientation is Faith and Science: Catholic Perspectives. Two sites that approach the conversation from a more scientific orientation are Science and Christianity—Allies or Enemies? and the Program of Dialogue between Science and Religion.

The novel is set in an abbey in the southwestern United States and begins some 600 years after the "Flame Deluge." Written before Vatican II in 1963 and focusing on men living a cloistered life, the world of the characters may seem doubly distant to many modern readers. But Brother Francis, Dom Arkos, Thon Taddeo, and Dom Zerchi are struggling with questions and fears that we face every day, if in less immediate terms.

**Internet Excursion 2**

For some, background on the religious issues and assumptions of these characters, a logical place to start might be The Holy See: The Official Vatican Web Site. Catholic-Pages.Com is a good source on general information about the church and its practices. And for those of you with a passion for Latin, here's a site advocating the use of Latin in church liturgy.

The horrors of nuclear war are a dim memory at the outset of Miller's novel, but the novel was written for readers who might very well have to face the unimaginable. You may want to spend some time learning a bit more about the nuclear arms race, the kind of thinking that went into the development of nuclear weapons, and where our government's current strategic thinking stands.

**Internet Excursion 3**

The A-Bomb WWW Museum in Japan is a thoughtful site about the WW2 bombings and lessons that might be learned. The Atomic Archive offers a more general historical site about the development of the bomb, and The Internet and the Bomb offers a research guide to policy and information about nuclear weapons. Finally, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has a site on Nuclear Weapons Systems Sustainment Programs.

**Characterization**

For a novel that covers some 1200 years and takes us from oil lamps to starships, Canticle has relatively few major characters. Brother Francis and Dom Arkos, Dom Paulo and Thon Thaddeo, Dom Zerchi and Brother Joshua—each of the three stories is dominated by a pair of characters in contention with one another. What keeps this pattern fresh is that the nature and progress of that contention is different each time. And of course, there's always Benjamin . . . .

The tone of "Fiat Homo" is amused and optimistic, and the relationship between Dom Arkos and Brother Francis often descends into low comedy. But the tension here is real; Brother Francis encounters the unknown, and his faith and, yes, courage, allow him to hold fast to the truth when the makers of myth threaten to take over. Dom Arkos seeks to preserve and assure the legacy of his order, and with his broader political understanding, he recognizes the danger Brother Francis's news brings long before he does. Brother Francis is the perfect narrative point of view for us here at the outset of the novel—like him, we find ourselves suddenly thrust into a world we don't quite understand, and as we watch his efforts to do justice to his own experiences, we recognize the quality and importance of his faith.

The friction between Dom Paulo and Thon Thaddeo is the most obvious manifestation of the tension between faith and science that is a persistent theme throughout the novel. While their relative positions are apparent from the outset of "Fiat Lux," you might look at the specific decisions each makes over the course
of the story. What are we to make, for example, of Thaddeo’s willingness to work for Hannegan in order to pursue his studies? And why does Dom Paulo order Brother Kornhoer’s light to be taken down, even though it was he who asked Thaddeo what he thought there was in “the refrangible property of light ... might be offensive to religion”? (p. 173).

Dom Zerchi sees Brother Joshua as a potential successor, and more, perhaps the one who will carry the legacy of Leibowitz to the future. Thus his relationship with Joshua is far different than Arkos’s relationship with Francis. Do pay some attention to the manner in which Zerchi approaches Joshua about the opportunity to lead the pilgrims to the stars. For many readers, Zerchi’s treatment of the young mother is painful reading, and I believe that it is intended to be. Yet is Zerchi being deliberately brutal here? How well, in your opinion, does Zerchi make his case?

Throughout the novel, there is the enigma of Benjamin, and your perception of him will have a substantial influence upon your reading of the novel as a whole. What stands out for me about Benjamin is his indomitable will. The medieval legends of the Wandering Jew speak of Christ’s commandment as a curse, a punishment for his abusiveness. And given the manner in which Benjamin treats many of those he meets in this novel, it’s not clear that he’s learned his lesson even yet. However, within the Christian context of the novel, Benjamin’s curse may also be understood as a blessing. If he is who he claims to be, then he alone of all these Catholic characters has actually seen Christ and he alone can be confident that he will again. We should consider this confidence in relationship with the faith with which the other characters struggle. In some ways, Benjamin’s condition seems superior—after all, he knows what the others can only believe. But even in that knowledge is uncertainty; Benjamin never knows how long he will have to wait, and the disappointment when he comes to see Thaddeo and realizes, “it’s still not Him” (p. 177) is poignant.

Structure

Like Isaac Asimov’s I, Robot, Canticle grew out of independently published stories. But unlike Asimov, Miller doesn’t try to rework the material into a more conventional plot; the episodic nature of the novel is crucial to its power. The three sections propose a future roughly analogous to the European Middle Ages, Renaissance, and the modern Western world. Six centuries or so pass between our own time and the time of “Fiat Homo,” and between that period and each of the subsequent stories. So one question to be discussed is whether this passage of time really represents the “progress” that it appears to.

The dangers of this kind of episodic structure are immediately obvious. For many characters, Brother Francis Gerard of Utah is the most appealing character in the novel, and yet he appears for only the first third—indeed, he’s little more than a legend to Dom Zerchi in the final story. And the cyclical pattern inscribed in each story, which is repeated in the novel as a whole, can be dissatisfying. Characters encounter new truths or new threats—and aren’t those often the same things?—struggle to respond appropriate, and in the end... well, you tell me!

But this cyclical pattern is also one of the unifying elements of the novel’s structure, and in the end we’re asked to decide: Is this merely an endlessly repeating wheel? or might it be better imagined as a spiral or helix, a series of repetitions that does, finally, lead somewhere? But of course, spirals can lead down as well as up (as Yeats knew!).

Another unifying element among the three stories is the recurring figure of the Wandering Jew, appearing here as an old pilgrim, then as Benjamin the Tent Mender, and finally as the beggar who tells Dom Zerchi to call him Lazarus. The myth of the Wandering Jew punctures the circularity of the novel, suggesting a definitive, if unknowable, ending to humanity’s struggles and hopes. The wait for that ending may be painful and long, but for Benjamin at least it never seems to get boring!

Themes

The themes of Canticle are obvious ones... or are they? I’ve read reviews of this novel that praise it for its religiously rooted optimism and others that con-
demand it for a pessimism that borders on despair. And both attitudes are readily apparent in the novel. Dom Zerchi prays, “Listen, are we helpless? Are we doomed to do it again and again and again? Have we no choice but to play the Phoenix in an unending sequence of rise and fall?” (p. 217). But Brother Joshua rejects despair. “The starship is an act of hope. Hope for Man elsewhere, peace somewhere, if not here and now, then someplace” (p. 234). And linked with the starship is the appearance of Rachel, whose grotesque origin in reminiscent of the birth of Athena, goddess of wisdom, from the forehead of Zeus, and whom Dom Zerchi believes to be “a creature of primal innocence” (p. 276).

The theme of the struggle between faith and reason, then, is never resolved, and we come to suspect that it never can be, at least not honestly and satisfactorily. Yet that doesn’t mean that the novel refuses to take sides or ultimately gives up. Because if reason is a consistent state of questioning, of asking why and then seeking answers, faith in this novel seems to be the state of asking how—how should one behave in the light of one’s understanding, limited as it is?

Thus, Canticle returns us to a theme that science fiction engages perhaps as often as any other, the theme of our responsibility to ourselves and our creations. Having forged Lucifer, are we doomed, either by God or our own biology, to use it? As Hannegan’s war of conquest begins, Dom Paulo asks the scholar Thaddeo, “you promise to begin restoring Man’s control over Nature. But who will govern the use of the power to control natural forces? Who will use it? To what end?” (p. 183). The questions demand a response, but none seem forthcoming, either from Taddeo or from us today.

Miller Links


Reviews of both Canticle and its sequel, Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman:
http://www.writerswrite.com/journal/feb98/fanf.htm

APPROACHING A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ

STUDY GUIDE

Paul Brians

Introduction

Although A Canticle for Leibowitz was published as a book in 1959, one version of it was written earlier. The first section, also entitled “A Canticle for Leibowitz” (now “Fiat Homo” (“And He Created Man”)) appeared in 1955, the second section appeared as “And the Light is Risen” (“Fiat Lux” (“Let There be Light”)) the next year, and the conclusion appeared in 1957 as “The Last Canticle” (“Fiat Voluntas Tu” (“Thy Will be Done”)), all in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. When he reworked the material for the novel, Miller made substantial changes and additions. Although he published a few stories before and after and wrote most of a sequel to Canticle, at his death, Canticle remained his only successful work. The sequel, Saint Leibowitz and the Wild Horse Woman, was almost finished when he committed suicide; it was completed by Terry Bisson and published in 1997. Canticle is widely considered a classic, has never been out of print, and is widely taught in science fiction courses.

Written during the height of 1950s concern over the danger of nuclear war, Canticle was the most literarily successful science fiction novel written on the subject until Russell Hoban’s Riddley Walker (1980, now out of print). Part of the novel’s success derives from its richly realized setting, a postholocaust America where scraps of prewar knowledge are gathered and preserved by a Catholic Church that no longer understands that knowledge. The novel takes for granted familiarity with the idea that after the fall of the Roman Empire, knowledge was preserved in Western Europe almost exclusively in small, isolated communities of
priests and monks during a centures-long dark age, recopied by men who often understood little of the ancient manuscripts of which they were the custodians.

There have been scores of novels set after a nuclear war in a neo-Medieval setting, but none so lovingly developed on the basis of a detailed study of the original Middle Ages. Miller remained a Catholic through much his life, though in tension with the Church (though he turned bitterly against it toward the end, as is evident in Saint Leibowitz). Most SF is highly critical of religion when it touches on the subject at all; but Canticle is distinguished by its serious consideration of religious issues, even though it sometimes departs from orthodoxy. Miller obviously could not have anticipated Vatican II's movement away from the use of Latin, and he imagines its revival in the new Dark Age, with the English of our age functioning only as an archaic ceremonial language.

The other most memorable feature of the books is the delightful portrait of the feckless brother Francis. Richly detailed characterization and real wit are both unusual in SF and have helped to make this work a classic. "Fiat Homo" is clearly the strongest part of the work, which suffers to some degree as a novel from the very long time spans that separate each of its sections. Like Ray Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles, it is well to remember that each section was composed separately and can still be read rewardingly on its own.

Many of the following notes require looking up passages in the Bible. If you do not have a copy you can access searchable one at <http://goon.stg.brown.edu/bible_browse/phpasy.shtml>. It offers both the Vulgate Latin version, which Miller draws upon, and the Revised Standard Version in English.

"Fiat Homo"
Chapter 1
Saint Raul the Cyclopean: in Greek mythology, a cyclops has only one eye in the center of his forehead. This saint was presumably a similarly deformed person genetically damaged by the lingering radiation of the nuclear war that provides the backdrop for the novel. In the discussion of the Church's attitude toward such mutations, how can one tell that the Church (unlike its medieval predecessor) does not dominate the culture of the time?

"Adonai Elohim": "Lord God"; a specifically Jewish chant. Lurking in the background of this tale is the medieval legend of the Wandering Jew. According to this legend (unsupported by anything in the Bible, but widely told), when Christ was carrying his cross to the place of crucifixion, he paused to rest at the threshold of a house. Its owner roughly told him to move on. Jesus sadly replied, "You move on too, until I return." The householder was forced to wander about the earth, undying, regretting his cruelty to the Savior, until Christ should return at the last judgment. Although this mysterious figure shares certain features with the Wandering Jew, Miller is no antisemite. What qualities characterize this character?

I'm not a sport: a mutant.

Leibowitz Abbey: "Leibowitz" is intended to be immediately recognizable as a Jewish name. When the pilgrim mocks Francis by commenting that his kind are "still writing things backward," he reveals that he is more comfortable with Hebrew, which is written from right to left. Francis, however, is too ignorant to figure this out.

vocational vigil: a period of testing to see whether a novice (would-be monk) has the vocation "calling"—determining whether he is suitable and chosen by God to be a full-fledged monk.

Ash Wednesday: six weeks before Easter, the beginning of Lent, which was traditionally a period of repentance and penance involving abstinence from meat and other pleasures.

"Apage Satanas!": "Begone, Satani!"
The natural results seemed to appear ex opere operato: "from the operation, not the operator"; a theological phrase that maintains the sacraments are rendered valid not by the holiness of the priest who performs them but solely through the performance of the appropriate action. Though Francis thinks himself unworthy to perform an exorcism, his effort apparently works.
REQUEST FOR BACK ISSUES OF SFRA REVIEW AND SFRA NEWSLETTER

Ellen C. Herzfeld and Dominique O. Martel of Quarante-Deux, a French SF organization, are attempting to put together a complete run of the SFRA Newsletter and SFRA Review as well as collecting many other SF periodicals. They specifically need issues 1-150, 156, and 173-234.

If you have some or all of these issues and would like to see them placed in a good home, please contact Martel at <xii@xii.org> or check out their Website at <www.integra.fr/XLII/SF42.html>. They're willing to pay postage.

Beelzebub: devil. The name was originally an insulting Jewish pun on the name of the Canaanite god Baalzebul, whose name meant "Lord of Lords"; the pun means "Lord of the Flies" and was commonly used later as a name for the Devil.

"Et ne nos inducas in . . .?": "And lead us not into . . ." The phrase from the Lord's Prayer that concludes with "temptation."

What does the stranger mean by his reference to changing stones into bread?

(Hint: see Matthew 4:1-4.)

"Libellus Leibowitz": "Little Book of Leibowitz." Note that some of the following Latin lines are immediately translated by Miller.

beatus ("blessed"): a term assigned to those who are regarded as especially saintly but who are not yet officially designated as saints. In what way does Leibowitz's status resemble that of Francis?

What is the pilgrim's attitude toward Francis? What is Francis's attitude toward the pilgrim? Which of them seems more intelligent? How can you tell? Explain the symbolism of the keystone.

"Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine . . .": "Resisting you, I have dared to seek whatever seemed to me to be more learned than Faith, more certain than Hope, sweeter than Love ("charity"). Who is therefore more foolish than I?" "Faith, hope, and charity" are three cardinal virtues (see Corinthians 13:13).

"O inscrutabilis Sacerdote animarum, cui patet omne cor, si me vocaveris, olim a te fugeram. Si autem nunc volis vocare me indignum . . .": "O inscrutable examiner of souls, to whom every heart is open, if you had called me, then would have fled unto you. If however now you should wish to call me unworthy . . ."

"Libera me": "Free me," translated below as "Set me free." Francis will repeat part of this same prayer in Chapter 2, just after asking Leibowitz to pray for him.

The two Hebrew characters on page 3 are explained later in Chapter 3.

pagan cabals: The Kadhalah consists of mystical Jewish interpretations of the Hebrew Bible. Here the term stands for any mystical teachings disapproved of by the Church.

Why is it ironic to call the buzzards a "heavenly host"?

