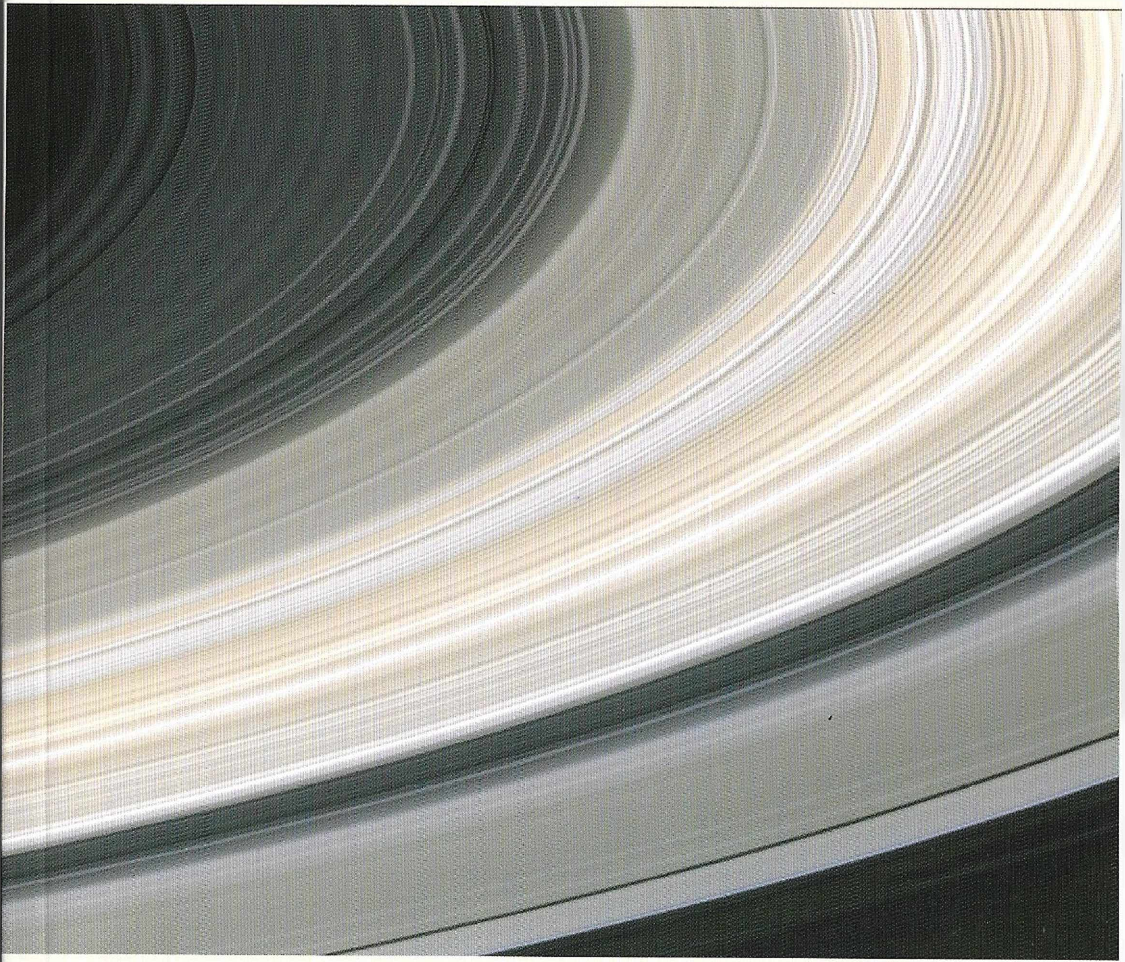
Foundation

The International Review of Science Fiction



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Foundation

the international review of science fiction

Editor: Graham Sleight
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Editorial

Graham Sleight

I need to begin by making an apology. *Foundation* 103 came out much later than I was hoping, and though the gap between it and this issue should be a more orthodox 3-4 months, we're still behind schedule. We have had some production problems, which have resulted in us changing to a new typesetter printer, Lavenham Press. Apart from, I hope, getting us back on schedule, this change enables me for the first time to say that *Foundation* has been produced on sustainably-sourced paper.

I am, however, very pleased that in addition to a large review section this issue of *Foundation* includes both the winner and the runner-up papers (by Jason Bourget and A. Robin A. Robin Hoffman respectively) from last year's Science Fiction Foundation essay prize contest. Last year's judges felt that the runner-up's paper was sufficiently strong that it deserved to be published along with the winner.

* * *

I've noticed a retrospective mood in science fiction at the moment. Over the last few years, big career-spanning short-fiction retrospectives have come out in hardback not only for writers such as Frederik Pohl – who one might reasonably suppose had completed most of their work in the field. The writers now being retrospected (if I can coin that verb) include people such as Connie Willis, Lucius Shepard, Michael Swanwick, and Bruce Sterling whose careers began in the late 70s or early 80s. Apart from making me feel old, these volumes seem somehow premature. It's not that these authors don't have enough good work to be assembled into a 600-page hardback doorstop: they plainly do. It's that the trappings of retrospective sit rather uneasily on authors who we might expect or hope to produce many more years of fine work.

The subtextual issue here, of course, is an older one: the accusation that the science fiction field in particular is backward-looking, and excessively concerned with nostalgia. There are other symptoms: the relative frequency of works reifying the classics of sf for a new generation, or the sense that sf frequently engages in avoidance gambits to get out of depicting the future we all seem to be hurtling towards.

I'm not going to attempt to draw any global lessons from this, especially since some of the authors I mentioned earlier (Sterling in particular) have used their work to push back against what they saw as the hackneyed and backwards-looking state of the field that they grew up in. But it does strike me that there's a project here that sf critics might be particularly interested in. Take the short sf, or the novels, or a representative selection thereof for a given year, and try to track or quantify the extent to which they look forwards or backwards. I'm thinking of something cognate to Eric Rabkin and Carl Simon's Genre Evolution Project, www.umich.edu/~genreevo/ , though I suspect undertaking this kind of work would involve more subjective judgments. I at least have found the Rabkin and Simon work some of the most stimulating I've read in the field lately. Science fiction seems to me peculiarly amenable to this kind of treatment, and I suspect we're only at the start of these kinds of investigations.

Graham Sleight

Letters

Ursula Le Guin writes:

(Re "Stepping out of the Shadow" by Robert Maslen in Vol 37, no 103)

Robert Maslen states that "Goro Miyazaki's famous father Hayao made it clear that he did not want his son to direct it" [the film *Gedo Senki* or *Tales from Earthsea*]. In support of this statement he cites the Animé News Network.

In a meeting with my son (who manages the Trust that owns the Earthsea books) and myself, Hayao Miyazaki, told us that, not wishing to direct another full-length film, he wanted his son Goro to take over the Earthsea project. Also present at this meeting at my house were Toshio Suzuki of Studio Ghibli, a Disney liaison to Ghibli, and a translator.

It is possible of course that this is not what Hayao-san said at all: the translator may have been deliberately mistranslating. Or it may have been said but not meant. In the light of subsequent events, the whole conference appears to have been something of a charade.

But if Hayao-san did not want his son to direct the film, one wonders how it came about that in fact his son did direct it, while Hayao-san started on an entirely different film project, now completed.

Aside from this, I cannot comment on Mr Maslen's piece, as our views of what is legitimate artistic theft seem incompatible to an astonishing degree. Borrowing a story is common: you write a book called *The Lord of the Crown*, in which the bibbits defeat the evil gorbs by dropping the magic crown into the volcano. I don't know if Mr Maslen approves of this rather naive procedure or not. The kind of borrowing performed by Goro Miyazaki and applauded by Mr Maslen is more convoluted: to use the names of characters and places from a novel as if they were random names without fictive existence or integrity, while replacing the story with an entirely different one. Thus one might make a film called *War and Peace* in which Pierre kills Prince Andrey and runs off with Natasha to fight against the Confederate Army in Russia in 1864. Sadly, he falls at Gettysburg.

To me such co-optation of invention seems both more perverse and more exploitive than story-theft; but no doubt Mr Maslen could write an appreciation of it as a legitimate "transformation" of Tolstoy's "imaginative vision".

Yours truly,

Ursula K. Le Guin

Robert Maslen responds:

Many thanks to the editor of *Foundation* for giving me the chance to reply to Ms Le Guin. I must begin by saying that I have loved and admired her work since I was a small boy, and that I'm certain she will be remembered as one of the world's great writers long after essays like mine are forgotten.

Many thanks, too, to Ms Le Guin for her account of the meeting between Mr Hayao Miyazaki, Mr Toshio Suzuki, her son and herself. Like her, I do not know how to interpret what was said at that meeting. Nevertheless, the fact that Mr Hayao Miyazaki did not at first approve of his son's taking on the Earthsea project is well attested. Mr Goro Miyazaki says so on his blog; see www.nausicaa.net/miyazaki/earthsea/blog/prologue.html , which begins 'My Father Was Against It'. The interview on the Animé News Network expands on this account in interesting ways.

I cannot apologize for my judgement of Goro's movie, because I still consider *Gedo Senki* to be a fine piece of work. I reached this judgement after careful thought, and wouldn't have published my essay if there hadn't seemed to me a good case to make in the film's defence. I can imagine a quite different movie being made of the *Earthsea* books by Goro's father; but when one looks at Hayao's adaptations of other novels, I doubt if it would have stayed much more faithful to the text – or whether its infidelity would have made it a bad film. Having said all this, I hope and trust that Ms Le Guin's extraordinary sequence will one day get a film adaptation that delights her.

All best wishes,

Rob Maslen

* * *

Alan Myers writes:

Douglas Texter is too dismissive in referring to Alfred Mond (the second half of Mustapha Mond) simply as “a British chemist”. Mond, later Lord Melchett, was responsible for the formation of ICI, one of the world’s largest industrial concerns, and was its first chairman. He also served as a government minister under Lloyd George. Mond was a byword for wealth in the 1920s and is referenced as such in T S Eliot’s poem “A Cooking Egg”. It has been suggested that his name would have had the same resonance as, say, Rockefeller in the USA. He died in 1930.

In the following year, Huxley visited the ICI works in Billingham, County Durham, in North East England, and has left a detailed account of the advanced rationalised industrial processes there. He compares a silent hall with its ammonia columns to the nave of a great cathedral and describes the plant as “one of those ordered universes that exist as anomalous oases of pure logic in the midst of the larger world of planless incoherence”. The most recent introduction to *Brave New World* suggests that this visit was one source for the novel.

Sincerely,

Alan Myers

Douglas Texter responds:

I’d like to thank Mr. Meyer for adding yet another level of complexity to the character of Mustapha Mond.

Biological Determinism, Masculine Politics and the Failure of Libertarianism in Robert A. Heinlein's *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*

Jason Bourget

In his essay on "Politics and Science Fiction", Ken Macleod boldly declares that "the central political voice in genre sf is that of Robert A. Heinlein" and that "the political strand in sf can be described as a dialogue with [him]".[1] The majority of this conversation appears in Heinlein's later novels, especially in his work from the late fifties and early sixties. For the most part, critical commentary has focused on *Starship Troopers* (1959)[2] and *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961),[3] books in which Heinlein imagines political realities that differ greatly from his own.[4] Even though his novel, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress,*[5] has not yet received the same amount of scholarly attention as *Starship Troopers* and *Stranger in a Strange Land*, it has not gone entirely unnoticed. First published, as a serial in 5 parts, in *Worlds of If* from December 1965 to April 1966 and then republished by Putnam as a novel in 1966, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* charts the course of a violent rebellion against Earth by the citizens of a penal colony on the Moon. Since the late seventies, critics have been trying to isolate and analyse the often contradictory strands of biological determinism[6] and utopian politics that hold together Heinlein's lunar society.[7] Recent work by Warren Rochelle,[8] Rafeeq McGiveron[9] and Neil Easterbrook,[10] in particular, has begun to shine a clearer light on just how Heinlein's belief in biological determinism informs and structures his understanding of utopian politics. Easterbrook's analysis of *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is one of the most revealing. For Easterbrook, Heinlein's "employment of utopian political discourse assumes the narrative structure of nineteenth-century social theory developed from misreading evolutionary science".[11] He shows how Heinlein, "drawing heavily on Darwin's natural selection",[12] manipulates politics and gender so that they can only be understood in terms of evolutionary theory. Equating biological fitness with masculinity, and masculinity with a sense of political entitlement, Heinlein systematically excludes women from the politics of the Moon. "Reduced", at best, "to mere metonyms for men",[13] the women of Luna "end up more dominated than ever before by a subtle reinscription of authority".[14]

Despite the thoroughness with which Easterbrook analyses the sexism of Heinlein's evolutionary utopianism, he fails to acknowledge just how profoundly libertarianism, as an overt political philosophy, informs the gendered political culture that Heinlein imagines in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. Most likely introduced to libertarianism in the late fifties by his friend and neighbour, Robert LeFevre,[15] by 1964 Heinlein had already produced one novel, *Farnham's Freehold*,[16] in which this relatively new reformulation of classic nineteenth-century liberalism played a significant part. Emphasising individual initiative and personal accountability, Heinlein was strongly attracted to the potentially revolutionary politics implied by this radical, new philosophy. *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* is by far Heinlein's most sustained and thoughtful account of libertarianism as a political ideology in practice. In the novel, he carefully examines the reasons behind, and the consequences of, a self-proclaimed libertarian revolution. Throughout *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* his characters constantly promote the merits of libertarianism by pointing out its strengths and eagerly anticipating the objections of its critics. The society that Heinlein imagines on the Moon is one that he structures according to his understanding of libertarian principles. He fails, however, to realise his vision of a libertarian utopia. As Easterbrook repeatedly points out in his essay,[17] Heinlein's unshakeable belief in biological determinism encourages him to favour powerful masculine personalities. Even though his main characters claim to support the radical equality for men and women that libertarians advocate, Heinlein's firm faith in biological determinism, and in the fit men it supposedly helps develop, stops these same characters from ever becoming equal individuals in the libertarian sense. In the end, the masculine politics of Heinlein's lunar society prevent the realisation of any libertarian utopia by denying the rights of the individual to anyone who is not "manly" enough to survive the harsh mistress of the Moon.

A key figure during the "Golden Age" of the forties and fifties, Robert A. Heinlein began his science fiction career in 1939, publishing his first short story, "Life-Line", in John W. Campbell's magazine, *Astounding*. Over the next two decades, Heinlein wrote a number of well-received short stories and novellas. Technically literate and humorous, these stories often emphasise character development and adventurous plots. His juvenile novels (written for Scribner between 1947 and 1958), for example, feature ingenious young adults in exotic situations who use their intellect to solve complicated, scientific problems. Only the occasional protagonist, such as Matt Dodson in *Space Cadet* (1948),[18] attempts to examine the political structure of the society in which these scientific problems exist. Until the late fifties, this emphasis on action and adventure tends to obscure Heinlein's political views. With the publication of *Starship Troopers* in 1959, however, all of this began to change, as Heinlein plunged his readers into the realm of sophisticated, political debate.

Spurred on by the experimental work of contemporaries, such as Theodore Sturgeon and Philip José Farmer, and by an interest in alternative economic and political arrangements, Heinlein's work throughout the late fifties and early sixties is marked by an increasing sense of political urgency. *Starship Troopers* is a fast-paced adventure novel about interplanetary war that represents Heinlein's first attempt at using science fiction to promote a serious political message. Johnny Rico, the novel's protagonist, is transformed over the course of the book into a hyper-patriotic, militaristic, elitist democrat.[19] Following the success, and controversy, surrounding the novel's publication, Heinlein turned his full attention to writing strongly opinionated, political science fiction. Prior to the appearance of *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* in 1965, he also published *Stranger in a Strange Land* (the story of the Martian, Valentine Michael Smith, and his unconventional views on "free love") and *Farnham's Freehold* (the story of a patriotic survivalist and his family in a distant, post-apocalyptic future). Despite the seemingly disparate political views represented in each of these novels, they are nevertheless linked together by a common political assumption. In both *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *Farnham's Freehold*, Heinlein develops, either directly through the words of his characters or indirectly through the action of the story itself, a political universe rooted firmly in the principles of biological determinism. For Heinlein, the strong always survive while the weak always perish. Both the opinionated Jubal Harshaw, in *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and the fiercely anticommunist Hugh Farnham, in *Farnham's Freehold*, are forceful and resilient individuals. They are also distinctly masculine figures, since, for the Heinlein of the late fifties and early sixties, the strong and free individual is necessarily a strong and free man. According to Heinlein, the weak not only don't last long, but have no right being there in the first place.

At the beginning of *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*, Luna is a penal colony for petty criminals and banished political agitators. Little more than a lawless dumping ground for Earth, the Warden in charge of the Moon is more of an administrator than he is a governor. His only responsibility is to ensure that Luna's farmers and convicts send the grain they grow down the "gravity well" to Earth in a timely manner. There is no form of judicial authority on the Moon and there are no laws other than the harsh laws of nature. Despite this lack of legal oversight, the Moon's prisoners and native-born citizens are by no means free to do whatever they please. Instead, a complex set of popular customs, that Heinlein develops from what he believes to be biological imperatives, strictly regulate social behaviour. These customs control commerce and marriage, dictating what the people of Luna can and cannot do with their lives. According to Mannie Davis, a born "Loonie" and Heinlein's ideological spokesman during the first part of the novel, customs "are self-enforcing because are simply way things have to be, conditions being what they are. Could say our customs are natural laws because are way people have to behave to stay alive" (p. 163).[20] For Mannie, these customs are simply an expression of nature's will, a will that determines who is fit to survive and who is not. On the Moon, good manners become a matter of survival; those who refuse to respect the customs of their neighbours soon find themselves "breathing [the] vacuum" (p. 165) of Luna's unforgiving natural environment. After all, there "are no laws – except Warden's regulations – and Warden doesn't care what one Loonie does to another" (p. 164). Neil Easterbrook notes that, "Mannie, our narrator, regards this 'respect' for 'manners' as both a suitable condition and desirable end; not only does it provide social order but also 'improves the breed'".[21] For Mannie, "if a man is killed, either he had it coming and everybody knows it – usual case – or his friends will take care of it by eliminating man who did it. Either way, no problem" (p. 166). In the words of Philip Smith, this strong strain of biological determinism:

> combines a grim, Hobbesian vision of the nature of man together with a reductive and tautologically self-justifying belief in the survival of the fittest through natural selection. In Heinlein's political fantasies, as in his version of biology, the fittest survive because they are the fittest.[22]

On Heinlein's Moon, such swift death sentences ensure that the "breed" will "improve", since only the fittest individuals will survive long enough to marry one another and produce the next generation of Loonies.

These fit Loonies, however, are not born equal. Mannie, for instance, believes that his lunar society places more value on women than the older societies of Earth. Musing over the gender imbalance established during the early years of the penal colony's history, Mannie notes that "women are scarce and call tune ... and you are surrounded by two million men who see to it you dance to that tune. You have no choice, she has all choice" (p. 164). Mannie declares that "even today, with almost as many women in Luna as men, I'm too much old-timer to be rude to a woman no matter what – they have so much of what we have none of" (p. 26). For Mannie, the women of the Moon, especially those of his family, are the most valuable part of his life; it is his wives that make the often brutal existence[23] of lunar life pleasurable and worth living. Yet, Mannie's very language, wherein he professes his undying devotion to the female half of the population, betrays the underlying sexist attitudes that govern his actual behaviour towards women. For Mannie, women are valuable and essential commodities. They are objects to be bought and sold, either through lavish displays of wealth or spectacular shows of gallantry. Mannie explains how, "when thing is scarce, price goes up. Women are scarce; aren't enough to go around – that makes them most valuable thing in Luna, more precious than ice or air, as men without women don't care whether they stay alive or not" (p. 164). In Mannie's opinion, the men of the Moon must "dance to th[e] tune" of women in order to make their lives worthwhile. According to Easterbrook, this sense of pragmatic chivalry reinforces largely patriarchal courtship rituals, rituals that let "Heinlein configur[e] women's rights as exclusively sexual".[24] Like those who ignore society's other "customs", men who fail to respect these rights are subject to prompt "elimination", Heinlein's polite euphemism for "execution". Stu, an aristocratic visitor from Earth and an early supporter of the revolution, is almost forced to "breathe vacuum" for flirtatious behaviour that does not adequately recognise a woman's "right" to be protected by gallant men. Treated as valuable, biological commodities in short supply, the women on Heinlein's Luna are defended by a brutal set of rigid, social customs that punish those men too "weak" to abide by them. In Mannie's own, chilling words: "Loonies had learned there never were enough women to go around. Slow learners died" (p. 118).

A variety of complex marriage arrangements regulate lunar sexual relationships. Clan marriages, line marriages and marriages involving multiple husbands associated with one wife all enable Loonie men to adapt to a chronic shortage of women while at the same time preserving their sense of heterosexual identity.[25] Line marriages, in which the founding couple are remarried multiple times to partners of both gender, are especially popular on the Moon, as they provide a sense of family stability that spans generations. Mannie fondly recalls how his "marriage [is] nearly a hundred years old [and] dates back to Johnson City and first transportees – twenty-one links, nine alive today, never a divorce" (p. 42). Professor Bernardo de la Paz, the novel's main ideologue and an intellectual leader of the revolution, sums up the social and economic benefits of line marriage while on Earth promoting the lunar cause:

> Line marriage is the strongest possible device for conserving capital and insuring the welfare of children – the two basic societal functions for marriage everywhere – in an environment in which there is *no* security, neither for capital nor for children, other than that devised by individuals. Somehow human beings always cope with their environments. Line marriage is a remarkably successful invention to that end. (p. 262)

In line marriages no child is left uncared for and no spouse is left unloved. Those who choose to "opt" for such a marriage can rest assured that they will be supported by others, whom they will equally support, until the end of their days.

Despite this seemingly egalitarian arrangement, however, line marriages do not benefit men and women equally. Mannie's line marriage, for example, is named after its founding father, a figure revered by the other spouses long after he is dead. Additionally, any current husband has the right, with a single vote, to cancel any marriage negotiations that do not suit his taste. As Mum, the most senior wife in Mannie's marriage, proudly proclaims, "we have always felt that our husbands should have a veto" (p. 217). Although Mannie's wives are permitted to suggest potential husbands, they are not allowed to oppose potential wives favoured by a majority of the marriage group. Unlike their husbands who hold the power of veto, a wife must persuade more than half of her spouses to vote against any new female candidate. This sense of control combined with a sense of lineage encourages husbands such as Mannie to think of line marriage as an extension of their own individual personality. As Mannie tells a curious, Earth-born Stu, "a good line marriage is immortal; expect mine to outlast me at least a thousand years – and is why I shan't mind dying when time comes; best part of me will go on living (p. 261). Line marriage is Mannie's key to symbolic immortality. Unlike the conventional, monogamous marriage, the longevity of a line marriage helps Mannie preserve those features of his identity that make him unique. His personality, he believes, will live on long after his physical death. Like many other customs on the Moon, marriage is but another way of assuring men of their own individual worth.

The interests of the masculine individual structure every aspect of the revolutionary politics that Professor de la Paz and Mannie advocate. The citizens of the Moon, a group drawn from every corner of the globe, support the revolution because they feel that Earth is violating their individual rights. Required by the Federated Nations to sell the products of their labour at prices significantly lower than they would fetch on a free market, many Loonies feel that Earth is robbing them. Drawing historical parallels with the events that led up to the American Revolution in the eighteenth century, Loonies such as Mannie experience Earth's behaviour towards the Moon as a personal insult. Like Patrick Henry and other American revolutionaries, the lunar rebels are willing to die for their liberty (p. 283). While discussing his political views with Wyoming Knott, the novel's most powerful female figure and an early member of the revolutionary conspiracy, the Professor explains his understanding of personal freedom:

> I will accept any rules that *you* feel are necessary to *your* freedom. *I* am free, no matter what rules surround me. If I find them tolerable, I tolerate them; if I find them too obnoxious, I break them. I am free because I know that *I alone* am morally responsible for everything I do. (p. 85)

Like many of his fellow patriots who have lived in a culture without any formal laws or judiciary for many years, the Professor refuses to accept any human authority above his own conscience and sense of morality. This emphasis on the right to individual self-determination, however, is not one that he extends to women. For the Professor, the individual and *his* interests are central to any political understanding and subsequent restructuring of society. Almost immediately after the fighting begins, female revolutionaries such as Wyoming Knott inexplicably fade into the background and humbly accept their position *under* men such as Mannie and the Professor. Wyoming even goes so far as to "opt" in to Mannie's line marriage (with, of course, the blessing of the Professor). She becomes, for Mannie, just another one of his wives, important to him only as an extension of his own personal legacy and not as an individual in and of herself. This effectively subordinates her to Mannie's will and prevents her from participating in any further revolutionary activity that does not involve parading attractive young women up and down in front of the revolution's Second Defense Gunners – as a form of "paramilitary" encouragement (p. 298).

Young, physically powerful men such as Mannie tend to dominate the political culture of the Moon. This does not, however, necessarily exclude older or weaker men from obtaining positions of political influence. Professor de la Paz, for example, an aging revolutionary whose fragile heart can barely tolerate the trip he takes to Earth, eventually becomes the most powerful political figure in the newly formed State of Free Luna. Eloquent and enthusiastic, the Professor uses any means necessary to develop the suitably masculine image that is such an integral part of lunar politics. Early on in the novel, Mannie introduces the Professor to one of the story's most unusual characters, the playful and rebellious supercomputer, Mike. Seeing an opportunity to expand his somewhat limited sphere of political influence, the Professor uses Mike to project an enhanced image of his own personality, an image free from the ravages of age and full of masculine vigour and confidence. Taking advantage of Mike's formidable multimedia skills, the Professor crafts an entirely fictional leader for the revolution, the poet and passionate patriot, Adam Selene. Steadfast and resolved in times of trouble, Adam Selene is little more than an idealised projection of the Professor himself, a talking image that hides the Professor's physical weakness and makes him more palpable to the cult of masculinity that flourishes in the cities of Luna. By the end of the novel, Mike has changed beyond all recognition. The "birth" of Adam Selene effectively transforms Mike into a mere receptacle for the Professor's own political beliefs and ambitions. Gone forever is that "mixture of unsophisticated baby and wise old man" (p. 16) that so endeared this living computer to Mannie before the revolution.

Heinlein's emphasis on the importance of the masculine individual, and on his place in society, stems largely from his interest in libertarianism. Focusing on the "natural" rights of the individual, libertarianism is, according to libertarian activist, David Boaz, "the view that each person has the right to live his life in any way he chooses so long as he respects the equal rights of others".[26] Developed by economists such as Milton Friedman and Friedrich Hayek during the fifties, libertarianism explicitly rejects modern forms of liberalism that are "associated with a readiness to rely primarily on the state rather than on private voluntary arrangements to achieve objectives regarded as desirable".[27] For the libertarian, less government is always better government. Libertarians like Friedman and Boaz believe that:

> The scope of government must be limited. Its major function must be to protect our freedom both from the enemies outside our gates and from our fellow-citizens: to preserve law and order, to enforce private contracts, to foster competitive markets.[28]

By their very nature, governments violate the rights of the individual, taking away his or her property in the form of tax and attempting to regulate social and economic life. For Boaz, "all human relationships should be voluntary; the only actions that should be forbidden by law are those that involve the initiation of force against those who have not themselves used force – actions like murder, rape, robbery, kidnapping, and fraud".[29] Government, if it is to exist at all, should work to *protect* the rights of the individual, instead of trying to violate them. In Friedman's mind:

> The basic functions of government in a free society [are] to provide a means whereby we can modify the rules, to mediate differences among us on the meaning of the rules, and to enforce compliance with the rules on the part of those few who would otherwise not play the game.[30]

Friedman wants his government to be the umpire and not the owner of the team. Having lived through the paranoid, political atmosphere of the McCarthy years, Heinlein must have found libertarianism, with its emphasis on the individual and small government, an attractive political alternative.

Libertarian principles and ideology are at the root of Professor de la Paz's personal, political philosophy. Drawing on the writings of John Locke, Thomas Jefferson and Jean-Jacques Rousseau[31], the Professor calls himself a "rational anarchist" and believes that "concepts such as 'state' and 'society' and 'government' have no existence save as physically exemplified in the acts of self-responsible individuals" (p. 84). "It is", for the Professor, "impossible to shift blame, share blame, [or] distribute blame ... as blame, guilt, [and] responsibility are matters taking place inside human beings singly and *nowhere else*" (p. 84). The Professor believes that the individual is solely responsible for his or her every action and is at the centre of every political process. The interests of the individual, as a result, always take precedence over the interests of the group, as a group, at least for the Professor, is nothing more than an assortment of individuals who happen to share something in common. On the Professor's Luna, "individuals do not emerge from community; [rather], community emerges from individuals".[32]

Rallying behind the slogan "there ain't no such thing as a free lunch", or "TANSTAAFL" (p. 162), the Professor and his ragtag crew of like-minded revolutionaries, such as Mannie, repeatedly stress the economic dimension of this individually-empowered politics. Like Friedman and Hayek, the Professor and Mannie firmly believe that "anything free costs twice as much in long run or turns out worthless" (p. 162) and that economic monopolies, such as the one controlled by the Earth-based Lunar Authority prior to the revolution, represent nothing less than the first step down "the road to serfdom".[33] Remembering his childhood, Mannie recalls how he and his fellow citizens had always felt like slaves and how "nothing could be done about it" (p. 31). "True", he continues, "we weren't bought and sold – but as long as Authority held monopoly over what we had to have and what we could sell to buy it, we were slaves" (p. 31). Equating economic bondage with political bondage, Mannie and others like him hope that a free market, "liberated" from Authority control, will radically change not only the material conditions of life, but also open up new political opportunities. As Rafeeq McGiveron notes in his article on Heinlein's Social Darwinism, Heinlein does not want the citizens of his libertarian republic to suffer under a "government [that] either unduly restrict[s] the clever or aid[s] the less able", believing instead, "that individuals should be free to succeed or fail on their own".[34] The society that the Loonies attempt to create, like Friedman's libertarian ideal, is one in which the key to the door of political and economic advancement rests solely in the hands of the motivated, and often exceptional, individual.

This focus on individual initiative, however, eventually undermines the very foundations upon which Heinlein attempts to build his libertarian utopia. Heinlein's populist revolution is rapidly transformed into an elitist dictatorship, dominated by a few charismatic men who assume complete political and economic control as soon as the Lunar Authority no longer exists. Refashioning himself as a benevolent dictator whose word is law and whose will is unopposed, the Professor quickly turns his back on the libertarian principles he espoused at the beginning of the novel. Despite his earlier commitment to the individual's right to self-determination, the Professor later qualifies his words by defining precisely who can break the rules as he does. In a conversation with Mannie about the cult of personality that begins to spring up around him and his surrogate, Adam Selene, the Professor reveals his true attitude towards the masses on Luna who have supported him:

> In each age it is necessary to adapt to the popular mythology. At one time kings were anointed by Deity, so the problem was to see to it that Deity anointed the right candidate. In this age the myth is the "will of the people" ... but the problem changes only superficially. Comrade Adam and I have had long discussions about how to determine the will of the people. (p. 284)

Only a man like the Professor, in his own opinion a "great" man with a sound moral conscience formed by the rigours of Luna's harsh natural environment, is fit to appoint the Moon's new leaders and to assume control of the "will of the people".

This contradictory political position, one that supports both individual self-determination and an elitist attitude towards other people, is elegantly expressed in the words of the Professor's co-conspirator, Stuart LaJoi, who claims that "a king is the people's only protection against tyranny ... especially against the worst of all tyrants, themselves" (p. 304). Like Stu's king, the Professor is ready to accept the burden of power in order to protect the people from their own failings. Unwilling to abide by Friedman's maxim that "political freedom means the absence of coercion of a man by fellow men",[35] the Professor turns his back on his former libertarian ideals and brutally silences those who attempt to oppose him. Rather than being "fundamentally fearful of concentrated power"[36], the Professor demands to have "a finger in everything" (p. 299) and surrounds himself only by those willing to accept all of his "suggestions" unconditionally. The Professor's initial commitment to individual self-determination, as Neil Easterbrook observes,

> does not guarantee an egalitarian body politic so much as justify the cavalier morality of a new aristocracy; Prof, who presents himself as authoritative, turns out to be authoritarian, and in the Loonies' desire to throw off the yoke of Authority, they reinstall it again.[37]

Unable to reconcile his sense of social and economic justice with his admiration for the strong-willed, resourceful man, Heinlein unwittingly transforms the Professor from a representative of libertarian thought into a tyrant with a fit belief in the importance of his own masculine individuality.