The Paraclete is a mysterious figure mentioned in the Gospel of John traditionally interpreted as the Savior. Note from Rev. Victor Peri Bogdanoff: <red@ultranet.com>: The term "Paraclete" is used two ways in John's Gospel: by the author in reference to "the whole scope of Jesus' and ministry both before and after his resurrection" and by Jesus himself to refer to a mysterious figure who will be sent to the disciples after his death, to "be with them always." In the Catholic tradition in which Miller is working, the "paraclete" is normally taken to be the Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, especially as manifested at Pentecost when it descended among Christ's disciples.

Explain the reference to the Dove. (Hint: see Matthew 3:16.)

the Flame Deluge: here refers to the nuclear holocaust that destroyed civilization, but the term "Deluge" originally designates the Biblical flood that destroyed all creatures outside the ark.

Salamanders were supposed in the Middle Ages to be able to survive in fire, probably because they were often found in the ashes of fires, where they had taken refuge in search of residual heat after the fires were out.

Radioactive isotopes of cobalt, strontium, and cesium were all much in the news as a result of concern over fallout from atomic bomb testing.

Chapter 2

"Domine, libera nos": "O Lord, deliver us."

"a morte perpetuo": "from everlasting death."

"te rogamus, audi nos": "we beseech thee, hear us." To what does the term "simplification" seem to refer in this story?

What does it tell you about this society that the term "versus puet" is familiar to Francis? ending the matter without benefit of clergy: dying suddenly, without any opportunity to confess sins to a priest and prepare for death.
Chapter 3
What does Father Cheroki’s name suggest about his ethnic origin, given that the novel is set in the southwest of the old United States? Since the monks very much want to have Leibowitz recognized as a saint, why is Father Cheroki so exasperated with Brother Francis? What is a succubus? (Look it up.)

Chapter 4
What does it tell us about the social system of America that Father Cheroki “came of baronial stock”? “Arkos” suggests “ark.” There are two arks in the Bible: Noah’s, which preserved human and animal life through the flood, and the Ark of the Covenant, the box that contained the tablets of the Jewish law. It is thus an appropriate name for a preserver of knowledge in a postholocaust era (Olsen 140). Why is Cheroki so hostile to the idea that the pilgrim was a miraculous appearance of Leibowitz?

“Benedicamus Domino”: “Let us bless the Lord,” the standard greeting among monks. The standard response is “Deo gratias”: “Thanks be to God”; but Francis’s timidity is indicated by the hesitant question marks after each word in his reply. “Magister meus”: “My master.”

Chapter 5
“Mandatum novum do vobis: ut diligatis insicem”: “I give you a new commandment: to love one another” (John 13:34), from the antiphon for Maundy Thursday, the day before Good Friday.

Chapter 6
What rationale does the legend say the creators of nuclear weapons used to justify their creation of atomic arsenals? What is the motive for the “great simplification”? Such a movement is frequently
How long ago did the nuclear war take place?

Chapter 7


"Inquisition": the Holy Inquisition was a ruthless and bloody Church organization dedicated to rooting out heresy, run by the Dominicans. Its chief officers were called "inquisitors."

"Catharism": technically a medieval religion popular in Provence until it was crushed by the pope and the king of France in the infamous Albigensian Crusade of the thirteenth century. Like its predecessor in antiquity, it argued that the world is the locus of a struggle between two divine powers, one good, the other evil. Christianity argued that God was both perfectly good and supreme and rejected the notion that Satan, for instance, had any power independent of God's. Why do you think Catharism might have revived in the time during which this story is set?

advocatus diaboli: the officer of the Church whose job was to challenge the evidence presented to prove that someone was a saint. His title means literally "devil's advocate," but his role is by no means seen as evil. His concern is to be certain that Leibowitz did not become a monk before establishing with certainty that his wife was dead because the Church forbids married men to become monks or priests, although widowers could.

"Ecce quam bonum, et quam frondens": "Behold how good and how delightful" (Psalms 132:1). Common English translations do not reflect this wording. A missal is a book containing all the prayers necessary for celebrating the mass throughout the year. A breviary contains the prayers used to be recited at various hours of the day. The Summa is probably St. Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae (1267–73), the standard theological treatise of the Catholic faith.

="Glorificemus": "Let us glorify [the Lord]."

"Miserere mei, deus": "Have pity upon me, God."

"audi me": "hear me."

Chapter 8

Extreme unction: the last rite of the Church, preparing the dying Christian for death and judgment.

postulator: the official responsible for advocating the canonization of a saint, the opposite of an advocatus diaboli.

prothonotary: one of seven members of the College of Prothonotaries Apostolic, responsible for recording major events in the history of the Church.

Chapter 9

Why does the Abbot veto the proposal to build a printing press?

Chapter 10

Sacerdos Magnus: Chief priest (pope).

"Dei imago": "Image of God."

Why are mutant offspring called the "pope's children?"

The reference to Jacob overcoming the angel refers to Genesis 32:23–33.

Chapter 11

"Appropinquat agnis pastor et oves pascenti": "The shepherd of the lambs approaches to feed the sheep."

"Genua nunc flactantur omnia": "Now are all knees bent."

"Jesus ertm Domini": "Once, Jesus ordered Peter to feed the flock of the Lord" (John 21:16).

"Ecce Petrus Ponteficem Maximum": "Behold Peter, the chief of high priests" (that is, the pope).
"Gaudet ergo populus Christi, et gratias agat Dominus": "Let the people of Christ rejoice, and give thanks to the Lord."

"Nam docet inur a Spiritu sancto": "For now we shall be taught by the Holy Spirit."

plain chant: unharmonized monophonic song, such as the Gregorian chants traditionally used in Catholic liturgy.

"Sancte pater, ab septentrio summa petimus ut ille Beat us Leibowitz eujus miracula mirati sunt multi": "Holy Father, we beseech you or your highest wisdom, on behalf of the Blessed Leibowitz whose miracles are many."

"dulit": "service."

"Gratissima Nobis causa, fili": "Our cause is most pleasing, [my] sons."

"sub duodecim sancti Spiritui": "led by the Holy Spirit."

"miserer nobi": "have mercy upon us."

"Sancta Dei Genetrix, ora pro nobis, Sancta Virgo virginum, ora pro nobi": "Holy Mother of God, pray for us, Holy Virgin of Virgins, pray for us." Part of a standard prayer to Mary called the "Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary" (also called the "Litany of Loreto"), a long prayer recited at the end of the rosary.

"Omnes sancti Martyres, orate pro nobi": "All the holy martyrs, pray for us."

"Veni, Creator Spiritus": "Come, Creator Spirit" (one of the most famous chants of the liturgy).

"Surgit ergo Petrus ipse": "Then let Peter himself arise."

"Te Deum": "Thee, God" (a chant sung particularly on celebratory occasions).

"sedarii": bearers of the papal chair on ceremonial occasions.

"let him approach."

"sedarius": singular of sedarii.

Why is the clan chief described as "converted," in quotation marks?

"scala caelestis": "heavenly stairs."

His Supreme Uncuosity: a sarcastic description of this official's behavior, not a real title.

Behold Peter: Catholics believe that Jesus' disciple Peter (formerly a fisherman) was the first pope.

What evidence is there that despite all the impressive pageantry at New Rome, the pope has little real power and knows little of the outside world?

"Noli molestari": "Do not molest."

Excommunicating; excommunication is the extreme penalty of the Church, forbidding the condemned to receive the sacraments and therefore almost certainly condemning him or her to Hell.

The story ends with lavish descriptions of the continuation and proliferation of life. How can we tell they are ironically meant?

How does this story leave you feeling about humanity? Is it optimistic? Pessimistic? Purely nihilistic?

"Fiat Lux"

Chapter 12

What does the first paragraph tell you about America in 3174? Is the Church dominant? Is civilization increasing or decreasing?

nuncio: papal ambassador.

Caesar: figuratively, any secular authority, following Christ's usage in Matthew 22:21.

What is the nature of the disagreement between Thon Taddeo Pfardentrott and Marcus Apollo? Note how the formal Spanish term of address "Don" has evolved into "Thon."

Sheba expects Solomon to come to her: reversing the Biblical story (1 Kings 10:1–13).

What does this phrase mean in the context of the story?

"Sub immunitate apostolica hoc supputitum est. Quisquis nunquam molestare audat, ipso facto excommunicaatur": "This is placed under the protection of the apostolic [papal] immunity. Whoever dare to molest this messenger is automatically excommunicated."

What is the origin of the village name of "Sanly Bowitts"? What about the culture explains the evolution of this name?

"Cum saltem dulit": "To whom it says, at least."

author studies


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Feast of the Assumption: August 15, the day celebrating the ascent of the Virgin Mary into Heaven.

"Quidam mihi calice nuper expletur, Paulo. Precamini ergo Deum facere me fortidem. Metuo ut hic persat. Spero te et fraterus saepeis orturos esse pro trescentiis Marci Apollini. Valete in Christo, Amici": "A certain chalice has been filled for me recently, O Paul. You may pray therefore to God to make me stronger. I fear that this will be lost. I hope that you and the brothers will pray often for the trembling Marcus Apollo. Farewell, friends." The image of the full chalice to symbolize bitter suffering is taken from Matthew 26:42.

"Tecearhaniae datum est Octava Ss Petri et Paula, Anno Domini Ternessimo": "Written at Texarkana on the eighth of Saints Peter and Paula in the year of our Lord, 3—."

"vespero mundi expectando": "waiting for the end of the world."

Why is old Benjamin said to have lived for 5408 years?

Chapter 14.

After centuries of preserving human knowledge, why are some of those in the Church not entirely happy about its spread? In what ways does history seem to be repeating itself?

 logos: as used in John 1:1. The term logos is far more than simply the Greek for "word." It means something like "meaning" or "underlying pattern, structure, purpose."

Veronica's veil: according to legend, a woman named Veronica helped Christ on his way to be crucified by wiping his sweaty face with her handkerchief. An image of his face came off on the cloth, which was preserved and exhibited for many centuries. Some scholars think the story was born out of a misinterpretation of the Greek phrase "vera ikon," meaning "true image."

"De Vestigiis Anticostorum Civitaturn": "Of the Vestiges of the Preceding Civilization."

machina analytica: analytical machines, computers.

"Caro canon": "Beware of the dog" a not uncommon inscription on ancient Roman houses.

Vexilla regis: The rest of the line is quoted and translated on the next page. The sixth-century poet and bishop Venantius Fortunatus composed a Good Friday hymn that begins "Vexilla regis prodeunt" ("the banners of the King advance," hailing the Crucifixion). Dante Alighieri parodied it in the first line of the final canto of his Inferno (part of the Divine Comedy) in which the hymn is altered so that the banners referred to become the vast wings of Satan.

Sancta Maria, interdico pro me: instead of the more common request to a saint—"pray for me"—he asks her to laugh for him.

Chapter 16.

What evidence is there that Benjamin is the Wandering Jew, or some variation on that theme? What evidence is there later in the chapter that he doesn't fit the Wandering Jew tradition precisely?


Benjamin's speech about the goat is a compound of several Biblical references. Goats traditionally symbolized the damned in Christianity, as sheep symbolized the saved (see Matthew 25:33), at least partly because of the ancient Jewish tradition of the "scapegoat"—a sacrificial animal on whose back all the sins of the community were laid when it was driven into the desert to be destroyed by the demon Azazel (see Leviticus 16:8-10). Benjamin also identifies the goat as the beast on which the "Whore of Babylon" (originally symbolizing ancient Rome) rides in Revelation 17:3 at the end of the world.

Saint Paul was by profession a tent-maker; so it is not inappropriate that Benjamin should be a tent-mender.

The Hebrew inscription in this chapter is the Shema, the central statement of faith in Judaism, from Deuteronomy 6:4, which Jews originally wore in a container on their foreheads and posted beside their doors in a container called a mez-
Modern Jews often wear it in a small mezuzah on a chain around the neck. In the King James translation, it is rendered as "Hear, O Israel: the Lord your God is One God."

Torquemada: Tomás de Torquemada, infamously cruel Spanish inquisitor general in the late fifteenth century, largely responsible for causing the expulsion of the Jews from Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella.

How does Dom Paulo rationalize to himself Benjamin's claims to have lived for thirty-two centuries? Miller is careful to provide plausible rationalist alternatives for the seeming miracles in this book.

In discussing Christian theology, Paulo Benjamin makes some typically Jewish criticisms: Whereas Jews believe in only one, undivided God, Christians claim that God can be three (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) at one and the same time; Christ's resurrection ("life in death") is not a part of traditional Jewish beliefs about the Messiah, who once born is never supposed to die; and Paul explains away the necessity to have faith in apparent absurdities in Corinthians 1:17-25 in a passage that became a powerful tool against rationalism in the Middle Ages, whereas for Jews wisdom is identified with knowledge of and obedience to the Law.

Anchorite: a hermit, often living in the desert.

Why does Dom Paulo call the Jewish Messiah the "One-Who-Isn't-Coming?"

Come forth: Benjamin is referring to the story of Lazarus in John 11:1-44. What does he mean by alluding to this passage?

Manasses, Cyrus, Nebuchadnezzar, Pharaoh, Caesar: worldly rulers, all except Cyrus depicted as wicked in the Bible.

Samuel warned us against them: In Samuel 8, the Hebrews reject rule by religious leaders and beg the prophet Samuel for a king. In Samuel 8:10-18, he lists the many disadvantages of having a secular ruler, but at their insistence he crowns Saul, whose reign turns out—as predicted—disastrously.

What precisely is the danger that Benjamin sees emerging at the present time? Why is he skeptical of the value of reemerging science and technology?

Elizabeth: an ancient Hebrew name for God.

"Memento, Domine, Omnium Jamulorum tuorum": "Remember, Lord, all your servants."

Chapter 17

What recent invention is threatening the survival of the abbey?

How neighborly of the lion to lie down with the lamb: Explain this speech on the basis of Isaiah 11:6.

"Tibi adiutum": "I am here, yours."

Why does the statue in the last paragraph remind Paulo of Benjamin?

Chapter 18

This chapter begins with a reading based loosely on passages from the books of Job and Revelation in the Bible, but actually retelling the story of the Flame Deluge (nuclear war). Also alluded to is the story of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19). In ancient Jewish tradition, sheep (Genesis 22:1-13) or goats (Leviticus 16:15-22) are sacrificed as a substitute for human sacrifice, often to atone for sin. Although Christians re instituted the concept of human sacrifice symbolically by considering the crucified Christ as the sacrificial "lamb of God" (John 1:29), Jews and Christians both generally regard the reversion to literal human sacrifice as a great evil.

The word "holocaust" (Hebrew olab) has a complex history. Originally it designated a particular type of Hebrew sacrifice: one which was entirely consumed by fire instead of the usual practice in which most of the sacrifice was consumed by the priests. The term was ironically applied to the incineration of millions of Jews in Hitler's Germany. Later writers, anticipating a global nuclear war, extended its meaning to apply to such a catastrophe.

The word "name" is used instead of the actual name of the ruler of the nation that begins the war. "Pik-a-don" is Japanese for "flash-boom" and was the name initially given to the Hiroshima bomb by its victims. Miller is building on the Jewish tradition of not pronouncing the sacred name of God (YHWH).


ILLUSTRATION/ART


BEST FICTION REVISITED

The list of best fiction by the elderly mostly male staff of the Modern Library generated considerable discussion some months ago. A similar list derived from lists by "hundreds" of librarians was published in the November 15, 1998, Library Journal. The 150 books of fiction published in this century "that you regard as the most influential, either in the larger world or in their impact of your personal" are listed in rank order. The first is Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird (1960), "far and away your first choice"; the last is Farrell's Studs Lonigan trilogy. The earliest works are The Wonderful Wizard of Oz and Sister Carrie, both 1900, the most recent 1996's The Color of Water by James McBride. The journal's editors added: "Obviously, you read mostly American and British writers and, alas, primarily men. Given that three-fourths of the profession are women, the dominance of males was a surprise."

Fantastic fiction included The Lord of the Rings (3), Nineteen Eighty-Four (7), Animal Farm (8), Lord of the Flies (9), Slaughterhouse-Five (14), Fahrenheit 451 (18), The Hobbit (22), Winnie the Pooh (34), A Handmaid's Tale (37), Stranger in a Strange Land
SCIFI CHANNEL ANNOUNCES
SF FILM POLL RESULTS

The Sci-Fi Channel's monthly magazine, Sci-Fi Entertainment, received more than 20,000 votes for top SF films, although the poll presumably asked for horror and fantasy films as well (a few qualified Frankenstein, Bride of Frankenstein, Time Bandits). The 100 are in rank order by number of votes. For the record, the first ten are Star Wars (1977), Blade Runner (1982), 2001 (1968), The Empire Strikes Back (1980), The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951), Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan (1982), Aliens (1986), Return of the Jedi (1983), Alien (1979), and Forbidden Planet (1956). Metropolis (1926) is the oldest film on the list, The X-Files and Akira (Japanese anime) had 1998, the most recent. The first ten have longer descriptions, all by SF writers or critics such as Roger Ebert or filmmakers. This is the largest such poll I know of, and like every poll, is likely to generate vigorous discussion, which is likely to be summarized on the channel's Web site, The Dominion, at <http://www.scifi.com>.

(40), Brave New World (41), A Clockwork Orange (59), The Wonderful Wizard of Oz (62), The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (63), The Mists of Avalon (69), A Space Odyssey (76), The Wind in the Willows (79), Tarzan of the Apes (85), The Once and Future King (100), Dune (115), Cat's Cradle (118), The Tin Drum (126), and Where the Wild Things Are (129).

When reading aloud, but substituting Adonai ("Lord") instead. In some early editions, the scientist-magi's name is misprinted "Backeneth" the first time instead of "Blackeneth."

What does this story convey about Miller's thoughts on the threat of nuclear war? Give as many details as possible.

"lectio divina": "sacred reading."

During the test of the new arc lamp, the monks recite the opening of Genesis (verses 1-5):

"In principio Deus": "In the beginning God."
"caelum et terram creavit": "created heaven and earth."
"Venus autem erat mundus": "The earth however was a formless void."
"cum tenerris in superficie profundorum": "with darkness on the face of the deep."
"Ortus est Dei Spiriuts supra aquis": "And God's spirit hovered over the water."
"Gratias Creatori Spiritui": "Thanks be to the Creator Spirit" (not in the Biblical text).

"Dicite Deum: FLAT LUX": "And God said, 'Let there be light.'"

"Lucem esse bonum Deus vidit": "And God saw that the light was good."
"Et sererot lucem et tenerris": "And he divided the light from the darkness."

"Lucem appellasti 'dien' et tenerris 'noctes':": 'And he called the light 'day' and the dark 'night.'"

"Vespers occae": "Evening having come."

Lucifer: the monk shouts a common name for the devil when he is shocked, but the word "Lucifer" is originally also a name for the planet Venus and means "light-bringer." The first matches in the nineteenth century were called "lucifers."

"ortus et primo die": "and morning, the first day."

What is the effect of having the monks recite this passage as they inaugurate the lamp?

Before light bulbs were developed, the first electric lights were noisy, expensive, but extremely brilliant arc lights like this. Looking directly at one is much like looking directly at a welding tool.

Chapter 20

"Flectamus genua": "Let us bend our knees" (a ritual bow).
"Lavate": "Rise."

"Oremus": "Let us pray."


"Sedet": "Be seated."

"ad absurdum": "to an absurd length."

What is the poet implying when he suggests that Lebowitz will become the new scapegoat?

Why does the abbot pretend that he is not worried about the study Thon Thadeo's companions have made of the abbey's fortifications?

"et tu, Brute": "you too, Brutus," supposedly the last words of Julius Caesar, shocked that among those who stabbed him was his former friend and ally Brutus.

What is indicated about the men at the abbey by their reaction to Thon Thaddeo's description of Monsignor Apollo's unscientific beliefs about the refraction of light?

What is ironic about the young monk's use of Saint Augustine in this discussion?

What foreboding prediction does Thon Thaddeo make about the course of science in the future?

Explain the meaning of the two paragraphs toward the end of the chapter that begin, "He also suffered them to know how it might be saved."

What is signified by Benjamin's appearance and speech?

Chapter 22

The first line indicates that this chapter is set in either September or October. Vaquero: Spanish for "cowboy."
was excommunicated. Essentially the Church would go on strike, halting all masses, confessions, burials, weddings, etc., in the hope of arousing popular sentiment to force the ruler to submit to the pope.

"Regnans in Excelsis": "Reigning in the highest."

What does this chapter have to say about the relationship between science and government?

simonia: A term used to characterize corrupt Church officials, particularly those who buy and sell Church offices (derived originally from the story of Simon Magus in Acts 8:9–24).

What is the significance of the fact that the names of the bishops who have signed Hannegan's proclamation are unknown to the abbot?

"Dilatam Ignii": "Fire Deluge."

Why might Thaddeo be drawn to the theory that humanity is a recent invention developed by a preholocaust race? What effect would that have on the value of his scientific research?

"Legi": "Read."

Thaddeo has been misled into thinking that humans were created in the twentieth century by reading a fragment from Karel Capek's 1921 play R.U.R. (Rossum's Universal Robots), in which a scientist manages to breed artificial humans, called robotniki in the original Czech, translated as "robot" into English, becoming the word for "artificial human" in later writings.

Over the whole course of the novel, who do you think turns out to be "right" about the importance of knowledge: Thaddeo or Paulo?

"ab Luminis Christi": "from the light of Christ."

Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine... Quia videntur oculi mei salutare: excerpts from the ritual of departure known as the Nunc dimittis. The quoted portions means "Now let thy servant depart, O Lord ["in peace" is omitted here]. . . . Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." The passage occurs originally in Luke 2:29–32 as the speech of Simeon, an elderly pious Jew who thinks he can now die in peace because he has seen the promised Messiah. What do you think is the speech's significance in context of Canticle?

For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof: Genesis 3:4. What does this passage seem to mean in its original context? How does it relate to the subject of this chapter?

What does the last sentence of the chapter mean?

Chapter 23

"Ego te absolvo": "I absolve you"; what a priest would say upon granting absolution for sins during confession.

"Catheters aurea regna": "You reign over the purifying air."

How optimistic or pessimistic is the end of this chapter?

"Fiat Voluntas Tua"

The title comes from Luke 22:42, in which Jesus, facing crucifixion, prays to God to be spared but concludes, "Nevertheless, let Thy will be done." What tone does this set for the final section, given the original context of the speech?

Chapter 24

manifest destiny: originally the nineteenth-century belief that the United States had the right to extend its power over all of America.

Adam and Christ, first paired by Paul (see 1 Corinthians 15), are traditionally taken to represent respectively humanity's fall into sin and redemption from it. Here they represent the ambivalence of the new scientific age, full of both hope and fear.

"Wir marschieren weiter wenn alles in Scherben": "We march away when everything falls to pieces," from a Nazi marching song glorifying war.

Proteus vulgaris: this is a common amoeba named after the fact that it, like the ancient Greek God Proteus, has no fixed shape and can assume many forms. It would have in common with atrophy and entropy the quality of increasing disorder, as do the destructive forces of time which taunt would-be military
conquerors in this passage.

Lucifer: as noted above, the Devil is often referred to as Lucifer, here alluded to as the tempter of Eve. In the Canticle of the Brethren of the Order of Leibowitz, the phrase proclaims the fall of Lucifer from Heaven, where he was an angel until he rebelled against God. The words are used as a code phrase to communicate the success of a nuclear bomb test. Remember that “Lucifer” had also been used earlier in reference to the arc lamp invented at the abbey. Instead of good triumphing over evil, then, the phrase could suggest the extinction of light.

“Kyrie eleison”: “Lord, have mercy,” the Greek phrase that begins the Mass text.

The slashed “V” and “R” in the Canticle label the lines to be sung by one voice and their response by the massed choir.

bureaucratic Dutch boys: refers to a once-famous incident in the novel Hans Brinker, or the Silver Skates; in which a young boy saves his town by plugging a leak in a dike with his finger.

What is the point of the “Lady Reporter” sarcastically asking the defense minister whether he is in favor of Motherhood?

Just as Arkos, whose name begins with A, is the first of the abbots we meet, Zerchi, whose name begins with Z, is the last (Olsen 138). St. George is usually portrayed slaying a dragon.

The Abominable Autoscribe would seem to be an advanced sort of word processor. Remember that when this novel was written, the only computers in the world weighed many tons and filled large rooms but had less power than a common pocket calculator today.

lesse majeste: a French legal term that describes acts that are crimes because of the noble social status of the people against whom they are committed.

Father Zerchi ironically comments that if a computer can emulate a human soul, it can also “fall” like Adam and Eve. What tone does this passage set concerning technology?

What does the existence of incompatible American dialects imply about social organization?

Vulgate Latin would be the medieval Latin of the Vulgate Bible, used by the Church for all official purposes until the mid-1960s.

Oh, ye of little faith: quotation from Matthew 6:30.

before the cock crows thrice: refers to Christ’s prophecy on the night before his crucifixion that Peter will betray him (Matthew 26:34; Mark 14:30; John 13:38).

“Hinc igitur afflictus”: “Escape from here.”

“Mota proprie”: “Of your own volition, on your own initiative.”

Anno Domini: year of our Lord: A.D.

“Ab hac planeta nati sitis aliquis fluit: Ecclesiae usque ad planetas solium alienorum iam abisse et nonquam redituros esse intelligimus”: “We understand that from this planet of the birth some sons of the Church have already gone off to the planets of other sons, never to return.”

“Quo peregrinatur greg, pastor secum”: “Where the sheep go, the pastor (shepherd) goes with them.”

“Casu belli nunc remoto”: “The causes of war now having been removed.”

The essence of the message Dom Zerchi is trying to dictate has to do with a plan by the Church to promote emigration to other worlds in case of nuclear war; the vehicles referred to are rocket ships.

Lazar: see note on Lazarus, Chapter 16.

“Luciferum niste mina dixit?”: “Are you telling me that Lucifer has fallen?”

“Christeum”: An abbreviated “Christ be with you,” used as a farewell like the old “God be with ye,” now abbreviated to “good-bye.”

“Cum spiritu”: “And with thy spirit” (a standard part of Catholic ritual).

Syndicates of my namesake: refers to a miracle performed by Joshua, the leader of the Hebrew invasion of Canaan, commanding the sun and moon to stand still so that there would be enough time to complete their victory in the valley of Gabaon. See Joshua 10:12–14. What does Joshua mean by saying that it would be useful to be able to perform this trick “in these times too"?
bicephalous: two-headed.

Chapter 25
dauntless Dutch boys: see note for the preceding chapter on “bureaucratic Dutch boys.”
The American War Department was changed to the more peaceful-sounding “Defense Department” after World War II. What does this second press conference imply about the events the defense minister is so carefully denying?
Phoenix: a mythical bird that once every 500 years sets itself on fire and is reborn from an egg in the ashes.
Alpha Centauri is the nearest star (actually two stars) to Earth, about four light-years away. It is now believed to be incapable of having planets that could sustain life.
Why is “Joshua” an appropriate name for the leader of the Church’s project to emigrate to another planet?
Few of the names in this novel have obvious meanings, but “Grail” seems like an ironic reference to the Holy Grail of Medieval legend: the cup that Christ used at the Last Supper, that caught his blood on the cross, and that King Arthur’s knights sought.
“Accedite ad eum”: “Approach him.”
“Lingua prima”: “first language.”
Maundy laving: On Maundy Thursday (the day before Good Friday), the pope ceremonially washes the feet of some of the poor in commemoration of Jesus’ washing the feet of the disciples (John 13:5).
Lazgar israeli: Hebrew name, related to “Lazarus”?

Chapter 26
What has happened between the end of the last chapter and the beginning of this? Who started it?
Cain is famous being the first murderer in the Bible, having killed his brother (see Genesis 4:1-16).
What is the meaning of the quotation from Eleventh Fiosus?
“Non habemus regem nisi caesarem”: “We have no king but Caesar.” See John 19:15. How does this relate to the preceding quotation?
“Grex peregrinus erit. Quam primum est factum suscipiendum nobis, jussu Sactae Sedis. Suscipite ergo operis partem ordinis nostro propriae”: “It will be a foreign flock. What must be undertaken by us is to be done as soon as possible. By order of the Holy See. Support the first part of the work by your order.”
“Eminentissimo Domino Eric Cardinali Hoffstraff obsequitur Jethro Zerchius, A. O. L., Abbas. Ad has res disputandas iam coegi discessuros fratres ut bodie parati dimitti Roman prima aeminae possint”: “Very Eminent Lord Eric Cardinal Hoffstraff submits himself to Jethro Zerchi, A. O. L., Abbot. I have already ordered brothers who are about to depart to be sent to Rome by the first airplane to discuss these matters.”
the ass he rides into Jerusalem: see Matthew 21:2-9.
Ecclesi, Domine. Psalms 35:23.
“Retracte me, Satanae, et discedes”: “Draw away from me, Satan, and depart.” Compare with Matthew 16:23.
burning bush: Genesis 3:1-6.
Is the Church escaping into space merely to preserve itself, or does it have other aims?
“Homo loquax nonnumquam sapient”: “The talkative man is sometimes wise.”
“Deduce, Seductor informis”: “Learn, foul seducer.”
“Egregium tenuire”: “We may leave the Earth.”
abbas: literally “Father” in Hebrew, but used as the title of the head of an abbey: an abbot.
“Audi me, Domine”: “Hear me, O Lord.”
negotium perambulans in tenebris”: “The pestilence that stalks in darkness” (Psalms 91:6).
“Rominicentur et convertentur ad Dominum universi fines terrae. Et adorabunt in conspectu universae familias gentium. Quoniam. Domini est regnum, et sse dominabitur”: “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before Thee. For the kingdom is the Lord’s, and he will rule among the nations” (Psalms 22:27). Why is it ironic that this is the psalm that happens to be scheduled for this night?
de essentia homini”: “of human nature.”
“Hoc officium, Filii—tibi imponemus oneri”: “This office, my Son—may we impose this burden upon you?”
“ponerem accepiam”: “I shall accept the honor.”
“Cruciis autem onus si audisti ut honor, nihil errasti auribus”: “If however you bear the burden of the cross as an honor, you did not hear wrong.”
“Accepiam”: “I accept.”
the principle of Epikela: the doctrine by which part of the Church—if separated from communication with the Roman hierarchy (in particular, the pope)—may institute its own parallel hierarchy to assure the continuity of the Apostolic Succession
Chapter 27

"Mori vult": "He wishes to die."