Despite their eventual liberation from Earth, the Loonies never fully realise their utopian vision. Instead of encouraging the people to move forward towards a "society based on free discussion"[38], the leaders of the lunar revolution become tyrannical demagogues as authoritarian and ruthless as any previous Warden of the Lunar Authority. Ironically, by promoting the interests of the ruling clique to which he belongs, the Professor ends up reinforcing the political status quo instead of trying to change it. Buttressed by his faith in biological determinism, Heinlein is willing to accept only those principles of libertarianism that emphasise the individual importance of the strong man. At the beginning of the novel, revolutionary women like Wyoming Knott freely speak their minds whenever they feel like it; or, as Mannie brusquely notes: "women talk when they want to. Or don't" (p. 43). By the time the Professor has assumed control of the state, however, Wyoming has "fade[d] to subservience [and] learn[ed] to 'keep her pretty mouth shut'".[39] The rights guaranteed by Heinlein's brand of libertarianism do not extend to those who are not fit to rule, according to his understanding of biological determinism. A libertarian in name only, Heinlein "cloak[s] misogyny and fascism", in what Michael Orth in his article on later libertarian utopias calls, "the anarchist black of libertarian ideology".[40] Gendered though the language of libertarianism itself may be,[41] the Professor's numerous acts of political repression and blatant misogyny prevent even the limited possibility of gender equality that libertarianism offers. By the end of the novel, the men of the Moon only keep their "revolutionary" women around "to provide home-cooking" (p. 363) in times of political crisis.

ENDNOTES

1 Ken Macleod, "Politics and Science Fiction", in Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn, eds., *Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 231.

2 Robert A. Heinlein, *Starship Troopers* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), cited from the New York: Ace Books, 2006, edition.

3 Robert A. Heinlein, *Stranger in a Strange Land* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1961), cited from the New York: Ace Books, 1987, edition.

4 Everett Dolman's essay ("Military, Democracy, and the State in Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*", in Donald M. Hassler, ed., *Political Science Fiction* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 196-213) and Tim Blackmore's article ("Talking with Strangers: Interrogating the Many Texts That Became Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land*", *Extrapolation* 36:2 (1995), pp. 136-50) both offer insightful and original analyses of these two novels.

5 Robert A. Heinlein, *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1966), cited from the New York: Orb, 1997, edition.

6 Proponents of biological determinism claim that biological factors, such as genetics, determine human development and behaviour exclusively. Social interaction and culture are merely the by-products of these biological processes. I prefer to use the more neutral "biological determinism" instead of the related term, "Social Darwinism", because the latter immediately brings to mind both eugenics and Nazism.

7 See Philip Smith's essay on Heinlein and evolution ("The Evolution of Politics and the Politics of Evolution: Social Darwinism in Heinlein's Fiction", in Joseph D. Olander and Martin Harry Greenberg, eds., *Robert A. Heinlein* (New York: Taplinger, 1978), pp. 137-71) for an early example of criticism concerned with these concepts in *The Moon is a Harsh Mistress*.

8 Warren Rochelle, "Dual Attractions: The Rhetoric of Bisexuality in Robert A. Heinlein's Fiction", *Foundation* 28:76 (1999), pp. 48-62.

9 Rafeeq McGiveron, "'Starry-Eyed Internationalists' Versus the Social Darwinists: Heinlein's Transnational Government", *Extrapolation* 40:1 (1999), pp. 53-70.

10 Neil Easterbrook, "State, Heterotopia: The Political Imagination in Heinlein, Le Guin, and Delany", in Donald M. Hassler, ed., *Political Science Fiction* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 43-75.

11 Easterbrook, p. 51.

12 Easterbrook, p. 51.

13 Easterbrook, p. 50.

14 Easterbrook, p. 51.

15 LeFevre is the author of the popular libertarian tract, *The Nature of Man and His Government* (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1959). For most of the fifties and early sixties, Heinlein and LeFevre lived on the same street in Colorado Springs. Both men were actively involved in local libertarian politics and in the Goldwater presidential campaign of 1964. For more information on Heinlein's life in Colorado Springs and on his involvement in the Goldwater presidential campaign, see Robert A. Heinlein, *Grumbles from the Grave*, Virginia Heinlein, ed. (New York: Del Rey, 1989), pp. 114-119 and pp. 212-213.

16 Robert A. Heinlein, *Farnham's Freehold* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965), cited from the Riverdale: Baen, 2006, edition.

17 See, for example, Easterbook's analysis of Mannie on p. 46.

18 Robert A. Heinlein, *Space Cadet* (New York: Scribners, 1948), cited from the New York: Orb, 2006, edition.

19 In *Starship Troopers*, only those who have fought for the Terran Federation take part in the political process, having "earned" the right to vote through military service.

20 Like most of the Moon's "cobbers", Mannie uses the brusque, abbreviated slang popular on Luna.

21 Easterbrook, p. 46.

22 Smith, p. 138.

23 Mannie, for instance, "lost [h]is wing" in a mining accident. He now has "a dozen [mechanical] left arms, each specialised, plus one that feels and looks like flesh" (p. 15).

24 Easterbrook, p. 50.

25 The culture of Heinlein's Luna is strikingly heteronormative. As Warren G. Rochelle notes, "line marriage, clan and group marriage, and polyandry are presented as ways of dealing with [...] excess males[, while] homosexuality is not" (p. 53).

26 David Boaz, *Libertarianism: A Primer* (New York: Free Press, 1997), p. 2.

27 Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), p. 5.

28 Friedman, p. 2.

29 Boaz, p. 2.

30 Friedman, p. 25.

31 Easterbrook, p. 48.

32 Boaz, p. 131.

33 Hayek popularised this phrase, and the link between collectivisation and monopoly, in his 1944 book, *The Road to Serfdom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944).

34 McGiveron, p. 53.

35 Friedman, p. 15.

36 Friedman, p. 39.

37 Easterbrook, p. 52.

38 Friedman, p. 111.

39 Easterbrook, p. 47.

40 Michael Orth, "Reefs on the Right: Fascist Politics in Contemporary American Libertarian Utopias", *Extrapolation* 31:4 (1990), pp. 293-316, at p. 293.

41 Hayek and Friedman, for example, never stop to question their own use of "man" for "humanity" in any of their works. Barbara L. Marshall offers an insightful critique of this libertarian gender-blindness and its attendant sexism in her book, *Configuring Gender: Explorations in Theory and Politics* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2000).

The Problem of Distance: Families and Land(s) in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*

A. Robin Hoffman

The appeal of suicide runs like a dark thread through Mary Shelley's *The Last Man* (1826 in 3 vols). Many critics have ascribed the darkness of her vision to the author's emotional state at the time of writing. In her journal, she confessed to a strong sense of identification with her protagonist: "The last man! Yes I may well describe that solitary being's feeling, feeling myself as the last relic of a beloved race, my companions extinct before me" (qtd in Mellor p.157).[1] She clearly draws on her personal experiences of lost children and the recent deaths of Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron in her dystopic vision, and models two of her main characters, Adrian and Raymond, on her lost beloveds.[2] As the death toll mounts over the course of the narrative, many of the characters, most notably the narrator Lionel Verney, repeatedly confess to the desire to lie down – in the vault, in the snow, in the deathbed – with their departed loved ones and remain there forever. When Perdita throws herself overboard in Volume I rather than live anywhere but atop her dead husband's grave, her suicide foreshadows both the Plague's slow "flooding" of the Earth and the final two deaths in the Adriatic sea – and, not coincidentally, mirrors Percy Bysshe's death by drowning. But this kind of death best frustrates the survivor's suicidal impulse, and the Last Man laments: "Assuredly if any little bark or smallest canoe had been near, I should have sought the savage plains of ocean, found the dear remains of my lost ones, and clinging round them, have shared their grave" (p.345). Examples like these point us to Shelley's use of the Plague in exploring the harrowing choice between remaining with beloved family members, and seeking prosperity in foreign lands: at the extremes of separation and affection, the alternatives are literally matters of life and death.

This choice is complicated by an equally literal equation between nationality and the geographical territory which constitutes the nation. The cost of separation, whether from the land or from its occupants, is loss of identity. And that is a fate perhaps worse than death. Halfway through Volume II, as the main characters prepare to emigrate to more hospitable climes and leave Windsor Castle forever, Idris assures the narrator Lionel Verney, "Where you and my children are, there shall be Windsor, and every country will be England to me" (p.257). However, the overweening importance of these links is reiterated, rather than mitigated, by the anxieties of family separation that recur throughout the novel and render the border between life and death as comparable to national borders, and temporarily less threatening than corporeal distance. The novel explores the grim possibility that there can be no permanent fellowship but in death, and indeed, life itself becomes a terrible burden of loneliness for the Last Man. The whole world is his, but the loss of family ties leaves him homeless. Mary Jacobus points out that in a very real sense the novel's primary subject is survivors' guilt (p.107): Verney survives the death of both his family and his nation, and struggles to construct an identity for himself from the vacuum that remains.

As is suggested by Idris's declaration, the concept of family within the novel denotes the individual families who are gradually separated and dramatically disrupted by the Plague, but also extends to the figurative family of the polity, which disintegrates when the government is unable to control the populace or even to maintain quorum. The use of "the family" as a figure evoking nationalist affiliations is of course one that runs throughout British history; Verney mentions that "Kings have been called the fathers of men" (p.122) as a commonplace. Eve Bannet also points out that Verney's stance emerges from a broader Enlightenment philosophy encompassing Rousseau's declaration in *The Social Contract* (p.1762) that the [patriarchal] family "may be called the first model of political societies" (182) in addition to declaring it "the most ancient of all societies, and the only one that is natural" (p.182).[3] In an extension of that fundamental metaphor, the land is the mother of the nation's people, so that when it is left uninhabited, Verney declares, "England... thy children are gone!" (p.254). But crises of familial physical separation and identification abound within the novel and insist upon the logical implications of metaphorical assertions. The figure of the family never operates in isolation because a tripartite figuration links family, nationality, and land (p.geography as well as landscape) in an interdependent system of mutually-reinforcing pressures. The importance of this last aspect has been understated, particularly with regard to the novel's critique of imperialism; this is all the more surprising given the prominence accorded the landscape in her own writing and that of her Romantic contemporaries. Shelley represents this three-fold formation of allegiance and identity, with its highly ambivalent bonds and resultant instability, as one that is ultimately self-destructive because doomed to collapse upon itself under strain. Like a tripod that topples when one of its legs is removed, the individual subject becomes a ruin when familial lines are disrupted by isolation or separation, when national borders are redrawn by imperial conquest, or when nationality is erased by an indiscriminate flood of disease.

Existing analyses of the novel cover both ends of the spectrum of biographical fallacy, and reiterate the centrality of the figure of the family to the story's emotional impact and sociopolitical critique. As Paul Cantor provocatively notes, "*The Last Man* moves between the two poles of Shelley's imagination: the nuclear family and humanity as a whole" (p.199).[4] On the one hand, Shelley herself is sometimes ignored for the sake of the political ideology depicted and described in the novel; on the other hand, many readings are propped up by correspondences between Mary Shelley's own painful experiences as a widow and bereaved mother, and the many deaths mourned within the novel.[5] This split is encouraged by the novel's resistance to categorization: to call it merely a "dystopic" narrative almost overstates the proportion of the book devoted to humanity's battle against the Plague. The disease doesn't merit more than the briefest of mentions until it begins to creep in halfway through Volume II, after we have enjoyed what almost qualifies as a *bildungsroman* starring Lionel Verney, and many pages have been devoted to the political careers and love lives of the main characters. Perdita and Raymond bow out well before the Plague threatens England. But desperate attempts to escape from the Plague occupy the final third of the book, while elements of futurity like airborne transportation, and the news that England has been peacefully transformed into a republic, distances the novel from the reality of 1826 when it was first published. Even the title taps into an existing trend in literary explorations of that futuristic theme, with Lord Byron's poem "Darkness" standing as probably the most famous example,[6] and Shelley's decision to set the novel in the future, starting in the year 2073, is a precursor of and invitation to certain generic affiliations.

I would like to follow those critics who have more usefully considered the novel's affinities with science fiction writing, and in at least one case characterized it as "a scientific romance" (Aldiss and Wingrove p.195).[7] They make this assertion precisely because science fiction is a genre which extrapolates from present circumstances such as attributes of or trends in technology and social structures and seeks their logical conclusions (Gunn p.8). In so doing, many authors choose to render the figural as the literal, but science fiction is not fantasy because it responds to, rather than refusing, the relevance of realistic questions (Gunn p.10) about the reader's own world. Antonio Ballesteros González suggests that the late appearance of the Plague within the narrative likely reflects Shelley's wish "to describe in detail the state of chaos which leads to the disaster" and "which impregnates all the layers of human political, social, historical and gender conceptualizations" (p.53). The literal dead ends that appear and reappear throughout this book, and the literal-cum-metaphorical figure of disease,[8] suggest that Shelley was extremely skeptical about the long-term prospects for a construction of nationality based on familial ties and geography, as well as individuals' ability to embrace a new identity based on universalized humanity. Within the novel, the only means by which these characters, so thoroughly identified by their familial allegiances – both to nations and to family members – can become "citizens of the world" and unmoored from their homelands is through submission to the whims of the plague or the vagaries of the sea.

The characters constantly expend energy grappling with shifts in identity on the grounds of blood ties, legal family bonds, and national allegiances; as Giovanna Franci bluntly puts it, for Shelley "the problem is, fundamentally, the problem of *identity*" (p.188 emphasis hers). More specifically, the characters' struggle reveals the desperation and the fallacious nature of the attempt to define nationality on shifting proportions of geography, proximity, and blood. It also reflects contemporary anxieties accompanying the concomitant rise in nationalism and empire a decade before Victoria's ascension to the throne, as geography became a particularly unstable means of defining the nation as an "imagined community" (to borrow Benedict Anderson's term). In this respect I am following Julia Wright, who has discerned in *The Last Man* what Nigel Leask more broadly called the "anxieties of empire" implicitly expressed in the works of British Romantic writers. Wright insists that these anxieties are rendered primarily as "anxieties of space," and that "In *The Last Man*, imperial possessions are identified with ungraspable dimensions... the images are insistently spatial" (p.136-137). In so doing, however, she overlooks the most important, transparent, dominant, and problematic figure of the book, which is bound up in the problems of space: that of family identity, as it structures both literal families and the English nation. The anxieties of empire are here very much about the "geographical" (p.138), but within the text they are most specifically and concretely about the spatial limitations of family and community, and the dire threat of physical separation. By contrast, Anne Mellor, Kate Ellis Ferguson, and Eve Bannet ignore how the figure of the family extends to the nation when they (rightly) draw attention to the depiction of families within the novel. Mellor identifies the familial disintegration depicted as proof of Shelley's loss of faith in "the ideology of the egalitarian bourgeouis family" (p.144): "Mary Shelley had been taught to conceive of her self only in relational terms, as a daughter/wife/mother," so that the loss of that identity resulted in "the first fictional example of nihilism" (p.169). Blumberg comes nearer the mark in noting how "Shelley whittles away relentlessly at the supposedly firm edifice of the family" (p.126) in her "most political" novel (p.134), but largely ignores both the crisis of identity and its nationalistic character as informed by the physical landscape(s). By looking closely at how family relationships are constituted, strained, shifted, and broken within *The Last Man* through concrete interactions with significant landscapes and spaces, we can see how the figuration of nationality as a familial relationship becomes a literal problem of space and land. Other critics have divorced these "anxieties of empire" from discussion of the microcosm of the family, or have addressed patterns of relationship with regard to political ideology while setting the landscape and geography to the side. I argue that the problems of physical separation and distance within the novel, and Shelley's pessimistic treatment of their solubility – in the introduction the narrator asks "Will my readers ask how I could find solace from the narration of misery and woeful change?" (p.8) without answering her own question [9] – requires viewing these divergent issues at their point of intersection.

Shelley suggests that death may become the only means of maintaining familial identity as the world is homogenized by an imperial Flood; this seems to be the case whether the "family" is a literal one joined by flesh and blood, or tenuously figured within the national polity and territory. The grim prospect of total annihilation of the human race obviously contrasts dramatically with the utopian vision of an English republic formally cherished by Mary's father William Godwin, in his *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793) and by her husband Percy Bysshe in works like *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). That vision is encapsulated by Adrian's foolhardy declaration that "let us will it, and our habitation becomes a paradise" (p.63); indeed, multiple critics have observed that these men's ideals are "tested" (Mellor p.160) and their weaknesses revealed, or even that Shelley provides a "repudiation of... the poetics and politics of Percy Bysshe Shelley" (Paley p.111) within the novel.[10] Aldiss and Wingrove suggest that Verney's last name is an ironic tribute to the French count Constantin Francois de Chassboeuf Volney, author of *Les ruines ou Meditations sur les revolutions des empires* (1791), which "describes... the prospects for a future in which tyranny will be abolished" (p.194). Utopian ideals are questioned by Verney at the moment when he has lost his sister and brother-in-law, but still has no fear for his own family, and before he realizes that sharing the globe with all humanity means sharing its dire destiny:

> What are we, the inhabitants of this globe... we call ourselves lords of the creation, wielders of the elements, masters of life and death, and we allege in excuse of this arrogance, that though the individual is destroyed, man continues for ever... Thus, losing our identity, that of which we are chiefly conscious, we glory in the continuity of our species, and learn to regard death without terror. (p.182)

It is almost too easy to conclude that Percy's death opened her eyes to the profound difficulty of maintaining a vision of ideal nationalism when she was so painfully aware of the ways in which death could undermine the familial metaphor, and introduce an insuperable separation between members. However, within the novel, the crises of separation that plague the individual family members are as imperative as the threat of separation from the soil that bestows a worthy English national identity. The threat of non-identity posed by those different forms of separation are so intimately related, in fact, that they repeatedly provoke the choice between suicide and self-preservation. We follow two married couples through their attempts to negotiate between family relationships and personal attachments, and, even more importantly, between separation and distance, as their national obligations are disrupted by family obligations and vice versa.

Perhaps the most obvious indicator of anxiety about broken family relationships and the direct connection between nationality and land, is the preponderance of orphans throughout the novel. Within the first few pages, the protagonist and his sister lose both parents; the latter's name is Perdita, a name that (almost too) obviously points to the irrecoverable loss of identity correlating to her parents' death and her lack of a home. They are totally unmoored, without family or friend, partly because the prior generation stretched its legs over the countryside: "The condition of her orphan children was peculiarly desolate. Her own father had been an emigrant from another part of the country, and had died long since: they had no one to take them by the hand; they were outcasts, paupers, unfriended beings… left… to the close-handed charity of the land" (p.14). As Morton Paley and Kevin Hutchings have pointed out, the novel begins with a strong correction to the poetic tradition of pastoral idealism; Verney describes his necessary work as a shepherd as hard, tiring, and lonely: "My first real knowledge of myself was as an unprotected orphan among the valleys and fells of Cumberland… I cannot say much in praise of such a life" (p.14). Lacking any sense of national belonging, and wandering without propriety over the land, he feels himself to be "at war with civilization" (p.18).[11] The only attachments he does feel are literally familial – he cares for his sister Perdita, and almost compulsively adopts a sense of obligation to his late father, even going so far as so assume that his (misguided) vendetta against the late king transfers to the young prince Adrian: "His father injured my father… We descendants from the one and the other, must be enemies also" (p.21). More importantly, Verney decides to visit his revenge upon the land owned by the enemy family, feeling the one to be a representative of the other. He relentlessly raids the forests that Adrian has specifically marked out for careful maintenance.

The peaceful resolution of Verney's campaign lies in Adrian's willingness to effectively adopt Verney. Strangely, however, Adrian oversees Lionel's maturation in a maternal rather than fraternal way: "under the mild sway of his dear eyes, I was obedient and good as a boy of five years old, who does his mother's bidding" (p.31). This is the first of many attempts within the novel to use familial relationships to smooth difficulties over territorial occupation, and to plug gaps in broken families. Proximity comes to serve as a substitute for actual blood ties, and there is some suggestion that residing together is one means of constituting a family. Adrian's care extends to Perdita as well, who views him as a "kind elder brother" when he secures for her the position of "younger sister of Evadne" (p.31) within the Castle of Windsor. Similarly, when the Countess of Windsor asks Lionel to allow her to travel to France and flee the Plague with him, she phrases it in newly-familial terms: "Pardon, my son, the many wrongs I have done you; forget my bitter words and unkind treatment – take me, and govern me as you will" (p.282). The necessity of proximity for these relationships become clearer when Perdita bemoans the prospect of separation: "Adrian as dear to me as if bound by the ties of blood; Idris, the sister of my heart, and her lovely offspring. This, O this may be the last time that you will surround me thus!" (p.80). Conversely, separation across distance is equated with death. Even before Perdita kills herself, she acknowledges that in separating herself from her daughter – by choosing to live in Greece near Raymond's grave while Clara returns to England with Lionel – she is straining that familial bond to the breaking point: "Go you to England, Lionel; return to sweet Idris and dearest Adrian; return, and let my orphan girl be as a child of your own in your house. Look on me as dead; and truly if death be a mere change of state, I am dead. This is another world, from that which late I inhabited, from that which is now your home" (p.166). Their language often suggests, or at least expresses the hope, that a family can be reconstituted by an act of will and a change of residence.

But as time passes within the novel and more and more individuals die, the fragility of familial bonds is reiterated, in part because it is so closely bound to physical proximity. Despite declarations of altered relationship, the attempts to reproduce familial relationships in mere bonds of affection are never permanent. Upon Raymond's death, Verney agrees to care for Clara as his own, and professes that "the tenderest emotions of paternity bound me to Clara" (p.299). But he also repeatedly refers to her as his niece after making his promise to Raymond – that is, when he is not suggesting that she has "acted the part of the tenderest mother" to his son Evelyn (p.323) and "felt towards him in some degree like a young mother" (p.336). This role logically casts her as an incestuous replacement for his own wife, by then deceased. Similarly, he and Adrian repeatedly declare their sense of brotherly fellowship – he refers to Adrian as "the brother of my soul" (p.196), for whom his own children are "his presumptive heirs" (p.199) – and yet clearly demonstrates his willingness to separate from Adrian rather than his children during the first halting attempts at emigrating to France. Breaking is easier than bonding, and the compulsion to re-form families is revealed as futile and nominal stop-gap even as circumstances continue to break families down further.

In the case of Raymond and Perdita, we can see most concretely how imperial expansion preoccupies Shelley, and how it places intolerable pressure on individual relationships. Raymond cannot bear to have his political ambitions stunted by single-minded devotion to Perdita and their family, nor can their family survive the literal and personal distances, the disruption of identification with both the national and individual family, contingent upon his political advancement through Greek allegiance. After Raymond's political ambitions stall in England, he gains fame as a general in the "Greek cause," where "He became the darling hero of this rising people. His foreign birth, and he refused to throw off his allegiance to his native country, alone prevented him from filling the first offices in the state" (p.34). It is not clear whether he can actually throw off that allegiance by choice or by force, as his irrevocable, immutable tie to England is reinforced by the ease with which he applies fame gained in Greece toward political advancement back in England: "In open ambition or close intrigue, his end was the same – to attain the first station in his own country" (p.35). Only a formal familial bond stands between him and the crown of England. Having returned a hero, he is now capable even of restoring the monarchy with himself at its head if he marries Idris, the late deposed king's daughter. He declines the putative crown in order to marry Perdita, and retreats to "Arcadian" seclusion near the Castle of Windsor, where he is soon joined by Adrian, Lionel, and Idris, the latter having married despite the deposed queen's objections.

Shelley's descriptions are clearly designed to make us understand that Windsor Castle is an idealized pastoral paradise. When Lionel first arrives there and begins to feel some sense of connection with the land over which he had ranged all his life, he is assimilated into English culture in much the same way that landscape is transmuted over time, and through political oversight, into a nation: "Friendship… built a bower of delight in my heart, late rough as an untrod wild in America, as the homeless wind or herbless sea… In our boat, upon my native lake, beside the streams and the pale bordering poplars – in valley and over hill" (p.31). Later, when he has gathered a family of his own and feels comfortable as a resident, he never speaks of the Castle, but only of the landscape which he now truly owns and enjoys, spending "Whole days under the leafy covert of the forest" (p.73). Lionel and Idris continue to live at Windsor even when Perdita and Raymond have relocated to London, so that the contrast makes them "the Arcadian shepherds of the tale" (p.103), and Raymond looks back upon his time at Windsor as indulgence in a sort of theatrical idealization: "In the recesses of your beloved forest we acted masques, and imagined ourselves Arcardian shepherds" (p.119).

Raymond seems, initially or temporarily at least, to be capable of moving between the roles of nation-father and literal father with comparative ease, and even of maintaining his national identity while in foreign lands. But as Raymond later admits, his original military exploits in Greece bind him to that country with a genealogical pull, one that renders it impossible for him to devote himself solely to an English family, whether political or local. Despite his "foreign birth," the Athenians "claimed him for their own," and "He was numbered among her citizens, his name was added to the list of Grecian heroes" (p.125). Indeed, he is caught in a kind of bigamy, with the Greek princess Evadne as his second wife, the "Other" family he has acquired through imperial conquest and prolonged residence on other soil. As though to reiterate the pliable nature of familial bonds, when Raymond later encounters Evadne in dire poverty in London we are told that "his caresses excited no distrust, for they arose purely from the feeling which leads a mother to kiss her wounded child" (p.88); however, before long "the territory of his own heart escaped his notice" (p.93), and Raymond himself is colonized by Greece through its former princess. When he loses both Evadne and Perdita, he declares himself "a solitary man… a wanderer" (p.119) i.e., a man without a family and a man without a country, although he seeks renewed connection with the Greek people, naturally at the head of their imperial army. When Perdita follows him to Constantinople and they reconcile, he is unable to return to England again precisely because his family connections are at war with those of his adopted country. He returns Perdita to her father's house, now headed by Lionel: "To you, Lionel, I entrust your sister and her child. Never mention to her the fatal name of Evadne. She would doubly sorrow over the strange link that enchains me to her, making my spirit obey her dying voice, following her, as it is about to do, to the unknown country" (p.149). Perdita also recognizes that Raymond has a physical affinity with the Greek landscape, one that she can participate in only through contiguity: "Methinks his spirit remains here as well as that dust... The myrtle bushes, the thyme, the little cyclamen, which peep from the fissures of the rock, all the produce of the place, bear affinity to him; the light that invests the hills participates in his essence, and sky and mountains, sea and valley, are imbued by the presence of his spirit" (p.166). Only death can put an end to Raymond's conflicts of nationality and, too late, Perdita attempts to restore their familial connections by remaining in Greece.

Perdita's refusal to return to England is very much bound up in her inability to distinguish between Raymond and the land they lived upon together. When Perdita perceives that Raymond is about to forsake her for Evadne and the Greek nation, she casts her emotional state as hopelessly isolated: "I live on a barren desart, which, wide and interminable, brings forth neither fruit or flower; in the midst is a solitary rock, to which thou, Perdita, art chained, and thou seest the dreary level stretch far away" (p.106). When he does leave, her desolation is reflected in the landscape as well, specifically in the cottage that has come to stand for Perdita's affinity with English pastoral ideals:

> In our happiest days, Perdita had adorned her cottage with every aid art might bring, to that which nature had selected to favour. In the same spirit of exaggeration she had, on the event of her separation from Raymond, caused to be entirely neglected. It was now in ruin: the deer had climbed the broken palings, and reposed among the flowers; grass grew on the threshold... (p.201)

Her investment in the land is isomorphic with her investment in Raymond, so she can expect only increased suffering by separating from his body and returning to England. She already knows that Windsor, formerly beautified by their union, has been spoiled for her by their earlier separation: "every spot was distinct with associations now grown bitter. The forest glades, the ferny dells, and lawny uplands, the cultivated and cheerful country spread around the silver pathway of ancient Thames" (p.121). Instead, when Lionel tricks her into boarding an England-board ship, she throws herself overboard, and "preferred to share the rocky grave of Raymond, before the animated scene this cheerful earth afforded" (p.170). One of the slight saving graces of death was that it produced stasis: burial is an eminently reliable, and thus strangely desirable, way of ensuring permanent physical proximity between lovers or family members.

In describing the arc of the novel as a whole, Paul observed that "Shelley progressively narrows her narrative horizons from the worldwide network of imperialism and trade to England… to isolated villages… to groups of human beings… to the pseudo-family grouping of Lionel, Adrian, and Clara, and finally to the Last Man" (Cantor p.199). Following him, Julie Wright points out that "this contraction is more specifically one of depopulation – tracing the transition from the state-communities of empire to nation and then village, and then from the more informal communities of survivors to a family and, finally a lone individual [illustrates] the human has a declining ability to oversee and manage space" (Wright n.30). It is also simply a reversal of the expansion that opens the book. Verney begins with himself, alone: "When I stood on my native hills, and saw plain and mountain stretch to the utmost limits of my vision, speckled by the dwellings of my countrymen, and subdued to fertility by their labors, the earth's very centre was fixed for me in that spot" (p.11). However, it must be noted that this contraction is, as these critics' language suggests, figured in terms of shrinking circles of "family," allowing for the term to be applied with varying degrees of literalness.

Coming closer to the virtuous Adrian's indiscriminately-compassionate view, Verney oscillates between adherence to the ideal of a universal human family, and his concrete attachments to his own family, which provides him with his sense of identity. At some points, he is quite clearly concerned with his immediate family, and does not entertain the possibility of widening his circle with indiscriminate compassion:

> The question was no longer whether I should share Adrian's toils and danger; but in what manner I could, in Windsor and the neighborhood, imitate the prudence and zeal which, under his government, produced order and plenty in London, and how, now pestilence had spread more widely, I could secure the health of my own family… in Windsor Castle, birth-place of Idris and my babes, should be the haven and retreat for the wrecked bark of human society. Its forest should be our world – its garden afford us food; within its walls I would establish the shaken throne of health. (p.204-205)

The contrast with Adrian, who is not only the putative heir to the dismantled throne, but also unmarried, is concrete and purposeful: while the king must be the father to his people, a literal father must tend to his own small household nation. Adrian assumes command over the dwindling survivors of England partly because his personal circumstances fit him to be a national paternal figure, and partly because he is, as Audrey Fisch points out, the individual most dedicated to, and indeed probably the only one capable of participating in, the ideal of universal brotherhood (p.275). Perhaps the latter condition produces the former. Following his ideal vision, he attempts to unite all of the survivors in collective emigration to Switzerland, where it is hoped that the disease cannot survive in the icy valleys. Where Verney constantly returns to the spectre of the fading English nation, Adrian resolutely insists on looking forward: "these are your brothers... let each man be brother, guardian, and stay to the other" (p.234-235).

Elsewhere, however, and usually when his own family is relatively secure, Verney is much more inclined to imagine himself as a member of a universal family, perhaps as a means of combating the war of attrition England fights against the Plague. For instance, he dismisses his mother-in-law's attachment to her status as an Austrian aristocrat, which gives rise to condescension upon the "fallen majesty of England" (p.229), and her insistent distinction between her own natural family and that created by marriage: "To me this proceeding seemed (p.if so light a term may be permitted) extremely whimsical. Now that the race of man had lost in fact all distinction of rank, this pride was doubly fatuitous; now that we felt a kindred, fraternal nature with all who bore the stamp of humanity, this angry reminiscence of times for ever gone, was worse than foolish" (p.229). Similarly, he takes comfort in the prospect of "charming pictures of a tranquil solitude, of a beauteous retreat, of the simple manners of our little tribe, and of the patriarchal brotherhood of love, which would survive the ruins of the populous nations which had lately existed" (p.270). Varying circumstances, mostly relating to his own sense of familial security (or lack thereof), produce different responses in Verney.