What is the essential disagreement between Father Zerchi and the Green Star representative?

the serpent deceived me, and I did eat Eve's excuse for eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:13).

Note that Poet from the previous story has become popularized as Saint Poet of the Miraculous Eyeball.

"Orbis Judicatum Consicentia": "The globe that judges consciences."

"Orbis Poetae Judicat": "The eye of the judging poet."

"Non cogitamus, ergo nihil sumus": "We do not think, therefore we are nothing," reversing René Descartes' famous dictum, "I think, therefore I am."

"Eventi diaboli": "Here comes the Devil."

Chapter 28

"Domine, mundorum omnium Factor, parsurus esto imprimit et filius avantis ad sideria coelii quorum sectus diffiderer": "Lord, maker of all worlds, spare these Thy sons who are going to the stars of heaven, whose lives will be quite difficult."

Note the return of the buzzards that were circling overhead at the beginning of the novel.

ABANDON EVERY HOPE YE WHO ENTER HERE: According to Dante's Inferno, this is the message inscribed over the entrance gate to Hell.

Golgatha: the Mount of Skulls, called "Calvary" in Latin, where Christ was crucified.

In your opinion, who wins the argument between Dom Zerchi and the young girl over euthanasia? Defend your opinion.

Chapter 29

"alter Christus": "another Christ."

"Te absolvo Dominus Jesus Christus; ego autem dixi auctoritate te absolvo ab omni iniquo. . . . Denique, si absolvates, ex peccatis tuis ego te absolvo in Nomine Patri": "The Lord Jesus Christ absolves you; I, however, through his authority free you from all . . . Finally, if you can be absolved of your sins, I absolve you in the name of the Father."

"Debita me": "Whiten me."

Dies Irae: hymn about the Last Judgment, written by Thomas of Celano in the thirteenth century and incorporated into the liturgy for the Catholic requiem (funeral) mass, obviously appropriate here considering both the plight of Zerchi and humanity in general.

fa ext: this is a medieval Latin phrase meaning roughly, "it is lawful"—that is, according to divine law.

Nisi baptizata es et nisi baptizari nonquis, te baptizo: Zerchi is being cautious, not at all certain that it would be proper to baptize something he suspects does not have a soul, so he covers himself by saying, roughly, "Unless you are [already] baptized or are something which cannot be baptized, I baptize you."

"Domine, non sum dignus, sed tantum dic verbo": "Lord, I am not worthy, but only speak the word." Spoken by a Roman centurion to Jesus in Capernaum (Matthew 8:8) when Jesus offered to come and heal his servant: "Domine non sum dignus ut intras sub tectum meum: sed tantum dic verbo et sanabitis puer meus." In the traditional Latin rite, the priest recites a modified version of the centurion's saying just before he receives the sacred host, substituting anima ("soul") for puer ("servant").

The first sacrament is baptism.

The Magnificat is the hymn of the Virgin Mary celebrating the fact that she is to bear the Christ (Luke 1:46–55). Dom Zerchi imagines that the newly awakened Rachel is purely innocent, like Mary (born of an immaculate conception, free of all sin), and therefore does not need baptism, the function of which is to wash away sins.

"Sic transit mundus": "That's the way the world goes" or "thus ends the world?"

The novel began with hungry vultures; it ends with hungry sharks. But whereas the vultures at least had a certain crude vitality, the sharks are presumably doomed like the rest of life on earth.

Is the ending of the novel optimistic, pessimistic, or something in between?

Recommended Studies on A Canticle for Leibowitz


**STUDY GUIDE**

**Edra Bogle**

This study guide is intended to do two things: to provide background information that students may well not have (such as the meaning of Latin terms or the story of the Wandering Jew) and to raise questions that an experienced reader asks during the reading process but that a student may well not consider because of a desire to find out what happens next. All page references are to the new Bantam edition, first printed in August 1976.

**Fiat Homo** = let there be man.

p. 1. Notice the combination of religious, negative and superstitious connotations the author uses to set the atmosphere and to imply the sort of place and people the reader will encounter.

p. 3. The irony of a monk who doesn't recognize the name of God in Hebrew is the first of many such ironies brought on by the ignorance of these people. Watch for others—underline a few. Why does the author use them?

p. 4. Sport = mutation.

p. 5. What could he mean, “writing things backward”? What relevant language is written right to left? What is the thematic relevance of the idea that when one is denied cheese (or food or anything else) it becomes overly important, something to create pseudodemons from?

p. 16. An incubus is, in medieval Christian tales, a male demon who has sex with women; a succubus (mentioned later) is a female demon who has sex with men, both usually coming to them secretly at night as a temptation.

p. 27. Satire on standard theological bickering, but may also be relevant to the end of the book.

p. 33. “Dead now, lo, the last six hundred years” combined with references to the 1960s (p. 57, and passim, as the time of the Flame Deluge, make this ca. 2570).

p. 40, bottom paragraph. Be sure you understand what Arkos means here, since it motivates his treatment of Francis.

pp. 48–49. If one exaggerates the importance of something, or suggests possibilities to an unimaginative sort, they tend to agree even if you don’t want them to. It’s the “don’t tell the kids not to put beans in their ears” syndrome, but it goes even farther here.

p. 52-54. Note how long Miller has waited to give the reader pure exposition. Is it arriving in such undigested lumps a literary fault?

p. 57–59. Note King James Bible style; more exposition.

p. 64. "Behold the Curial (or Church Court) inquisitor. Listen and be attentive."

p. 71+. Satire on speculation about unknown things. Why is there so much satire and irony throughout the book?

p. 78–80. Who do you think Brother Fingo carves?

p. 85. Does he really have horns and fangs? (If so, why do they shrink at the end of the chapter?) Why the iron cot and food, in contrast to the earlier visitor? A devil’s advocate is a church official assigned the duty of finding out every possible reason why a candidate for sainthood should not be canonized, partly to make sure that the candidate is indeed properly holy and partly to avoid embarrassing material being brought up later by outsiders.

p. 96. Is it chance or Providence that rescues the original relic? What is the effect on you of deciding it’s Providence and then realizing what the relic is? Or is it only a scrap by now?

p. 108. Is this another vision of the Pilgrim? If so, why? If not, why does the author suggest it is? Why is the Pilgrim there anyway?

p. 110. Note the buzzard; another 600 years.

**WANDERING JEW, THE**, a Jew condemned to wander about the world until Christ’s second coming, because, according to the legend, as Christ bore the cross to Calvary, the Jew chid him, and urged him to go faster. . . . An Armenian archbishop visited England in 1228, and, while being entertained at St. Albans, was asked if he had ever heard of or seen Joseph, who was present at the Crucifixion, and was said to be still alive. . . . The prelate replied that the man had recently dined at his own table. He had been Pontius Pilate’s porter, by name Cartaphilus, who, when they were dragging Jesus from the Judgement Hall, had struck him on the back, saying, ‘Go faster, Jesus, why
What’s so funny? If Komhoer seems to be an Edison type. This is the beginning of Genesis, and a good chance to try to spot cognate words in the Latin; especially if you know some Spanish or French, though some words relate to English, too.

Usually Thon Taddeo is such a skeptic about the facts of history. Why is this theory such a pleasant and easy cop-out for him? Is there anything in the book that would indicate it was true? false? How does it tie in with the discussion of responsibility? The play referring to the created race is R.U.R. (Rossum’s Universal Robots) (1921) by Karel Capek, which added the term “robot” to popular usage.

Note the change in Komhoer here and on p. 210. What has changed him? Note that the buzzards herald.

"Alas! You say that Lucifer is fallen?" Lucifer is an especially appropriate name for the bomb, since as an angel of light he was favored by God, but became proud and revolted, to become known as Satan.

"We understand that from this planet of birth certain sons of the church are to go even to planets of an alien sun and never to return." (The phrases are not in that order.) Quo peregrinatur grex = “Where the flock wanders, the pastor goes with them.”

"Our side of this question.

Why does Brother Joshua decide to go; how does the omen influence him? What is the significance of the Memorable going with them? It’s not necessarily just to preserve it.

Note the irony of the victims of this radiation worrying about their survivors inheriting.

Do you agree with the two statements by the doctor? Why does Abbot Zerchi consider them wrong?

Can anybody follow the summary of the book? It ends “I don’t think; therefore I don’t exist,” a reversal of a famous quotation by the philosopher Descartes.

The motto is from Dante’s Inferno, where it is engraved over the gate of Hell.

Another irony, that Dom Zerchi has to stop, so the young woman gets out.

Think about the idea of forgiving God for His justice.
p. 308 on. Think about the character of Rachel. What does she signify? Why does she bless, rather than need to receive blessing? Does the Abbot’s refusal to assess her origins (bottom p. 311) satisfy you? Does she seem to make sense, or is she a literary gimmick like the skull on p. 307? (Whose must it be?)

p. 312. Sic transit mundus = thus goes the world. Note that the buzzards do not end this section, but rather a shark does. Sharks, like buzzards, are scavengers. Is it a hopeful note that some life seems to survive?

APPROACHING A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ

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FICTION REVIEW

VIEW FROM ANOTHER SHORE

Steven H. Silver


Franz Rottensteiner's anthology View from Another Shore is an interesting, if flawed, collection. Part of the flaw comes from the history of the collection itself, rather than any of the content. View from Another Shore was originally published in 1973 by the Seabury Press. When Liverpool University Press elected to republish the collection in 1999, they chose to retain the con-
In his introduction, Rottensteiner discusses the state of the current speculative fiction industry in the United States. He laments that foreign authors are having difficulties publishing their work in the United States. He indicates that there are several reasons for this, ranging from a history of poor translation that was published in the mid-1970s to simple anglocentrism. Rottensteiner argues that European science fiction is as powerful and modern as the works published in America. This is where the imbalance occurs.

With a single exception, all of the European translations included in View from Another Shore were published prior to 1971. Even if these stories were on the cutting edge of the genre when they first appeared, they are now dated by more than a quarter century of technological and literary advance. Although some of them, such as Sever Gansovsky’s “The Proving Ground” (1969) or Lino Aldani’s still timely “Good Night, Sophie” (1963), which envisioned the world of virtual reality, still seem to retain their power after all these years, other stories, like J.-P. Andrevon’s “Observation of Quadrupedes” (1971) appear trite after all these years. Rather than demonstrating that European science fiction can hold its own, Rottensteiner appears to be demonstrating that it is dated, an unfair comparison given the original publication dates of the stories.

And yet Rottensteiner’s introduction seems to argue against using View from Another Shore as a sourcebook specific to the 1960s, such as James Gunn’s Road to Science Fiction series. In the latter, Gunn clearly indicates the historical and literary context for the stories he has chosen to present. Rottensteiner lets each of his stories stand on their own, without giving them any context in which to be read. Though it is fair to expect a story to stand on its own, these stories frequently fail to do so without some indication of the situation that surrounded their initial publication.

In fact, Rottensteiner only really discusses the work of one of the included authors in his introduction. He spends nearly four pages (of nine) lamenting the current position of Stanislaw Lem in the science fictional firmament. Despite acknowledging Lem’s flaws in characterization and social background, Rottensteiner seems to indicate the belief that Lem’s work should be read and studied simply because it exists rather than because of any internal demonstration of ability or inventiveness. Unfortunately, Rottensteiner’s selection of Lem’s “In Hot Pursuit of Happiness” tends to support the negative aspects of Lem’s work without really giving a reason to look further into his writing. The only other authors mentioned more than in passing in the introduction are the Russian Strugatsky brothers. Unfortunately, Rottensteiner notes that he was unable to include any examples of their writing because they wrote almost exclusively at the novella or novel length. However, some of the most interesting stories in the book are from other Russian authors, such as the previously mentioned Gansovsky or Segre Kladserv’s light “A Modest Genius” (1968).

Given the date of View from Another Shore’s original publication, it is understandable that all of the authors included were born before World War II. However, reading the new edition of the book at the end of the twentieth century causes the reader to wonder whether there are any new and rising stars in European science fiction or if the field stagnated twenty years ago without being able to advance beyond the level represented in Rottensteiner’s collection.

Taking each story on its own merits, without attempting to put them into an historical or social context, View from Another Shore is a haphazard collection of stories, many of them dated or trite, but with a few that manage to stand out. Although it could provide a useful text for a comparative literature class, there are other collection of non-Anglophonic science fiction, such as Frederik Pohl’s Tales from Planet Earth (1986) or James Gunn’s The Road to Science Fiction 6: Around the World (1998) that would be just as useful.

FICTION REVIEW

A CIVIL CAMPAIGN


Bujold’s latest Vorkosigan adventure continues the manic tale of Miles Vorkosigan, the young Barrayaran nobleman who, in the previous book, Komarr, found love in the person of the beautiful widow, Ekaterin Vorsoisson; the occasion of her husband’s untimely death was the subject of Komarr; as was the characterization of Ekaterin herself, really the focus of Komarr. Bujold continues the trend of fleshing out her characters in A Civil Campaign, a book about love: Gregor, the Emperor of Barrayar, is at last going to marry his beloved Laia, and an imperial wedding is something to make a fuss about. Love must be in the air.

Indeed, the novel focuses on the love mishaps of all the unmarried characters in Bujold’s world. Ivan, Miles’s not-socially useless cousin, sets his sights on an ex-lover, Donna, only to be hilariously disappointed. Miles sets out to woo Ekaterin and tells everybody about it but her, with hilarious consequences—one of the most painful scenes I have ever read. Mark, Miles’s clone-brother, is in love with Kareem Koudelka, who feels squashed at her parents’ house during her visit home and unable to
be herself with Mark, forcing Cordelia Vorkosigan, Miles's mother, to take things in hand—with, of course, hilarious consequences.

Combined with the romantic troubles of the principals are several other plots. Mark and Kareen, along with a scientist, have gone into business farming "butter bugs," disgusting bugs that vomit forth a bland, tofu-like, edible substance. But how to market and sell such an inherently disgusting food item, no matter how delicious when turned into a frozen dessert? And two friends of Miles' have political problems: one was found, during a routine genetic scan, to be part Cetagandan, so his seat on a council has to go up to vote. And another friend, Dono, wants a seat himself so his awful, unethical relation won't inherit it; the way he goes about getting it is indeed drastic. Bujold interweaves these political machinations cleverly into her love plots; but the real focus of the novel is interpersonal relationships and marriage.

Miles doesn't get to play Imperial Auditor in A Civil Campaign. But Miles gets to be Miles, and his charming self is reason enough to buy this book. Bujold continues to delve into her characters: Ivan isn't as stupid as he pretends to be, Miles is as vulnerable as he is smart, and Ekaterin is much, much more than a pretty face—indeed, she's a match for Miles, and readers of Bujold know what that means. Mark, the most conflicted of Bujold's characters and one of the main characters in Brothers in Arms, is not glossed over here either; his life as a programmed assassin has taken its toll, and he is in pretty serious therapy. Bujold deftly juggles about six plots, all of which resolve nicely, and this light, funny book has moments of real emotional heft. Vorkosigan fans won't want to miss this one.

**FICTION REVIEW**

**THE INVISIBLE COUNTRY**

Donald Gilzinger, Jr.


Paul McAuley's short story collection, *The Invisible Country*, originally published in the U.K. by Gollancz in 1996, contains nine stories written between 1991 and 1995. Eight are related to *Pasquale's Angel* (1994), *Fairyland* (1995), and the *Books of the Confluence* (1997-9) and appear to be his earlier working out of ideas and issues that later emerge in the novels. Moreover, McAuley's insightful afterward to each story, occasionally explaining its germination or ethical and moral questions, provides a parallel structure to his fictions that demonstrates his wit and compassion. *The Invisible Country*, overall, is an excellent collection that serves as a suitable entree to his novels while further revealing McAuley's continuing growth as a writer.

The title story stands by itself as a sort of slyly sartorial homage to William Gibson and the cyberpunk style in general. "The Invisible Country" contains all the appropriate cyber buzz words, such as "black clinic," "renting your body," "grafted arm muscle," "kinked my metabolism," but ingeniously inverts the standard resolution of so many cyberpunk stories not with clichéd acts of choreographed violence but with a kiss.

"Recording Angel" fills in a few background lacunae from the Books of the Confluence series, including the probable origin of Confluence itself (what McAuley terms a Big Dumb Object), whereas "The Temptation of Dr. Stein" and "The True History of Dr. Pretorius" are devoted to Pretorius, a secondary character in *Pasquale's Angel*. "The Temptation of Dr. Stein," winner of the 1995 British Fantasy Award, poignantly reworks the Frankenstein myth with Pretorius as a sinister, frustrated Victor and Stein as a father who refuses to accept his daughter's death. The ironically titled "The True History of Dr. Pretorius" horrifies and amuses as a meta-science fictional tale that sets Pretorius in centuries-long competition with the likes of Dr. Moreau, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, H. Rider Haggard, and Professor Challenger, among others.

The most coherent and essential group is that related to *Fairyland*: "Gene Wars," "Prison Dreams," "Dr. Luther's Assistant," "Children of the Revolution," and "Slaves." The narratively fragmented "Gene Wars" anticipates the issues surrounding genetic manipulation that McAuley will develop further in *Fairyland* and which he identifies in its afterward as the tension between the myth of Prometheus and of Pandora's Box as the template myth of science. "Prison Dreams," "Dr. Luther's Assistant," and "Children of the Revolution" each explore that tension through the complex relationships evolving among humanity, its bioengineered slave "dolls," and liberated dolls called "fairies." The increasing complexity and danger of this relationship finds its fullest expression in "Slaves," the strongest story, actually a novella, in the collection. Ostensibly a *Bildungsroman* about the young girl Katz, "Slaves" ultimately upends the traditional SF theme concerning humanity's moral responsibility for its creations (shades of *Frankenstein*) to explore what responsibility and uses our creations may have for us. McAuley presents a powerful, humbling, almost mythopoetic story that serves as a perfect segue to *Fairyland*.

I have, however, one small caveat about this important collection. A distracting aspect of McAuley's otherwise graceful and distinctive style is his propensity for unnecessary foreshadowing that disrupts the narrative flow. Whether related to character development, as in "The True History of Dr. Pretorius" when he inserts, "But within days of starting the investigation, Cochrane knew that the story would change his life. Definitely permanently, and maybe forever" (p. 197), or connected to plot exposition, as in "Slaves" when he inserts, "But then there was the fairy hunt, and her whole world was blown apart" (p. 255), too often McAuley's foreshadowing is simply redundant. It is as if he cannot wait for his readers to follow his densely
described, yet clearly imagined, narratives and impulsively needs to give away characterization and plotting ahead of time in order to raise tension. Nevertheless, *The Invisible Country* exhibits McAuley’s elegant, mature, and deeply moving narrative skill. He should trust his considerable talent, and let these vital and disquieting stories tell themselves.

**FICTION REVIEW**

**INVERSIONS**

Karen Hellekson


I couldn’t wait for Iain M. Banks’s latest paperback to come to the United States in hardcover; I ordered it via amazon.com.uk and got a British edition to match all my other paperback British editions, which I collected on trips to the U.K. and Canada. Banks is best known for his Culture cycle of SF, stories and novels that take place in a far-flung future of machine intelligence and superhumans. *Inversions* is a sharp contrast to Banks’s previous SF works, and fans of the Culture may not appreciate this text, as it is not overtly placed in the Culture’s universe. Clues and hints (and one particularly violent scene) indicate that one of the characters is a member of the Culture, but other than that, this book reads like a fantasy novel.

Banks’s familiar themes of war and games are themes here as well. Two interweaving plots alternate chapters: one plot follows DeWar, a king’s bodyguard, and is told in third person; the other plot follows Vosill, doctor to another king, a rival to the first, and is told in first person from the point of view of her assistant; who is also spying on her for his unnamed Master. This narrative comprises reports from the spy to his Master. The two plots dance and finally come together at the end, but with Banks, you always have to expect the unexpected: The tension between the two plots is not resolved as one might hope, leading to an oddly muted but nonetheless satisfying ending.

DeWar’s story focuses on his attempts to save the life of his king, the Protector, who killed the previous ruler for the post he now holds. DeWar saves the Protector’s life on several occasions; is there a plot against the Protector from within, perhaps one touching on the Protector’s son? And Vosill’s story focuses on court intrigue as members of her king’s court attempt to remove her by various unsavory means. Both DeWar and Vosill are outsiders, not natives of their respective regions, and as such, they bring an outsider’s perspective to their jobs and are perceived by others as hopelessly foreign and therefore untrustworthy.

Mixed among these plots are stories that the characters tell. Vosill tells stories of her distant homeland and the way they do things there, which strikes her assistant as very strange; and indeed, her style of doctoring (not to mention the fact that she is a woman doctor, apparently quite unknown) is most unusual, although apparently very effective. DeWar tells the Protector’s young son stories of three friends in a distant land who undergo a variety of adventures. Naturally, the stories he tells are stories of himself, but they are so altered through the lens of his storytelling that the reader must search for the similarities in circumstances that have made DeWar who he is.

The story concludes with betrayal and loss related to war, a common theme in Banks’ work. Though fans of Banks’ Culture novels will search hard to find the representative from the Culture hidden within the book, this book is not typical of Banks’ SF writing and for that reason alone may not be as well liked by his audience as his other science fiction. However, patient readers will find much to reward them: I enjoyed seeing typical Bankian themes in new clothing.

**FICTION REVIEW**

**RAINBOW MARS**

Tim Blackmore


If you feel you’ve been here before, you’re right. The short novel *Rainbow Mars* (78,000 words) is a friendly visit to Niven’s early days with Hanville Svetz, the whimsical time traveler from such stories as “The Flight of the Horse” (1969), “Leviathan,” (1970), and “Death in a Cage” (1973), all reprinted here.

The novel is about Svetz, his familiar time-traveling pals, and their quest for a “hangtree” (orbital tower, beanstalk, skyscraper) for Earth. The first Svetz tales were about hunting missions for rare, actually legendary, animals—a unicorn, a dragon, Moby-Dick, a werewolf, and so on. Now Svetz’s bosses want to begin interplanetary, ideally intergalactic, travel. Svetz and crew return to Mars in search of hangtree seeds that they can plant on Earth to establish Earth’s own orbital elevator. The center of the book concerns Svetz’s mission to Mars and close and hostile encounters with some of the five native Martian races there. Svetz and his crew eventually fly the hangtree sapling to Earth, where it roots just as the Portuguese arrive to
colorize the New World. In the course of that colonization, Svetz creates the myth of the gold-making alchemist while a Portuguese sailor named Jack climbs—you guessed?—the beanstalk in search of the golden eggs Svetz has given him. After more kidding around, Niven sends Svetz to a new future where the hangtree is about to kill Earth as it has Mars (a hangtree apparently drained Mars and created the canals). Svetz and his pals save the day and trade Martians the technology to revivify Mars in exchange for the secrets of interplanetary travel. Joy in Mudville.

Niven obviously enjoys his chance to revisit some old fictional friends whom he identifies in an afterword: primarily they are Edgar Rice Burroughs, C. S. Lewis, Ray Bradbury, Stanley Weinbaum, and H. G. Wells (and Alex Raymond's Flash Gordon). The novel doesn't require familiarity with either the earlier Svetz stories or the science fiction mentioned above. The idea of the beanstalk (skyhook, hangtree) is also common, as Niven points out, to Clarke's The Fountains of Paradise (and Charles Sheffield's Web between the Worlds, which Niven doesn't mention). Anyone looking for more than passing references to these classic authors should look elsewhere, though.

It's hard to be cranky about such a pleasant book. Niven moves the narrative along briskly, sometimes telegraphically; the characters are charming, if slenderly drawn, and the homages provoke smiles. Underlying the story is the by now typical antecology message that Niven's frequent coauthor Jerry Pournelle stridently propounds. Niven's moral, if a beanstalk will support such a heavy word, is that our current moment of technological development is the ideal one for the full exploration of space. The novel suggests that wasting time with trinkets from the past is going to kill us as surely as pollution will: The best answer to global problems is for us to invest in interplanetary and interstellar colonization immediately, before the pressures of population become too enormous for the planet to bear.

There is an easiness about this novel that suggests that in revisiting old ground, Niven is not particularly concerned with breaking new: It seems like a lead pipe cinch to write about this rainbow. However, Niven is particularly good at making us see our world as an alien place. His blurred line between the fabulous and the real calls into question our own customs and beliefs. Rainbow Mars is not Swiftian—it's a pleasant book that entertains; we don’t come to know the characters particularly, and we touch down only briefly on the mythical Mars and Earth. The illuminating pictures of aliens from Niven's other work are absent. The narrative skips from event to event with a sort of jerkiness that is disconcerting, although not problematic. The five short stories that follow the novel invite comparison with the Niven of thirty years ago, and so while the book acknowledges the anthology as an artifact of time travel, the early stories remind us that we've been here before and that perhaps the future was more thoughtfully written about then.

**Fiction Review**

**FUTURE WAR**

Wendy Bousfield


Besides exceptionally imaginative extrapolations of future war technologies, this fine collection features memorable human (and other) beings. All ten stories are concerned with the effect of war on the bodies, minds, and souls of the lowly beings who do the actual fighting. Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois, veteran anthologists, have provided headnotes that place each story in the context of the author’s other fiction.

Unfortunately, as is often the case with science fiction, this collection is packaged shoddily. Future War has the look of a throw-away paperback, its undistinguished cover unrelated to the contents. Browsers looking for clues that would distinguish genuine speculative fiction from mere fluff may be deterred by a vapid “Preface,” characterizing the anthology as “vivid entertainment, slambang action.” Unfortunately, while public librarians may add Future War to popular fiction collections that they neither maintain nor fully catalog, academic librarians will probably not purchase such a flimsy book—if they even know of its existence. No reviews for Future War are listed in Book Review Digest, which indexes the standard reviewing sources consulted by librarians.

Not surprisingly, since computer applications are rapidly transforming our communication and perceptions of reality, the most recent stories in the collection deal, in various ways, with the computerization of war. In Allen Steele’s “The War Memorial,” soldiers wearing the half-ton “Mark III Valkyrie Combat Armor Suit” have, to all intents and purposes, become robots. When a system fails, in his suit immobilizes him, Giordano, the last object left standing at the end of a battle, becomes a war memorial. Computer technology, several stories imply, is blurring the distinction between war games and actual combat. In Joe Haldeman’s “The Private War of Private Jacob,” computers enable the people actually waging war to remove themselves from the bloodshed and to disregard the suffering of the soldiers they manipulate in various battle scenarios.

In Geoffrey Landis’s “Rorvik’s War,” a thirty-eight-year-old man, involuntarily and unknowingly, undergoes a series of virtual reality simulations. Brutally abducted from his home by the U.S draft board, Rorvik is, as he believes, sent into combat against the Russians, who have invaded Boston. He experiences a series of crises, each requiring split-second decisions. What makes the story so moving is that Rorvik, when asked to choose between his own welfare and that of his country, al-
ways behaves altruistically. In an interesting twist, the protagonist is not, as the reader might expect, being trained for battle but is being used to predict the outcomes of hypothetical engagements. In the story's future, battles among superpowers are won or conceded without being fought, if computers on both sides predict the same outcome.

As artificial intelligence becomes reality, several of the *Future War* stories intriguingly suggest, the distinction between human and machine breaks down. In Philip K. Dick's "Second Variety" and Alastair Reynolds' "Spirey and the Queen," weapons of war have evolved to sentience. Dick's "claw" and Reynolds' "wasps" pursue their own agendas, while human beings devolve or face extinction. Several stories feature beings modified for specific battle functions through a combination of genetic engineering and computer implants. In Tony Daniel's "A Dry, Quiet War," soldiers, "aggression enhanced" by something called "trans-weblink anti-alg coding," prey on civilians after the battle they have been programmed to fight ends. In Paul J. McAuley's "Second Skin," the protagonist learns that he is not the person he thinks he is. His body is a genetically engineered "copy," and he has been conditioned to perform an assassination through artificially induced memories. One of the most moving stories, Ian McDonald's "Floating Dogs," is narrated by a raccoon. Like his companions, a tapir, cat, porcupine, and bird, Coon-ass has been genetically engineered with sufficient intelligence to carry out a mission for distant human masters, whom he regards as angels. These stories stretch our assumptions about what constitutes a human being.

Lucius Shepard's "Salvador" is my choice for the finest story. Told from the viewpoint of an impressionable young man serving in a Special Forces unit, "Salvador" suggests that war engenders sadism. DT, the brutal commander, delights in using superior American weaponry to commit atrocities against the "Beaners." DT encourages his men to prepare for combat by popping pills that, by sharpening reflexes, fueling anger, and quenching fear, make them enjoy killing as much as he does. The pills are the story's only science fictional element. Suggesting that the stress of war awakens magical forces, "Salvador" depicts the narrator's encounter with the spirit protector of a boy whom DT had thrown from a helicopter.

Though detractors of science fiction complain about the absence of believable characters, the *Future War* stories feature beings one cares deeply about. Repeatedly, and poignantly, the soldiers in these stories are robbed of free will through psychological or physiological manipulations. War, the stories, collectively, suggest, is such an unnatural state that, to be effective warriors, combatants must be modified through computer implants, drugs, or psychological conditioning.

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**Nonfiction Review**

**NO LIMITS and PACKING FRACTION**

Muriel Rogow Becker


I never did like the teacher's manuals that included the text—annotated. The students were sure the heavier, larger book meant Teacher had the answers. Why then should they bother to think was too often their response. Yet that kind of arrangement was apparently the decision reached by Trifolium Books for these companion paperback texts. I wish it hadn't been.