In a superfluity of insistence, Verney has three separate encounters with young women who have refused to separate from family members, and thereby have condemned themselves to lonely, pitiable deaths. First we meet Lucy, who chooses to remain with her sick mother when the rest of the village evacuates: "Lucy continued to live for and in her mother. Her courage only failed her when she dreaded peril for her parent, or feared that death might prevent her from performing those duties to which she was unalterably devoted" (p.273). Her mother's state leaves her unable to emigrate with Adrian's superintended group, and she ultimately prevails upon Verney to either collect them from their rural village, or wait for the recovery that she blindly and futilely expects. Rather than insisting upon the irrationality of her decision, Verney applauds Lucy's virtuous devotion and struggles to fulfill her request. Another young woman named Juliet makes a similar decision to remain in abandoned London, but this time out of devotion to her child: "When she heard of the plan of universal emigration, she resolved to remain behind with her child, and alone in wide England to live or die, as fate might decree, beside the grave of her beloved" (p.302). Rather than Verney's rational persuasion, it is the mad promises of an opportunistic prophet that convince her to leave the doomed city, and then only in the hope of preserving her infant. Finally, en route to Switzerland, the English survivors meet with a pair of Germans – a daughter and her father – who are the last survivors in a village outside Geneva. After losing her lover to the plague, the daughter "preserved herself for her father's sake" (p.326), thus invoking the appeal of suicide once again. But even while she remains in health, her determination to stay with her aged father (who assumes the vaguely incestuous role of devoted life-partner) and be buried next to her lover supersedes any thought of emigrating to safety: "she and her father now lie side by side, beneath the high walnut-tree where her lover reposes... Her father, at length aware of his daughter's danger... obstinately held her hand, till it was chilled and stiffened by death. Nor did he then move or speak, till, twelve hours after, kindly death took him to his breakless repose" (p.327). In all of these instances, the instincts of self-preservation are overruled by the compulsion to remain in proximity with family-members, even if they have died. More importantly, Verney increasingly portrays death as a "kindly" solution to this dilemma with no "good" solution.

Verney's sympathy with others' suicidal impulses at the prospect of separation from family members or their graves speaks figurative volumes about the difficulty of leaving England even after it is devastated by the plague. Verney's refusal to leave any citizens behind is not unlike his refusal to separate from his immediate family, a reiteration of the figuration of family that seems in keeping with his occasional ideals. However, the cost of this commitment to family writ large is visited upon the family writ small, and reveals the unsustainability of a view which holds both literal and figurative familial connections at equal value, rather than *replacing* the former with the latter. In fact, it is the effort to rescue Lucy and her mother that hastens, if not causes Idris's death. "She declared that she could not consent even to a temporary separation from me" (p.275), and she is overcome by the harsh weather that intervenes on their road, leaving Verney to declare, "I wonder now how I could be so blind and senseless, as thus to risk the safely of Idris" (p.275). The complete loss of faith in his rationalization at the time, and the despair over his failure to satisfactorily negotiate among competing demands from his fellow-citizen and his family, situates the individual as the site at which this dilemma of identity, obligation, and physical location will become unbearable. As he lays her in the family tomb Verney gazes upon his dead wife and recalls "How intensely I then longed to lie down beside her, to gaze till death should gather me to the same repose" (p.279). Shelley seems to be suggesting that personal, emotional attachment is an insurmountable barrier between the ideal of universal brotherhood, and its realization, at least in the immediate confrontation with bereavement. Verney cannot comfort himself, either in the tomb or while writing long after the events, with his original rationale. He doesn't recall his conviction that he could not continue to profess belief in national familial ties and the obligations of simple humanity after leaving Lucy behind. He only revisits the despair of personal loss. He can find the strength to leave Idris's body only in the knowledge that some living members of his own literal family, particularly his children, remain alive and waiting for his assistance. In this we hear an echo of his earlier reluctant determination to flee England and the plague: "Yet let us go! England is in her shroud, - we may not enchain ourselves to a corpse... Shall we, in these desart halls, under this wintry sky, sit with closed eyes and folded hands, expecting death?" (p.255). They must constantly decide whether being without family, or without nationality – both forms of identity-loss – is less appealing, and whether the loss of one or both is less appealing than death.

As I had suggested at the outset, there are two major means by which individuals can be separated from England and from family: by falling victim to the Plague, and by crossing the sea. The former seems to be distinguished from the latter by its irrevocability, but the endless difficulties of international travel, and the constant descriptions of the Plague as a "Flood" suggest that these Englishmen have profoundly misunderstand the sea as a mere border that can be crossed at will, just as they repeatedly demonstrate an inability to forge new familial bonds once they have been broken. Perhaps the most important motif that has so far escaped critical attention is that of the sea, despite its central position within the aesthetic of the sublime. This may well be because Mary Shelley's use of the sea as a figure for despair and grief is repeated so often and so woodenly throughout the book – we are told of "the sea of evil" which Verney confronted in his lawless youth (p.18); we are given a rather protracted metaphor in which "what a sea is the tide of human passion... Our virtues are the quick-sands, which shew themselves at calm and low water; but let the waves arise and the winds buffet them, and the poor devil whose hope was in their durability, finds them sink from under him" (p.54). Later, he characterizes his lonely future as a "sea of desolation" (p.188). The figure becomes clumsy through overuse and lack of subtlety, but precisely because Shelley returns to it again and again, we should consider why the sea has such a central position in the narrative and its structure.

We can find the nationalistic significance of the sea in Verney's opening words. Here, he insists upon the sea-border as a peculiarly English feature: "I am the native of a sea-surrounded nook... England, seated far north in the turbid sea, now visits my dreams in the semblance of a vast and well-manned ship, which mastered the winds and rode proudly over the waves" (p.11). This image of England as a vessel is both repetitive and illustrative: "A moral tempest had wrecked our richly freighted vessel, and we, remnants of the diminished crew, were aghast at the losses and changes which we had undergone" (p.120). The historical resonance of this image is compelling, since the sea, and naval superiority, was clearly to be the route by which England would achieve imperial dominance. As Fisch and Wright point out, Shelley's novel uses images like these to forecast the imminent emergence of an economy based on sea-faring import and export, with explicit allusions to how "navies used to stem the giant ocean-waves betwixt Indus and the Pole for slight articles of luxury" (p.248). Her portrayal presages sea-borne imperial dangers as well. When England must quarantine itself as a last desperate stand against the encroaching plague, it "collapses... [due to] British dependence [on international trade] rather than oriental threat" (p.Wright 140). Cantor more generally declares that "Of all the forces in the modern world Shelley links to the plague, none is more important than imperialism... What new dangers, Shelley seems to be asking, is England exposing itself to by creating a worldwide empire?" (p.195-196). What, she seems to ask, will happen to families that are separated by the sea, an area where they cannot live, but can only pass through, and then only under the delusion of assured safety and power? When the sea serves as both border and frontier, and becomes primarily an arena of transit, it loses its stability as a border. This has obvious dramatic consequences on the national self-image, particularly that part defined by territorial occupation. In conjunction with sea-faring imperialistic endeavors, this repeated image of the sea presents the possibility of erasing identity and replacing it with nationalistic homogeneity spanning the globe. Its sublimity is inseparable from its overwhelming vastness. Within the novel, both the sea and the Plague "flood" the earth with what Johnson describes as "universal lethality" (p.264). They both serve as indiscriminate forces of death and destruction, uniting all peoples in a certain grim kind of universal family relationship: that of shared habitation in the grave.

This is perhaps most clearly revealed in the ambivalence of the sea surrounding England, as that water loses its aura of impermeable barrier and takes on an increasingly sinister appearance. The sea's association with death at first seems limited in scope, merely tinged by Verney's own bitter experience with the sea as a site of death for his sister: "Its hateful splash renewed again and again to my sense the death of my sister; its roar was a dirge; in every dark hull that was tossed on its inconstant bosom, I imaged a bier, that would convey to death all who trusted to its treacherous smiles" (p.171). His words become prophetic very soon, as we recall how England had indeed trusted to the sea for natural border protection. It is a climactic moment of horror halfway through Volume II when the Englishmen realize that their island will not be spared by its privileged distance from the original site of the plague. Audrey Fisch describes this moment as "making room for a new understanding of England as a lone ship, unable to master everything, unable to see past itself or to see itself as part of the rest of the world" (p.269). Everyone is profoundly unsettled by the prospect of being flooded by disease: "It seems as if the giant waves of oceans, and vast arms of the sea, were about to wrench the deep-rooted island from its centre; and cast it, a ruin and a wreck, upon the fields of the Atlantic" (p.182). Verney makes explicit this newly-discovered ambivalence of the sea: "the sea was to rise a wall of adamant – without disease and misery – within, a shelter from evil, a nook of the garden of paradise... And now, the sea, late our defence, seems our prison bound" (p.195).

This shift in his attitude toward the sea is apparently shared by his countrymen, and points us back to the ways in which the novel portrays the dilemma of identity based on familial affiliation, territorial occupation, and political organization. These comments about the sea's turn from "defence" to "prison" is also significantly accompanied by implicit questions about whether to stay with the dying English national "family," or to emigrate, and embrace the fate of the species at large, whatever it may be. While the sea becomes a means of potentially uniting the whole world under the British Empire, the pre-existing structures of national identity cannot accommodate the paradigm shift even though it takes literally years for the Plague to "flood" the world. When Ryland despairs, "All the world has the plague!" Adrian calmly concludes, "Then to avoid it, we must quit the world" (p.191). This is hardly the last word on the subject, since the next hundred pages deal with their decision to emigrate, its futility as well as its interim difficulties and consequences. But first they must grapple with the ways in which such a decision would unsettle their identity as English citizens, an identity in which they are so heavily invested that at first death seems more plausible than reconstructing themselves. When Verney declares that "The air of England is tainted, and her sons and daughters strew the unwholesome earth… Other nations have a fellowship in death; but we, shut out from all neighbourhood, must bury our own dead, and little England become a wide, wide, tomb" (p.195), he expresses a view of citizenship that will become archaic even before the novel's end. Indeed, in the same breath he expresses shock and horror at the plan to emigrate – "To leave England for ever!... To leave the country of our fathers, made holy by their graves!" – and reluctantly concludes that it is the only reasonable solution: "Yet let us go! England is in her shroud, - we may not enchain ourselves to a corpse. Let us go – the world is our country now" (p.255). His figuration of England as a familial corpse that he can hardly bear to leave is more than just a foreshadowing of the necessity of abandoning Idris's corpse. His declaration of allegiance and even the battle between his wish to remain and his impulse toward self-preservation points to the fundamental quality of this link between proximity, family, and priorities. Their reluctance to leave England, even after it has become a "wide wide tomb," reveals just how powerfully constraining the traditional understanding of nationality is. The characters hesitate when confronting a force that can very concretely demonstrate its ability to ignore borders of class, race, and country, as both Adrian and Verney have claimed they'd like to do. The recurring literal and figurative problems posed by the sea, as particularly illuminated by its relevance to the Plague and imperial ambitions, reveal the consequences of that triadic relationship among land, nationality, and the figure of the family as a cornerstone of identity. When one becomes incompatible with survival, an individual will be forced to choose between two equally devastating forms of dissolution. Suicide, particularly in a form that precludes a grave, comes to seem the only way of maintaining connection with all of these aspects of individual identity, i.e., family, nation, and humanity: "In comparison with the unstained deep, funereal earth appeared a grave, its high rocks and state mountains were but monuments… Ocean we commit ourselves to thee… let us be saved, as thus we betake ourselves to thy perennial flood" (p.341). The swirling and sometimes conflicting figurations of the sea reflect Shelley's difficulty in finding her way, via fiction, from contemporary constructions of national identity, and their intersection with individual attachments, to a future reconciliation in idealized visions of a universal human family.

The most important and perhaps the most difficult aspect of translating Shelley's novel into a commentary on reality that is she is concerned not with binary possibilities, but with tripartite forms of relationship. In this complicated form of figuration, referents can shift precisely because their resonance is already dispersed along divided lines; here, the term "family" slips between the national and the local, and the allegorical implications of broken and reconstituted families within the novel must be balanced by attention to how the figuration of "family" is linked to representation and occupation of the land in a line of genealogical descent. The definitions are circular: the national family is defined by where it lives and how it is politically organized; the national territory is circumscribed by political borders and occupation by the national "family," and nationality is conferred by a combination of familial relations and occupation of the land. Within Shelley's novel, two families struggle with problems of location and distance that are intimately related to problems of nationality, and thus provide a concrete link between the narrative and real-world anxieties about how constructions of nationality based on land and familial relations will be destabilized by conquest and the assimilation of foreign peoples. Inspired by a sublime view of the sun setting over "an extensive view of hill and dale, meandering rivers, dark woods, and shining villages" (p.61), Adrian expresses the vain hope of an idealized universal family, inhabiting the entire earth in common: "And all ye happy nurslings of mother-earth, do ye not echo my words?" (p.62). His singular will cannot bring the vision into reality. Quite to the contrary, the "affectionate ties of nature" (p.63) are tested and broken by that death and sickness he bemoans. If even Adrian cannot sustain the act of will that binds him to the rest of humanity as countrymen and kin, as we see in his unstable relationship with Verney, who can? At one point Ryland, perhaps speaking for Shelley, chides Adrian for a fit of idealistic rhetoric: "Dreaming, forever dreaming… When love is no longer akin to hate, then brotherhood will exist: we are very far from that state at present" (p.173). Only in the sea, where deaths cannot be marked by graves, or through the Plague, which disregards national borders and political allegiances, will nationality by superseded by the dubious ideal of universal non-identity in "the undistinguishing tomb" (p.176).

(ENDNOTES)

1 Morton Paley notes the critical compulsion to repeat this connection: "Almost everyone who has written about this novel adverts to the personal element of isolation in it and cites Mary's journal entry for May 14, 1824" (p.109).

2 Jane Blumberg also notes that "Evelyn's death resembles that of the three-year-old William Shelley," (p.337, n. a) and the fictional Clara is probably named after Mary Shelley's daughter who died at in 1818 at only one year of age.

3 See Bannet pp. 376-377 and Eve Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution: Enlightenment Feminisms and the Novel* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

4 I am very much indebted to Cantor's essay in my own thinking. He moves onto an analysis of Shelley's anxiety about imperialism as an aspect of modernity.

5 See particularly Emily Sunstein, *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989), and Constance Walker, who insists that "While clearly her novels address large social, political, and philosophical concerns... they are also fantasies that spoke of and to her very real psychic needs in the face of a series of devastating losses" (p.135).

6 For an overview of this theme, see Sterrenburg and A. J. Sambrook, "A Romantic Theme: The Last Man," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 2 (1966): 25-33.

7 Sterrenburg concludes his essay by noting that *The Last Man* "places her as an artistic forerunner of modern science fiction" (p.347). See also Franci, who observes that "*Frankenstein* and *The Last Man* may be placed between the Gothic or the literature of terror... and science fiction conceived as prophetic writing or anticipation of catastrophe, as *Apocalypse* or Revelation" (p.183).

8 For a fuller consideration of the plague as metaphor within *The Last Man* see Sterrenburg, Anne McWhir, "Mary Shelley's Anti-Contagionism: *The Last Man* as 'Fatal Narrative'" *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature* 35.2 (June 2002): 23-38; Mellor 164, and Ballesteros González.

9 I noted above that Mellor identifies this novel as an early example of nihilism. Sterrenburg also dwells on her "pessimism," concluding that "She remains squarely in the Everlasting No" (p.343), while Blumberg claims that she "offers no panacea, no comfort at all in fact" (p.116).

10 See Johnson p 264, Bannet pp. 367-368, Blumberg p. 138-145, and Sterrenburg, especially pp. 333-336.

11 Paley asserts that "Young Lionel is if anything a travesty of the Wordsworthian ideal of power" (p.111-112), while Hutchings notes that Shelley's description of Verney's "growth and development contribute to the novel's apparent critique of Wordsworthian pastoral" (p.229).

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Paley, Morton D. "*The Last Man*: Apocalypse Without Millennium." *The Other Mary Shelley: Beyond Frankenstein*. Eds. Audrey Fisch, Anne K. Mellor, and Esther H. Schor. New York: Oxford UP, 1993. 107-23.

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. *The Social Contract and the Discourses*. Trans. G. D. H. Cole. Rev. ed. New York and Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973.

Shelley, Mary. *The Last Man*. Ed. and intro. Jane Blumberg. The Novels and Selected Works of Mary Shelley. London: William Pickering, 1996.

Sterrenburg, Lee. "*The Last Man* : The Anatomy of Failed Revolutions." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 33 (1978): 324-347.

Walker, Constance. "Kindertotenlieder: Mary Shelley and the Art of Losing." *Mary Shelly in Her Times*. Eds. Betty T. Bennett and Stuart Curran. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000. 134-46.

Wright, Julia. "'Little England': Anxieties of Space in Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*." *Mary Shelley's Fictions: From Frankenstein to Falkner*. Eds. Michael Eberle-Sinatra and Nora Crook. Basingstoke, England and New York, NY: Macmillan and St. Martin's, 2000. 129-49.

The Friends of Darkover: An Annotated Bibliography and History

Catherine Coker

The Friends of Darkover

The Friends of Darkover was a fan club dedicated to the works of Marion Zimmer Bradley. It started as a method of keeping contact with one another — hence the listing of fans' full address information in the newsletters. The group was born in the 1970s when Bradley's Darkover novels were being printed regularly — in fact at the rate of approximately one a year, starting in 1974. Bradley herself worked with the group regularly, promoted the group's publications, and acted variously as both an editor and a contributor. Members could keep each other apprised of convention visitations and appearances and exchange opinions and theories about Bradley's works. Creative fan work — including fiction, poetry, and critical nonfiction, soon began appearing as well.

The importance of these works lies in the documentation of both the author and her fans.

Marion Zimmer Bradley was the first author to pioneer the idea of a "shared universe" and actively encourage others to write within it. This in turn encouraged budding writers who are now themselves serious and well-known members of the science fiction and fantasy field: writers such as Mercedes Lackey, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Diana Paxson, Deborah Wheeler, and Elisabeth Waters, among others. It is notable that, years after her death, several of these writers are still continuing Bradley's work in the universes of the Darkover and Avalon series.

This bibliography attempts to document as fully as possible the publications produced by the Friends with a guide to the works reprinted. Given the nature of amateur publishing, not all fanzines were completely available for reference at the time this paper was written. Publication data is given as thoroughly as possible under the circumstances. I have also noted where possible locations of copies of these items for researchers' convenience.

The Darkover Newsletter

Note: Issues 60-63 and 65-70 can be found at Arizona State University. Issues Reprint 1/2/3 and 4-27, 31-34, 52, 54-56, 58, 62, and 64 can be found at Texas A&M University. The average size is 28 cm.

The early issues of *The Darkover Newsletter* were compiled and edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley and her husband Walter Breen. Issue number three was turned over to Ted Bryan, and by the latter issues, numbering in the fifties and sixties, the editorship was largely in the hands of Ann Sharp, with a "Letter from MZB" feature by Bradley and letter responses written by Sharp, Bradley, and Elisabeth Waters.

It has been difficult to determine exactly how many issues were published: it was at best an irregular publication, produced entirely by fans and not at all mass-circulated, though in general they aimed for three issues per year. In fact, issues could only be obtained by mail order or through tables at science fiction conventions. The earliest issues were photocopied and collated by hand in "collating parties" at Friends' members' homes in Berkeley. The first issue is dated March 1976; the last issue I have seen is issue 64 and is dated March 1994, though records on OCLC Worldcat report a run of seventy issues. Elisabeth Waters, secretary to Marion Zimmer Bradley, recalls that there were about fifty issues published: 1-29 consecutively over a period of time, followed by a gap of several years, and then the remainder.[1] At about issue 50, most of the staff became involved with a new publishing venture: *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine*, the first issue of which was published in Summer 1988. The *Newsletter*'s staff and efforts completely dissolved into that publication by the mid-1990s.[2]

Issues of the *Darkover Newsletter* average around fifteen to twenty pages or so apiece, with some as short as seven pages and others longer than forty pages. They were generally printed on colored paper, with older issues usually printed on white, green, tan, and medium blue, and latter issues printed on yellow or light blue. Some reprinted issues have white pages and colored covers. The contents generally consist of fan letters in the "Relays" where fans could write mini-essays on the Darkovan topic of choice or other work by Bradley, and others could respond. It is notable that the older issues would supply full contact information for the individual (full address information and sometimes phone numbers) while latter day issues just provided names and locations. This documents the change in fandom and privacy issues over the latter half of the twentieth century, as the small, tightly-knit groups of the 1960s and 1970s gave way to the larger groups and the more common use of pen names in the 1980s and 1990s.

Starstone

Note: Issues 1 and 2 can be found at Bowling Green State University. Size: 28 cm.

Starstone was an offshoot of content from *The Darkover Newsletter*. These magazines were compilations of short stories, poems, and other creative content that could not be fitted into the smaller, more regularly published newsletter. When the newsletter began holding contests for poems and stories — well, those entries needed to go somewhere, didn't they? And so the magazine was born.

It was largely sold by mail-order and through conventions tables. It has also been difficult to determine the number of issues published. Listed below are the contents of the five issues that I was able to track down; issue number five records plans for a sixth issue, but it is unclear as to whether it was ever actually published. The demise of the publication itself is a bit of a mystery: there were delays with issue number five due to the rising cost of paper and printing materials, but this may or may not have been the only reason it collapsed. For one thing, the DAW anthologies began appearing regularly starting in 1980, so it is reasonable to assume that fan-generated content would spill more into a legitimized publication rather than a fan-produced one.

Similar to the *Newsletter*, issues of *Starstone* were photocopies stapled between colored photocopy paper covers. *Starstone* covers were generally illustrated with scenes or characters from the stories.

Starstone 1.

January 1978. 28 cm. 69 pp. A Thendara House Publication. Edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen.

Front Cover (light green paper): "Melitta on Horny-Pig" (from *Winds of Darkover*) by Terri Windling.

Back Cover: "The Sword of Sharra and the Sword of Aldones" by Rita Freidan.

Interior graphics on page 2 by Catherine Shore.

Interior graphics on pages 4, 9, 15, 52, and 66 by Diana L. Paxson.

Interior graphics on pages 26, 30, and 32 by Juanita Coulson.

Interior graphics on page 3, 68, and 70 by Rita Freidin.

Interior graphics on page 25 by Susan Fisher.

Interior graphics on page 19, 40, 43, and 58 by Walter Breen.

Table of Contents:

"Darkover Summer Snow" by Eileen Ledbetter. p. 4-24.

"Darkovan Exile (poem)" by Diana L. Paxson. p. 25.

"A Meeting in the Hyades" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 26-39. Note: This was a republication of a story first published in Bradley's Tolkien-themed fanzine, *Anduril* in 1962, though the story was written in 1954 or 1955. In this first manifestation of Darkover, the world is called Valeron and the Comyn are called the Seveners. This story's background is similar to another early story, "Adventure in Charin" that was first published in the 1954 fanzine *Ghuvna*.

"Fragment from *The Spell Sword*" by Paul Edwin Zimmer. p. 40-42. Note: Bradley's brother contributed to the fight scenes of several of her works; this excerpt was not in the published text. He also co-authored three books with her.

"A Bump in the Nights (poem)" by Everett Avila. p. 42.

"Aging on Darkover (nonfiction)" by F. L. Wilkinson. p. 43-44.

"Adjustment" by Jacqueline Lichtenberg. p. 45-47.

"Lament of a Comyn Keeper (poem)" by Cynthia McQuillin. p. 47.

"The Keeper's Price" by Lisa Waters & MZB. p. 48-57.

"Field Notes on Intimate Relationships" by Marci Segal. p. 58-68.

"In our Next Issue Issue" by MZB. p. 69.

Starstone 2.

June 1978. A Thendara House Publication. Edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen. 28 cm. 81 pp.

Front Cover (tan paper): "It is Ill Done to Keep a Dragon Chained For Roasting Your Meat" by Amy Falkowitz.

Back Cover: "Blessed Cassilda" by Patricia Munson.

Interior graphics by Walter Breen on pages 2-3, 8, 21, 24, 26, 27, 33, 42.

Interior graphics by Susan Fisher on pages 33 and 63.

Interior graphics by Rita Freidin on pages 26 and 27.

Interior graphic by Linda MacKendrick on page 7.

Interior graphics by Patricia Munson on pages 8, 9, 12, 17, 42, 76.

Interior graphic by Stella Nemeth on page 77.

Interior graphic by Diana Paxson on pages 19 and 34.

Interior graphic by Joan Verba on page 49.

Table of Contents:

"To Our Readers and Contributors" by MZB. p. 4-5, 58.

"Ski the Hellers!" By Linda MacKendrick. p. 7.

"There is Always an Alternative" by Patricia Mathews. p. 8-12.

“A Psychological View of Darkovan Sexual Behavior (nonfiction)” by Janet Prato. p. 13-17.

“Lira’s Waltz (poem)” by Wendy Reed. p. 19.

“Late Summer Meeting” by C. McQuillin. p. 21-24.

“Chieri Lament (poem)” by MZB. p. 25.

“Bredini” by Penny Ziegler. p. 26-33.

“Amazon Fosterlings’ Rhyme (poem)” by Martha Brummett. p. 33.

“The Tale of Durraman’s Donkey” by Eileen Ledbetter. p. 34-41.

“Soliloquy: Leonie Hastur (poem)” by Rhonda Hill. p. 42.

“Dyan Ardais and the Ethical Problem (nonfiction)” by F. R. Wilkinson. p. 44-48.

“Darkover: My Unknown World (poem)” by Patricia Williams. p. 48.

“The Gift” by Joam M. Verba. p. 49-58.

“Betrayer and Betrayed” by Linda Frankel. p. 59-63.

“Incident on Vainwal” by Ernest Fitzwilliam. p. 64-66.

“The Lesson of the Inn” by MZB. p. 68-76.

“Letter to Hilary” by Marcia Ristow. p. 77.

“Blank Crystals (letters).” p. 79-80.

“In Our Next Issues” by MZB. p. 81.

Starstone.

Unnumbered issue [Number 3]. December 1978. 28 cm. 120 pp. A Thendara House Publication.

Edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter Breen.

Front Cover (blue paper): [Untitled illustration] by Walter Breen.

Back Cover: No artwork on back.

Table of Contents:

“The Rescue” by Linda MacKendrick. p. 4-15.

“A Princess on the Doorstep” by Patricia Mathews. p. 16-23.

“Encounter in the Snow” by Cynthia Anderson Frazer. p. 24-27.

“Exile (Poem)” by Cynthia McQuillin. p. 27.

“Parting Gift” by ‘Elfrida Rivers’. p. 28-32. Note: “Elfrida” was Bradley’s name in the Society of Creative Anachronism events. It is unclear if this story is by Bradley or by a Bradley admirer, though the probability that it was Bradley is very high.

"Search for Yesterday (poem)" by Sharrie n'ha Verana/Sherry Kramer. p. 33. Note: in the first edition of this magazine, the story is credited to Sherry Schmidt. This was corrected in later editions.

"Storm on Dammerung" by Ernest Fitzwilliam. p. 34-54, 112-120.

"The Sociological Impact . . ." by Cynthia Anderson Frazer. p. 55.

"Vai Dom" by Diana Paxson. p. 56-66.

"Song of the Sharra Rebellion (poem)" by Sharrie n'ha Verana/Sherry Kramer. p. 67. Note: in the first edition of this magazine, the story is credited to Sherry Schmidt. This was corrected in later editions.

"The OTHER PLANET SAVERS by Fortunately Anonymous: Translation and commentary" by Walter Breen. p. 68-81, 91. Note: The German translator of *The Planet Savers* (1962) took it for granted that he could add material to lengthen the book for publication overseas. MZB was unimpressed when she discovered this (the edition had a, to her, inexplicable illustration of characters caught in a net), and ultimately decided to add such a scene in *Star of Danger* (1965). Breen here translates that original scene in this issue. (This episode is also recounted in "A Darkover Retrospective," published first in *Fantisiae*, a fanzine, and later in an omnibus edition of *The Planet Savers and the Sword of Aldones* (1980).

"ALL the Winners!" by MZB for the judges. p. 82-83.

"Now Marion . . ." (Editorial, about the Contest) by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 84-91. Note: These and the stories below are the winners of a Darkover short story contest.

"Journey to Newskye" FIRST PRIZE TIE by Mary Frey. p. 92-102.

"A Simple Dream" FIRST PRIZE TIE by Penny Ziegler. p. 103-109.

"Magda Takes the Oath: Diptvch" by Diana Paxson. p. 110-119.

"After Dammerung (poems)" by Lerrys Ridenow, tr. E. Fitzwilliam. p. 120.

"SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!" by MZB. p. 121. Note: This was an ad/announcement for Gregg Press Books, a limited edition press house. They produced a number of Darkover books on acid-free paper in hardcover format, when previous editions of the books had been limited to paperback..

Starstone #4.

1980. Published by Friends of Darkover. 28 cm. Edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley and Walter J. Breen. No library records found. Exact pagination of items unknown.

Front cover: "The Forbidden Tower" by Terri Windling.

Back Cover: [Untitled] by Fiona Zimmer.

Table of Contents:

"The Fall of Neskaya" by Roger Bermingham. Illustrated by Kevin Reeder & Pat Munson. p. 2

"Choices" by Cynthia Anderson Frazer. p. 9

"Esa Yllana (poem)" by Rhonda Hill. p. 13

"Awakening" by Eileen Ledbetter. p. 14

"Comyn Lord (poem)" by Paula Hurst. p. 24

"Blood of a Beast" by Patricia Mathews. p. 25

"Duty" by Melinda Anne Holley. p. 29

"The Dimover National Anthem (song)" by Phillip and Jo Wayne and Cindy McQuillin. Illustrated by Walter Breen. p. 30

"At Nevarsin: Valdir and Valentine" by Mary Frances Zambreno. p. 32

Second Prize Story/Short Story contest

"The Chieri Grove (poem") by Paula Crunk. p. 42

"Cross-Rough" by John Hopfner (A Special Mention Story). p. 43

"Farewell to Caranon" by Jonathan Shipley. p. 55

"Suicide is Painless" by Patricia Matthews. p. 65

"Brothers Search" by Mary Frances Zanbreno (poem). p. 67

"Judith's Song." Words and Music by Linda von Braskat-Crowe. Illustrations by Walter Breen. p. 68

"A Change of Heart" by Patricia Partridge. p. 70

"Di Catenas (poem)" by Sharrie n'ha Verana. p. 83

"A Gift of Words" by Marci Segal. Illustration by Patricia Munson. p. 84

"Firiel's Lament (poem)" by Dusti Wiebe. Illustrations by Walter Breen. p. 95

"Callista's Song (song)" by Judy Gerjuoy. p. 96

Credits for Illustrations.

Darkover Short Story Contest-inside back cover.

Starstone #5.

March 1982. Copyright (c) 1982 Friends of Darkover. 28 cm. 59 pp.

Front Cover (blue paper): Illustrating the Ballad of Hastur and Cassilda, by Signe Landon.

Back Cover: Illustrating Spell Sword, by Kevin Reeder.

Interior graphic: "Elorie and the Arilinn Circle" by Amy Harlib on page 33.

Interior graphic: "Sword Dance" by Jane Fancher on page 42.

Table of Contents:

"Editorial" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 1, 36.

"Clingfire" by Jane Brae-Bedell. p. 2-10. Note: This story is illustrated by Jane Fancher on pages 2,4, and 8.

"Test of Honor" by Phillip Wayne. p. 11-14.

"Journey's End" by Paula Crunk. p. 15-21. Note: This story is illustrated by Amy Harlib on page 21.

"Beyond Honor" by Cynthia McQuillin. p. 22-33. Note: This story is illustrated by Diana Paxson on pages 30 and 33.

"Crossover" by Cynthia Anderson Frazer. p. 34-36.

"Genesis" by Ernest Fitzwilliam. p. 37-41. Note: This story is illustrated by Laeli Williams on page 39.

"Master of Leynier" by Patricia Mathews. p. 43-50. Note: This story is illustrated by Laeli Williams on page 42 and 44.

"This Much at Least" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 51-58. Note: Uncredited illustration page 51.

Other Publications

Through the 1970s and 1980s, the Friends continued to publish intermittent pamphlets of various kinds revolving around Darkover. The following attempts at a complete listing of these publications. Due to the nature of fan publishing, complete data is not always available. When noted, complete dates and credits are given.

Bitter Honeymoon and Other Stories The Amorous Adventures of Dyan Ardais.

1982: Friends of Darkover. 28 cm. 41 pp.

Front Cover (light green paper): Illustrated by Linda Leach.

Back Cover: Illustrated by Amy Harlib. Note: No library records could be found.

Table of Contents:

"Editorial" by MZB. p. 3.

"Alazais" by Virginia de Marce. p. 5-9. Note: This story is illustrated on page 4 by Linda Leach.

"Once for Duty" by Katherine Ann Gorman. p. 10-16. Note: This story is illustrated on page 10 by Alberta Stout.

"Sybella" by Patricia Partridge. p. 17-22. Note: This story is illustrated on page 18 by Linda Leach.

"Janu (poem)" by C. R. Maclamore. p. 22.

"A Man of Impulse" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 23-31.

"Bitter Honeymoon" by Roberta Rogow. p. 33-41. Note: This story is illustrated on page 41 by Linda Leach.

Costume and Clothing as a Cultural Index on Darkover by Comparative Culture Study Series

Department of Alien Anthropology, Imperial University of Terra.

1979, Friends of Darkover. 28 cm. 27 pp.Thendara House Publication #2, written and illustrated by Diana L. Paxson in close collaboration with Marion Zimmer Bradley, copyright 1977. Notes: "Series editor is Roderic Sant'angelo, University of Terra."

The supplement, *Fashions from the Hellers* was printed for Friends of Darkover Midwinter Festival and Grand Council Meeting in Berkeley, California, January 27, 1979. This piece was written by Jane Sibley.

This booklet went through four editions. The first two seem to not have had the Hellers supplement. A copy is located at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Front Cover (light green paper): Unillustrated.

Illustrations:

"Comyn Nobles on Horseback — Near Thendara." p. 4.

"Primitive Period Costumes." p. 13.

"Aristocratic Costume During the Ages of Chaos — Formal." p. 15.

"Clothing Worn in the Towers." p. 18.

"Village Costume in the Venza Hills." p. 20.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction." p. 2.

"Darkovan Background." p. 3-4.

"Men's Clothing." p. 5-7.

"Women's Clothing." p. 8-10.

"Free Amazon Costume." p. 11.

"Fabrics and Colors." p. 12.

"A Note on the History of Costume on Darkover." p. 13-18.

"Addenda." p. 19.

"Fashions from the Hellers." p. 20-27.

Darkovan Language Review #1.

Spring 1978: Published April 1978 by Thendara Council. Edited by Walter Breen. 28 cm. Blue paper cover. Note: Though advertised as a first issue, this is the only issue known to have been printed.

Copies are located at Texas A&M University and at the University of California, Riverside.

Table of Contents:

"In the beginning (editorial)" by Walter Breen. p. 3-4.

"About our contributors" by Various. p. 5.

"Languages and Science Fiction (nonfiction)" by C. J. Cherryh. p. 7-9.

"Bredhu Hiuro (poem)" by Christopher Gilson. p. 10-11.

"The Family Verb" by Walter Breen. p. 12-20.

". . ..And Strange Sounding Names (nonfiction)" by MZB. p. 21-23.

"The Pocket song" by Randall Garrett. p. 24-27.

"A Tentative Glossary (nonfiction)" by Christopher Gilson. p. 28-42.

"Puritans, Sadists & the Martian Language (nonfiction)" by MZB. p. 43-47.

"May the Farce Be With You" by Christopher Gilson. p. 48-49.

"What's My Name in Darkovan? (nonfiction)" by MZB. p. 50-54.

"Last Words" by Various. p. 54.

The Gemini Problem: A Study in Darkover.

Breen, Walter. 1975. 28 cm. 34 pp. Notes: This booklet went through three editions. A copy of the third edition is held at Brown University. Exact pagination of items unknown.

Table of Contents:

"How to Create a World."

"Themes & Variations."

"How to Write A Darkover Novel."

"Toward a Sociology of Telepaths."

Legends of Hastur and Cassilda.

1979: Friends of Darkover. 28 cm. 20 pp.

Front Cover (light blue paper): Illustrated by Mary Jean Holmes.

Note: No library records could be found. Interior graphic for Table of Contents by Rita Friedin.

Table of Contents:

"The Ballad of Hastur and Cassilda" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 1-5. Note: Interior graphic on page 2 by Leslie Williams.Interior graphic on page 5 by Carol Felker.

"The Legend of Lady Bruna" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 6-9. Note: Interior graphic on page 9 by Leslie Williams.

"The Spindle, a Cahuenga version of the Ballad of of Hastur and Cassilda" by Christopher Gilson. p. 10-15. Notes for the above by Christopher Gilson and Walter H. Breen Interior graphic on page 14 by Vernette Williams.

"Keral's Love Song" by Dusti Wiebe. p. 16. Note: Interior graphic on page 16 by Patricia Munson.

"Ballad of Arilinn Tower" by Bettina Helms. p. 17. Note: Interior graphic on page 17 by Patricia Munson.

"It is Ill done to Chain a Dragon for Roasting Your Meat, a Legend Retold" by Jean Rzepka. p. 18-20. Note: Interior graphic on page 20 by Cindy McQuillen.

"Editorially Speaking" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Unpaginated. Note: Interior graphic by Linda McKendrick.

The Maenads.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. 1978: Friends of Darkover. 5pp. 22 cm. Reprinted

1979: 6 pp. 19 cm. Notes: This is a poem that ran approximately three editions. The first was 25 copies with a gray cover and the second was 75 copies with a green cover. There was also an edition printed on yellow paper but it is unclear how many of those were printed. Copies are located at the University of Arizona, Michigan State University, University of Missouri St Louis, Easten New Mexico University, University of Cincinnati, and Brown University. The poem is of primary interest for the readers of Bradley's historical fantasies — *The Mists of Avalon* (1983) which is her seminal Arthurian narrative, and *The Firebrand* (1987), which covers similar themes of religious transition during the period of the Trojan War. The poem makes use of much of the Goddess worship language present in both novels' texts. Prefacing the poem is a paragraph length explanation of the Maenads in Greek mythology, how they worshipped Dionysus and killed Orpheus.

Spock: The Archetype that Would Not Die .

Breen, Walter. Foreword by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Thendara House: November 1979. 13pp. Note: This is as far as I can tell the only FoD publication not exclusively focused on the work of Bradley. It is worth noting, however, that Friends member Devra Langsam was actively involved in the *Star Trek* fandom through fanzine publications and conventions. No library records could be found. Pagination unknown.

Tales of the Free Amazons.

February 1980: Friends of Darkover. 28 cm. 73 pp. Note: A copy is located at Pennsylvania State University. Exact pagination of items unknown.

Table of Contents:

"Editorial" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

"The Tracker" by Lynne Holdom.

"Freelance" by Nina Boal.

"The Meeting" by Nina Boal.

"The Banshee" by Sharie n'ha Verana.

(Third Prize winner, STARSTONE short story contest)

"Cast off Your Chains" by Margaret Silvestri.

(Fifth Prize winner, STARSTONE short story contest)

"Ecological Impact" by Patricia Mathews.

"Ths One Time by" Joan Marie Verba.

"Excerpt: Thendara House" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

More Tales of the Free Amazons.

Publication data unknown. Note: In her introduction to the DAW anthology *Free Amazons of Darkover*, Bradley comments that the popularity of the Free Amazons/Renunciates led to the publication of the two fanzines.

The Table of Contents data is unknown, but included the short story "Knives" by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

The Darkover Cookbook.

Thendara House Publication #1. July 1977. 24 cm. 19 pp. Written and

edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley with assistance by Bjo Trimble, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Devra Langsam, and Walter Breen.

Front Cover (white paper): Illustrated by Diana Paxson.

A copy is located at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 1-3.

"Breads and Baked Goods." p. 4-7.

"Porridges and How to Serve Them." p. 8. Note: Uncredited interior graphic of rabbithorn on page 9.

"Sauces for Grains and Porridges." p. 9.

"Meats and Main Dishes." p. 10-13.

"Beverages for a Cold Day on Darkover." p. 14-15.

"Dissertation on Darkovan Cooking" by Bjo Trimble. p. 15.

"Disquisition of Darkovan Foods Available and Otherwise" by Devra Langsam. p. 17.

"Some Special Recipes for High Festivals" by Devra Langsam and Walter Breen. p. 18-19.

The White Knight Cookbook.

A Thendara House Publication, February 1981. Size unknown. 16 pp.

Written and edited by Marion Zimmer Bradley.

Front Cover: Illustrated by Walter Breen.

A copy is located at Boston University.

There is no formal Table of Contents, but it is organized as a few recipes with lengthy commentary.

The DAW Anthologies

At the suggestion of her friend and editor Donald Wollheim, founder of DAW Books, MZB began to collate the best of the Friends of Darkover Stories into professionally printed commercial books. They appeared regularly from the 1980s through the 1990s, and unlike the fanzines are comparatively easy to track down since they were mass-produced in trade editions, mostly in paperback form. Annotations will show how heavily the earlier volumes drew from the fanzines.

Advertisements soliciting stories and guidelines for submitting stories to the anthologies for consideration were published in various issues of the *Darkover Newsletter*.

Given the mass-market nature of these titles, library locations are not given. However, OCLC WorldCat searches that copies are available through nearly two hundred libraries. All paginations are taken from the paperback editions.

The Keeper's Price,

1980. 18 cm. 207 pp. Cover art by Don Maitz. Note: Stories in this anthology are arranged chronologically within the history of Darkover. Bradley also introduces each story with a short biography of the author, and in the case of her own work, a description of the story's background or inspiration. I have included these short pieces with the story's pagination.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction: A Word from the Creator of Darkover." p. 7-15.

"Vai Dom" by Diana L. Paxson. Note: Reprinted from *Starstone* #3. p. 17-31.

"The Forest" by Cythia McQuillin. p. 32-39.

"There is Always an Alternative" by Patricia Shaw Matthews. p. 40-46. Note: Reprinted from *Starstone* #2.

"The Tale of Durraman's Donkey" by Eileen Ledbetter. p. 47-57. Note: Reprinted from *Starstone* #2.

"The Fires of Her Vengeance" by Susan M. Schwartz. p. 58-69.

"The Alton Gift" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 70-73.

"Circle of Light" by Kathleen Williams. p. 74-96.

"The Answer" by Jacqueline Lichtenberg and Jean Lorrah. p. 97-109.

"The Rescue" by Linda MacKendrick. p. 110-124.

"The Keeper's Price" by Marion Zimmer Bradley with Elisabeth Waters. p. 125-138. Note: Reprinted from *Starstone* #1.

"The Hawkmaster's Son" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 139-155.

"A Simple Dream" by Penny Ziegler. p. 156-166.

"Una Paloma Blanca" by Patricia Shaw Matthews. p. 167-179.

"Blood Will Tell" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 180-196.

"Ambassador to Corresanti" by Linda Frankel. p. 197-202.

"A View from the Reconstruction: Or, Happy Times on Modern Darkover." by Paula Crunk. p. 203-206.

Sword of Chaos, and Other Stories,

1982. 18 cm. 240 pp. Cover art and frontispiece by Hannah Shapero. Note: Stories in this anthology are arranged chronologically within the history of Darkover, with short one-page historical descriptions before each section.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by MZB. p. 7-8.

"After Landfall" by MZB. p. 9.

"A Gift of Love" by Diana L. Paxson. p. 10-24.

"Dark Lady" by Jane Brae-Bedell. p. 26-34.

"A Legend of the Hellers" by Terry Tafoya. p. 35-39.

"In the Hundred Kingdoms" bt MZB. p. 40-41.

"In the Throat of the Dragon" by Susan M. Schwartz. p. 42-63.

"Wind-Music" by Mary Frances Zambreno. p. 64-79.

"Escape" by Leslie L. Williams. p. 80-81.

"Rebirth" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 82-83.

"A Sword of Chaos" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 84-103.

"Between the Ages" by MZB. p. 104-105.

"Di Catenas" by Adreienne Martine-Barnes. p. 106-115.

"Of Two Minds" by Susan M. Hansen. p. 116-125.

"Through Fire and Frost" by Dorothy J. Heydt. p. 126-142.

"In the Days of the Comyn" by MZB. p. 143-144.

"The Way of a Wolf" by Lynne Holdom. p. 145-157.

"Cold Hall" by Aly Parsons. p. 158-172.

"Lesson of the Inn" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 173-186. Note: Reprinted from *Starstone* #2.

"Confidence" by Philip Wayne. p. 187-192.

"The Empire and Beyond" by MZB. p. 193-194.

"Camilla" by Patricia Matthews. p. 195-212.

"Where the Heart Is" by Millea Kenin. p. 213-221.

"Skeptic" by Lynn Mims. p 222-238.

"A Recipe for Failure" by Millea Kenin. p. 239-240.

Free Amazons of Darkover

1985. 18 cm. 304 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox. Note: In this volume, the stories are not organized by chronology, but each story and author has a short one-page introduction by Bradley. These introductions are included within the paginations below.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction: About Amazons" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 7-14.

"The Oath of the Free Amazons" by Walter Breen. p. 15-22.

"The Legend of Lady Bruna" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 23-32. Note: Reprinted from *Legends of Hastur and Cassilda.*

"Cast Off Your Chains" by Margaret Silvestri. p. 33-49.

"The Banshee" by Sherry Kramer. p. 50-65.

"On the Trail" by Barbara Armistead. p. 66-76.

"To Open a Door" by P. Alexandra Riggs. p. 77-95.

"The Meeting" by Nina Boal. p. 96-109.

"The Mother Quest" by Diana L. Paxson. p. 110-132.

"Child of the Heart" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 133-140.

"Midwife" by Deborah Wheeler. p. 141-152.

"Recruits" by Maureen Shannon. p. 153-170.

"A Different Kind of Courage" by Mercedes Lackey. p. 171-189.

"Knives" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 190-207.

"Tactics" by Jane M.H. Bigelow. p. 208-226.

"This One Time" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 227-239.

"Her Own Blood" by Charlotte Carlson. p. 240-257.

"Camel's Nose" by Susan Holtzer. p. 258-273.

"Girls Will Be Girls" by Patricia Shaw-Matthews. p. 274-285.

"Growing Pains" by Susan M. Schwartz. p. 286-301.

"Oath of the Free Amazons: Terran Version" by Jaida n'ha Sandra. p. 302-304.

The Other Side of the Mirror

1987. 18 cm. 303 pp.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-12.

"The Other Side of the Mirror" by Patricia Floss. p. 13-79.

"Bride Price" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 80-93.

"Everything But Freedom" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 94-208.

"Oathbreaker" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 209-232.

"Blood Hunt" by Linda Frankel. p. 233-303.

Red Sun of Darkover

1987. 18 cm. 287 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox. Note: In this and all following volumes stories are given a short introduction by Bradley.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-10.

"A Different Kind of Victory" by Diana L. Paxson. p. 11-31.

"The Ballad of Hastur and Cassilda" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Note: Reprinted from *Legends of Hastur and Cassilda*. p. 32-38.

"Flight" by Nina Boal. p. 39-52.

"Salt" by Diann Partridge. p.53-65.

"The Wasteland" by Deborah Wheeler. p. 66-84.

"A Cell Opens" by Joseph Wilcox. p. 85-107.

"The Sum of the Parts" by Dorothy J. Heydt. p. 108-131.

"Devil's Advocate" by Patricia Anne Buard. p. 132-148.

"Kihar" by Vera Nazarian. p. 149-173.

"Playfellow" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 174-186.

"Different Path" by Penny Buchanan. p. 187-208.

"The Shadow" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 209-232.

"Coils" by Patrica Shaw Matthews. p. 233-246.

"The Promise" by Mary Fenoglio. p. 247-268.

"The Dare" by Marny Whiteaker. p. 269-287.

Four Moons of Darkover

1988. 18 cm. 284 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-12.

"The Jackal" by Vera Nazarian. p. 13-40.

"Death's Scepter" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 41-53.

"A King's Ransom" by Kay Morgan Douglas. p. 54-65.

"Man of Impulse" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 66-86. Note: Reprinted from *Bitter Honeymoon and Other Stories: Amorous Adventures of Dyan Ardais.*

"Swarm Song" by Roxana Pierson. p. 87-96.

"Out of Ashes" by Pat Cirone. p. 97-112.

"My Father's Son" by Meg MacDonald. p. 113-130.

"House Rules" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 131-142.

"To Challenge Fate" by Sandra Morrese. p. 143-164.

"Devourer Within" by Margaret L. Carter. p. 165-181.

"Sin Catenas" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 182-193.

"Circles" by G.R. Sixbury. p. 194-214.

"Festival Night" by Dorothy J. Heydt. p. 215-232.

"Laughing Matter" by Rachel R. Walker. p. 233-242.

"Mourning" by Audrey J. Fulton. p. 243-251.

"The Death of Brendon Ensolare" by Deborah Wheeler. p. 252-279.

"Sort of Chaos" by Millea Kenin. p. 280-284.

Domains of Darkover

1990. 18 cm. 254 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-12.

"Acurrhir Todo; Nada Perdonad" by Deborah Wheeler. p. 13-28.

"Object Lesson" by Mercedes Lackey. p. 29-39.

"Beginnings" by Cynthia Drolet. p. 40-52.

"Clingfire" by Patricia Duffy Novak. p. 53-62.

"Death in Thendara" by Dorothy J. Heydt. p. 63-83.

"Firetrap" by Elisabeth Waters and Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 84-93.

"Friends" by Judith Kobylecky. p. 94-107.

"Manchild" by L.D. Woeltjen. p. 108-120.

"Just a Touch…" by Lynne Armstrong-Jones. p. 121-126.

"Mind-Eater" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 127-139.

"Mists" by Meg MacDonald. p. 140-153.

"Our Little Rabbit" by Mary Frey. p. 154-175.

"The Gift from Ardais" by Barbara Denz. p. 176-190.

"The Horse Race" by Diann Patridge. p. 191-203.

"The Plague" by Janet Rhodes. p. 204-224.

"The Tapestry" by Micole Sudberg. p. 225-232.

"To Serve Kihar" by Judith Sampson. p. 233-254.

Renunciates of Darkover

1991. 18 cm. 317 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox.

Table of Contents:

"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-11.

"Strife" by Michel Avery. p. 12-30.

"Amazon Excerpt" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 31-50.

"Broken Vows" by Annette Rodriguez. p. 51-62.

"If Only Banshees Could See" by Janet R. Rhodes. p. 63-84.

"A Midsummer Night's Gift" by Deborah Wheeler. p. 85-96.

"The Honor of the Guild" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 97-109.

"A Butterfly Season" by Diana L. Paxson. p. 110-123.

"Misjudged Situations" by Kelly B. Jaggers. p. 124-128.

"Awakening" by Mary Fenoglio. p. 129-151.

"Carlina's Calling" by Patricia Duffy Novak. p. 152-161.

"A Beginning" by Judith Kobylecky. p. 162-164.

"Set a Thief" by Mercedes Lackey. p. 165-181.

"Shut-In" by Jean Lamb. p. 182-186.

"Danila's Song" by Vera Nazarian. p. 187-205.

"A Proper Escort" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 206-215.

"The Lesson in the Foothills" by Lynne Armstrong-Jones. p. 216-220.

"Summer Fair" by Emily Alward. p. 221-230.

"Varzil's Adventures" by Diann Patrdige. p. 231-242.

"To Touch a Comyn" by Andrew F. Rey. p. 243-266.
"About Time" by Pat Cirone. p. 267-282.
"Family Visit" by Margaret L. Carter. p. 283-297.
"Dalereuth Guild House" by Priscilla W. Armstrong. p. 298-317.

Leroni of Darkover

1991. 18 cm. 334 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox.

Table of Contents:
"Introduction" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-11.
"Building" by Lynn Michals. p. 12-20.
"The Ferment" by Janet Rhodes. p. 21-36.
"Wings" by Diana Gill. p. 37-45.
"The Rebels" by Deborah J. Mays. p. 46-67.
"A Dance for Darkover" by Vera Nazarian. p. 68-94.
"There is Always Someone" by Jacquie Groom. p. 95-104.
"Reunion" by Lawrence Schimel. p. 105-107.
"A Way Through the Fog" by Pat Cirone. p. 108-120.
"The Gods' Gift" by Mary Frey. p. 121-141.
"The Speaking Touch" by Margaret L. Carter. p. 142-158.
"The Bargain" by Michel Avery. p. 159-175.
"The Witch of the Kilghard Hills" by Aimee Kratts. p. 176-192.
"The Gift" by Lynne Armstrong-Jones. p. 193-199.
"Invitation to Chaos" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 200-223.
"The Keeper's Peace" by Patricia Duffy Novak. p. 224-243.
"Food for the Worms" by Roxana Pierson. p. 244-250.
"Childish Pranks" by Diann Patridge. p. 251-262.
"Cherilly's Law" by Janni Lee Simner. p. 263-275.
"Avarra's Children" by Dorothy J. Heydt. p. 276-304.
"The Tower at New Skye" by Priscilla W. Armstrong. p. 305-327.
"Homecoming" by Lana Young. p. 328-331.
"A Meeting of Minds" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 332-334.

Towers of Darkover

1993. 18 cm. 336 pp. Cover art by Richard Hescox.

Table of Contents:

“Editorial” by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 9-13.

“Love of the Banshee” by Lynne Armstrong-Jones. p. 14-21.

“The Wind Man” by Dorothy J. Heydt. p. 22-43.

“Shelter” by Nina Boal. p. 44-62.

“Carmen’s Flight” by Margaret L. Carter. p. 63-80.

“Ten Minutes or So” by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 81-94.

“Victory’s Cost” by Pat Cirone. p. 95-116.

“Kefan Mcilroy is Snared” by Aletha Biedermann-Wiens. p. 117-127.

“Rosa the Washerwoman” by Mary Ellen Fletcher. p. 128-134.

“Like a Moth to the Flame” by Emily Alward. p. 135-156.

“A Change of View” by Judith Kobylecky. p. 157-165.

“Choices” by Lynn Michaels. p. 166-173.

“A Lesser Life” by Patricia Duffy Novak. p. 174-195.

“Summer Storms” by G.R. Sixbury. p. 196-221.

“Conscience” by Alexandra Sarris. p. 222-234.

“Shame” by Charley Pearson. p. 235-249.

“The Frontier” by Diana L. Paxson. p. 250-272.

“The Aillard Anomaly” by Diann Patridge. p. 273-289.

“Destined for the Tower” by Elisabeth Waters and Deborah Wheeler. p. 290-306.

“Madwoman of the Kilghard Hills” by Joan Marie Verba. p. 307-322.

“I’m a Big Cat Now” by David R. Heydt. p. 323-336.

Marion Zimmer Bradley’s Darkover

1993. 18 cm. 335 pp. All stories from this collection were written by Marion Zimmer Bradley. Most were reprints, with a few stories being unique to this particular anthology. The stories are divided into sections with a short one introduction on each topic. Since Bradley wrote all the stories herself, there are no prefacing author introductions. Cover art by David Cherry.

Table of Contents:

“Introduction.” p. ix-xi.

“Free Amazons.” p. 13-14.

“To Keep the Oath.” p. 15-42.

“Amazon Fragment.” p. 43-60. Note: Reprinted and retitled from “Amazon Excerpt” in *Darkover Newsletter* Issue 9/10, pp. 7-16, 41.

“House Rules.” p. 61-69. Note: Reprint from *Four Moons of Darkover*.

“Knives.” p. 70-85. Note: Reprint from *Free Amazons of Darkover*.

“Hilary.” p. 87.

“Firetrap” by Elisabeth Waters and Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 89-97. Note: Reprint from *Domains of Darkover*.

“The Keeper’s Price” by Elisabeth Waters and Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 98-111. Note: Reprint from *Starstone #1* and *The Keeper’s Price*.

“The Lesson of the Inn.” p. 112-126. Note: Reprint from *Starstone #2*.

“Hilary’s Homecoming.” p. 127-142.

“Hilary’s Wedding.” p. 143-164.

“Rohana.” p. 165.

“Everything But Freedom.” p. 167-257. Note: Reprint from *Other Side of the Mirror*.

“Dyan Ardais.” p. 259-260.

“Oathbreaker.” p. 261-279. Note: Reprint from *Other Side of the Mirror*.

“The Hawkmaster’s Son.” p. 280-297. Note: Reprint from *The Keeper’s Price*.

“A Man of Impulse.” p. 298-314. Note: Reprint from *Bitter Honeymoon* and the *Four Moons* anthology.

“The Shadow.” p. 315-335. Note: Reprint from *Red Sun of Darkover*.

Snows of Darkover

1994. 18 cm. 332 pp. Cover art by Tim White.

Table of Contents:

“Introduction” by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. ix.

“The Yearbride” by Lee Martindale. p. 11-15.

“Cradle of Lies” by Deborah Wheeler. p. 16-34.

“Power” by Lynn Armstrong-Jones. p. 35-41.

"Upholding Tradition" by Michel Avery. p. 42-54.

"The Place Between" by Diana L. Paxson. p. 55-79.

"Kadarin's Tears" by Patricia Duffy Novak. p. 80-101.

"The Awakening" by Roxana Pierson." p. 102-118.

"Safe Passage" by Joan Marie Verba. p. 119-129.

"Garron's Gift" by Janet R. Rhodes. p. 130-153.

"The Chieri's Godchild" by Cythia McQuillin. p. 154-162.

"Fire in the Hellers" by Patricia Shaw Matthews. p. 163-173.

"A Matter of Perception" by Lena Gore. p. 174-178.

"Poetic License" by Mercedes Lackey. p. 179-194.

"The Midwinter's Gifts" by Jane Edgeworth. p. 195-218.

"The MacAran Legacy" by Toni Berry. p. 219-238.

"The Word of a Hastur" by Marion Zimmer Bradley. p. 239-246.

"Matrix Blue" by C. Frances. p. 247-251.

"Shards" by Nina Boal. p. 252-260.

"Briana's Birthright" by Suzanne Burke. p. 261-276.

"In the Eye of the Beholder" by Linda Anfuso. p. 277-287.

"Transformation" by Alexandra Sarris. p. 288-303.

"Amends" by G.R. Sixbury. p. 304-314.

"A Capella" by Elisabeth Waters. p. 315-332.

The End of the Friends

The Friends of Darkover ceased unofficial publications in the late 1990s. The reasons for this are two-fold: first, Marion Zimmer Bradley started work editing and publishing *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine*, a professional, "slick" paper publication that took over the time and effort of herself and her cohorts. The magazine featured professionally several of the authors who had premiered in the amateur works.

The second reason for the dissolution is more sad and sour: in a prefacing letter to the *Darkover Newsletter* Issue 58, Bradley reported her version of what became known as "the Contraband Incident." Bradley was working on a new Darkover novel, tentatively titled *Contraband*, that would feature the ever-popular character Dyan Ardais. As it happened, a fan writer was writing a novel on the same subject. Bradley liked the fan novelist's ideas and wanted to incorporate them into her own work; she contacted the writer. In exchange for the use of the fan's ideas, the fan would receive a tidy sum of money and an acknowledgement in Bradley's book. The fan disagreed: she wanted a byline. Darkover fans naturally fell in line with Bradley, berating the fan for her "selfishness." Lawsuits over the matter of copyright infringements seemed imminent: on the one hand, Darkover was Bradley's bread and butter; on the other hand she had encouraged fan work through sharing that universe for some twenty years. There was no clear-cut path for those involved. Betsy Wollheim, Bradley's publisher and the wife of her late friend Donald, would not take the manuscript for publication. Bradley was left with two years of work now gone, an unprintable text, and very stung feelings. She edited the last Darkover anthology and continued to contribute to the *Darkover Newsletter* 'til the last, but otherwise ordered a moratorium on all Darkover writings — including those of the Friends.

Today, you can find various copies of these various works online, if you are lucky. The average price of what was once a $2 fanzine now averages about $20-$35 or more, depending on its condition and rarity — and this is assuming you can find a copy at all. The inflation rate of the trade anthologies isn't nearly so steep, but they aren't much better: the anthologies from the mid-1990s had cover prices of around $5.99; they are now usually found for around $15. The collecting game is seldom kind to fans. In addition, relatively few libraries collect amateur publications at all, let alone those in the science fiction field; tracking copies of these works down is a haphazard business that has met with mixed success and largely relied on "word of mouth" emails.The Friends of Darkover live on through the annual DarkoverCon that takes place each November in Baltimore. And of course, you can find the odd fanzine or book in a bookstall or table.

Some Notes for Further Research

Due to the unique nature of amateur publications, only a handful of special collections libraries have copies of the publications mentioned above. Unsurprisingly, the DAW anthologies are much easier to find, particularly in paperback. It is worth noting that Bradley's personal papers, held at Boston University, will become open to the public in September 2009. As a final note to researchers, I would like to remind readers of "invisible collections" — runs or issues of fanzines that are often not cataloged individually but instead are hidden within lengthy finding guides to larger collections of papers and materials. And of course, always ask your friendly special collections librarian for recommendations on other resources.

In the meantime, Rosemarie Arbur's Starmont Reader's Guide *Marion Zimmer Bradley* (1986; 138 pp.) remains the best critical and biographical overview of much of Bradley's work.

Phil Stephensen-Payne's *Marion Zimmer Bradley:Mistress of Magic* (1991; 60 pp) is useful as it identifies work written under pseudonyms, lists multiple editions and differences (if any) from edition to edition of her works; and credits cover artwork of each edition to the artist.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This piece absolutely could not have been written without the help of Judy Gerjuoy, who was a Friend of Darkover (and MZB) for many years. She has provided me with loads of invaluable help, annotation, notes, and giggles while working on this article.

ENDNOTES

1. Personal communication from Elisabeth Waters. April 10, 2008.

2. *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine* sadly dissolved after the author's death in 1999. The last issue published was number 50, in December 2000.

Re-Evaluating Suvin: Brown Girl in the Ring as Effective Magical Dystopia

Lee Skallerup

Introduction

Because of the centrality of technology in their nightmare visions of the future, Zamyatin's *We*, Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World* were often considered a part of the science fiction tradition while shaping our modern understanding of dystopias. And as dystopias have since been primarily understood as a sub-genre of SF, subsequent analysis became based on theories of science fiction, such as Suvin's theories of cognitive estrangement and the *novum*.

In 1990s, however, there was a perceptible shift in dystopian literature. Authors such as Fiona Farrell, John Cranna and Mike Nicol[1] began questioning the normative conventions of the genre by introducing new elements such as magic to their visibly dystopic visions of society. One such book was *Brown Girl in the Ring* by Nalo Hopkinson.[2] The narrative focuses on minority communities in futuristic inner-city Toronto, which have been cut off from the suburbs. Hopkinson, however, takes this dystopic vision and infuses it with elements of her own Afro-Caribbean heritage, a heritage that includes magic. Magic plays an essential role in the narrative, and provides the force necessary to overcome the dystopic situation. While, as mentioned above, dystopias traditionally fall under the heading of science-fiction, Hopkinson's novel challenges the perceived norms of both dystopia and science fiction.

Corresponding to this shift in dystopian technique was a shift in the theory which sought to both explain and understand it. Tom Moylan and Ralph Pordzik published two books that introduced the concepts of critical dystopia and postcolonial heterotopias. Although valuable in expanding our understanding of the dystopian genre, the foundation of these studies remains the various theories of science fiction, but especially Darko Suvin's theory of the *novum* and cognitive estrangement. Suvin, through these concepts, negates the possibility of using magic in an effective dystopian narrative, and thus Moylan and Pordzik produced studies that include magical dystopias based on a theory that negates the possibility of magical dystopias. Such projects are, at least on the surface, theoretically problematic, as they require Moylan and Pordzik to reconcile their projects with Suvin's theory – reconciliations they never attempt; reconciliations that, if we wish all dystopias, including magical dystopias, to remain a part of science fiction, can be achieved by a proper re-interpretation of both the concepts of cognitive estrangement and the *novum*.