Czerneda states thoughtful objectives and offers creative projects, vocabulary building, sixteen worksheets (copies permitted), Website resources, and fine teaching techniques for developing scientific literacy in the letter-size *No Limits*. Including therein everything from the smaller student collection, *Packing Fraction* (five short stories, three poems, and interviews, bibliographies, and reading recommendations of the writers) only diffused the practical and imaginative content of the teaching text. In fact, Czerneda points out that her ideas could be used with other SF. In such an instance, the manual would be more than cumbersome.

Emphasizing "what if" as a defining characteristic of SF, the commissioned short stories by Charles Sheffield, Jan Stirling, Robert J. Sawyer, Josepha Sherman, the author herself, and poems of Carolyn Clink, all written to be "accessible to most high school students" satisfactorily "speculate about issues" in physics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, archaeology, and technology and lend themselves well to team teaching.

I must admit I kept thinking about an out-of-print paperback I used in my classes in the early 1970s, *Where Do We Go from Here?*, edited by Asimov (1971; reprinted 1972). How science or English language arts teachers would have been delighted if Czerneda could have then helped us teach the seventeen selections by Blash, Clarke, Clement, Heinlein, Niven, and others that furthered scientific literacy and provided, as Asimov said in his comment on his "Pate de Foie Gras" story, "an accurate picture of what scientific research is like."

NONFICTION REVIEW

DEEP SPACE AND SACRED TIME

Susan A. George


This book attempts to understand the cultural value of Star Trek TV series and films, not just as an indicator of the concerns and anxieties of their time, but also as a modern reworking of myths, folktales, and stories that have been a part of Western culture (and other cultures as well) for centuries. As they note, their argument is more ahistorical than most of the work currently being done on Star Trek in academia. The book addresses, reframes, and challenges many of the claims made by other cultural and media critics, such as Elyce Rae Helford and Katrina Boyd.

They make many interesting connections to myth and folklore as well as using several theoretical approaches, including semiotics, structuralism, and postmodernism, as well as the notions of hegemony and the writings of Jung and Joseph Campbell. Thumbnail explanations of these ideas are generally clear and concise. They enjoy Star Trek not as a guilty pleasure, as many SF fans do, but openly, even proudly, which is refreshing. In several instances, however, it affects their critical analysis of the Star Trek universe, especially in regard to the Federation's colonial tendencies and gender representation in the original series.

I have a few reservations: The biases of myth and folktales aren't fully delineated in the beginning of the book. For instance, the fact that these tales are often tools of the status quo and frequently racist and sexist is not that strongly set out early in the book. It's addressed later in chapters that deal primarily with the representation of women in Star Trek. These chapters answered many of the nagging questions and concerns I had through the early chapters. Their arguments regarding the female characters were convincing, their analysis of the homoerotic aspect of male bonding less so. The chapter on race is less insightful than the work on this topic by critics such as Leah R. Vande Berg and Daniel Bernardi.

The average Trekker looking for interesting details regarding Star Trek will probably be bored by the mostly theoretical sections. But Trekkers interested in how Star Trek functions culturally will probably find the study interesting. With the increased attention and importance of popular culture being investigated in university programs in ethnic, women's, and American studies, this book would provide an interesting counterpoint to others such as those by Taylor Harrison, Sarah Projansky, and Kent A. Ono in Elyce Rae Helford's essay collection Enterprise Zones: Critical Positions on "Star Trek" (Westview Press, 1996), which is cited, or Daniel Bernardi's "Star Trek and History: Race-ing toward a White Future" (Rutgers, 1998). A classroom discussion and comparison of these varying approaches and critiques could provide a more thorough understanding of how Star Trek functions in our culture. The endnotes, including the bibliographical references and index, are extensive and useful. Recommended for committed readers and academic and research libraries.

NONFICTION REVIEW

DRACULA

Karen McBride


New Casebooks is a British series on standard classics, one of them Frankenstein. These ten reprinted essays in this volume offer an effective overview of recent trends in criticism away from biographical and superficial dismissals of sensationalism to serious evaluation of the text in relation to current critical trends, such as evaluations of gender roles (Christopher Craft, "Kiss Me with Those Red Lips: Gender and Inversion in Bram Stoker's Dracula"), poststructuralism (Judith Halberstam, "Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's Dracula"), Bakhtian views (Rebecca A. Pope, "Writing and Biting in Dracula"), or Lacanian criticism (Elisabeth Bronfen, "Hysteric and Obsessional Discourse: Responding to Death in Dracula").

The articles acknowledge historical concerns of Stoker's time as well as the vampire tradition in literature, with emphasis on the sociological as well as the psychological implications of narrative structure and characterization with particular attention to depictions of women. Nina Auerbach's "Dracula: A Vampire of Our Own" offers insights into recent film adaptations, especially Coppola's Bram Stoker's Dracula, while David Glover's "Travels in Romania—Myths of Origins, Myths of Blood" demonstrates parallels between Dracula and Dan Simmons's Children of the Night as well as Coppola's film. Because some articles are extracted from longer works, Byron adds context notes at the beginning. The bibliography is current but has only a few entries for formalist, psychoanalytical, historicist, and gender criticism. All articles are well written and contribute to a balanced view of recent critical approaches.

But the book is horribly overpriced, especially since five of the ten articles are included in the Norton Critical Edition of Dracula (1997, 488 pp., $9.95 trade paper), edited by Nina Auerbach and David J. Skal. Carol Margaret Davison's Bram Stoker's
Some years ago, a well-known economics professor, whose successful textbook had been criticized by students for being just an uninteresting compilation of facts and figures, rewrote it in a light, airy style to make it easier reading. Its sales soon dropped precipitously. Professors who adopted it found their students did poorly in examinations; beguiled by the more casual prose, they lost sight of the subject matter. By the next year the text had been rerevised, restoring its former rigor.

I was reminded of this anecdote as I gazed through Teller of Tales. I am not opposed to a biography being reader friendly, but I confess preferring my nonfiction to be written more crisply, to be more revealing than concealing. That said, however, Stashower's creamy prose does embody a fair and reasonably full account of Conan Doyle's life and accomplishments. His accent on historical events is also politically up to date; for example, he gives evidence that Doyle was repelled by the brutality of whaling and seal hunting, although he participated in both, and that he was largely sympathetic to minorities.

Although he breaks little or no new ground, Stashower does bring out two points I haven't seen emphasized elsewhere. First, he shows that the generally accepted view (supported, incidentally, by the man himself) that Doyle became a writer because he was forced to supplement his earnings as a doctor is true only at the very first; he wrote by preference after his practice was bringing in a then-respectable £300 a year, and after his wife received an inheritance of £400. Second, he emphasizes that Doyle's interest in spiritualism and belief in the authenticity of psychic phenomena was no sudden late-in-life conversion. He had been brought up a Roman Catholic, and his early abandonment of it left gaps that he sought all his life to fill.

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Robb’s prose is peppered with adjectives such as “notorious,” “controversial,” “phenomenal,” and “shockingly successful,” and he emphasizes popular and critical reactions to the Craven movies and Craven’s reactions to the reactions. Robb summarizes and describes each of the films in turn, from The Last House on the Left to Scream 2, including Craven’s TV work on The Twilight Zone and Nightmare Cafe.

Most valuable in his discussion of Craven’s obsession with dreams and on Craven’s evolving talent for building tension and suspense. The text is rich with quotes from Robb’s many interviews with Craven, who recalls financial difficulties and disappointments, his relationships with cast members (Robert “Freddie Krueger” Englund receives his own chapter) and bizarre working conditions, such as the apparently jinxed filming of The Serpent and the Rainbow in Haiti. Robb chronicles Craven’s love-hate relationship with the horror film genre, revealing how Craven fought for years for the backing to make mainstream movies and has finally accepted his reputation in the annals of film history.

He concludes with a detailed filmography, though no index. With an easy conversational style and a high ratio of black-and-white photos (portraits, posters, movie frames, and publicity shots) to text, this book will please most horror fans and is suited to public libraries or large research libraries supporting film studies departments.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**JONATHAN SWIFT**

Donald M. Hassler


We are fortunate that Victoria Glendinning, the British author of highly successful books on Trollope, Rebecca West, Elizabeth Bowen, and others, has now applied her fresh, self-conscious biographical writing to Swift. Both she and Swift have a lot to say about “fantasy” and about the truth to be gleaned from it. Like Asimov, Swift was reluctant to travel far from his home base, in his case the axis of London and Dublin, and also like Asimov he worked hard at producing bare and seemingly naked language. His utopian horses in *Gulliver’s Travels,* using what Glendinning nicely identifies as “Horse Sense” (also the title of a chapter), employ an economical language that has no word for lies and untruths. Gulliver reports that they simply understood lying as “saying the thing that was not.” The wonderful puzzle in Swift, and for us today, is how the illusions of disproportionate scale such as Hal Clement’s Mesklin, of children’s dreams, of fantasy travels, all convey a feeling not of deceptive lies but rather of the strong sense of the thing that *was,* of the truth.

Biography itself aims at telling the truth, and here Glendinning practices that act with a plain style and with Swiftian puzzles. The two biggest questions about Swift’s life range from the immensely trivial and private to the huge public issues of British politics and his role in decisions over Ireland and the constitution. Glendinning knows how much recent scholarship on these questions is in print. She knows how the standard three-volume biography by the late Irvin Ehrenpreis opts for the presentation of massive detail and shies away from interpretation. She also believes, arguing with Ehrenpreis, that the biography must interpret lest she imply “the thing that was not.” Thus she offers her interpretations of Swift’s putative marriage to Stella, of his Anglican beliefs, of his Jacobite “treasons” of 1714. Those of us interested in scholarship will continue to debate those issues. Those of us interested in writing will continue to learn from Swift, and now from Glendinning, how the most important questions can be posed most effectively. This is an excellent book on Swift and on issues in fantasy.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**FEMINIST INTERPRETATIONS OF AYN RAND**

Ellen Rigsby


This is one of the Rereading the Canon series, all of which are titled *Feminist Interpretations of...* Rand’s principal links to SF are *Anthem* (1937) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1959). Several schools of interpretation are there, from the followers of Rand, the Brandens, to Susan Brownmiller, who argued in 1975 that “Rand is a traitor to her sex” for portraying some of her most famous women characters as wanting to have sex forced on them by the men they loved. The book begins and ends with these questions: Can Rand be a feminist given her portrayal of women wanting to be raped and given that she herself came to despise feminism? In between, several essays discuss issues such as why Rand refused to consider herself a feminist and whether feminists can salvage Rand from herself to make her a feminist.
The book is divided into three sections: looking back on what scholars have written about Rand, which sets the terms of debate in the book; feminist re-readings of Rand; and attempts to offer some possible Randian feminisms.

This book is as much about how feminism has changed from the 1970s to the 1990s as about what is Rand’s representation of women or her take on feminism. The authors grapple with Rand’s own insistence that feminism is bunk because it argues that women ought to be seen as victims who need to be protected by the law; and they also grapple with the controversy surrounding Rand’s portrayal of at least two of her most famous characters, Dagny and Dominique, as desiring to be forced to have sex with their hero-men. The first issue, perhaps described most eloquently by Joan Kennedy Taylor, suggests that Rand is a feminist insofar as she thinks there should be no difference between men and women under the law, but that certain aspects of feminism—those which define women as in need of protection or special status by the law—actually undermine the status of women as equal by defining them as victims. Wendy Brown, in States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity, makes a similar argument in her criticism of the incorporation of rights for minorities and women under the due process clause of the constitution.

This takes on feminism and Rand raises a further complication. Rand wrote in “About a Woman President” that women do have an essential nature, which is to be dominated by a man they worship as a hero; thus, in the ideal relationship, the man must have the more important role. Susan Love Brown’s example is Dagny Taggard in Atlas Shrugged, who keeps the trains running but is happiest taking care of her man, whose mission she sees as more important then her own. If any conclusion can be drawn, it’s that Rand’s public woman is equal before the law, but her private woman wants to be dominated by a superior male figure. Feminists and Randians alike ask what is to be done with this seeming contradiction.

Robert Shaeffer argues through Paglia and Melissa Jane Hardie through Deleuze that the criticisms of Rand offered by Brownmiller don’t hold up to a close reading of Rand’s texts, but Rand does not adequately deal with her insistence that women have any job (except that of president), but that in the home they desire to be dominated by a man.

The book asks more questions than it answers about Rand’s utopian vision of gender, but it’s an excellent study both in how Ayn Rand may be read and in how feminism has changed over the years.

NONFICTION REVIEW

THE WORLD OF MICHAEL PARKES

Walter Albert


After completing an art degree at the University of Kansas, Michael Parkes (b. 1944) first taught at Kent State University, then at the University of Florida. In 1970, dissatisfied with his academic career and the direction his painting was taking, he left with his wife, Maria Sedoff, for Europe, where for a time he gave up painting entirely. He lived for four years in India, selling his handicrafts and studying various systems of yoga. When he eventually returned to painting, he abandoned an early adherence to abstract impressionism and painted in a realistic vein tempered by fantasy.

In addition to the ninety-four plates in this oversize collection, most of them oils on canvas, there are reproductions of nine additional paintings in the introduction by John Russell Taylor. The earliest paintings here were done in 1977, the most recent in 1998, with a remarkable continuity of style over the twenty years. (Two- or three-sentence captions by his wife appear on the verso of each plate.)

Certain figures recur constantly, the most obvious of these being ballerinas, angels (or mythological or fantastic winged creatures), birds (the swan was an especially obsessive icon in many of the early paintings), animals (both mythological and real), clowns, brightly costumed midgets, and commedia dell’arte masked players. All of them, however, circle in the orbit of Parkes’s nude females, the posed centerpieces of his oblique canvases. There is no overt attempt to directly engage the viewer’s eye. The figures are most often posed in profile or with their backs turned to the viewer. Even on those rare occasions when a figure seems to face the viewer, the eyes look inward or away from the spectator. In one of his most striking paintings (no. 15, “Waiting for Alice”), a fully clothed but headless figure poses provocatively, while by the mannequin’s foot the ivory cheek of an upturned mask is marked by a single blemish—a tiny bloodred heart that at first appears to be a single tear.

Some of Parkes’s most telling images evoke music and the dance, but there is a silence, a stillness that makes even the figures in flight seem arrested in their movement. A swan rests his head on the shoulder of a woman “playing” a harp, and this quiet moment is characteristic of Parkes’s untroubled, serene sense of composition.

I must admit that I prefer Parkes’s early paintings to his most recent work. There’s a purity and distillation of the subject that is gradually replaced by a weightier, more elaborate development of his subjects. Parkes seems to turn away from the enigmatic surrealism of the early works, reaching backward to find more congenial stylistic affinities in Renaissance and Baroque artists. Nonetheless, this volume collects the work of an accomplished artist who deserves an appreciative audience.
In 1991, utopian scholars gathered in Switzerland's Yverdon-les-Bains, home of the maison d'Ailleurs and its Pierre Versins collection of utopian literature, to observe that country's 700th anniversary and to analyze the ways in which our various conceptions of utopia have changed over time. Twenty-six essays, seven of them in French, were assembled for this volume.

One that is most worth the effort (for a nonnative reader) is Jean-François Thomas's investigation of utopianism in the culture and daily life of the Swiss. Most essays treat utopia not as a political goal but rather as a window into the human imagination or a reflection of contemporary society. As Eric Rabkin acknowledges, a belief in utopia is "a necessity in our ideological lives but an impossibility in our practical lives."

One of the transformations of utopia chronicled by these essays is its successive relocation in space and time. More's sixteenth-century island utopia gives way to Wells's nineteenth-century future utopia; Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and its dystopian successors in turn drive utopia on into the distant future, an alternative present, or, paradoxically, the past. Bud Foote's essay examines the backward-looking utopias of such writers as Ray Bradbury, Jack Finney, and L. Sprague de Camp, in which the future is so horrifying—or so dull—that escape into a romanticized version of the past is the only attractive option.

This relocation of utopia to such alternative venues as the past, cyberspace, and even TV commercials and Club Med, is the central theme in the book's second section. David Porush rejects the idea of a cyberspace utopia by comparing our own technological "architecture of transcendence" with that of the ancient Jewish temple and its hypertextual substitute, the Talmud. He concludes, "it is unsettling to think that we postmodernists can still commit ourselves to these attractive delusions, showing ourselves to be as vulnerable to belief as fundamentalists."

The book's final section has perhaps the most to offer SF readers, including Paul Alkon's "The Utopian Calendar," Gary Westfahl's "Gadgery, Government, Genetics, and God: The Forms of Science Fiction Utopia," and Marleen Barr's "All You Need is Love? The Postseparatist Feminist Utopia." A standout essay is Carol McGuirk's "NoWhere Man: Towards a Poetics of Post-Utopian Characterization." She contrasts hard SF, in which character is subordinated to the technological landscape, and space opera, in which cosmic principles can be brushed aside by cosmic heroes. Between these two extremes she finds the middle ground of what she calls "visionary" science fiction, "where ironic conflicts between symbolic heroines and landscapes are fully dramatized," with Dune used as an example. In his examination of the dystopia, Edward James concludes with the sobering suggestion that a contemporary distaste for utopia, based on the individual desire for "risk, and excitement, and continued progress," may indicate a disregard by Western intellectuals for the rest of the world's more immediate material needs.

In his "Dystopian Postscript," Paul Alkon writes that "as our millennium approaches, utopia recedes." With the end of the Cold War, "there has come not peace, much less utopia, but proliferation of lesser conflicts between and within nations." If one reason utopia is so difficult to achieve is that it is a moving target, changing its location from one era to the next, even from one individual to the next, then understanding how our definition of the ideal society is altered may be as important as devising strategies to get there—or, in the view of some of these authors, not to get there.

Psychology professor Iaccino extends the discussion in his 1994 Praeger book, Psychological Reflections on Cinematic Terror: Jungian Archetypes in Horror Films, to include SF and fantasy films and a few TV series. He explores media correlations for six of Jung's basic archetypes: the parental, child, persona/shadow, anima–animus, fairy tale hero, and mandala. His preface provides a detailed analysis for each primordial image.

Part 1 explores the Star Wars trilogy, six Star Trek films, Planet of the Apes, Logan's Run, and Battlestar Galactica. Part 2 analyzes Back to the Future, Superman, Batman, the Indiana Jones and Highlander series, and the Omen trilogy. Part 3 examines The Fugitive, The Incredible Hulk, Starman, and The Pretender. In his conclusion, Iaccino argues that these recurrent patterns in human
history are basic to these SF movies, fantasy films, and TV series as well as to any story about the human condition. A less charitable conclusion suggests that Iaccino consistently confined elements of these films and TV shows in archetypal straightjackets, the “necessary reference point for mastering the complex material presented later,” whose patronizing implication is that the reader is someone who could not be expected to understand the archetypal and psychological concepts without special aids and detailed repetition.

The text is burdened with an excessive number of endnotes—587 for nine chapters comprising 188 pages—and quotes from many of these sources. Iaccino might have been more persuasive had he provided a more succinct analysis and summary of these sources in his own words. Purists may sneer at his use of the term “sci-fi.” An appendix provides details on the films discussed. A bibliography of film reviews and books and journal articles is also provided, along with an index.

The popular films that Iaccino discusses seem rather lightweight and undemanding. If that is so, the last people who would read even one paragraph of the book are viewers. Film buffs are likely to find the straightjacket of Jungian analysis far too confining. Forget public libraries whose budgets wouldn’t justify the overpriced book and whose users probably wouldn’t be interested. The only audience would be larger university libraries supporting strong film programs.

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**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**AFTER THE END**

W. Warren Wagar


*After the End* is not a study of how imagined cataclysms produced longed-for utopias (as in my *Terminal Visions*, 1982), but something much more visceral: a study of how historical, real-world cataclysms wound their survivors and, when denied, deform the survivors of the survivors. Blending poststructuralist analysis with a reawakened historicism, *After the End* is a profoundly perceptive, frightening, and morally urgent analysis of modern culture, especially American culture, since 1945. In the best manner of cultural studies nowadays, it is sublimely indifferent to genre. Gathering his material, Berger leaps effortlessly from the lyrics of the Rolling Stones and Lou Reed to Jacques Derrida to the Terminator films to the novels of Pynchon and Toni Morrison. Heidegger rubs shoulders with Batman.

I see nothing wrong with any of this. In my view, the sooner SF writers and critics join the “mainstream”—the only real stream—the better. And the sooner we all accept the radical interdependence of “high” and “popular” culture in our century (and perhaps all centuries), also the better.

Berger’s principal materials are American SF films and novels, the apocalyptic tradition in American literature, the Book of Revelation, narratives of witnesses of the Shoah, Wim Wenders’s film *Until the End of the World*, novels by D. M. Thomas and Cynthia Ozick, the deviously forgetful evasiveness of Derrida, the narcotic speeches of Ronald Reagan, the pseudo-therapeutic talk shows of Oprah Winfrey, the shocking contrast between the honesty of Pynchon’s *Vineland* and the falsity of the “Reaganist” film *Forrest Gump*, and the brave denial of denial in Morrison’s *Beloved*.

Berger’s message comes through clearly. The story of humankind is punctuated by catastrophes. As a disillusioned student of world history, I disagree with his claim that the Holocaust provides the definitive paradigm. In any event, the ubiquity of catastrophes, of ends of the world, is not at issue. What matters is that, as Berger says, every such catastrophe generates survivors and remainders, postapocalypses that need vigorous working through, whether it be the annihilation of Europe’s Jews, the obliteration of Carthage, or the genocide against the red and black races executed in the American hemisphere by European whites. “To see a world as post-apocalyptic is to recognize its formative catastrophes and their symptoms, and to identify the ideological sutures that hide the damages and repetitions.” Berger is dead right. When we see the world in such terms, “At that point, new—more healthy and more truthful—histories and futures may be possible” (p. 219). Yes!

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**SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND HORROR**

Richard Bleiler


According to the introduction, this guide came into existence because Sheppard wanted to find a reference book that “would give me the author, with his or her year and place of birth/death, most readable (or best) books, with the publishers of the first known editions whether in hardback or paperback in UK and USA, with the awards the book won, if any,” along
with a capsule summary and a statement as to whether the work was part of a series. Sheppard also states that he started without being aware of David Pringle's *Ultimate SF Book* [sic], though he was aware of the fourth edition of Neil Barron's *Anatomy of Wonder*.

He claims that his book, "concentrates on the developing nature of SF: mainly books published 1960–1995." What "the developing nature of SF is, was, or will be is never revealed, but Sheppard lists about 600 American and British authors and 2900 of their works, from Candide to 1997. Skeletal information is provided for another 900 titles. Additional pre-1960 writers whose works are mentioned include Bellamy, Doyle, Eddison, Rider Haggard, Hodgson, Kuttner, and Merritt, to name but a few, along with dubious inclusions such as Harris's *Silence of the Lambs* and Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*.

It would not be inaccurate to call this guide a complete disaster, for it is in almost all respects poorly focused and executed. At the most basic level the volume is badly designed and frustrating to use, lacking a table of contents and running heads; because the text is typographically undistinguished, locating authors can be problematic. Bibliographic errors, often egregious, can be found on virtually every page. Hugh Cave is shown with different birth years; Alasdair Gray's first name is consistently misspelled, and his *Lawk* is erroneously described; the publisher Macmillan is shown as MacMillan; wrong first editions are shown; and so on.

Beyond the body of the guide are a title index and key, which uses a poorly conceived series of symbols to indicate if the work is referred to in the text but not described, underwent a title change or has a duplicate title, is an omnibus edition, or is part of a series or trilogy. This is followed by a "read on listing," and a list of sequels and series by name. There is a list of "sequels, series, and sequences by author," and the book concludes with a bibliography of sources consulted. These are also riddled with errors (Louis Barron, author of *Anatomy of Wonder*). Readers and libraries looking for useful reader guides to fantastic literature would be better advised to spend their money on Barron's *Anatomy of Wonder*, Pringle's *The Ultimate Guide to Science Fiction* (second edition, 1994), or even such genial newcomers as *Waterstone's Guide to Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror*, a British bookstore chain's guide.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**CHRISTIAN MYTHMAKERS**

Darren Harris-Fain


Several studies, both individual and collective, have appeared on most of the writers in this volume, some looking at them as writers of fantasy, some as Christian writers, a few as Christian writers of fantasy. This book does the last, devoting a chapter to each major writer from Bunyan to Lewis, concluding with a less developed chapter on some contemporary authors working in the same vein. What may set this book apart from earlier studies is how Hein applies general notions about myth and literature to the writers studied here.

In line with Tolkien's and Lewis’s ideas on the subject, Hein argues that myths, rather than simply being stories that aren’t true, point to a level of reality beyond that of the physical world, to a timeless world of transcendental truth beyond the world of time and appearance. Though other types of literary myth may lead to such epiphanies, Hein says, literature of the fantastic is particularly suited for mythopoeia. Moreover, Hein claims that it's the Christian mythology alone that points to absolute truth. Hein assumes, as do the writers he studies, the authority of Christianity and the Bible in his analysis of literary myth-making.

*Christian Mythmakers* is more scholarly than doctrinaire, but Hein's examination of each of these writers is informed by a particular religious faith as well as a general understanding of literary history. Despite his assumption of the truth of the Christian faith, however, he realizes that not all readers share this belief. Speaking of the Christian character of these writers' mythic fictions and of the impact of the mythic in literature generally, Hein admits, "Much depends upon the sensibility of the individual reader, and, of course, skeptics will miss the experience altogether" (p. 9). Still, Hein maintains that these authors cannot properly be understood outside the Christian worldview within which their work is located.

Hein points out that the writers are only as effective in suggesting the reality of a supernatural world as they are at creating evocative stories about a more or less natural world. Good mythmakers, in other words, are also good writers. However, in the summaries and commentaries on individual works that constitute most of this book, Hein remarks on the mythic and religious elements of the books in such a way as to make them sound unappealing as fiction, while in fact what distinguishes most of these writers from their less talented imitators whose efforts fill the fiction shelves in evangelical Protestant bookstores is their ability to create highly readable works of fiction, not just their ability to fictionalize theology.

There are other problems as well. Sometimes Hein suggests that the Christian context is the only one for many of these works, and he tends to gloss over the more heterodox elements in writers such as MacDonald and Williams. Further scholarly
context would be helpful as well: Often Hein’s comments that accompany his ample plot summaries read like class lectures rather than scholarly analyses, and his sources are drawn more from Christian commentators than the complete body of scholarly literature on these writers. Also, it’s amazing that, given the subject of the book, there is no discussion of the Narnia series in the chapter on Lewis.

Nonetheless, Hein does a good job of elucidating the Christian beliefs behind these works and noting how these writers relate to and were sometimes influenced by one another. Nothing here is strikingly original, but the book offers a decent overview of some important writers in fantasy and science fiction.

NONFICTION REVIEW

DECONSTRUCTING THE STARSHIPS

Bill Dynes


Gwyneth Jones is a British writer and a feminist, and both these roles figure prominently in this collection of twenty essays, conference papers, and reviews, published 1988–97. Gathered together, they offer an interesting and valuable exploration of the politics and art of recent SF.

The first section, “All Science is Description,” is the most explicitly academic; the second, “Science, Fiction, and Reality,” includes four essays probing cyberpunk and feminism; the third offers twelve reviews of particular authors or texts. The subjects of the essays in the first section range from what Jones calls “the language game of science fiction” to the worlds of Lewis and Tolkien. “Getting Rid of the Brand Names” discusses parallels between SF and developments in literary criticism. Jones balances a criticism of Lewis and Tolkien, specifically for their patriarchal and conservative political positions, with a rediscovery, through reading to her own son, of the magic of their imagination. I found “The Lady and the Scientists” to be the most interesting essay, which explores the history and current (as of 1990) condition of feminist science fiction. Jones is deeply critical of many of the token liberal poses that pass for a feminist position.

The second section focuses on the tension between recent SF and recent science. “Fools: The Neuroscience of Cyber-space” explores the history of the artificial intelligence motif as against new theories in the physiology of human intelligence. “Sex: The Brains of Female Hyena Twins” and “Aliens in the Fourth Dimension” are particularly fascinating for their insights into the implications of recent scholarship on biology and gender. In the second essay, she explicates her own creations, the Aleutians, as she sought an alien that would allow her to question some of the parallels she sees in European colonialism and the battle of the sexes.

The dozen reviews are on the whole insightful, stimulating, and challenging. Authors considered include Le Guin, Gibson, Lefau, Cherry, and Tepper, as well as the series by Charnas. They are informed by Jones’s feminism and by her awareness of what SF can be. Her harshest criticism is reserved for those who adopt an appearance of liberalism or feminism, such as Brin’s Glory Season or Barnes’s A Million Open Doors, but who fail to deal with the breadth of challenges those positions face in our own world.

While Jones’s scholarship is professional throughout, her style and tone are witty, direct, and engaging. The book is clearly intended and appropriate for an academic audience and will be accessible to interested undergraduates. Most college and university libraries would find it an appropriate addition.

NONFICTION REVIEW

"THEY'RE HERE"

Darren Harris-Fain


If ever there was a B movie that has acquired the status of a classic, both among B movies and beyond, it would be Don Siegel’s *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), based on Jack Finney’s equally classic novel, *The Body Snatchers* (1955). Rather than being relegated to cult film status, it’s taken on a life of its own and has long been an object of admiration and even academic study for a variety of reasons, most having to do with how the film’s general themes of alienation and paranoia connected to the anticommunist atmosphere of the period. For instance, Al LaValley edited *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1979; $17, paper) as part of a Rutgers series on notable films that includes Howard Hawks’s *Bringing Up Baby*, Jean-Luc Godard’s *Breathless*, Fellini’s *La Strada*, and Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*. 
Where LaValley compiled documentary materials, contemporary reviews, and critical commentary, this collection is far less scholarly, and there are other differences. LaValley's book is devoted solely to the 1956 film, but the subject here is what is referred to repeatedly as "the Body Snatchers franchise": Finney's novel, serialized and in book publication, along with Siegel's original film, Philip Kaufman's 1978 remake, and Abel Ferrara's studio-plagued version (intended as a sequel to Kaufman's film, rethought as a remake), which was released in 1997 after years of delay. Although this breadth of coverage allows for interesting comparisons among all three films, here it contributes to the book's superficiality.