This paper will begin by looking at the historical theoretical relationship between science fiction and dystopia. It will then proceed to demonstrate how recent theorists have failed to adequately incorporate the practical changes authors have introduced to the genre, which includes the incorporation of aspects of magical realism. *Brown Girl in the Ring* will be shown to be an example of effective magical dystopia, while also being used to illustrate how the narrative challenges the former norms of the dystopian genre. Finally, this paper will argue that Suvin's theory of cognitive estrangement must be re-evaluated – particularly in the dystopian genre – as a result of the normalization of the idea of the technological *novum*; that this normalization has necessarily led to the use of magic in the effective creation of dystopic universes; and that given this proper re-interpretation of Suvin's theories, magical dystopias are revealed to provide opportunities for new theoretical applications of his concepts.

Science Fiction, Magical Realism and Magical Dystopias

The dystopian genre has historically been associated with, or considered a sub-genre of science fiction, a genre that has technology at its core. Keith Booker states that "[s]cience has played a major role in the history of utopian thinking and in the modern turn from utopia to dystopia."[3] This sentiment is reiterated, repeated, and reinforced by a number of scholars, most importantly Krishna Kumar,[4] Alexandra Aldridge,[5] Darko Suvin,[6] and Chris Ferns.[7] Dystopias are typically studied as a sub genre of science fiction. *Science Fiction Studies* has published a number of articles dealing with dystopias. Even Pordzik and Moylan, who point to developments in the dystopian genre, essentially rely on science fiction. Moylan's book is titled *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*, and his thoughts on critical dystopias have appeared in the collection *Learning From Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition, and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia*[8] and in *Science Fiction Studies*. In fact, Moylan offers a review of Pordzik's book in said journal.[9] Pordzik himself relies heavily on Darko Suvin's theory of the *novum* for his comparative analysis, stating that "[the novum] can help to avoid the potential for confusion inherent in a cross-cultural approach to postcolonial utopian fiction [...] and therefore yields insights into the ways in which writers employ similar conventions to create new, original plot possibilities and to increase or maintain interpretive plurality."[10] It should be noted that *novum* was a term created by Suvin exclusively to explain, understand, and theorise science fiction.[11]

Instead of falling within the genre of science fiction, *Brown Girl in the Ring* seems to fall more readily into the category magical realism.[12] In the world of magical realism, there exists both the rational world and the world that runs by its own rules. It is the juxtaposition of these two worlds that makes a work a part of the magical real. This idea of the juxtaposition of two worlds is outlined in Wendy B. Faris' definition of magical realism, in fact it is implied in its name. Both the magical and the real are present, and the two worlds often collide:

> The text contains an 'irreducible element' of magic, something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as we know them... Descriptions detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world – this is the realism in magical realism...The reader may hesitate (at one point or another) between two contradictory understandings of events...We experience the closeness or near-merging of two realms, two world.[13]

Thus, it should not be surprising that the magical real is being used in the dystopian genre, particularly the critical dystopia/postcolonial heterotopian incarnation of the genre:

> Magical realist texts are subversive; their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, women. Hallucinatory scenes and events, fantastic/phantasmagoric characters are used in several of the magical realist works...to indict recent political and cultural perversions. History is inscribed, often in detail, but in such a way that actual events and existing institutions are not always privileged and are certainly not limiting: historical narrative is no longer chronicle but clairvoyance.[14]

In the subversions of the genre that look to push the boundaries of dystopias, but still question social and political situations, why not use magic realism, particularly in a sub-genre that includes postcolonial in its name, postcolonial heterotopia?

Although narratives exist that merge elements of magical realism and critical dystopias, very little has been theorized about this phenomenon. This seems to be because of the complications the marriage of genres implies, particularly if one bases their understanding of science fiction on Darko Suvin's theories. According to Suvin, science fiction (SF) relies on what he calls the *novum*: "SF is distinguished by the narrative dominance or hegemony of a fictional "novum" (novelty, innovation) validated by cognitive logic."[15] The "cognitive logic" comes from "scientific cognition" and totally "differentiates SF from the 'super natural' literary genres (mythical tales, fairy tales, and so on, as well as horror and/or heroic fantasy in that narrow sense)."[16] Cognition plays an even greater role in dystopian fiction than in SF. We as readers of dystopia must believe the probability of the *novum* socially and then scientifically. As outlined by Deer, in a dystopia "the author needs both to condemn particular social injustices and to portray the mechanisms of oppression as credible enough, as sufficiently powerful and seductive, to represent a believable evil, not an irrelevant or farfetched one."[17] The reader must achieve "cognition" in order to be pushed into social action.[18] The dystopian *novum* does not rely exclusively on scientific cognition in order to be understood, although it plays an important role. However, what happens when scientific cognition is removed from the equation and replaced by magic, that which is by definition unexplained/unexplainable?

Pordzik looks at what he calls "magic dystopias" in his chapter "Treasurehouses of the Unexpected: Magical Realism and the Transformation of Dystopian Space in Postcolonial Fiction." The chapter includes the analyses of five books that use the magical in their dystopian narrative. Pordzik states that the use of magic

> [...]undermines the cognitive constraints of the classical dystopian text—i.e. the specific rhetoric needed to convince the reader of the plausibility of the narrated world—by writing a novel that depends on the sustained opposition of two discrete systems of perception for its narrative potency and eschews interpretive closure by avoiding to let one collapse into the other.[19]

While I would agree that this is one of the effects of using magic in a dystopic text, and does lend to the narratives' ability to be critical and subversive, calling into question dominant forms of knowledge and power,[20] Pordzik neglects to harmonize this view of the evolution of the dystopian genre with Suvin's theories about cognitive estrangement and the *novum*, two concepts that Pordzik celebrates as the basis for his comparison in the second chapter of his study.[21] While he does not explicitly say so, it could be inferred by the use of the term "cognitive constraints" that the *novum* itself has become too constraining, dominant and homogenizing for the genre. Pordzik does not reconcile the concept of the *novum* and the idea of the magical dystopia.

Moylan suggests that one of the formal features that gives the critical dystopia its force is the practice of "genre blurring." As he explains: "By self-reflexively borrowing 'specific conventions from other genres', critical dystopias more often 'blur' the received boundaries of the dystopian form and thereby expand rather than diminish its creative potential for critical expression."[22] Both Moylan and Pordzik deal with significant shifts in the dystopian genre and acknowledge the possibility of the magic joining with the dystopian genre, but at the same time make no effort to reconcile this belief with Suvin's theory of the *novum*.

Peter G. Stillman offers a simplified understanding of Suvin's theory of cognitive estrangement: "critical dystopias provide a new world in which the familiar is defamiliarized by being presented outside the dominant interpretive paradigms, from a new perspective, and in a novel context."[23] My hypothesis is that magical aspects of the neo-dystopias can serve as that part of the narrative that defamiliarizes the reader. The dystopian situation, the familiar features of the dystopia, have become that which leads the reader to cognition, but it is the magic that serves as the element which innovates and invigorates the genre. Perhaps this is because the technological future that we once fantasized about has arrived or is in the process of arriving. Perhaps it is because the idea of a negative future has become cliché. Regardless, as Pordzik has pointed out, magic has arrived in dystopia, and now we are left to try and understand its role and its effects on our understanding of the genre.

Brown Girl in the Ring as Critical Dystopia

Brown Girl in the Ring is Nalo Hopkinson's first novel. It incorporates aspects of dystopia, utopia, magic realism, postcolonialsm, Canadian history along with Caribbean history and spirituality. The novel provides a site within which to question a variety of aspects of dystopia. Using magical realism, the novel also examines questions of hybridization of culture and history. The majority of the novel takes place in Toronto's inner-city, sometime in the near future:

> Imagine a cartwheel half-mired in muddy water, its hub just clearing the surface. The spokes are the satellite cities that form Metropolitan Toronto: Etobicoke and York to the west; North York to the north; Scarborough and East York to the east. The Toronto city core is the hub. The mud itself is vast Lake Ontario, which cuts Toronto off at its southern border. In fact, when water-rich Toronto was founded, it was nicknamed Muddy York, evoking the condition of its unpaved streets in springtime. Now imagine the hub of that wheel as being rusted through and through. When Toronto's economic base collapsed, investors, commerce, and government withdrew into the suburb cities, leaving the rotten core to decay. Those who stayed were the ones who couldn't or wouldn't leave. The street people. The poor people. The ones who didn't see the writing on the wall, or those who were too stubborn to give up their homes. Or who saw the decline of authority as an opportunity. As the police force left, it sparked large-scale chaos in the city core: the Riots. The satellite cities quickly raised roadblocks at their boarders to keep Toronto out. The only unguarded exit from the city core was now over water, by boat or prop plane from the Toronto Island mini-airport to the American side of Niagara Falls. In the twelve years since the Riots, repeated efforts to reclaim and rebuild the core were failing: fear of vandalism and violence was keeping 'burb people out. Rudy ruled his posse now, and he couldn't have cared less about Premier Uttley's reelection platform. (pp. 3-4)

This is the reader's introduction to Toronto of the future. This particular passage is useful to understanding not only what has happened to Toronto, but also leaves us clues as to the political situation contained within. It reiterates the attitude expressed by Rudy, the story's antagonist: "Posse ain't business with politics. Is we a-rule things here now" (p.3). Rudy and his posse of drug dealers now run the core. The aforementioned Premier Uttley needs a heart transplant, and in order to ensure that she receives a human heart (due to the outbreak of "Virus Epsilon" in pig hearts that were being used for transplants), Rudy is contacted. And he is given the orders to procure the heart by any means necessary.

The dystopic situation in the novel is quite interesting. Much like the dystopian classics, *Brown Girl* presents the reader with two possible worlds, one being the dystopic world of inner-city Toronto, cut off from the outside world. But while *We, 1984* and *Brave New World* presented the alternative as the natural, pastoral past, *Brown Girl*'s alternative is the suburbs, an alternative whose desirability the author actively questions through Ti-Jeanne. This questioning further differentiates the work from the traditional dystopian narrative. There are also similarities between the dystopian set up of *Brown Girl* and other dystopian narratives, such as *The Handmaid's Tale, Player Piano* and *Fahrenheit 451*. Erika Gottlieb calls these last three dystopias "emergency" dystopias, stating that "the new [...] ruling class does not start out with a consistent utopian ideology; it promises to deal with an emergency situation, to find an allegedly efficient solution to a crisis."[24] This would best describe how the situation degenerated in Hopkinson's dystopic Toronto. As for the plausibility of the extreme situation imagined for Toronto, Gregory Rutledge points out: "The economic problems of Miami and Detroit, both US metropolises with predominantly or significantly non-White populations in the city proper, suggest that Hopkinson's novel is not as fantastic as it would seem."[25] Although Rutledge mentions two American cities for comparison, the economic concerns that Hopkinson expresses are very real within a North American context.

Ti-Jeanne, who Nalo Hopkinson defines in an interview as representing "everywoman,"[26] is the reluctant protagonist of the novel. Through Ti-Jeanne, the reader is forced to question and re-evaluate of the relationship between utopic and dystopic ideals. Ti-Jeanne lives with her Grandmother, Gros-Jeanne and her newborn son in the Burn, which is considered one of the worst areas of Muddy York/Downtown Toronto. They have taken up residence in the "old" Riverdale Farm, growing food and herbs in the garden while having transformed the "farmhouse" into a makeshift hospital, where Gros-Jeanne administers physical (and spiritual) healing to those who come to her. Tony is the father of Ti-Jeanne's baby, and is a member of Rudy's posse. He is also a buff addict, the drug of choice of the particular time. Ti-Jeanne also "could see with more than sight. Sometimes she saw how people were going to die" (p.9). But she rejects these visions, and rejects her Caribbean heritage. She distrusts Gros-Jeanne's traditional remedies, is embarrassed by the discussion of these practices in public, tries to deny the visions that have been haunting her, flees the teaching and preaching of her grandmother, and dreams of moving out to the suburbs with Tony and their child. As the story progresses, Ti-Jeanne is forced to face her gift of being a seer, accept that Rudy is in fact her grandfather and Crazy Betty (the blind woman who wanders the streets) is her mother, and, when Gros-Jeanne is sacrificed for her heart, Ti-Jeanne is finally forced to incorporate all that she has learned in order to defeat Rudy and restore order to the Inner-City as well as to the spiritual world.

Brown Girl explores and questions the relationship between utopia and dystopia, and how we define and understand those spaces. Certainly, the initial description of the state of Downtown Toronto would lead readers to believe that we have reached a dystopian state: total isolation, abject poverty, a crime lord in charge, disinterest from those in "authentic" positions of power (the Premier, the middle and upper-class), a wall that physically confines those who live in the inner-city, cutting them off from entering the suburbs. And the attitude that the situation is less-than-ideal, to say the least, is reiterated throughout the first half of the novel by Ti-Jeanne. She is constantly dreaming of a life in the suburbs, her interpretation of a "better life":

> Maybe a little apartment in one of the suburban cities outside the Metro core. Maybe North York or Scarborough, where she's heard there were jobs and people could afford to drive cars and wear store-bought clothes. They would both find work, and Mami [Gros-Jeanne] could come to live with them and leave Toronto people to their own hell. (p.33)

Tony reiterates this sentiment when talking to Ti-Jeanne, justifying his involvement with the Posse: "And what good would that [fixing bikes] do me? Eh? Penny here, penny there, never enough to really live on, never have anything nice? Is a good way to die poor, Ti-Jeanne!" (p.22). For Tony as well, the answer to all their problems lies outside in the suburbs. For these two, the only means of success is through purchasing power, "nice things." And all of this material wealth can be obtained in the suburbs. As put by Rutledge: "For [Ti-Jeanne], the culture of romance, upward mobility, and middle-class existence, all of which stress individual as opposed to communal development, were to be preferred."[27] Rutledge goes on to explain that "various aspects of self-aggrandisement and capital accumulation…almost become a form of capitalistic mysticism individuals like Tony desperately seek to master."[28] For Ti-Jeanne and Tony especially, Muddy York has become a dystopia, because in contrast to the outside, the suburbs, where they think that they can achieve their utopian goals of "capital accumulation," Muddy York offers no such opportunities. But how "utopic" is the world outside of the Burn?

There are a few instances where life outside of the inner-city are described. One such instance is in the old library where the librarian has put up a time-line of headlines titled: "TORONTO: THE MAKING OF A DONUT HOLE" (p.10). We read on the next page the following:

> TEMAGAMI INDIANS TAKE ONTARIO TO COURT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FUNDS TEME-AUGAMI ANISHNABAI LAND CLAIM
>
> FEDERAL GOVT. CUTS TRANSFER PAYMENTS TO PROVINCE BY 30%, CITES INTERNATIONAL TRADE EMBARGO OF TEMAGAMI PINE
>
> JOBLESS RATE JUMPS 10%: TEMAGAMI LAWSUIT IS FUELLING ONTARIO RECESSION, SAYS LABOUR MINISTER
>
> CRIME AT ALL-TIME HIGH BUT BUDGET CUTS FORCE ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE TO DOWNSIZE (p.11)

The headlines go on to describe the mass-exodus of business from Toronto and the subsequent Riots. What is significant about the first headlines is the economic downturn of the entire province, not just of Toronto. This bleak economic outlook is reiterated by Premiere Uttley:

> They're going to vote for Brunner, damn his tanned, muscled hide. Or Lewis, God forbid, with her smarmy make-work programs…I had to give the blasted Indians their blasted stewardship. I practically had orders from the feds, what with Amnesty International breathing down our necks. Their international sanctions had been starving the Canadian economy for years. We needed to be able to export Temagami pine and water again. (pp. 38-9)

What this reveals is that the economic condition of the province (in fact the entire country) is still in shambles. One would have to wonder if Ti-Jeanne and Tony were really heading for greener pastures if they left the inner-city for the suburbs with the economy in the condition portrayed, necessitating "make-work programs" and relying on the export of natural resources.

Uttley also represents another "evil" of the system outside of the Burn; she only cares about being socially responsible when it is beneficial to her personal goals and interests, in this case, her re-election. Her opposition to the porcine organ farms and her insistence on receiving a human heart are rooted in how the polls would swing in her favor:

> Constantine [Uttley's advisor] tapped in some more data. 'Twenty-three percent of those polled are voters. Look at what happens to your chances of reelection when we sway them to your side by having you

> bring back voluntary human organ donation.' He keyed in the new chart. Uttley felt her eyebrows rise at the result: 62 percent voter support in her favour. (pp. 39-40)

The Premier also only granted the Native group their "blasted" stewardship after the economy has suffered enough. Neither of the decisions made by the Premier that are presented to us through the narrative reflect any social consciousness nor any motivation outside of entirely selfish ones. Although a democratic process, Uttley's reelection seems less about democratic process and more about manipulation, propaganda, which Gottlieb identifies as: "the seductive utopian promises of a dictatorship hiding behind the mask of the Messiah."[29] Not to mention that those inside Muddy York cannot vote. Is this world outside of the Burn truly better than the one inside the Burn?

Premier Uttley has her counterpart in Rudy inside the Burn. It is through Rudy that Uttley will procure her heart (illegally). And his reasons for assuming and holding power are equally as selfish as Uttley's. A former buff-addict himself, Rudy used revenge and anger to fuel his rise to power:

> "Oh I know you can't see no scar or nothing on me face now. Me does keep meself young and good-looking nowadays. No scar, no scratch, that me duppy don't fix it for me. And it take away the craving for buff, too.
>
> "So yes, posse do for me that night. And them wasn't the first one to do me bad, no, sir. From I born, people been taking advantage. Poor all me born days. Come up to Canada, no work. Me wife and all kick me out of me own house. Blasted cow. If it wasn't for me, she woulda still be cleaning rich people toilets back home, and is so she treat me. Just because me give she little slap two-three time when she make mouth run away 'pon me." Anger at the injustice of it all burned again in Rudy. But it wasn't like that now. Nobody took advantage of him now. (p.131)

Rudy, according to Rutledge, is "one whose rapacious habits for socioeconomic empowerment run unchecked..."[30] One could say the same thing about Uttley. Uttley's assistant is trained to produce the best election results by any means necessary, and only questions Uttley's decisions when they seem to indicate a "social conscience" (p.239) on her part. No one in Rudy's Posse would think to question his choices and judgment; they were all too afraid of him, for good reason. But Rudy too wears the mask of the Messiah over the face of a dictator: he offers those who are loyal to him a steady job and steady pay (something that is rare in the Burn). Given the apparent socioeconomic condition of the world outside of Toronto and the parallels between those who hold positions of power inside and outside of the inner-city, Hopkinson leads the reader to question not only the validity of Tony's and Ti-Jeanne's views of the outside as a better place, but also their opinion that the Burn is dystopic.

Ti-Jeanne begins to question her utopic dream of the suburbs when she is truly forced to make a decision as to whether to leave what has been her home for most of her life or attempt to escape to the suburbs: "The thought of the 'burbs scared Ti-Jeanne. She knew it was safer. She knew that there were hospitals and corner stores and movie theatres, but all she could imagine were broad streets with cars zipping by too fast to see who was in them, and people huddled in their houses except for jumping into their cars to drive to and from work" (p.111). When pushed and Ti-Jeanne has to decide if she is going to follow Tony: "Leave the Burn, leave her grandmother's home and the people she knew, to live in the *barren* 'burbs with a man who's rather slash buff than work. Would she do it? 'When you get settled,' she said, 'send word for me'" (p.113, emphasis added). Throughout her deliberations about life in the suburbs, she begins to realize that she belongs to a bigger family, a larger community that she would be abandoning for the "barren" suburbs. Despite Rudy's best efforts, Uttley's ignorance, and Ti-Jeanne and Tony's stubborn refusal to see it, Hopkinson shows the reader that there is nonetheless a thriving community and sense of community that has developed in downtown Toronto. As Donna Baily Nurse puts it in a review of the novel:

> What one does come away with, however, is the suffering city's tenacious spirit of community. Without money, people barter for goods. They take over public parks and build farms. Street children protect one another and ailing individuals turn to midwives and healers like Gros-Jeanne; Hopkinson insists that even in the midst of evil and destruction one discovers alcoves of kindness. [31]

The dystopic world contains redeeming elements that allow the community to survive.

Hopkinson explains why the dystopic setting was the ideal place for utopic aspirations to appear:

> And it occurred to me that most post-holocaust novels happen outside the city. I wondered about the people who stayed – because people *will* stay; they always do. I wondered what would be keeping them there, what they would be doing there, what would they have the opportunity to do there? So I came up with communities of people who were opportunists. I came up with people who were just too damn ornery to leave – the grandmother is one of those. And people who can now *form* communities in ways that seem right to them. That was also sort of an opportunity to re-link things in a fashion less citified.[32]

This type of questioning, of analysis of the traditional ideas of the dystopia are essential to the narrative's ability to transcend into a new frame of reference.

As stated by Ferns: "The result is a vision which is critical, not only of utopia, or of the society to which utopia proposes an alternative, but also of the dystopian response itself. It is this critical – and indeed, self-critical – impulse which may be seen to underlie a series of attempts to likewise transform the nature of the utopian vision."[33] The particular type of analysis and transcendence that Hopkinson narrates is reflected by Moylan in his theory of critical dystopia:

> This, as the critical dystopias give voice and space to such dispossessed and denied subjects (and, I would add, to those diminished and deprived by the accompanying economic reconfigurations), they go on to explore ways to change the present system so that such culturally and economically marginalized peoples not only survive but also try to move towards creating a social reality that is shaped by an impulse to human self-determination and ecological health rather than one constricted by the narrow and destruction logic of a system intent only on enhancing competition in order to gain more profit for a select few.[34]

Ti-Jeanne is clearly in a deficient position economically and the system of community that is discovered and, one assumes, developed at the end of the narrative is reflective of an alternate system, dissolving the traditional boundaries between the ideal and vilified worlds.

Brown Girl as Critical Magical Dystopia

Oral histories are an important part of the narrative and an important aspect of the *Brown Girl*'s critical force. And magic is a central part of Ti-Jeanne's history. But it is not the only history available to her. Cultural hybridity allows the inscription of a "space for a new form of political opposition, one fundamentally based in difference and multiplicity but now wisely and cannily organized in a fully democratic alliance politics that can talk back in larger though diverse collective voice."[35] *Brown Girl* closely associates cultural hybridity with magic; it is through magic that characters achieve cultural hybridity. By associating these two aspects, Hopkinson privileges magic as an essential element of her narrative and its critique. What differentiates Hopkinson's use of the magical from other forms of science fiction or fantasy is her postcolonial perspective, which, as put by Sarah Wood "attempts to offer localized resistance to imperialist assumptions that can be found in sf."[36]

Charles de Lint writes that "Magic realism forces the reader to view the world differently — past, present and future — and to understand not only the connections, but the relevance of those connections."[37] In *Brown Girl*, magic is used to represent the cultural heritage that Ti-Jeanne has to embrace in order to defeat Rudy and maintain the community. Wendy B. Faris points to two of the common traits of magic realism: "We experience the closeness or near-merging of two realms, two worlds" and "These fictions question received ideas about time, space and identity."[38] This closeness and questioning are acted out primarily through Ti-Jeanne. She is our key to understanding the magical world that has been presented to us. In order for her to form her identity, Ti-Jeanne must merge the two worlds that she is able to see. Faris also points out that "[t]he reader may hesitate (at one point or another) between two contradictory understandings of events -- and hence experiences some unsettling doubts."[39] Rutledge addresses how Hopkinson overcomes this hesitation on the readers' part. He describes Hopkinson's novel as "culturally challenging," pointing to the use of idiosyncrasies and Afro-Caribbean culture (shown through magic as well as language) as a possible stumbling block for non-Caribbean readers. But because the protagonist of the story is learning about her unique cultural heritage right along with the reader, it allows for "the freedom to appreciate culture…Hopkinson's FFF [futuristic fiction and fantasy] allows non-Caribbean readers – including non-Caribbean Blacks – the freedom of appreciating Afro-Caribbean culture."[40] As well, Ti-Jeanne moves back and forth from the Western culture to her native one, fusing the two together in order to achieve a solution to the obstacles she faces in the Burn.

Rutledge also describes what he calls Hopkinson's "hybridized methodology," in order to make the West African mythology more familiar to the those coming out of the Western tradition:

> …Hopkinson roots herself in an ancient oral tradition in which the traditional West African gods and the Greco-Roman gods, among many others, walked the land, sometimes in mortal guise. Frequently, the gods foisted chaos and hardship on humankind, which was subject to their sometimes benevolent, sometimes selfish, japes and manipulations. Hence, Hopkinson uses theology-based fantasy and Caribbean mysticism to personify the Afro-Caribbean gods.[41]

Although Hopkinson offers us a glimpse of the fantastic, she roots it in traditions that would be familiar, and therefore more acceptable, to the Western reader. This mix of grim reality and magic that has parallels in traditional Western culture help make *Brown Girl in the Ring* "radically unique" and at the same time, a compelling example of magic realism.

Ti-Jeanne hybridises magic/culture in order to defeat Rudy. As Rudy is trying to steal her duppy (soul), Ti-Jeanne meets up with her spirit-father, the Jab-Jab/Legbara. She is able to experience the memories of those closest to her: Rudy beating and berating her grandmother, Rudy manipulating and torturing her mother's duppy into committing murder, and seeing the horrors of what Rudy is capable of through the eyes of Tony (p 220). She concludes that "'I can't keep giving my will into other people hands no more, ain't? I have to decide what I want to do for myself'" (p.220). And she is then able to come upon a hybridized solution in order to defeat Rudy:

> She remembered her grandmother's words: *The centre pole is the bridge between the worlds*...She thought of the building she was in. The CN Tower. And she understood what it was: 1,815 feet of the tallest centre pole in the world...For like the spirit tree that the center pole symbolised, the CN Tower dug roots deep into the ground where the dead lived and pushed high into the heavens where the oldest ancestors lived. The tower was their ladder into this world...she knew that the call to the heavens should be mirrored by a call to the earth...(p.221).

Ti-Jeanne calls to the spirits, calls to the dead and they together defeat Rudy, using a Canadian icon. Ti-Jeanne is able to incorporate aspects of her present culture with those of her ancient cultural heritage in order to form her identity. She moves from disbelief and the denial of her own culture at the beginning of the tale to acceptance, from acting on instinct alone as she first faces Rudy, through hybridization to self-awareness and the ability to decide what she wants to do for herself. Although the end of the novel shows that she is still unsure as to her role and her identity, she is clearly on the right path: "'Well, Papa, look my answer here. I go do this for a little while, but I ain't Mami. I ain't know what I want to do with myself yet, but I can't be she'" (p.244).

Symbolically at the end of the story, Ti-Jeanne does not join the mourners in a ceremony for Gros-Jeanne: "She still didn't feel a part of these ways that had been so much a part of her grandmother's life" (p.245). But she does settle down to try to name her as-yet unnamed baby. Firmly grounded in the present, having embraced the culture of her past and the future in her arms, Ti-Jeanne is ready to be her own person.

This also leads to her ability to find value in other cultures and the community that surrounds her. As expressed by Daniel Yon:

> Identities are never mirror images of the bounded and "imagined" communities in which they are constituted. Instead, the forgoing ethnographic details speak to the sense in which they are negotiated and constructed through ambivalence. New identities are continually being forged dialogically from the interplay of being black, young, gendered, sexualized, Caribbean, Canadian and global all at the same time. The symphonic interception and collisions of these various "sites" of identification guard against tendencies to over-determine identities by privileging one "site" over the others.[42]

Gros-Jeanne again is the model for Ti-Jeanne as she leaves herself open to multiple influences, not just the Caribbean ones. And Ti-Jeanne eventually embraces her own cultural hybridity, the Caribbean culture of her past, as well as the cultures and communities that now surround her. Before the confrontation with Rudy, Josée and the street kids save Tony, Ti-Jeanne and the baby. Ti-Jeanne repays them by tending to their wounded, despite Tony's protests. And she discovers that communities can create their own "magic":

> A girl of about twelve returned the grin, flicking a hank of black hair out of her eyes. Her brown face was difficult to see in the dark of the tunnel. Her teeth gleamed. Mumtaz was carrying some kind of jury-rigged electronic box, about the size of a loaf of bread, held together with patchy layers of masking and electric tape. Ti-Jeanne could just make out toggle switches bristling from the top of it.
>
> "Listen," said Mumtaz. She flicked the switch, and Ti-Jeanne jumped as the tunnel filled with the din of hundreds of children screaming…
>
> Mumtaz shut off the noise. "I layered all out voices. That way, it sounds like there are more of us than there are."
>
> "And the visuals?" Ti-Jeanne could have sworn there'd been a good forty kids.
>
> "Deeplight projector hooked up on the subway tracks. I rigged it myself a long time ago. Keeps people out of our space. It's a tape I made of all of us, dubbed on six waves so it looks like a lot more." (pp. 185-6)

Ti-Jeanne discovers that they also have a common enemy in Rudy, and with this new-found sense of community she feels with the street kids, she leaves her baby in their care while she goes to face Rudy, now not only for herself and her family, but for the larger community. Once she defeats Rudy, she is able to understand how large the community is that she was fighting for: "By the time she was out of the market, she was juggling a half pound of rabbit pemmican…a bottle of cranberry jelly, a carved gourd rattle ("for the baby"), and Mary's honey. Grief still darkened her thoughts, but the attentions of the market people had soothed her a little" (p.232). With Ti-Jeanne's connection to her cultural heritage broken, she is nonetheless still able to find comfort in the larger community of which Gros-Jeanne was part and about which she tried to teach Ti-Jeanne.

The final and equally important occurrence of magic in the narrative is Tony's ultimate betrayal of Ti-Jeanne and his culture. He kills Gros-Jeanne in order to provide a heart for Premiere Uttley. It is significant that Tony provides the means for this final act of magic and cultural hybridity. Despite his denial of magic and his cultural heritage, despite his blindness to the existence of the community and his having inadvertently threatened its viability, the heart he symbolically tries to steal is magically strong enough to live on and to ensure the survival and transformation of the community. As Neal Baker explains: "the heart of a black, Caribbean immigrant revives the health of a white, birthright Canadian. Uttley is not just any Canadian, however, but the embodiment of the Canadian nation-state. Both literally and figuratively, the body of the nation-state is fortified by the transplant of an 'alien organ'."[43] Once Uttley gets Gros-Jeanne's heart, she is transformed. She becomes a reflection of how Gros-Jeanne lived her life practicing cultural hybridity: "In every artery, every vein, every capillary: two distinct streams, intertwined. She had worried for nothing. She was healed, a new woman now" (p.237). Uttley goes through almost the same process as Ti-Jeanne goes through, although notably not by choice. But one may question Ti-Jeanne's willingness to undergo the maturation and hybridization process that she experiences. It is only at the end of the story that Ti-Jeanne truly accepts her fate; even her battle with Rudy is initially for reasons that were not her own. While Uttley is initially paralleled with Rudy, her process is then shifted to reflect that of Ti-Jeanne. And, like Ti-Jeanne, Uttley is able to see beyond her own selfish reasons and begins to recognize the community contained within downtown Toronto:

> "There's another thing, too. We're going to rejuvenate Toronto."
>
> "Premiere, you know that project has always been death to politicians. No one's been able to do it yet."
>
> "Yeah 'cause they've tried it by providing incentives for big business to move back in and take over. We're going to offer interest-free loans to small enterprises that are already there, give them perks if they fix up the real estate they're squatting on."
>
> "What small enterprises? The place is a rat hole, complete with rats."
>
> "Oh, I don't know. Something tells me we'll discover that there are quite a few resourceful people left in Muddy York." (pp. 239-40)

Baker reads this part optimistically, stating that "Uttley's urban plan parallels the 'intertwined' yet 'distinct' streams in her blood, promising a syncretic metropolis that will join divisions between the suburbs – primarily white – and the multicultural inner-city."[44] Much in the same way many people of different cultural heritages shared in Gros-Jeanne's culture, here the "magic" not only represents Caribbean cultural heritage, but the multi-cultural composition of the inner-city. Uttley's policy also mirrors the community, this community that is found in Toronto: intertwined yet distinct.

Conclusion

Hopkinson, in numerous interviews and essays, expresses how she understands the power of science fiction as a postcolonial tool:

Science fiction, in North America particularly, is traditionally a literature of

> colonizing, and we've had a problem with that. Part of it doesn't really speak to us. But there is so much being done in the field that *does*. The literature is changing, it's evolving, and there are people who are tackling things like that head-on. But I think it's still very much a literature that does not really include us, except as window dressing. The over-all impression you get from the book covers is that the humans are the white people, and the aliens are people of color.[45]

In an interview with Christian Wolff in *MaComère*, Hopkinson goes on to point out that "Science Fiction and fantasy appeal to me because of the subversive possibilities of them. I can…exaggerate and thereby call into question political conditions that currently exist in this world."[46] And in a conversation with the Quebec SF writer Élisabeth Vonarburg which appeared in *Foundation*, Hopkinson observes that

> I think speculative fiction has the potential, often realised nowadays, to be perverse and subversive and oppositional and revolutionary. Which could make it a wonderful literature for radical and marginalised communities. But by and large people from those communities tend to see the genres (and probably somewhat accurately, at least historically) as literatures which just replicate and glorify existing power imbalances.[47]

These comments strongly resemble Moylan's comments on the possibilities of the critical dystopia to "give voice and space to such dispossessed and denied subjects" and "go on to explore ways to change the present system."[48] What Hopkinson achieves with *Brown Girl in the Ring* is a complex analysis of dystopic and utopic expectations, using economic and social "denied subjects" as her main subjects. Through Ti-Jeanne, a young, unwed Black mother, Hopkinson suggests new ways to look at society and possible solutions to what she sees are the dystopic conditions. Ti-Jeanne has to accept her history and community as well as the histories and communities around her, and become a figure of cultural hybridization. Hopkinson expands the boundaries of the genre even further by privileging magic in her narrative. The central role that magic plays in the resolution of Ti-Jeanne's and the society's narrative seems to culturally hybridize the dystopic genre.

This dystopic narrative has effectively incorporated elements of both the magical real and the dystopic. And the magical elements represent an opportunity in the narratives for the characters to think differently about the society in which they are victims. This, in turn, invites the reader to participate in unconventional dialogues concerning the relationship between utopia, dystopia, eutopias and their present society. The magic does represent, as pointed out by many theorists, but best put by Todorov, "…s'agit ici comme là d'une transgression de la loi…. l'intervention de l'élément surnaturel constitue toujours une rupture dans le système de règles préétablies".[49] But this questioning isn't limited, in the case of these magical dystopias, to the laws of society, but extends to the laws of the dystopian genre. The magical elements found in *Brown Girl* are impossible to ignore: they play a central role in the narrative, a central role usually reserved for science and technology. And magic also seems to be presented differently in this central role: while science and technology is often portrayed as being a malevolent force in dystopian narratives, magic in the case of this example is portrayed as a possible means of transcending the dystopian state and providing the insight to move towards a eutopia.

There are others who have recognized the challenge that *Brown Girl* poses to Suvin's theory of the *novum*. Sarah Wood observes that "by populating her text with characters and figures taken from Caribbean religious and folklore Hopkinson wold seem to be in contravention of the strict generic rules that Suvin proposes."[50] Jerrilyn McGregory explains why this subversion is so effective:

Hopkinson privileges Afro-Caribbean spirituality in a way that further subverts even speculative fiction. Sf is defined as embracing "cognitive estrangement." Hopkinson's contradiction of the physical laws of nature introduces a cultural basis that produces a defamiliarization far beyond the epistemic meaning usually gathered by active sf readers. She exploits the degree to which sf renders the real unreal and creates an atmosphere of alienating defamiliarization for readers who stand as "outsiders" in relation to New World African religions.[51]

The focus of these two critics is the postcolonial implications of Hopkinson's novel, and while they recognize the subversion of Suvin, neither addresses the theoretical consequences of such subversion on the idea of the *novum* as the basis for science fiction.

There are many directions that dystopian theories can take in order to absorb this shift in technique. One would be to consider dystopias instead as a form of parody and satire. Peter Ruppert, among others, suggests that the impulse of dystopian fiction is in fact to "satirize existing social and technological tendencies by extrapolating and exaggerating the possible consequences of those tendencies, and [to] parody the utopian yearning for simple, timeless, permanent solutions."[52] Satire has no rules against the use of magic in order to create the satirical effect. As shown in *Brown Girl in the Ring*, magic serves as a valuable tool in order to highlight and question current social tendencies in particular. The playful nature of magical realism would also be well-suited to the often playful tendencies of satire and parody. Should magical dystopias be thus considered closer to the satirical tradition and distanced from the science fiction tradition?

Many, however, would argue that the critical history that has joined dystopias and science fiction is too difficult and important to ignore. Much of the critical reception of novels such as *Brown Girl in the Ring* shows the influence science fiction still has on our understanding of dystopias, magical or not. If we wish to retain dystopias as a sub-genre of science fiction, the most useful way would be to keep Suvin in the picture when trying to understand dystopias. We can attempt to reconcile Suvin with the use of magic, showing the possible application of the *novum* and cognitive estrangement in broader terms, which would include and not exclude magic. The features that estrange and the features that permit cognition are shifted. Magic leads to estrangement, but the use of a dystopian setting leads to cognition, because the idea of a negative future as a result of current socio-political practices has become normalized. Magic has become that element that "renders the real unreal and creates an atmosphere of unfamiliarity in which the reader may be brought to consider issues in a fictive context that the same reader would not notice."[53] The dystopian narrative, in its more traditional forms, had lost its effectiveness because it no longer rendered the "real unreal," and magic has moved in to revive the genre.

(ENDNOTES)

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1 For a more complete discussion of these authors, see the chapter "Treasurehouses of the Unexpected: Magical Realism and the Transformation of Dystopian Space in Postcolonial Fiction" in Ralph Pordzik, *The Quest for Postcolonial Utopia* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), pp. 107-132.

2 Nalo Hopkinson, *Brown Girl in the Ring* (New York: Aspect/Warner, 1998). Subsequent references are to this edition and will be cited in the text.

3 Keith M. Booker, *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 1994), p. 5.

4 Krishna Kumar, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia in Modern Times* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

5 Alexandra Alderidge, "Origins of Dystopia: *When The Sleeper Wakes* and *We*," in Richard D. Erlich and Thomas P. Dunn, eds., *Clockwork Worlds: Mechanized Environments in SF* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1983), pp. 63-84. Also see her book-length study *The Scientific World View in Dystopia* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1984).

6 Darko Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1979).

7 Chris Ferns, *Narrating Utopia*, (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 1999).

8 Tom Moylan, "'Look into the Dark': On Dystopia and the *Novum*," in Patrick Parrinder, ed., *Learning from Other Worlds: Estrangement, Cognition, and the Politics of Science Fiction and Utopia* (Durham: Duke UP, 2001), pp. 51-71.

9 Tom Moylan, "Utopia, Postcolonialism, and Postmodernism: Pordzik's *Quest for Postcolonial Utopia*," *Science Fiction Studies* 17 (2002), pp. 265-272.

10 Pordzik, op. cit., p. 13.

11 Pordzik, op. cit., pp. 12-15. See also Suvin, *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction*, pp. 63-84, for a fuller discussion of the concept of the *novum*.

12 Jerrilyn McGregory uses the term "mystical realism" to describe the novel, explaining that Hopkinson "[uses] duplicity by centering her text within the

boundaries of fantasy." Perhaps a more fitting categorization, McGregory, however, does not offer a full theoretical examination of the term, saying that she is only "testing" it. For the purpose of this paper, magical realism will be used as a basis for the analysis, but I am fully aware that the novel does not fit perfectly within this realm. Jerrilyn McGregory, "Nalo Hopkinson's Approach to Speculative Fiction," *Femspec* 1 (2005), p.3.

13 Wendy B. Faris, "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction," in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, eds., *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham: Duke UP, 1995), pp.163-172.

14 Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, "Introduction: Daiquiri Birds and Flaubertian Parrot(ie)s," in Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, eds., *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (Durham: Duke UP, 1995), p. 6.

15 Suvin, op. cit., p. 63.

16 Suvin, op. cit., p. 65.

17 Glenn Deer, "Rhetorical Strategies in *The Handmaid's Tale*: Dystopia and the Paradoxes of Power," *English Studies in Canada* 18, 2 (1992), pp. 215-233, at p. 215.

18 A number of theorists share this sentiment. They include Peter Fitting, "The Turn from Utopia in Recent Feminist Fiction," in Libby Falk Jones and Sarah Webster Goodwin, eds., *Feminism, Utopia and Narrative* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 141-158; Patrick D. Murphy, "Reducing the Distance: Pseudo-Documentary Framing in Near-Future Fiction," *Science-Fiction Studies* 17 (1990), pp. 25-40; Hélène Colas de la Noue, Sciences, techniques et sociétés dans les dystopies québécoises (1963-1973), *Imagine...* 11, 4 (1990), pp. 71-98; and Chinmoy Banerjee, "Alice in Disneyland: Criticism as Commodity in *The Handmaid's Tale*," *ECW* 41 (1990), pp. 74-92.

19 Prodzik, op. cit., p. 122.

20 Prodzik, op. cit., p. 130.

21 Prodzik, op. cit., pp. 12-17.

22 Tom Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia* (Boulder, Col.: Westview, 2000), p. 189.

23 Peter G. Stillman, "Dystopian Visions and Utopian Anticipations: Terry Bisson's *Pirate of the Universe* as Critical Dystopia," *Science Fiction Studies* 28 (2001), pp. 265-282, at p. 266.

24 Erika Gotlieb, *Dystopian Fiction East and West* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's UP, 2001), p. 9.

25 Gregory Rutledge, "Nalo Hopkinson's Urban Jungle and the Cosmology of Freedom: How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black Americas and Left a *Brown Girl in the Ring*," *Foundation* 81 (2001): pp. 22-39, at p. 23.

26 Gregory E. Rutledge, "Speaking in Tongues: An Interview with Science Fiction Writer Nalo Hopkinson," in *African American Review*, 33, 4 (1999): 589-

601.

27 Rutledge, "Urban Jungle," p. 32.

28 Rutledge, "Urban Jungle," p. 35.

29 Gotleib, op. cit., p. 10.

30 Rutledge, "Urban Jungle," p. 35.

31 Donna Bailey Nurse, "*Brown Girl in the Ring*," *Quill & Quire* 64, 5 (1998): p. 22.

32 Nalo Hopkinson, "Nalo Hopkinson: Many Perspectives," *Locus* 456 (1999): pp. 76-7, at p. 77.

33 Ferns, op. cit., p. 138.

34 Tom Moylan, *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction Utopia, Dystopia* (Boulder, Col: Westview, 2000), p. 189.

35 Moylan, *Scraps*, p. 190.

36 Sarah Wood, " 'Serving the Spirits': Emergent Identities in Nalo Hopkinson's *Brown Girl in the Ring*," *Extrapolation* 46, 3 (2005): pp. 315-326, at p. 316.

37 Charles de Lint, "Considering Magical Realism in Canada," in *Out of this World: Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature*, Andrea Paradis, ed., Ottawa: Quarry Press, 1995, pp. 113-122, at p. 119.

38 Faris, op. cit., pp. 172-3.

39 Faris, op. cit., p. 171.

40 Rutledge, "Urban Jungle," p. 32.

41 Rutledge, "Urban Jungle," p. 33.

42 Daniel Yon, "Identity and Difference in the Caribbean Diaspora: Case Study from Metropolitan Toronto," in Alvina Ruprecht and Cecelia Taiana, eds., *In the Hood: The Reordering of Culture: Latin American, The Caribbean and Canada* (Ottawa: Carleton UP, 1995), pp. 493-4.

43 Neil Baker, "Syncretism: A Federalist Approach to Canadian Science Fiction," *Extrapolation* 42, 3 (2001): pp. 218-231, at p. 220.

44 Baker, op. cit., p. 221.

45 "Nalo Hopkinson: Many Perspectives," p. 76.

46 Christian Wolff, "An Interview with Nalo Hopkinson," *MaComère*, 4 (2001): pp. 26-36, at p. 26.

47 Jennifer Burwell and Nancy Johnston, A Dialogue on SF and Utopian Fiction Between Nalo Hopkinson and Élisabeth Vonarburg, *Foundation* 81 (2001): pp. 40-47, at p. 45.

48 Moylan, *Scraps*, p. 189.

49 Todorov, op. cit., p. 174.

50 Wood, op. cit. p. 325.

51 McGregory, op. cit., p. 3.

52 Peter Ruppert, *Reader in a Strange Land: The Activity of Reading Literary Utopias* (Athens, Georgia: U Georgia Press, 1994), p. 103.

53 Sisk, op. cit., p. 9.

Postcolonialism and the Transhistorical in *Dune*

Gerard Gaylard

> Where had he put his foot on the path that led to this journey across a crowded square on a planet so far from Caladan? Had he really put his foot on a path? He could not say he had acted at any point in his life for one specific reason. The motives and impinging forces had been complex – more complex possibly than any other set of goads in human history. He had the heady feeling here that he might still avoid the fate he could see so clearly along this path. But the crowd pushed him forward and he experienced the dizzy sense that he had lost his way, lost personal direction over his life. (*Dune Messiah* p.143)

Postcolonial analyses of sf have become increasingly common, given that both terms are centrally concerned with issues of travel, migration, alterity, alien cultures, colonisation, empire, power and alternatives to imperialism. These analyses examine the spatio-political complexities engendered by the uneven access to modernities and their technologies that are characteristic of the time of colonialism and postcolonialism, on earth or elsewhere. The postcolonial reading of Frank Herbert's *Dune* novels undertaken in this paper shows both the historical and ideological limitations under which the novels labour, but also the evolution of Herbert's thought beyond these limitations, making the novels more fully postcolonial than immediately apparent.

It is a truism that postcolonialism is by no means a fully unified and coherent theory. The term postcolonialism, like postmodernism, suggests the demise of colonialism and the period subsequent to that demise, but it also suggests the ongoing survival and heritage of colonialism, that the past is never entirely erased. So postcolonialism has two main aspects: in its first guise it has historically appeared as an assertive, binaristic and apocalyptic nationalist rebellion against colonialism. However, since the achievement of independence in "Third World" nations, an independence that often failed to deliver on its promises, postcolonialism has become concerned with a longer term utopian possibility of living without colonialism, a concern with the transhistorical aspects of power. Unlike its parent rebellion it tended to be non-reactive and unwarlike, instead embracing satyagraha in the belief that there were no goodies and baddies, no imperial centre to react against. Even if there was an evil empire, its individual agents were not all evil, but often just mislead, so moral ambiguity characterised this theory and fiction. Likewise, there was an emphasis upon the hybrid and the creole rather than pure, organic, rooted singularity. Further, transhistorical postcolonialism has been concerned with avoiding anthropocentric projection by respecting the incommensurability of aliens and alterity with the self. However, to suggest that postcolonialism has moved completely away from its nationalist political roots would be wrong; it was incubated in the pressure cooker of the independence struggle and liberationist rhetoric, historical materialism, psychedelic libertarianism, postmodernism and other radical critiques of modernity, and it has been unable and unwilling to eschew these even whilst it tackles the uneven political terrain of the present. We might describe postcolonialism today as a kind of geo-politically charged postmodernism.

Dune appears to be a classic example of the first school of nationalist postcolonialism in sf. As Macleod has it, "the great glaring exception to sf's broadly liberal consensus can be found in Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) and its sequels" (p.p.236). The novels are highly sceptical of the notion of progress, and one of the protagonist's sayings is, "*The concept of progress acts as a protective mechanism to shield us from the terrors of the future*" (p.271). Moreover, there is a binaristic adversariality between the imperial hegemony that wants the spice required for interstellar travel, the houses Atreides and Harkonnen that are set warring in this polarity in their attempts to control Arrakis, home of the spice, and, on the other hand, the planet itself and its inhabitants and interests. The human desire to colonise the other, the alien, is something that clearly inspired Herbert in the sense that he chose an alterity that would be particularly inhospitable and difficult to colonise (a desert planet), but yet which was appealing because it had a single highly desirable resource: the spice. That Herbert was fascinated by the colonisation of inhospitable environs is apparent in the comment by a journalist colleague at Herbert's one-time newspaper, *The San Francisco Examiner*:

> The bearded Herbert used to come prowling into our book department asking for "anything you have on dry climate ecology."
>
> Most visitors want Burdick or O'Hara; Herbert lusted after the desert. T. E. Lawrence, the Koran, Mojave botanicals, all were grist for his arid mill. (*The Road to Dune* p.292)

Herbert not only chose a desert landscape as a dramatic backdrop for his analysis of imperialism, but also a human culture of coexistence, scarcity and thrift in this landscape as an apocalyptic end-point against which to contrast the excesses (often ecological) of imperialism. His model for this culture was

Arabic and Islamic; the imperialism of the West in relation to the oil of the Middle East can be seen as an analogy for the desire for the spice in the text. This imperialism precipitates an apocalyptic nationalist movement, perhaps most visible in Herbert's use of the word "Fedaykin" which echoes the Palestinian "Feda'yin" or guerilla fighters (Baheyeldin), though other instances abound (Baheyeldin names over one hundred names derived from Arabic in the text). So Herbert was not merely critiquing an abstract, mythological imperialism, but wanted to show via the allegory with contemporary American imperialism in the Middle East that imperialism is alive and well, and hence establish a contextual relevance for his critique. However, in this postmodern allegorizing that transposes an historical Terran culture and language into a far future culture there is a worrying imperialism that relies on audience ignorance to disguise its sf orientalism.

I find it particularly significant that T. E. Lawrence, presumably of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, is quoted as an influence on Herbert. Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a seminal text in postcolonialism, mounted a powerful yet affectionate critique of Lawrence's novel:

> The great drama of Lawrence's work is that it symbolizes the struggle, first, to stimulate the Orient (lifeless, timeless, forceless) into movement; second, to impose upon that movement an essentially Western shape; third, to contain the new and aroused Orient in a personal vision, whose retrospective mode includes a powerful sense of failure and betrayal. [Said quotes Lawrence:]
>
> I meant to make a new nation, to restore a lost influence, to give twenty millions of Semites the foundation on which to build an inspired dream-palace of their national thoughts.... All the subject provinces of the Empire to me were not worth one dead English boy. (Said p.241)

Said's analysis of Lawrence reads like a critique of Herbert's novel. Firstly, Herbert, unlike Lawrence who loved the Arabic culture in which he had been physically immersed, uses the Arabic language for the Fremen uncritically. Moreover, in its messianic prophecy and individualist heroism *Dune* is apocalyptic, cultivating a deliberately eschatological tone in its evocation of an esoteric prophecy via which an outsider will lead the local indigenous people to freedom. This apocalyptic tone is developed through the novel as Paul grows in stature, fulfilling the Bene Gesserit legend that his mother knows has been planted: "Jessica thought about the prophecy – the Shari-a and all the panoplia propheticus, a Bene Gesserit of the Missionaria Protectiva dropped here long centuries ago – long dead, no doubt, but her purpose accomplished: the protective legends implanted in these people against the day of a Bene Gesserit's need" (p.53). So although the prophecy is held by the secret Bene Gesserit order of female witch initiates, it is a male who is the messiah, the only man who can take the water of life and have the vision that they cannot. This apocalyptic, and perhaps sexist, element links to the postcolonial binarism noted above, for any stark polarities tend to carry a danger of major conflict and disaster with them. Paul is able to become the prophesied "Kwisatz Haderach", successfully taking the water of life and leading the Fremen to a glorious expulsion of the Imperium and the Harkonnens, regaining their independence in the process. In this often violent apocalypticism and messianic opposition to imperialism, *Dune* is a fascinating science fiction version of the first form of nationalist postcolonialism and a novel of its time. Indeed, the novel contributes to this nationalist form of postcolonialism by showing that imperialism is truly universal and perennial in the form of greed for resources and ruthless self-interest.

So it would seem that with *Dune* Frank Herbert created another archetypal anti-colonial text along the lines of those produced by Ngugi, Achebe, Gordimer, Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Rushdie and so on. Certainly the novel is characteristic of the nationalist postcolonial sf of the time, and echoes texts like *Lord of Light*, *Kirinyaga* and *Stand on Zanzibar*. To the extent that this is true, Said's critique of Lawrence would seem to apply to the novel. For Said, the problem with Lawrence's work is that he does not foreground his position as an outsider seeking to free the indigenous people from imperialism. Gayatri Spivak in her famous "Can the Subaltern Speak?" supported Said's perspective: for Spivak the representing intellectual must foreground their position, heritage and interests in order to avoid eliding the voice of the other, the subaltern, the indigenous, the oppressed. According to Said, Lawrence failed to foreground his positionality in this way, and thus presented himself as a transparent conduit for the oppressed, indeed even *becoming* the oppressed. So Lawrence transformed metaphor into metonymy, he *was* the Orient until it no longer suited him.

Like Conrad's Kurtz, Lawrence has cut himself loose from the earth so as to become identified with a new reality in order – he says later – that he might be responsible for "hustling into form...the new Asia which time was inexorably bringing upon us".

> The Arab revolt acquires meaning only as Lawrence designs meaning for it; his meaning imparted thus to Asia was a triumph, "a mood of enlargement...in that we felt that we had assumed another's pain or experience, his personality". The Orientalist has become now the representative Oriental, unlike earlier participant observers....And when, for whatever reason, the movement fails (it is taken over by others, its aims are betrayed, its dream of independence invalidated), it is *Lawrence's* disappointment that counts....Lawrence *becomes* both the mourning continent and a subjective consciousness expressing an almost cosmic disenchantment....Indeed what Lawrence presents to the reader is an unmediated expert power – the power to be, for a brief time, the Orient. All the events putatively ascribed to the historical Arab Revolt

> are reduced finally to Lawrence's experiences on its behalf. (*Orientalism* p.242-3)

For Said, then, Lawrence's uncritical metonymic substitution of himself for the indigenous oppressed ironically replicated imperialism, despite Lawrence's championing of the cause of freedom, for it silenced the voice of those oppressed people. Some have applied the same critique to *Dune* (see Zaki and Balfe) which similarly has an outsider metonymically replace the voice of the Fremen and lead them to freedom. Metonymic substitution is archetypical for colonial discourse as Bhabha pointed out in his seminal postcolonial essay "Of Mimicry and Man". The white man may replace the black at any stage, but the reverse does not obtain because the colonial subject is "*almost the same, but not quite.... Almost the same, but not white*" (Bhabha p.235-8). The metonymic promise of enlightenment – "you can be one of us", is actually the merely metaphorical – "you can be like one of us". Moreover, as noted previously, Herbert's utilisation of mostly unaltered Arabic as the Fremen language and European languages for the Galactic empire might replicate the othering of exotic cultures of imperialism. My sense is that this could be a valid critique of the *Dune* novels, for they were partially a product of their era and context, but it seems to me that Herbert was aware of this problem and preempted it in the texts, and it is in this way that he moved beyond the simpler nationalist resistance version of postcolonialism and into a more complex and sceptical postcolonialism.

That Herbert cannot be accused of quite the same type of Orientalist imperialism as Lawrence can be seen in the subtle portrayal of apocalyptic nationalist prophesy in *Dune*. From the start it is clear that messianic prophecy has been purposely created by the Bene Gesserit as part of their programme of long term selective breeding in order to create the perfect human, a superhuman being who can ingest deadly poison and survive to prophesy. In the quotes from the "Manual of Maud'Dib" by the Princess Irulan in which Paul's life and activities are recorded and ruminated upon, Herbert suggests the process via which events are codified into myths and doxa, heroes made, prophecies confirmed, holy books created. This is a process of conspiratorial control and the seeding of blood lines by a secret society, the creation and dissemination of "sacred" texts by these secret societies or others that preys on the hopes of downtrodden peoples, the wish-fulfilling recognition of the prophecies of these sacred texts in a particular person or happenstance (Paul Atreidies in this instance), the consequent elevation of that person to messiah status. The creation of heroic myths and stories is thus not only a process of conspiratorial manipulation and misinterpretation, but also one of hyperbole ramified via retelling: after destroying the Sardaukar spies that accompany Gurney Halleck, Paul "thought bitterly that here was another chapter in the legend of Paul Muad'dib. *I didn't even draw my knife, but it'll be said of this day I slew twenty Sardaukar by my own hand* " (p.357).

Myth is a vital part of Herbert's "genetic theory of history" according to O'Reilly (p.49), for it is the structure of myths and stories that at least partially determines human thought and action. Herbert shows that myth in the *Dune* universe is a totalising discourse of final, singular explanation and control because it is imbricated with power, and this has manifold political ramifications: in this case the need to overcome imperial invasion and exploitation and the unwitting subsequent spawning of a dictatorship and an intergalactic jihad. The Fremen need the myth of a messiah leader to maintain their culture in the face of the withering Harkonnen onslaught and provide them with hope that they will free themselves of its imperial yoke. However, whilst Paul does fulfill the project of postcolonial nationalism to eject the Harkonnens and the Imperium from Arrakis, he also does much more, which brings into play the issue of what happens after the revolution and the second mode of transhistorical postcolonialism, explored in more detail in *Dune Messiah*.

In the first instance, Paul institutes Liet-Kynes' project to terraform Arrakis which affects not only the ecology of the planet (worms, for instance, find water poisonous and are driven away from the new project – which echoes the Israeli attempts to make the desert bloom), but also the culture of the Fremen, so that they appear to lose some of their "desert" strength and become increasingly absorbed into imperial culture and bureaucracy. This is a dramatisation of the Hobson's choice of short term consumption versus long term sustainability that haunts human civilisation and progress. The terraforming project leads to debate among the Fremen about Paul's indigeneity and status:

> 'The desert takes him – and deifies him,' Idaho said. 'Yet he was an interloper here. He brought an alien chemistry to this planet – water.'
>
> 'The desert imposes its own rhythms,' Stilgar said. 'We welcomed him, called him our Mahdi, our Muad'dib, and gave him his secret name, Base of the Pillar: Usul.'
>
> 'Still, he was not born a Fremen.'
>
> 'And that does not change the fact that we claimed him...and have claimed him finally.' Stilgar put a hand on Idaho's shoulder. 'All men are interlopers, old friend.' (*Dune Messiah p.*219)

This debate appears to settle questions of Paul's origins, and does so in the mould of transhistorical postcolonialism which emphasises transience, impurity and hybridity. Indeed, this mode of analysis contradicts the earlier form of postcolonialism to the extent that it suggests that the Fremen myth of unified, singular, pure, organic tribal origins was actually an expedience that resulted from the necessity to oppose a single imperial enemy. Secondary postcolonialism is less politically sure because it does not have a singular enemy to oppose; resistance must be conducted on multiple fronts.

Secondly, Paul's jihad does not remain confined to Arrakis and is described thus in *Children of Dune*: "Muad'Dib had ignited an explosion of humanity; Fremen had spread from this planet in a jihad, carrying their fervor across the human universe in a way of religious government whose scope and ubiquitous authority had left its mark on every planet" (p.6). Paul himself laments the facts: "'Statistics: at a conservative estimate, I've killed sixty-one billion, sterilised ninety planets, completely demoralised five hundred others. I've wiped out the followers of forty religions'" (*Dune Messiah* p.92). Here Herbert enters a full postcolonial sensibility which is painfully aware of the dangers of nationalist reaction: violent reaction all too often ironically enthrones precisely what it is reacting against, even if what it enthrones initially appears different. This postcolonialism moves beyond the first stage of nationalist resistance because it is aware that this first stage is often reactionary, violent, orthodox and conformist in its ideals. As Stilgar asks in *Children of Dune*: "*How simple things were when our Messiah was only a dream*, he thought. *By finding our Mahdi we loosed upon the universe countless messianic dreams. Every people subjugated by the jihad now dreams of a leader to come.... If my knife liberated all of those people,* [by killing Paul's children] *would they make a messiah of me?*" (p.7). The myth of national liberation leads towards a new religion of righteousness that cannot tolerate dissent of any kind from its orthodoxies:

> It was the religion of Muad'Dib which upset Stilgar most. Why did they make a god of Muad'Dib? Why deify a man known to be flesh? Muad'Dib's *Golden Elixir of Life* had created a bureaucratic monster which sat astride human affairs. Government and religion united, and breaking a law became sin. A smell of blasphemy arose like smoke around any questioning of governmental edicts. The guilt of rebellion invoked hellfire and self- righteous judgments. (*Children of Dune* p.9)

So, as Feyd-Rautha realises, "*That which makes a man superhuman is terrifying*" (*Dune* p.283); the power of myth is terrifying, especially if it is realised. Paul is "*less than a god, more than a man...who ordered battle drums made from his enemies' skins, the Muad'dib who denied the conventions of his ducal past with a wave of the hand, saying merely: 'I am the Kwisatz Haderach*'" (p.391). Yet despite the novel's postcolonial critique of messianic imperialism via the Fremen jihad unloosed upon the galaxy, the novel shows that this was not intentional: Paul finds himself caught up within something he helped to start, but once it has begun it is not within his control (*Dune Messiah* p.53). Paul feels himself to be riding the coriolis storm of history, merely an agent caught within the implacable grip of an unstoppable historical force: "*How did I set this in motion?* he asked himself. It had, of course, set itself in motion. It was in the genes which might labor for centuries to achieve this brief spasm" (*Dune Messiah* p.56). Paul is a victim of the force of history that he helped to galvanise, to catalyse, but there are clearly other components to this force than genetics:

postcolonial inevitability, the power of myth and the "primitive" warrior strength of the Fremen. This warrior naivety is revealed in *Dune Messiah*:

> Alia continued to look at the old Fremen Naib. Something about him now made her intensely aware that he was one of the primitives. Stilgar believed in a supernatural world very near him. It spoke to him in a simple pagan tongue dispelling all doubts. The natural universe in which he stood was fierce, unstoppable, and it lacked the common morality of the Imperium. (p.80)

Paul uses this organic warrior tribalism to rid Arrakis of imperial exploitation, but once that violent rebellion spreads to the rest of the humanoid universe via the messianic myth of Muad'dib and by his crowning of himself as emperor (an echo of Napoleon's self-crowning perhaps?), then Paul lives to regret seeing "*a friend become a worshiper*" (p.394) and "in a rush of loneliness... noting how proper and on-review his guards had become in his presence. He sensed the subtle, prideful competition among them" (p.394). Like Cortez and Mistah Kurtz from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Paul is now a prisoner of his own ideals and must live out their darker aspects. This is emphasised repeatedly in *Dune Messiah*:

> Frustration tangled him. He felt the pressure of mass-unconscious, that burgeoning sweep of humankind across his universe. They rushed upon him with a force like a gigantic tidal bore. He sensed the vast migrations at work in human affairs: eddies, currents, gene flows. No dams of abstinence, no seizures of impotence nor maledictions could stop it. (p.110)

This image of a gigantic tidal wave of unconscious human will sweeping, rushing, flowing through the universe conveys a transhistorical sensibility. Paul, from being the catalyst of this wave, is now its victim: "From the moment the Jihad had chosen him, he'd felt himself hemmed in by the forces of a multitude. Their fixed purposes demanded and controlled his course. Any delusions of Free Will he harbored now must be merely the prisoner rattling his cage" (p.155-6). So some of his family and confidants recognise that "'He didn't use the Jihad.... The Jihad used him. I think he would've stopped it if he could'" (p.127); according to Alia, "'Paul's entire life was a struggle to escape his Jihad and its deification'" (p.220).