This superficiality stems more from the contents than from the scope. With the exception of a rambling, ineptly conducted interview with Kevin McCarthy, the male lead in the 1956 film who is listed as coeditor here, all of the eleven original essays and interviews are short. For some interviews, this is a blessing, especially that with the annoyingly vulgar Abel Ferrara, although he's not the only film figure here who seems to possess more ego than talent or intelligence. Nor does brevity necessarily preclude interesting insights, as the letters, memoranda, interviews, reviews, and essays gathered in LaValley's book illustrate. Here there are also interesting insights on the book and the movies it inspired, but they could be more fully developed and defended.

These essays aren't scholarly in a traditional sense, but neither are some of those in LaValley. And it's not as if the authors' comments are wrongheaded; it's just that their commentary lacks depth. Much of it relates factual information or plot summary with some commentary; some of it includes personal response. In summary, most essays read, if not like mediocre student papers, like program notes for a music album—interesting, sometimes useful, but there's so much more that could be said.

The essays are weakened by the editors' failure to cut repetition: of information about Finney's writing career, of comments about the films, of full contributor notes. Dean Koontz contributes a brief personal essay that touchy on why the 1956 movie is effective as much as McCarthy-era filmmaking, while Stephen King does much the same in his more extensive observations, reprinted from Dans Macabre and excerpted in LaValley's book.

The most interesting part of "They're Here..." is the background information supplied about the three movies. LaValley does a better job of tracing the studio interference behind the 1956 film, but McCarthy and Gorman give a better general impression of the human forces behind the scenes and how they often conflict in the making of a movie. There's also a lot of movie trivia and, in the actor interviews, celebrity gossip. But even here another weak point of the book lessens its usefulness: It lacks an index.

This book might be valuable to movie buffs and completists, but for scholarly purposes, its utility is limited. If it had more pictures—a final flaw—it would work better as a coffee table book. For $4 more, LaValley is much preferred.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**GOTHIC**

Karen McGuire


Because Davenport-Hines stresses the theatricality and spectacle of gothic forms, his splendid subtitle is appropriate to his thesis, even though it will disappoint a reader looking for the gore and extravagance that it implies. The ideal readers would be those basically unfamiliar with the gothic revival, which Davenport-Hines dates from the eruption of Vesuvius in 1631. He consistently presents a critically superficial and often gossipy assessment of an array of traditional gothicists such as artists Henry Fuselli (b. 1741) and Goya (b. 1746) as well as mainstream gothic writers like Walpole, Shelley, Stoker, and Robert Louis Stevenson in England, and Poe and Hawthorne in the United States. With an eye primarily to sweeping social movements and aesthetics, he traces gothic modes from Salvator Rosa (b. 1615), painter of "savage and desolate scenery," which ignited the gothic imagination that reached fruition in such novels as Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Beckford's *Vathek* in the subsequent century. Bringing his survey of gothicism to the late twentieth century, he includes the impact of Nazism and Hiroshima on contemporary fiction and cinema and assesses Poppy Z. Brite as "the most impressive goth novelist to emerge in the USA in the 1990's." James Whale's productions of *Frankenstein* from the 1930s as well as David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* from 1986 are representative films analyzed with attention focused on directors' biographies. Although superficial in critical analysis, the book is inclusive and current.

In his assessment of the gothic imagination, Davenport-Hines stresses the genre's fascination with theatricality, irrationalism, power, and sublimation as well as transgression, while acknowledging the "camp mockery" that so often accompanies gothic excesses, as in *Otranto*. With entertaining tidbits about the personal transgressions of social norms by authors, such as Walpole's notorious homosexual inclinations, he consistently entertains the reader, but anyone looking for new insights into traditional as well as contemporary gothic stories would be better served by one of the many critical texts on gothicism that
have proliferated in the 1990s; Davenport-Hines is more interested in colorful biography than in critical assessment. But for an audience interested in the affairs and personal excursions of writers, artists, and assorted builders of pseudogothic ruins in the eighteenth century, his account will definitely provide peeks at the skeletons in authors' closets.

Many illustrations, including eight unnumbered pages of color plates of Rosa, Goya, and Fuseli, enhance the text. There are no foot- or endnotes, but sources are listed by the pages on which they occur. In summary, this is pleasant reading as an introduction to gothic modes but too cursory in presenting literary assessment of gothic works.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**DEMAND MY WRITING**

Douglas Barbour


Jeanne Cortiel has done a great service to all students of the relation between SF and feminism, and especially to readers who recognize Joanna Russ as one of the most stringently innovative writers of feminist SF, with this, the first full-length study of Russ's oeuvre. *Demand My Writing* offers useful, often surprising, always productive readings of Russ's novels and her most important stories, but it does more than that. It provides a rigorous overview of Russ's work in the context of Julia Kristeva's categorization of three central "moments" in feminist history and thought, reading the various texts in relation "to three major concerns which run through and structure Russ's fiction: (1) woman's agency, (2) female sexuality, and (3) the indeterminacy of both of these categories" (p. 9).

One of the critical delights of Cortiel's approach is the way she navigates among what are perceived of as conflicting feminisms and demonstrates how Russ's work has from the beginning moved among the radical materialist ideas of the 1960s and 1970s, the separatism of the late 1970s and early 1980s, and the poststructuralisms of the last decade. Instead of reading from the early stories to the latest ones, Cortiel has chosen to approach Russ's fiction through the three concerns, demonstrating how all of it has investigated possible responses to patriarchal cultural "norms" that always already define "woman" as lesser. Her careful readings of individual stories reveal how they all, in different modes and to differing degrees, question essentialisms, even feminist ones.

Cortiel is especially good on the ways the act of narration in Russ's fictions enact a strategy of agency and power. She calls attention to the self-reflexive aspect of so many of these stories, demonstrating that they are not there simply for playful postmodern *femina* but serve complex political ends. She believes Russ's writing is always political, but she shows how Russ usually manages to avoid a dreary didacticism. Indeed, she recognizes the wit and irony of much of Russ's writing, although I think her approach won't allow her to get at the outright scary comedy in much of it.

In Part Two: Sexuality, Cortiel carefully underlines the way Russ's writing has explored not just lesbianism as such but what Cortiel, borrowing from Adrienne Rich, calls "lesbian continuum," which "allows woman who identify and act as 'heterosexuals' to share the subversive potential of lesbianism and posits a vision of a society which transcends categories of 'sexual orientation'" (p. 106). She explores the way so many of Russ's tales engage the Sapphic paradigm of elder teacher and younger student (in both sexual and worldly matters), yet also continuously deconstruct even this relation as itself a process of ever-changing power.

Indeed, Cortiel's most important critical insight has to do with her third category, as she makes a very good case for Russ's fiction as ever indeterminate both philosophically and structurally. Although she does not do much close formalist reading, she is sensitive to the ways Russ's carefully constructed stylistic innovations, the way in which every sentence tells in her work. But mostly Cortiel provides finely attuned readings of Russ's major fiction in terms of its intersections with, and often anticipations of, the central developments of feminism in the past half century. *Demand My Writing* is a book every library should have, not to mention every reader who counts Russ as one of the most important writers in recent SF.

**NONFICTION REVIEW**

**DERLETH**

Fiona Kelleghan


A longtime acquaintance of August Derleth (1909–71) declares in her biography that not only was the cofounder of Ark-
ham House “the most important author of the 20th century,” but will be “officially declared the only classic writer to emerge out of the 20th century.” Even from a fan and friend, this is overblown—and symptomatic of Litersky’s prose.

The book, allegedly written to fulfill Derleth’s desire for a “portrayal of the whole man, free of the closet of lies he had been forced to hide in throughout his lifetime,” is anecdotal, rambling, genteelly sensationalistic, and obviously wasn’t copyedited (the book is self-published). As a Wisconsin native, Litersky focuses on the author of the Sac Prairie novels as a colorful local character and lifelong rebel against conventional strictures. Her enthusiasm for Derleth’s poetry encourages her to indulge in flowery prose, which I’ll spare you.

Litersky does what she sets out to do, though without great skill: She describes Derleth’s stormy personality, lifelong clashes with the residents of his hometown, Sauk City, Wisconsin, and sexual relationships with both men and women, providing on all issues, in spasms meant to prove her objectivity, the opinions of both his friends and enemies. For details about Derleth’s trysts, romantic agonies, and bitter break-ups, she draws upon his journals and interviews with his colleagues and friends.

The emphasis on regionalism will make this biography most useful to Wisconsionians. Genre readers will find a disappointing dearth of information about Derleth’s work in weird fiction. Litersky spends a little time discussing his relationship with Lovecraft and provides publishing statistics of Arkham House sales for nearly every year of Derleth’s life, but shows a disinclination to critique his fiction and a nearly total ignorance of genre literature—she consistently misspells Robert Bloch’s name and touts Asimov and Bradbury as examples of those whose careers Derleth fostered. Lacking a bibliography, index, and chronology, the hook is useless as a reference work and will be appreciated most by undemanding readers curious about the private life of a much loved and much reviled figure in the history of weird fiction.

[Roald Dahl’s essays in volume 2 of Bleiler’s Supernatural Fiction Writers (1985) provides a balanced assessment of Derleth’s writings, including his regional fiction. —Ed.]

NONFICTION REVIEW

CRASH

Bob Blackwood


Cronenberg’s 1996 film Crash is a reworking of Ballard’s 1973 novel. Ballard, a writer of SF who surfaced in the New Worlds era, is more of a poet than a novelist. One shouldn’t expect carefully developed characters and an elaborate narrative. Rather, one should take in his prose one paragraph at a time. Look for the images of suburban London, the promise of pornography, plus an obsession by the main character—named James Ballard—with crashing into the car of film star Elizabeth Taylor. Jayne Mansfield’s fatal car crash somewhat replaces the Taylor crash in the novel.

Sinclair is in a sense re-creating Ballard’s novel while commenting on the film. The concerns of both the novel and the film are sexual tensions (occasionally achieving sexual release before or after collision), the icons of the pop media, and various techno backgrounds—airports, parking garages, the freeways we’ve visited in David Lynch’s Lost Highway, Kubrick’s Lolita, and Kerouac’s novel On the Road.

Sinclair often sees parallels between the film Crash and Godard’s 1967 film Weekend, which is essentially a political and cultural satire on contemporary French society. The satire is Godard’s film is stronger. Crash recreates a new world of high-tech medicine, transportation, and emergency technology rather than satirizing a political structure.

The various sexual encounters of both novel and film are pleasureless. Only the writing techniques of Ballard and the cinematography of Cronenberg, plus his choice of an exceptionally attractive cast, are appealing. Sinclair sees the film as sort of a tale by de Sade at 99 mph. He concludes “The film of Crash exists only in its surface. ‘I wanted,’ Cronenberg said, ‘the real to be hallucinatory.’”

Sinclair’s analysis of both the novel and film seems quite credible. His interviews with Ballard, Michael Moorcock, and others are pertinent. His choice and placement of photos to illustrate his points are good. His prose is readable and fun. He links many of the images and analyzes names, which seem random, into a possible vision of both the novel and film. He explains in vivid prose both film and book without being patronizing or boring and places them within an artistic and social context. For large film collections.

[The critical reception of the film ranged from mild praise to dismissal. See the Internet Movie Database <www.imdb.com> for comments by viewers and critics. —Ed.]

This is a good book, full of good stuff—good for Trekkies and good for the rest of us. The introduction sets out the author’s goal and perspective: Star Trek is “not only scientifically sound but also environmentally hip,” Andreadis claims (p. 22), and I agree. She goes on to explore sex, immortality, shapeshifting, holodecks, and much more. Though she picks quarrels with Star Trek, she also admires it for the scientific and social issues it raises, for what it lets us think about cryochambers and tailored life forms, about Broca’s area and psychokinesis. She knows very well that Star Trek works because it is “easy character driving melodrama” (p. 104), but she affectionately uses it as a springboard to discuss and evaluate biological possibilities and impossibilities in the present and the future.

Andreadis is a neurologist at Harvard Medical School, with plenty of professional and intellectual horsepower to make her points resonate. She uses Star Trek as the source for a series of essays on biology, with a focus on many episodes as vehicles to think Big Thoughts about life and Destiny, about universal translators and telepathy and intelligent parasites, about all the aliens which populate the Star Trek universe and what the mere notion of them means to ordinary us. She always writes clearly about difficult subjects, as a good teacher should, in a lively and colorful style that made me glad to know her, though she sometimes drifts into the arch and cute. But in all cases, whether she trashes or praises Star Trek, she cites chapter and verse and names characters and episodes, so viewers can enjoy her survey.

But the real audience for this book isn’t limited to Star Trek fans, nor is the book just science. Andreadis knows more about SF than Star Trek and places the TV and film series in the larger myths of SF. In spite of its focus on biological issues, she explores the ethical dimensions of the many issues we’ll face in the next century, which often interested me more than the scientific exposition.

The bibliography lists books on biology she recommends rather than references for the text, and the index is adequate. I learned about Star Trek and also about Life, in the large biological sense, and you will, too.

[Apparently quite similar to Andreadis is Life Signs: The Biology of “Star Trek,” by Robert and Susan Jenkins, HarperCollins, 1998, whose authors are a molecular biologist and a psychiatrist; not seen. —Ed.]


This is part of Faber’s Directors on Directors series and usefully complements McCabe’s Dark Knights and Holy Fools, reviewed in #241. Both books survey Gilliam’s career but are designed for different audiences. Christie’s volume consists mostly of reviews, plus some black-and-white photos and a number of storyboards, including eleven pages of a sequence for Brazil.

Christie asks valuable questions, and on one occasion refreshingly disagrees with Gilliam (on the significance of a shot in GoodFellas). Gilliam comes across as a wonderful raconteur, thanks in part, one assumes, to skillful editing. I regret space doesn’t permit me to quote lengthy passages on Gilliam’s failed summer-camp production of Alice in Wonderland, his enthusiasm for the earliest days of Disneyland, his perspective on long hair, and his dubbing of Sean Connery’s final line in Time Bandits. To be sure, some readers may tire of his constantly positioning himself as a crusader against Hollywood mendacity and idiocy, mostly in the second half of the book, but he does have good stories to tell and is not lacking in self-criticism. The really avid Gilliam fan may want to consult more specialized books on the making of Brazil (The Battle of Brazil by Jack Mathews, Crown, 1987, is especially recommended) and Munchhausen, but otherwise, especially with its excellent filmography, Christie’s book should do just fine.
On reading Neil Baron’s unrelievedly negative report on my Pioneers of Wonder in the August SFRA Review (#241), I concluded he must have reviewed it from the galley sheets. If he’d seen the book itself, he could at least have truthfully reported that it looked nice! I agree with his objection to the collection’s title and subtitle, which aren’t my considered choices; unfortunately for both of us, my contract with the publishers gave them total control and sole discretion of what these should be, so commercialism triumphed over accuracy. (At least my objections kept them from their first, even worse choice!) As for Barron’s other points, before I decide to change my career and hobby—I’ll wait for a few more reviews and follow Yogi Berra’s advice: “Take it with a grin of salt.”

Eric Leif Davin
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.

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