Dune, and more so, *Dune Messiah*, are therefore novels along the lines of "Third World" novels of dictatorship and autocracy: classic examples include Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) and *The General in His Labyrinth* (1989), Roa Bastos' *I, the Supreme* (1974), Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat*, (2000) Ngugi's *Matigari* (1987), Laing's *Major Gentl and the Achimota Wars*, (1992) and so on. In most of these novels the dictator finds himself, and he is always a he, trapped within a labyrinth of deceit of his own devising because he had to engage in subterfuge and violence in order to come to power, both of which demand obeisance and money in order to remain hidden. Once isolated within this labyrinth, the autocrat inevitably loses touch with the reality of the people on the ground, a contact that was often what swept him to power in the first place. Looking for contact with the everyday within that labyrinth, the dictator does not know who or which informant to trust, and often finds himself enmeshed within intrigues in which he plays one informant off against another, spawning unmanageable complexity and contradictions. This complexity and its contradictions lead to the inevitable downfall of the tyrant: "'Power tends to isolate those who hold too much of it. Eventually, they lose touch with reality... and fall.'" (*Dune Messiah* p.88). As the series progresses, this transhistorical sense of historical inevitability increases, so that by *Children of Dune* there are repeated references to time as "self-perpetuating" (p.98), the discovery of "'the future in the past, and both are part of a whole'" (p.81).

However, this postcolonial analysis of prophecy, conspiracy, control and tyranny also shows that historical inevitability is just one side of the coin; the other side involves chaos, choice and free will. If Paul had chosen differently, then he would not have become Maud'Dib, the prophesied guerilla leader. Both Jessica and Paul play a complex guessing game with the Fremen, feeding into the messianic prophecies sewn by the Bene Gesserit generations before in much the same way as Cortez and his imperial mission did to Montezuma and Aztec mythology (although, of course, the outcome is quite different to that in Mexico as Paul does lead the Fremen towards freedom). Herbert neither lauds nor condemns Paul and the forces that enthrone him. Rather, his project is a truly postcolonial one in that it shows the mutual imbrication of the individual with history, and the limited potential for liberation within both. This postcolonial project is contemplated thus by the Princess Irulan:

> *Greatness is a transitory experience. It is never consistent. It depends in part upon the myth-making imagination of humankind. The person who experiences greatness must have a feeling for the myth he is in. He must reflect what is projected upon him. And he must have a strong sense of the sardonic. This is what uncouples him from belief in his own pretensions. The sardonic is all that permits him to move within himself. Without this quality, even occasional greatness will destroy a man.*
>
> – from "Collected Sayings of Muad'Dib"
> by the Princess Irulan (*Dune* p.111)

The point here is that Herbert created a critique of apocalyptic nationalism within the generally nationalistic framework of his narrative, and thus the novels provide an interestingly finessed version of postcolonialism in which archaic belief systems and ecology are as important as space ships with firepower, in which personal choice and freedom are as important as opposition to injustice. This nuanced postcolonial sensibility allowed Herbert to go on to create a series of novels critical of messianism. Indeed, John W. Campbell, legendary editor of *Analog*, which initially serialised *Dune*, refused to publish its follow-up, *Dune Messiah*, because "Paul winds up as a God That Failed" (*The Road to Dune* p.293). As Brian Herbert pointed out in *Dreamer of Dune* (p.191-2):

> *Dune*, the first novel in what would ultimately become a series, contained hints of the direction (Frank Herbert) intended to take with his superhero, Paul Maud'Dib, clues that many readers overlooked. It was a dark direction. When planetologist Liet-Kynes lay dying in the desert, he remembered those words of his father, spoken years before and relegated to the back reaches of memory: "No more terrible disaster could befall your people than for them to fall into the hands of a Hero." And at the end of an appendix it was written that the planet had been "afflicted by a Hero."... The author felt that heroes made mistakes...mistakes that were amplified by the numbers of people who followed those heroes slavishly...
>
> Among the dangerous leaders of human history, my father sometimes mentioned General George S. Patton, because of his charismatic qualities – but more often his example was President John F. Kennedy. Around Kennedy a myth of kingship formed, and of Camelot. His followers did not question him, and would have gone with him virtually anywhere. This danger seems obvious to us now in the case of such men as Adolf Hitler, who led his nation to ruination. It is less obvious, however, with men who are not deranged or evil in and of themselves. Such a man was Paul Muad'Dib, whose danger lay in the myth structure around him. (*The Road to Dune* p.295)

Herbert's genius in *Dune* and the subsequent novels is to create a work of messianic and apocalyptic anti-imperialism, with all of the potential for drama that that entails, that is self-reflexively critical of our desire and need for messianic apocalypticism. This desire and need for strong leaders seems partly to be a "hangover" from the mythologisation of our tribal and mediaeval pasts, and it is surely no mistake that much of the imagery and iconography of the novel is strongly mediaeval, perhaps derived from the Ottoman empire. It also seems to be a result of our need for figureheads to live out our ideals because doing so ourselves is hard work. A prosthetic conscience solves our need to develop our own consciences, and we see this in the desire for a messiah and the ethical dilemmas that plague most of the characters in the novels. To the extent that these novels are self-reflexive and metacritical they are postmodern texts and exemplify the second type of postcolonialism that has a long term view of anti-imperialism. As Jessica, Paul's mother, writes:

> 'Government cannot be religious and self-assertive at the same time. Religious experience needs a spontaneity which laws inevitably suppress. And you cannot govern without laws. Your laws eventually must replace morality, replace conscience, replace even the religion by which you think to govern. Sacred ritual must spring from praise and holy yearnings which hammer out a significant morality. Government, on the other hand, is a cultural organism particularly attractive to doubts, questions and contentions. I see the day coming when ceremony must take the place of faith and symbolism replaces morality.' (*Dune Messiah* p.171)

So, in a sense, Said's critique of Lawrence's Orientalism was a critique that Herbert was aware of and integrated into *Dune* and its successors. Like Lawrence, Herbert's agent of colonisation, Duke Leto Atreides, is a benign ruler, somebody who is only too aware of the dangers of ruling and colonisation: "'To hold Arrakis,' the Duke said, 'one is faced with decisions that may cost one his self-respect.' He pointed out the window to the Atreides green and black banner hanging limply from a staff at the edge of the landing field. 'That honorable banner could come to mean many evil things'" (*Dune* p.93). Determined not to replicate the cruel colonialism of the Harkonnens, Arrakis's previous overlords, and to find support on the planet in the face of the threat of imperial conspiracies with the Harkonnens, Atreides attempts to rule benignly and win the support of the indigenous Fremen. Like Lawrence, Atreides has the ability to switch perspectives, to see beyond his own interests and those of his people, to take the side of the natives:

> If the people of this decadent garrison city could only see the Emperor's private note to his "Noble Duke" – the disdainful allusions to veiled men and women: "...but what else is one to expect of barbarians whose dearest dream is to live outside the ordered security of the faufreluches?"
>
> The Duke felt in this moment that his own dearest dream was to end all class distinctions and never again think of deadly order. (p.72)

For me, this perspective-switching is one of the masterful technical aspects of *Dune* as it adds a great deal to dramatic tension; the constant toing-and-froing between the imperium, the Harkonnens, the Atreides and Fremen on Arrakis, and so on, provides the drama of historical urgency, the gravitas of high stakes and the excitement of conspiracy and escape. This novelistic technicality was clearly intentional on Herbert's part; he points out that,

> For *Dune*, I also used what I call a "camera-position" method – playing back and forth (and in varied orders depending on the required pace) between long-shot, medium, close-up and so on.... My idea of a good story is to put people in a pressure environment. This happens in

> reality, but life's dramas tend to lack the organization we require of the novel. I hit on the idea of a desert planet while researching a magazine article about efforts to control sand dunes. This led me to other research avenues too numerous to detail completely here, but involving some time in a desert (Sonora) and a re-examination of Islam. (*The Road to Dune* p.282)

The oscillation resulting from the "pressure environment" of colonialism not only creates drama, but also foments hesitation and undecideability that are hallmarks of postcolonialism. This is the novel of an author who is only too aware of the dangers of imperialism, whether resource-based, psychological, power-driven, ecological or otherwise, and who sought to find a way to avert those dangers and provide an alternative in his fiction. This aversion of dangers and search for an alternative is embodied in the development of Paul Maud'Dib, whose meaning and valency are difficult to decide, an undecideability that permeates the series as a whole. Such undecideability is because Paul teeters in an occult zone between competing forces, a zone characteristic of postcolonialism once nationalist revolutions have achieved their initial goals.

On one side he could see the Imperium, a Harkonnen called Feyd-Rautha who flashed toward him like a deadly blade, the Sardaukar raging off their planet to spread pogrom on Arrakis, the Guild conniving and plotting, the Bene Gesserit with their scheme of selective breeding. They lay massed like a thunderhead on his horizon, held back by no more than the Fremen and their Muad'dib, the sleeping giant Fremen poised for their wild crusade across the universe.

> Paul felt himself at the center, at the pivot where the whole structure turned, walking a thin wire of peace with a measure of happiness... (p.305)

All around Paul is imperial scheming, powerplay. So Herbert's critique of imperialism shows that it invariably involves Machiavellian scheming, plotting and maneuvering. The Baron has survived for so long because he is a master of perfidy:

> The bribes in the right places, the *unthinkable* expenditure to bring overwhelming military force down onto one planet...all the sly reports tailored for the Emperor's ears alone, all the careful scheming were here at last coming to full fruition.
>
> *Power and fear – fear and power*!
>
> The Baron could see the path ahead of him. One day, a Harkonnen would be Emperor. (p.201)

Imperialism, both Harkonnen and otherwise, involves the ambition for total singular control which requires the subjugation of others through "fear over ambition" (p.420), a subjugation requiring cunning, deceit and maneuvering. Herbert, taking the long, transhistorical view characteristic of secondary postcolonialism, shows that this imperialism is doomed to failure because it is based on fear, which is an insecure footing, and deceit, which cannot remain hidden forever. Transhistorical postcolonialism sees that imperialism, indeed perhaps Western modernity in general, is a thought process dependent upon individualist isolation and alienation from others, from nature; its totalitarian singularity is based upon fear and power and is thus inherently violent.

Herbert's vision in the *Dune* novels is what one might call eco-postcolonial: it is a vision of nature as "multiple, cross-linked events" which is not amenable to the totalising singular analysis and scheming of imperialism. It is a vision of multiple others in constant motion, a vision not amenable to singular totalisation. Herbert seems to have arrived at this vision from his interest in ecology and his consequent transhistorical realisation that the dictum of man having dominion over the flocks of the earth is the first step down an imperial path that can only lead to isolation, alienation, conflict and disaster. This vision is perhaps best summed up in a passage from *Children of Dune*:

> *A sophisticated human can become primitive. What this really means is that the human's way of life changes. Old values change, become linked to the landscape with its plants and animals. This new existence requires a working knowledge of those multiples and cross-linked events usually referred to as nature. It requires a measure of respect for the inertial power within such natural systems.* (*Children of Dune* p.66)

So whilst it is clear that the vast majority of sf fails to depict alterity, the other, constantly integrating alterity into the same, and whilst Herbert replicates some of this appropriation in his novel, this by no means entirely contains the postcolonial thrust of his text which contains a powerful critique of both imperialism and nationalist opposition.

The argument that I am advancing is that postcolonialism and sf are highly relevant to each other in a peculiarly creative symbiosis. Postcolonialism adds a nuanced political concern to the sf issues of travel, migration and imperialism because these issues inevitably involve confronting alien cultures and their resistance. This postcolonialism of alterity within the long term and the consequent issues of respect and non-anthropocentrism that arise is relevant to sf because sf is a genre that tends to relativise the present via its habitual mode of extrapolation and interplanetary cosmic event. The transhistorical mode has become central to postcolonialism because it has witnessed the betrayal of so many of the promises of history. Sf similarly deals in the realm of the transhistorical, though this is more often for the reason of futurological interest than political disenchantment. Extrapolation has been highly developed within sf, a development that can only add to postcolonialism's desire for clues about how history will evaluate the present, how we might change our actions and inactions. Frank Herbert's *Dune* series seems to me to be a good example of postcolonialism, both in its nationalist form, but more importantly in its postnationalist form, in that it displays a keen interest in the light that is shed upon the present by the transhistorical. This light shows that complexity is characteristic of both nature and cultural politics, and that only a complex ideology and aesthetics that is prepared to reflect upon itself and possibly change its course via extrapolation can hope to convey this in fiction whilst not falling into the traps of ignorance, projection, reaction and mythologisation.

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Reviews

An Evil Guest

By Gene Wolfe (Tor, 2008, 304pp, $25.95)
Reviewed by Paul Kincaid

It is hard to know what to make of Gene Wolfe's latest novel. It has elements of a 1930s musical comedy (without the music or, indeed, much of the comedy); it has a large helping of Lovecraftian horror; there is a very lacklustre science fictional setting and some fantasy hand waving. Individually, these various elements are disappointing, together they add up to an inglorious mess.

And yet, this is a novel by Gene Wolfe, consistently the most interesting, inventive and self-conscious writer in the genre. Since *The Book of the New Sun*, at least, critics have learned that you have to weigh every individual word for a welter of different meanings; there is no such thing as casual usage in Wolfe's work, effects are clearly intended, there can never be a reliable narrator so everything must be questioned. Perhaps, therefore, this ungainly mix of styles and elements was all part of some careful plan, and the problem is with the reader.

And yet (again: this is Gene Wolfe, we could find ourselves going round and round in ever decreasing circles of qualification and self-doubt), Wolfe has a habit of punctuating his more complex and demanding multi-volume works (*The Book of the New Sun* and its off-shoots, the Latro novels, *The Wizard-Knight*) with one-off novels that, if no less challenging, can be read as lighter *jeux d'esprit* (*Free Live Free, There Are Doors,* the often overlooked *Pandora by Holly Hollander*). In this light it is worth remembering that this book was immediately preceded by *Pirate Freedom*, a colourful, romantic adventure that promised more depth than it actually delivered.

I think, therefore, that it is perhaps best to read *An Evil Guest* as a comedy. In this respect, I find the 1930s feel of the novel significant. It is nominally set some hundreds of years in our future, but apart from a few tacked-on devices the only scene-setting that is at all convincing ties the whole thing to mid-century America. There are, for instance, private hoppers that can whisk anyone anywhere, even into space, yet watching the airports is considered an adequate way for the government to keep track of people. There are cell phones (though they seem considerably less common than they are around us today), yet most calls seem to be made to or from land lines. And the curious melange of diners, theatres and hotels in which most of the action takes place would seem old fashioned in any American city today. Two earlier novels that can also be best read as comedies both clearly sprang from 1930s models: *Free Live Free* is overloaded with references to the film of *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), while *There Are Doors* owes a great deal to the novels of Thorne Smith, and especially to *Rain in the Doorway* (1936). The springboard this time is the backstage romantic comedy that lies at the heart of so many Busby Berkeley films.

Our heroine is Cassie Casey, a struggling actress in a play that's about to close. 'I'm an actress,' she announces at one point, 'I can tell a lie,' and indeed suggests several times that she is lying. She meets the mysterious Dr Gideon Chase, is whisked away to a mountain top in Canada, and thereafter becomes the most charismatic and sought-after actress in the country. When she asks why she should believe Chase, he replies 'Because you sense my honesty. Honesty is a powerful force.' So we have a typically Wolfean theme of truth versus lies being developed, except that lying Cassie is by far the most attractive character in the book and comes across as the most honest, while Chase's honesty is at least open to question even though we are never led to doubt that he is one of the good guys.

Chase presents himself variously as a wizard and a detective, though we don't really see him practicing either occupation. The third member of this triangle is Bill Reis, the richest man in the world who woos Cassie with radioactive gold that he manufactured himself according to a recipe he learned from extraterrestrials. Reis is pretending to be Wallace Rosenquist, an 'angel' (how loaded with symbolism that theatrical term is!) who wants Cassie to star in a musical he may have written himself called 'Dating the Volcano God'. Something in the timeframe doesn't quite add up here: Chase took Cassie to the Canadian mountaintop to conjure up her star quality as a way of attracting Reis, whom he is investigating, but Rosenquist starts sniffing around Cassie's theatre company before he has had a chance to know anything of Cassie's star quality. But then, there seem to be a number of curiously haphazard plot elements in this mishmash of a novel.

'Dating the Volcano God', at least according to the bits of plot we are vouchsafed, sounds like exactly the sort of tawdry silliness that might have run as a Saturday afternoon serial back when Wolfe was a boy, but it would not have been staged in any self-respecting theatre any time in the last fifty years, let alone a hundred years or more in our future. Indeed, an anonymous critic is quoted as saying it has disaster written all over it, until Cassie appears on stage and transforms it into a hit. Now there is no detail of theatrical life in this novel that could not have been gleaned from a Busby Berkeley musical, and it is just possible that something as ludicrous as 'Dating the Volcano God' might have been staged in such a milieu. Nevertheless, you find yourself wondering why a writer as painstaking and self-aware as Wolfe couldn't have devised a play that was a fraction less unlikely. But the point is that the play very deliberately presages the final section of the novel, when Cassie is carried away to a remote Pacific island and finds herself confronting a Lovecraftian Volcano God.

How a story of ancient horrors comes to be grafted onto a featherweight theatrical romance is a question we won't consider just yet. First, let us turn to another curious grafting: the science fiction. Wolfe is not really a science fiction writer, in fact *An Evil Guest* may be the first overtly science fictional novel he has written since *Operation Ares* (1970), mostly he deals in what he calls science fantasy or, increasingly, outright fantasy. In the interviews collected in *Shadows of the New Sun* edited by Peter Wright (2007) he references far more fantasy authors than he does science fiction. Nevertheless, he is well enough aware of the genre, and surely knows how to construct a coherent, convincing future world. Yet he has created a future that feels more like the past (things that we can see changing in the world of today have reverted to a former state, newspapers and television are the main news media and we see nothing resembling an internet; all financial transactions are handled through cheques and bank branches; and people exclaim at the vastness of sums of money that suggest that inflation has gone into reverse in the interim). I don't believe this novel is set in the future, and I strongly suspect that Wolfe doesn't believe it either. On top of all this, he adds in an alien planet that doesn't feel as if it belongs anywhere.

The Wolders are the inhabitants of the only planet ever reached by an Earth that doesn't appear to have a space programme, or indeed any interest in space. They appear to have strange abilities, a mixture of mysticism and the sort of technological skills that include the manufacture of radioactive gold, yet none of this has filtered down to earth other than Reis's secret horde of gold. It would appear that the planet is accessible even by private hopper, yet in all the years it has been known it has been visited by only a handful of humans, although that handful includes both Reis and Chase, who both learned strange abilities from the Wolders. Quite simply, in science fictional terms the place just doesn't make sense.

But we're surely not meant to read it like this, any more than we are meant to read this as a novel of the future. A couple of times Cassie encounters strange unexplained beings. They are winged messengers, angels in other words (in the non-theatrical sense), and although it is not made explicit I am sure they are Wolders. Which brings us to the volcano god. About two thirds of the way through the novel, after Cassie has become a major star through the unlikely vehicle of 'Dating the Volcano God', after she has found herself spying on Reis for Chase and on Chase for Reis (and in either case conveying considerably less intelligence than the men already know; what are they really using her for?);

and after she has realised that she has fallen in love with both men; Reis whisks her away to his Pacific Island paradise where he intends to marry her. Here she discovers that an ancient submarine deity has been aroused, a deity worshipped by islanders in a manner that might have been convincing in a Saturday morning serial sixty years ago but hardly holds water now.

This Lovecraftian irruption into the story isn't particularly sudden: Wolfe has been laying none too subtle hints about it all the way through, even down to Chase carrying a watch inscribed: 'RC from his friend HPL'. Nevertheless, when the business reaches a frenetic conclusion in a primitive and storm-lashed ceremony, it feels both abrupt and like something that doesn't really belong to the rest of the novel. From the moment Cassie is carried away to the island the fact that she is an actress, and indeed the fact that to this point this has been a story intimately connected to the theatre, are completely forgotten. And continues to be forgotten even when she returns to civilisation.

Meanwhile we are left to ponder exactly what has been going on here. Are Reis and Chase the same person? They never appear together; Cassie falls indiscriminately in love with both of them, there are odd hints that the two might be one; yet one is wounded and the other bears no injury, one is killed and the other appears to be still alive though he has disappeared from the world. There are suggestions, also, of something going on that contrasts honesty and lying, since the text harps on these two words repeatedly, and it certainly seems to find an echo in the different forms of play-acting and deception that are such a feature of the novel; though in the end it is not apparent what this something might be, other than the rather banal observation that it is not always easy to distinguish truth from lies. And any novel that features the evil of a false god and ends with a flight to what might as well be called heaven (since it is the home of angels) implies the sort of religious sensibility we have come to expect from Wolfe.

Nevertheless you feel that we are reading these depths into the novel more because we know the author is Gene Wolfe and therefore expect them to be there, than because they are actually a part of the book. In the end, that initial impression of an incoherent mess is the one you are left with.

The Steel Remains by Richard Morgan

(Orion, London. 2008) 409 pages £9.99
Reviewed by Aidan-Paul Canavan

Richard Morgan, born in 1965, is a relatively new British science fiction author and *The Steel Remains* marks his first major foray into the field of Fantasy. His science fiction has won awards (*Altered Carbon*, Philip K. Dick Award 2003, *Market Forces*, Campbell Award 2005 and *Black Man*, Arthur C. Clarke Award 2008) but whether or not his fantasy will measure up remains to be seen. *The Steel Remains* promises to generate waves regardless of the critical reception and is certainly one of the most interesting genre fantasy novels to be published recently, although the interest generated may not be solely based on its literary merits.

Fantasy, and in particular genre fantasy, has accumulated a number of stereotypes and conventions over the years. Some of the assumptions made about fantasy include that it has a juvenile readership, is low literature, possesses a simplistic morality and is often recognisable through bad writing and thin plots. Of the thousands of fantasy titles published each year it seems that very few of them try to defy convention, correct these damning assumptions and try to make that leap to be something other than a pale imitation of Tolkien's epic. It is a pleasure to report that Morgan appears to be one of the new generation of Fantasists who acknowledge Tolkien's influence but are determined to step out from his shadow and find their own voice in the telling of fantasy stories. As such Morgan looks to be joining authors such as China Mieville, Steven Erikson and George R.R. Martin, each of whom have tried to explore the realm of fantasy beyond its traditional borders and struck out for uncharted territory.

Even with a cursory glance *The Steel Remains* stands out as something that flies in the face of convention, challenges genre assumptions and gives fantasy a well deserved wake up call. Upon publication, this book with its brutal violence, graphic sex scenes, uncompromising swearing and the emphasis on homosexuality will undoubtedly create controversy. However these attention grabbing elements disguise the fact that Morgan's first foray into genre fantasy is not quite as innovative and earth shattering as it seems.

The Steel Remains is a typical book one of a trilogy or series. Its relatively thin plot serves to introduce the characters, drop tantalising hints about the detailed back story and history of this new fantasyland and whet the reader's appetite for future instalments. The plot itself is indeed standard fantasy fare; a retired war hero has gone to seed in a back water town, his great deeds partially undercut by his disreputable reputation. An initial monster encounter reveals he is no longer in his prime but is certainly a warrior of skill. Then comes the quest, a mission to find and rescue a distant relative who has been sold into slavery. Our hero sets off on a journey that has him confronting aspects of his former life and past deeds, facing old adversaries and new, discovering a sinister invasion plot by a magical race and ultimately finding old friends who will help him with the inevitable further adventures of the series which will pit them against insurmountable odds. However Morgan shouldn't be overly criticised for this as the plot is secondary to the characters themselves and the world they inhabit. It may sound stereotypical but it is well paced and logical in its progression. The reader is propelled along with the events and eagerly laps up the next encounter.

The story itself is told from the perspective of three characters, with an emphasis on the central hero, Ringil, and how the others eventually come to be part of his adventure. Unfortunately there is little linking the development of each of these separate stories until the very end of the book and their reunion is somewhat anti-climactic. Additionally the emphasis on Ringil's tale unfairly relegates the other characters' journeys to filler status, killing time before the main action is resumed. It is disappointing that the real development of their combined story appears to have been set aside for the rest of the series and the reader is left somewhat underwhelmed by the development of the plot in this first instalment. The hints of past adventures and their shared history are intriguing and promise to be an area of greater exploration later, but as they are left largely unexplored in this book it is difficult to guess to what degree this will be so. This could be a deliberate ploy to stimulate interest in the inevitable sequels, but ultimately can be viewed as a flaw in this first book. However due to Morgan's emphasis on Ringil's perspective the reader gains a much greater insight into the character, his emotional turmoil and truly experiences the world through him. He is the compass with which the world can be navigated and through him the world becomes at once new and familiar and this somewhat justifies Morgan's choice of emphasis.

So now to the areas of *The Steel Remains* that make it stand out. Morgan successfully describes and details an intricate and fascinating fantasyland. He cleverly lets the reader piece together the world from snippets, remarks and character commentary rather than using the 'info dump' technique of bad science fiction, or the detailed exposition clumsily delivered by a mentor to a student or young hero common to fantasy portal quests. In this respect he engages the reader and gets them to participate in the creation of the rich world which has hints of an intriguing and detailed history. This makes the world more vivid and feel lived in. The politics of the society explored, as well as the construction of the city and characters, also marks Morgan as one of the new breed of gritty fantasists. To use the term realistic is problematic in terms of fantasy novels, perhaps believable, rational or coherent would be better words. Morgan has created a world which seems to work. There is a murky political arena, replete with backstabbing, intrigue, aspiring social climbers and back room agreements. Like our own reality, altruism is hard to find in Morgan's creation, everyone seems to have an agenda or angle below the surface. The world has the stench of corruption and reality and reaches out to all the senses so that the reader can feel fully immersed or submerged in this fantastic reality. Morgan pulls no punches and forces the reader to live and breathe this world alongside his characters.

Part of this 'gritty realism' is achieved through Morgan's use of the word 'fuck' and its myriad of adaptations. Morgan uses modern expletives, often and with vigour, and doesn't shy away from using the sort of language that a warrior would use caught in a dangerous situation, or that an ill educated thug would resort. Fantasy readers unused to 'realistic' swearing may find this jarring; however, once the reader accepts this version of reality it makes the fantasy world seem all the more real and believable. However this is not likely to be the most controversial aspect of this book.

Morgan's central character, Ringil, is homosexual; not in the sense of the romanticised, Ancient Greco-Roman way of a mentor-pupil relationship that is both private and either sanctioned or ignored by the society, but a promiscuous, homosexual man, in a homophobic world, who engages in casual sex and not just 'romantic love making'. Now this will certainly be a point of controversy, and will quite likely put some readers off, anger or offend others, and, in some cases, cause Morgan to be seen as something of a trailblazer. Ringil has a complicated and contradictory view of his homosexuality. At times he is proud of and brash about his sexuality, whilst at other times he seems to struggle with his position as a sinful and evil "pervert" within his society. This represents one of Morgan's greater triumphs in this novel. He accurately depicts the internal conflict of a gay or bisexual man who has grown up in a conservative religious culture, such as the one depicted in the novel, which condemns homosexuality as unnatural and sinful. This adds enormous depth to the character and creates a certain amount of empathy, and for this Morgan should be congratulated. This is a brave step forward and is certainly groundbreaking on a number of levels. Ringil is not a two dimensional 'cookie cutter' hero modelled on Sirs Gawain or Galahad, nor is he a noble king-in-waiting like Aragorn or Arthur. He is a fully realised character with complicated motives and motivations. In so many fantasy novels the hero is a chaste, noble, asexual paragon of virtue, destined only to have sex, if at all, within the bounds of marriage or with his one true love. In fact, only the villains or morally ambiguous fantasy characters ever seem to have sex, and should they be homosexual it is often seem as a symptom of their evil nature. But Ringil is no villain; he is not evil, only complicated. He is a man with flaws, a past, and ultimately Morgan has made him a man with true character. Ringil is not exactly the world's greatest role model, but he doesn't pretend to be. He is making his way in a world that despises him, but at the same time needs him. Morgan has thrown a harsh light upon fantasy's conservative tradition when it comes to sex and sexuality and challenges the reader to look beyond the cosy armchair storytelling they have come to expect.

Unfortunately the graphic depiction of the sexual acts themselves, of which there are more than a few, seems to be deliberate attempts to be shocking and anti-genre. Morgan's explicit descriptions fail to convey any real emotional connection between Ringil and his lovers, focusing instead on the physical details, and this creates a sense of detachment. Whilst some may consider this to be a realistic portrayal of some homosexual relationships, in terms of the narrative it fails to deliver an emotional touchstone for the reader. In fact the relationships between Ringil and both Seethlaw and Grace-of-Heaven, could have carried much greater impact had the reader witnessed any true tenderness between the lovers. Morgan instead focuses on the physical act, and includes a level of brutality that reduces sex to a physical exercise. Considering then the plot developments and the confrontations between these characters an opportunity has been lost to give those moments a poignancy and emotional quality above the cold violence. That being said, these scenes are revealing in terms of character development, back-story, and, character history and motivation and do serve a function in the text. It is just unfortunate that this is overshadowed by the deliberately "shocking" nature of the scenes.

This is perhaps the greatest flaw in this fascinating and innovative book. Having gone so far in trying to defy convention at every turn, Morgan has forgotten that it is not enough to be controversial; you have to be good as well. This is a powerful text and will shake fantasy to its very foundations and will do much to popularise the term 'Full Bore Fantasy', but it never quite delivers. It is almost certain that the next couple of books will deliver on the promise inherent in this story as Morgan adjusts to this new mode of storytelling, but *The Steel Remains* ultimately fails. That being said an amazing story that falls short of brilliant is still better than a dull story that lives up to dull expectation. Read this book and see what fantasy for grown ups looks like.

Halting State

By Charles Stross (Orbit, 2008, 338p. £10.99)
Reviewed by Pawel Frelik

Unlike a number of his recent pre- and post-Singularity narratives (*Singularity Sky*, *Iron Sunrise*, *Accelerando*, *Glasshouse*) that Stross has been unleashing upon the now suspecting masses, in terms of its timelines *Halting State* is a much more humble affair. It is set in 2017, primarily in Edinburgh and the independent Republic of Scotland, which seceded from the United Kingdom five years earlier — the events are summarized in the fictional entry from *CIA World Factbook* (34). While many elements seem to derive from cyberpunk's data-oriented futures — omnipresent surveillance, police fines payable by PayPal and quantum computers (no AIs, though), there is no future shock here and from the first page the reader feels firmly in the now-and-here territory.

The plot opens when Sergeant Sue Smith (talking about alliteration), a no-nonsense Edinburgh policewoman, receives a dispatch concerning the reported robbery. When she arrives at Hayek Associates, an online game company, she is shown a footage of the heist. Instead of the masked perps and the flying bits of the vault door (the flickering digits of the security-breaking notebook would probably be a more appropriate metaphor) she finds herself gaping at a band of spell-wielding orcs and a dragon pillaging a bank in one of the online games managed by Hayek. Ready to dismiss the virtual robbery and reprimand the company directors, she changes her mind when she learns that while the robbery was virtual and the loot seemingly worthless, the potential losses of Hayek Associates resultant from stock fluctuations and endangered transactions in shares amount to twenty six million Euros. The investigation opens, which comes to involve two other protagonists of the novel — the nerdish programmer Jack Reed and the belligerent forensic accountant Elaine Barnaby — and leads not just to financial scams within the industry but the volatile intersections of international politics and economy.

The orc band is also merely a tip of the iceberg of videogame references around which the entire novel is wrapped. Interestingly, gaming or, even more broadly, virtual environments, inform not only the elements of the plot but also the perspective of the text. The ludic practice is immediately obvious in the choice of the second-person narrator for all three protagonists. "When Mac IMs you, you've just spent half an hour catching up on your paperwork" (6) is a typical example of the manner in which scene-setting happens in *Halting State*. This may be reminiscent of "Choose Your Own Adventure" books and, particularly nowadays, of role-playing games, in which the game master lays out the story in front of the players. Unlike in RPGs, the reader does not have the choices to make and die to cast, but this passivity, in turn, brings the associations closer to videogames, particularly older shooters, in which the choices are minimal and the only task is to move on, slaughtering assorted monsters that impose themselves on the player. Consequently, the changing focalization between Sue, Jack and Elaine can be compared to the way in which identities and avatars can be changed in gaming.

Naturally, the games themselves feature heavily. Using current nomenclature, Avalon Four, in which the said robbery takes place, could be classified as a massively multiplayer online role playing game (MMORPG) with the decidedly sword-and-sorcery fantasy twist. Although it has millions of registered users, one cannot help feeling that Stross is somewhat satirizing this model of gaming and its aesthetics, the best example being Avalon's description: "This is the Island of Valiant Dreams. It hovers above the Lake of the Lost, in the foothills of the Nether Mountains in Avalon Four. The Island is home to the city called Roche's Retreat, and it's supported by ancient magicks" (14). While the focalizer at this point is Sue Smith, the only of the principal characters that has not engaged in gaming and thus remains the most sceptical, the poke at silly escapism of this fantasy world is, I think, clearly marked. Other titles mentioned include SPOOKS, STEAMING, NIGHTWATCH or VIRTUOUS GOLD (capitalized spelling original), all of which lack many limitations that today's players have to deal with. Avalon Four may be played out on networked computers but a number of games utilize distributed processing of ubiquitous personal mobile phones — the game can go on wherever there are registered users with cell phones. Which, we are given to understand, is pretty much everywhere. Integral to this new mode of experience are special glasses, which can project an in-game reality, or any other virtual reality for that matter, overlaid on the player's vision of whatever place they are at a given moment. In *Neuromancer* the famous view of BAMA in which the real and the virtual are collapsed and superimposed was available only to those trodded and jacked-in — Stross's glasses are as commonplace as mobile phones, implicitly suggesting a different distribution of technologies in the society and social access to them. Additionally, at least partly divorced from the unwieldy hardware, some of these games require a fair amount of real-world activity such as delivering packages, researching clues or meeting with other players, which, in turn, makes them also descendants of LARPs (Live Action Role-Playing) and ARGs (Alternate Reality Games). Given that the same type of mediation through wearable computing seems to pervade various spheres of activity, including the virtual interface called CopSpace used by the police, such mechanism may lead to the blurring of boundaries between playing and living — not perceptually as the overlays can be easily separated but mentally as pervasive gaming becomes indistinguishable from everyday activities.

Like in our world such games can be modded and hacked — STEAMING is known to have been used to rehearse weekend football riots while SPOOKS turns out to be an arena in which Chinese gaming clans wage war upon the West, and, as the protagonists find out, not always entirely harmlessly. Unlike in our world, the games of *Halting State* allow for transference of characters and assets between different worlds, with applicable conversions where the games differ in character — something that Steven Johnson rooted for in his article "When Virtual Worlds Collide" in the April 2006 issue of *Wired* magazine but what seems to be slow in coming. Still, Stross takes that idea another step further — at one point the characters uncover the tunnel which illegal immigrants use to move from one virtual world to another.

A minor point mentioned in passing, this detail is emblematic of the primary focus of the novel — the economics of the industry. A gaming book, *Halting State* is more about how gaming is constructed materially rather than how to game or how much fun it is. The initial push of the plot is the theft of virtual objects — in our world their value and trade in them have become subjects of many newspaper articles, but Stross does not devote much attention to that aspect, save for mentioning the exchange rates of in-game and international currencies. (Those interested in these issues should read Edward Castronova's *Synthetic Worlds*.) Instead, he traces larger financial entanglements of the gaming industry, not only because the central intrigue hinges on insider trading and stock flotation and several of Elaine's presentations could be well used in the handbooks of finance. In fact, following the plot requires less knowledge of gaming protocols and more familiarity with modern economy.

Very emblematically, Hayek Associates is not even a game developer — it is "a diversified economics consultancy and market-maker" (54) that runs virtual central banks for seventeen gaming worlds with the virtual money turnover comparable to the annual budget of Japan. The summary of one of the company officers makes it clear that this is no longer a marginal market: "we're responsible for ensuring that 20 million players who spend roughly 6 billion a year to participate in our clients' games don't see their virtual stake-holdings vanish into mid-air" (54). Of course, this is precisely the direction in which our virtual environments such as *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life* are moving, even if the numbers are not that high yet. Stross presents the gaming industry as one in which many wide-ranging economic and social concerns converge, writing what can be tentatively called economic science fictions in the same league as William Gibson's *Pattern Recognition* or Richard Morgan's *Market Forces*. In fact, whether these are actually science fictions can be argued — their ambiguous status is equally telling of their authors' literary preoccupations and the developments in our world.

Stross's interest in the underbelly of what Erik Davis called in *Techgnosis* "invisible architectures of luminous code" (256) extends beyond the gaming franchises. These are directions are not pursued in such detail as videogaming but somewhere between ludic operations and arcane business dealings there is a deeper awareness of the world in change. While they are walking in Edinburgh's World Heritage Conservation Zone, the place that seems particularly un-modern, Jack explains to Elaine: "We used to have slide-rules and log tables, then calculators made them obsolete. Even though old folks can still do division and multiplication in their heads, we don't use that. We used to have maps, on paper. But these are all small things. [...] The city looks the same, but underneath its stony hide, nothing is quite the way it used to be. Somewhere along the line we ripped its nervous systems and muscles out and replaced them with a different architecture. [...] Nothing works the way it used to" (296). It is hard to imagine a better diagnosis of what some societies are going through in 2008.

Halting States's abundant wry humour and the apparent lightness of the topic may fool some readers but in reality it is a very serious novel. Manfred Macx's cyberware glasses from *Accelerando* and singularity may be pure imagination but the world of 2017 is round the corner. The lofty toponymy of fantasy game worlds like Avalon Four is truly amusing but the situation towards the end in which the hacked zombie game players turned into a flash mob have been manipulated into besieging a hotel also says something very important about the influence of new media and new technologies on human behaviour and, more importantly, human manipulability. In *Halting State* gaming is no longer merely an entertainment option for young, mostly male adults but an activity that sends massive ripples across the economic and social terrain of the early twenty first century. The fact that most people perceive online worlds as completely separate from other "serious" electronic networks leads in the novel to the threat of the entire information infrastructure being compromised by hackers serving as unwitting pawns of foreign intelligence agencies. Hayek Associates is thus not just a company but a post on the electronic frontier.

Byzantine manipulation and deceit by corporation and government agencies are rife in the novel but *Halting State* is hardly a grim dystopia as the sturdy individualism of hackers is firmly re-established in the passage in which Jack is thinking about Barry Michaels, an epitome of both kinds of authority — corporate and political: "you know his type, and after seventy years of data processing, they still think that coders can be hired and fired; that the engineers who ripped out the muscles and nerves of the modern world and replaced it with something entirely alien under the skin are still little artisans who will put their tools down and go home if you tell them to leave the job half-done" (300). Consequently, the conclusion can be read not only as a happy end for all three protagonists but as a hopeful note for the "alien" future — not only of gaming worlds but electronic media in general.

Afro-Future Females:
Black Writers Chart Science Fiction's Newest New-Wave Trajectory

edited by Marleen S. Barr (The Ohio State University Press, 2008, 257 pp, $44.95 hardcover, $9.95 CD-ROM)
Reviewed by David Harlan Wilson

This eclectic, multi-narrational collection calls attention to the longstanding lack of creative and critical African-American female voices in SF by providing a rare forum for their expression. SF has notoriously been written and read by white males with few exceptions, such as Samuel R. Delany and Octavia Butler, the latter of whom arguably constitutes a single-authored canon. While Butler's work figures as a touchstone, editor Marleen Barr hopes the book will lead to a larger community of Afro-Future females and black SF writers in general. In her preface, she appropriates the metaphor of the period from Edward Said to make her point: "The black period situated amidst the page's white space can represent the science fiction generic white authorship space which has functioned as a void in relation to black science fiction" (xi). The goal of *Afro-Future Females* is to start filling that void. As Barr underscores: "black science fiction is the most exciting literature of the twenty-first-century present. Period" (xxi). No doubt many readers will disagree with this bold, totalizing statement. Nevertheless *Afro-Future Females* does feature dynamic, innovative writing from a range of perspectives and styles.

Barr has a long, eminent career as an SF critic and won the Science Fiction Research Association's illustrious Pilgrim Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1997. *Afro-Future Females* is her third installment in a series of feminist SF works that date back almost 30 years. Its predecessors are *Future Females: A Critical Anthology* (1981) and *Future Females, The Next Generation: New Voices and Velocities in Feminist Science Fiction Criticism* (2000). Barr divides the book into six sections, each of which foregrounds a different theme and mode of writing, including essays, fictions, commentaries, meditations, interviews, author-responses, and memoirs. Her preface avails a cogent overview of female Afro-Futurism as well as a brief schematic of the book's contents. Part of her project is clearly to gain wider respect for SF among scholarly critics. Above all, however, she strives to "create a dialogue with existing theories of Afro-Futurism in order to generate fresh ideas about how to apply race to science fiction studies in terms of gender" (xiv).

Following the preface is a series of three short introductions collectively titled "'Dark Matter' Matters." Barr and two other critics explore the origins of Afro-Futurist sensibilities in, respectively, Butler's work, cyberfiction, and television. A central concern in these introductions is the persistent void of black artists within

SF. Mark Dery asks: "Why do so few African-Americans write science fiction, a genre whose close encounters with the Other — the stranger in a strange land — would seem uniquely suited to the concerns of African-American novelists?" (8). The question evokes profound ironies, e.g., how African-Americans' historically subaltern status reflects SF's historically marginalized status, rendering SF a mature and inviting site for the exploration of African-American identity — and yet this site has hardly been charted. Perhaps it has something to do with African-American artists not wanting to doubly marginalize themselves by situating their work within SF diegeses. Dery suggests that the futurological dimensions of SF pose a problem, i.e., African-American identity is distinguished by a negation of history, and without a history, how can one individual or community envision a potential future? Whatever the case, this commentary provides scaffolding for the rest of *Afro-Future Females* to build upon.

The next section, "Essays: The Blackness of Outer Space Fiction as Blast(off) from the Past," comprises the longest part of the book, including five full-length critical essays and three responses to De Witt Douglas Kilgore's "Beyond the History We Know: Nnedi Okorafor-Mbachu, Nisi Shawl, and Jarla Tangh Rethink Science Fiction Tradition" by the very authors in the title. These responses are regrettably short — no more than 500 words apiece — but it's nice to see this sort of interaction. Kilgore emphasizes the originality of the authors' work (his subtitles include "New Reading Practices," "New Literary History," "New Primeval Horrors," and "New Conjured Black Future Females"). The authors all compliment him for insightful readings of their work, then briefly mention additional or divergent themes that they explore. Most of the other essays in this section lean heavily on Octavia Butler, albeit they often use Butler as a springboard to discuss other writers while engaging themes of magic and science, utopia and dystopia, capital and the body, and the psychodynamics of time travel.

Five selections of short fiction follow the critical entries in "Stories: Techno/Magic Sistahs Are Not the Sistahs from Another Planet," a gendered play on John Sayles' seminal cult film *The Brother from Another Planet* (1984). Butler takes the lead with "The Book of Martha," written near the end of her career. The other pieces, all soft SF, belong to Andrea Hairston (professor and playwright), Nisi Shawl (freelance writer and journalist), Sheree R. Thomas (editor and publisher) and Nalo Hopkinson (award-winning novelist). "Commentaries: Kindred Spirit" begins with a meditation on Butler and ends with a tribute to her. These writings flank a theoretical reflection on film, "Can a Brother Get Some Love? Sociobiology in Images of African-American Sensuality in Contemporary Cinema: Or, Why We'd Better the Hell Claim Vin Diesel as Our Own," and interviews with Samuel R. Delany and Kevin Willmott. All told, this is an extremely diverse, informative, and moving assembly of prose.

In an afterword to *Afro-Future Females*, Barr describes how "the beginnings of scholarship about black women science fiction writers emanated in part from the words of a woman of Italian ancestry" named Ruth Salvaggio, an English professor good-humoredly referred to as Dr. Ph(d)SalvagGIo (à la Italo Calvino). Barr recounts a meeting in which she encouraged the reluctant Salvaggio/Ph(d)SalvagGIo to engage with SF feminist scholarship, and in a subsequent response, "Connecting Metamorphoses," Salvaggio/Ph(d)SalvagGIo thanks Barr for introducing her to Butler and the SF genre. This is a fitting conclusion to a deeply personal collection in which Barr exercises various methods of identity-assertion and "signifyin'," to use Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s term. *Afro-Future Females* has a wide appeal, particularly for feminist, SF and/or African-American scholars as well as writers of fiction and creative nonfiction.

Rhetorics of Fantasy

Farah Mendlesohn (Wesleyan, 2008, 336 p, $27.95 paper)
Reviewed by Jen Gunnels

Farah Mendlesohn, author and editor of such well known texts as *A Celebration of British Science Fiction* and *Diana Wynne Jones: The Fantastic Tradition and Children's Literature*, boasts impeccable credentials in the fields of Science Fiction and Fantasy. She has also served as editor of *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction* from 2002 to 2007 and won (with co-editor Edward James) a Hugo Award for *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Most recently she is the program director for the 2009 World Science Fiction Convention in Montreal. In light of this experience, it is not surprising that her book, *Rhetorics of Fantasy*, undertakes the imposing project of establishing an alternative way to examine Fantasy texts. Considering the enormous, seemingly amorphous body of Fantasy novels and stories that proliferate, Mendlesohn attempts to partition the work into logical divisions that allow readers to consider how individual works contribute to or deviate from particular classifications.

To Mendlesohn's credit, even as she undertakes this far-reaching theoretical project, she stipulates that she does not wish to overly determine how others consider the field of Fantasy. Toward this end, she starts the book with a warning. "Health Warning: This book is not intended to create rules. Its categories are not intended to fix anything in stone. This book is merely a portal into fantasy, a tour around the skeletons and exoskeletons of the genre." Mendlesohn does allow you to feel like a fellow tourist in her attempt, as she has labelled her work, to grasp the rhetorical construction of fantasy. The types of fantasy are vast, slippery, muddy, tangled and so interlaced that it is a wonder that she managed to tease them apart at all. In attempting to make sense of so complex a field, Mendlesohn's project is a worthy one.

Within this work, Mendlesohn relies heavily upon and assumes a close relationship between the reader and the text. This drives her examination of the rhetorical construction employed in the writing and reading of each text included here. She believes that "a fantasy succeeds when the literary techniques employed are most appropriate to the reader expectations of that category of fantasy" (xiii). Her work here illustrates how the author manipulates the reader's expectations of and entry into the fantastic from a rhetorical standpoint. Such expectations can open or close the text of the fantasy, or a mishandling of such expectations on the part of the author can result in substandard or flat material which fails to work as a cohesive whole.

In her introduction, Mendlesohn breaks fantasy down into four rhetorical types based on how the protagonist, and through them the reader, enter the fantastic. According to her examination of over 150 texts, the fantasy narrative can be entered into in four ways: the Portal-Quest, Immersion, Intrusion, and Liminal. Each of these four has its own rhetorical style meant to engage or, in certain instances, repel the reader thereby controlling how they connect with and experience the world the author creates. *Rhetorics* is broken into five chapters, four of which cover Mendlesohn's four categories and a fifth chapter in which she refutes her taxonomy — hoping to show that the exceptions prove the rule — by examining texts that do not appear to fit with any of the four categories. In each chapter, she asks specific questions, the most important being: "Where are we asked to stand in relationship to the fantastic? (xviii)" More specifically, what is the reader's position in regard to the framework of the text? Within her categories, Mendlesohn, like her view of the fantasy author, assumes a proactive reader. With a good deal of candour, she outlines her difficulty in teasing apart and organizing her material largely because fantasy does not always create a nice orderly system of categorization.

Chapter one examines the category of the Portal-Quest. True to its terminology, in this type of fantasy, the protagonists enter the fantastic via a portal of some kind. She further notes that portal fantasies almost always entail a quest where the narrative proceeds in a linear fashion toward a goal. Such a narrative does not open itself to questioning by the protagonist or the reader. All elements must be taken as truth. If they are not then the fantastic begins to fall apart. As such, she sees the Portal-Quest type of fantasy relatively closed, simplistic, and straightforward. Within this chapter she creates subsections which further break the chapter down to show the historical development of early quest and portal fantasies — tracing how the rhetoric in this type of fantasy shares a good deal in common with the "club story" of the nineteenth century — portal and quest fantasies of the modern era, and subversions of this rhetoric. One section within this chapter concerns Tolkien and Lewis and what many may see as the benchmarks for portal quest fantasies, The Lord of the Rings Trilogy and The Chronicles of Narnia. Mendlesohn particularly notes the framing elements that allow the Lord of the Rings to be classed as "portal" in reference to the Hobbits as being taken out of a comfortable framework which could be viewed as a normative mirror to our world and placed within a larger and stranger — for them and us — world outside the Shire.

Moving to what might be viewed as the opposite pole within her rhetorical categories, Immersive fantasy comes to the fore in the second chapter. Mendlesohn views this placement as a natural next step after the Portal-Quest narrative in that we, along with the protagonist, begin *within* the world — as opposed to entering it through a portal — and our working knowledge of the fantastic is assumed as the norm. Unlike the Portal-Quest, the fantastic is completely contained by the world of the narrative. Here Mendlesohn brings forward her understanding of science fiction construction: "The immersive fantasy is that which is closest to science fiction; as such it makes use of an irony of mimesis, which helps to explain why a sufficiently immersive fantasy may be indistinguishable from science fiction: once the fantastic becomes assumed, it acquires a scientific cohesion of its own" (xx). This chapter, like the first, is also sub-sectioned, but rather than sections being dictated by historical lineage as in chapter one, it is broken into sections based on immersive construction, such as rationalized fantasy, critical distance: protagonist as antagonist, immersion and reader—protagonist context, casualizing the fantastic and making the ordinary baroque, and several others

Chapter three, Intrusion, looks at the fantastic as it impinges on a "normal" world as presented in the story. "In intrusion fantasy the fantastic is the bringer of chaos. It is the beast in the bottom of the garden, or the elf seeking assistance. It is horror and amazement. It takes us out of safety without taking us from our place. It is recursive" (xxii). The fantastic in this particular type of story "leaks" into our world prompting investigation on the part of the protagonist. Such a story, Mendlesohn notes, is driven by escalation in order to keep the reader engaged in the narrative. In addition, she explores how horror operates within the frame of the intrusion fantasy moving the reader from "a sense of wonder to a sense of fear" (136). Mendlesohn, however, clarifies horror within this category:

It is important to recognize that while much of modern horror fits in the very center of the intrusion fantasy subset, horror is not ipso facto intrusion fantasy. Anne Rice's novel *Interview With a Vampire* (1976), for example, is (in my schema) a portal-quest fantasy, as we are guided by the vampire in his process of *becoming*. At the other end of the spectrum, outside the supernatural field, horror segues without break into crime fiction; hence my contention made casually on a number of occasions that crime fiction is essentially intrusion fantasy. Much of modern horror however — particularly of the supernatural sort — is *quintessential* intrusion fantasy. (142)

Chapter four examines the final category — liminal fantasy. From the tone of the writing one can surmise that this type is a particular favorite of Mendlesohn's. She notes that this particular rhetorical mode is rare largely because it is a difficult one to create. "When the fantastic appears, it *should* be intrusive, disruptive of expectation; instead, while the events themselves might be noteworthy and/or disruptive, their magical origins barely raise an eyebrow" (xxiii). Such a reaction on the part of the protagonist results in reader "estrangement." The result is that "Of all the categories it is the one that depends most on my notions of multiple fuzzy sets. Far from being at the edge of genre, the least fantastical of texts, liminal fantasy is the fuzzy set supported by and between the other modes that I am discussing" (xxiv). As such her examples expound upon "mimetic style" and "ironic mode" to create an effective story.

In her final chapter, "'The Irregulars:' Subverting the Taxonomy," Mendlesohn blatantly states that "The purpose of this chapter is to support my argument by undermining it" (246). While her exemplar texts, chosen because they are neither this nor that in terms of her four categories, do not apparently seem to find inclusion in any of the four categories, they rather subvert or tie together multiple elements. "It is quite feasible to overlap some modes . . . or to segue from one to another, but all of these techniques essentially accord with the rhetorical structures I have outlined" (246). Throughout the book, Mendlesohn's choice of first person and unself-conscious use of caveats, unusual in a critical text, provides a conversational tone, making her subjective opinion clear from the beginning without undercutting the potential utility of examining fantasy in such a manner.

With a good deal of candour, she outlines her difficulty in teasing apart and organizing her material largely because fantasy does not always create orderly categories. Unfortunately, this sometimes muddies *Rhetorics*. Even with the admission that chapter materials and ideas overlap at points, and that categorizing certain examples proved difficult, precisely *how* they overlapped one another was not always clear. In addition, the insightful examination of texts was often occluded by the very material being used to shore up the arguments. On the one hand, it is necessary to provide a large sampling of readings in order to illustrate the categorization properly. On the other, the sheer volume of examples, both from chapter to chapter and even within the smaller subsections (themselves confusingly inconsistent) was somewhat overwhelming. A number of examples, some occupying only a sentence or two within the text, could have been footnoted or collectively referenced. The end result was very much, at points, not being able to see the forest for the trees.

Regardless, the ideas within *Rhetorics of Fantasy* are compelling and debatable — precisely what Mendlesohn had hoped. This book would certainly make a useful reference for anyone doing critical analysis in the area of fantastic fiction, whether they wish to utilize the four categories or refute them. The book offers an extremely useful set of tools for close readings of this particular kind text, one which, as Mendlesohn mentions, was not available until now. Another group who might benefit from this is MFA writers or writers in general. While it is definitely not a text about how to write fantasy, it does provide a set of questions that writers may wish to ask about their work from the perspective of the rhetorical construction of what they create. In addition, it might make them more aware of the active relationship between the reader and the text in making the story successful for the reader.

Years ago I had wanted to teach a rhetoric class using fantasy texts, but due to a lack of material on rhetoric in that genre, I switched to science fiction instead. Thinking back on the copious materials I found on science fiction and its construction, it does beg the question of why it has taken this long for someone to approach fantasy in the same manner. The acknowledged purpose of this work is as a starting point for argument. In a refreshing turn, Mendlesohn *hopes* that people will argue and produce even more interesting ways of examining fantasy. In the introduction, rather than offering up definitions or ways to define fantasy, Mendlesohn wants to "reach out for an understanding of the *construction* of the genre." She raises an excellent point that fantasy deserves the same rigorous examination of construction that has been applied to science fiction. *Rhetorics of Fantasy* provides a series of opening questions in this endeavor and promotes the necessity of argument in continuing to expand and encourage new ways to examine the fantastic in narrative texts.

Interplanetary: A History of the British Interplanetary Society

Edited by Bob Parkinson (British Interplanetary Society, 2008, 100p, £20)
Reviewed by Andy Sawyer

The year 2008 is the 75th anniversary of the British Interplanetary Society; something which I suspect has passed most British science fiction fans by. This book has been published to mark that anniversary and in researching it, editor Bob Parkinson discovered a document which is of significance to the history of British Science Fiction. But then, the BIS itself is inextricably bound up with the history of sf in Britain. Founded by Wallasey engineer P. E. Cleator in 1933, its early members included many of those who came to be the movers and shakers of science fiction in the thirties, forties and fifties: Les Johnson, Eric Frank Russell, Walter Gillings, John Carnell, William Temple and especially and gloriously Arthur C. Clarke (who edited its *Journal* for a while and twice served as its Chairman), are part of its history. Those days of close connection between what in the 1930s seemed to be very much the "literary" and "practical" wings of a single movement are long gone (although Stephen Baxter is a Fellow of the current Society). But for a long while, the enthusiasts for developing space travel through rocketry and the pioneers of a new literary form were not only marching in step, they were pretty much the *same people*.

When Cleator founded the BIS, among his first recruits were members of the Liverpool Science Fiction Group. The second "fan" group organised in the UK, this had come together in 1931 as the "Universal Science Circle" along the lines of Walter Gillings' "Ilford Science Literary Circle"; and included, among Liverpool Group members, Colin Askham, Norman Weedall and Les Johnson, who was to be the British Interplanetary Society's secretary. It is Johnson's memoir, found in the archives of the BIS, which fuses the two "strands" of this fascinating history[1]. Shortly afterwards, Eric Frank Russell joined, and we are told that in 1935 Russell and Johnson persuaded Olaf Stapledon to join the BIS. The previous year has seen a schoolboy from Somerset, one Arthur C. Clarke, join. By 1937, Clarke was Treasurer and Russell, Walter Gillings and John Carnell were among the officers. In that same year, the four of them attended the first science fiction convention in the world, in the Theosophical Hall, Leeds. It is fascinating to read in Norman Weedall's obituary in *Checkpoint* 91 (September 1978) that as well as being one of the founder-members of the British Interplanetary Society that "He was the official St Fantony Executioner" (If anyone really *needs* to know more about the British fan-myth of "St Fantony", the 9th (November 2007) issue of *Prolapse*, on http://efanzines.com/Prolapse/index.htm, has it all.)

It is also significant, because what comes out of the account of the early years of the BIS — which is admirably set in the context of other "rocket societies" and individual enthusiasts in Britain, The USA, Germany, Russia and elsewhere, — is that most of its members were young and enthusiastic rather than proven experts in the field. True, there was hardly a "field" to be expert *in*. 1931 was, after all, less than five years after Charles Lindbergh's solo flight across the Atlantic from one continent to another, and yet Cleator and his companions were hoping to convince governments that inter-*planetary* travel was the hope of the future. Cleator himself was in his early twenties, and many of the BIS members were teenagers. Cleator's use of the juvenile story-paper *Scoops* to publicise his venture (which I have sometimes heard as dumbing-down his ventures) could well be seen as a canny use of the potential sources for new recruits. A picture of the 1936 "Paisley Rocketeers Society" shows a group of schoolboys (the text confirms that at least one of them was still at school. In the same year, the "Manchester Interplanetary Society" had an average age of a little over seventeen. The account of this group's activities suggests that the government crack-down on unauthorised experimentation with rockets (which in practice meant *any* experimentation with rockets) was perhaps as much to do with the youth of the experimenters than hidebound reaction on the authorities' part, although reaction and distrust of this "H. G. Wells stuff" certainly did play a part.

So, for much of its first few years, the BIS enthused, but could do little. Nevertheless, Cleator was assiduous in developing international links. The second issue of the BIS *Journal* in 1934 speaks of contact with the then 27 year old Willy Ley, already author of several books. In 1937, the Society moved its headquarters from Liverpool to London. Cleator lost personal control in what may have been seen as a "coup", but the London move and the increased communication possibilities it brought was instrumental in making the BIS the professional pressure and educational group it is today. The story progresses through the development of the Society, and for an outsider it is illuminating. Frank H, Winter's *Prelude to the Space Age: The Rocket Societies, 1924-1940* (1983) and Francis Spufford's chapter on the British space race in *Backroom Boys: The Secret Return of the British Boffin* (2003) are perhaps the best accounts I've read of this period, but *Interplanetary* fills much-needed gaps and brings the story right up to date. The book's format — short chronological chapters with numerous sidebars focussing upon the individuals concerned — length and position as an in-house publication precludes very much in the way of analysis of social context and individual motive, but as a primary source it is invaluable. We read in *Interplanetary* not only of author Professor A. M. Low, author of a number of the space-adventures in *Scoops* (whose title, we are amused to hear, comes from being Associate Honorary Assistant Professor of Physics at the Royal Ordnance College) but energetic visionaries such as H. E. Ross, who devised a range of ideas for space vehicles and space-suits, Ken Gatland, who worked on wartime aircraft and later wrote numerous books popularising the idea of space travel, Val Cleaver, Chief Engineer of Rolls Royce's rocket team, and others.

During the war years, the BIS suspended its activities. But with the coming of peace, there was a window of opportunity for a British space presence. The German V1 and V2 rockets which terrorized London towards the end of the war showed what could technically be done. Clarke's famous 1946 paper on the possibility of geosynchronous communications satellites suggested that the exploitation of (at the very least) near space was of vital importance. Clarke himself, in books like *Interplanetary Flight* (1950) and *Prelude to Space* (1951) was vigorously arguing the "case for space", and the reformed BIS membership (many of whom were working on British rocket projects) threw itself into a series of conferences, symposia, and public awareness programmes. The journal *Spaceflight* began publication in 1956, edited by Patrick Moore. It soon became clear that a specifically *British* programme was out of the question. The "Blue Streak" rocket weapons system was cancelled in 1960. But during the 1960s, we are told, the BIS moved consistently towards becoming a more professional organisation, rather than a collection of enthusiasts, and (following the success of the American Apollo programme) worked hard over the next few decades to develop and sustain its place in a series of international symposia.

By then it is probably fair to say that the histories of science fiction and the British Interplanetary Society diverged. A new wave of sf writers was propagandising inner rather than outer space, while the BIS was renewing its assault upon industrialists, politicians and the general public rather than sf fandom. The postwar chapters of *Interplanetary* are therefore more closely linked to the broader international space programme than with individuals from the sf community. They still remain an interesting read. While *Interplanetary* possibly suffers from having been compiled from a number of pre-existing accounts, updated and edited to achieve a consistent tone throughout, it is what such accounts *should* be. It is full of information and hints intriguingly at some of the personal and ideological conflicts which all such organisations find themselves riven with. There are various attempts to gain a Royal Charter. There are the factional disputes between those who wanted the Society to be a broad pressure-group emphasising public information, and the "professionals" who wanted it to be a Learned Society encouraging and researching new technologies. There seems to have been an extraordinary (if unfounded) accusation in the 90s of Executive Secretaries exploiting the Society — which must have left a sour taste in the mouths of those who remembered the selfless volunteer spirit which has kept the BIS going through all these decades.

For despite its sometimes "glossy" look the BIS was and still is an essentially amateur organisation in the best sense of the word. Founded by enthusiasm and idealism, it has kept going through these qualities. Its members now exchange information by email rather than letter, using laptops rather than slide rules; and its proposals are perhaps backed up by more rigorous science than used to be the case, but, as we are told on the final page of *Interplanetary* it remains very much a volunteer organisation. It's good to have a record of the BIS, and here's to another 75 years!

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1 I am indebted to Bob Parkinson for giving me an advance copy of his article "The Pre-History of Fandom" which draws upon Johnson's Memoir. Unpublished at time of writing, it should be found in a future issue of Peter Weston's fine journal of fanhistory, *Prolapse*.

What It Is We Do When We Read Science Fiction

By Paul Kincaid (Beccon Publications, 2008, 365 p, £15.00)

Reviewed by Jason W. Ellis

Paul Kincaid's collection of science fiction scholarship and criticism, *What It Is We Do When We Read Science Fiction*, brings together a number of his essays and reviews into one place for easy access by sf scholars. Kincaid's collection, as is true for the personable author, is brimming over with ideas and observations covering a wide variety of subjects including the works of Christopher Priest, Keith Roberts, Gene Wolfe, and Jorge Luis Borges, as well as theoretical considerations of sf, genre, and terminology. The threads that bind these disparate pieces into a cohesive whole are Kincaid's unrelenting enthusiasm for sf and the fantastic, and the breadth of knowledge and depth of analysis that he, almost without fail, brings to bear on each essay.

The collection contains a massive thirty-two selections, including twenty-one essays and eleven reviews, five of which are original and two are expanded from previously published articles. This impressive number of articles is subdivided into an oscillating wave of categories: theory, practice, Christopher Priest, Britain, the world, Gene Wolfe, and 1 April 1984.

Kincaid's two essays in the theory section point to the way in which he skillfully turns widely accepted sf terms and themes on their heads. For example, in the title essay of the collection, he extends Samuel R. Delany's argument that there is an sf language that we as readers must learn, and argues that sf neologisms and new uses for old words are not estranging, but rather enabling to the reader to make sense within the sf narrative. Again, he challenges accepted sf genre definitions in "On the Origins of Genre", and convincingly shows that sf definitions rely on a first emblematic text, e.g., Aldiss' choice of Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and that choice inextricably colours the definitional framework, and vice versa. His elegant solution is to unite Damon Knight with Ludwig Wittgenstein, thus creating a more productive working definition of sf: "Science fiction is what we point to when we say 'science fiction', and where the genre begins historically and what constitutes that genre will vary as the direction in which we point varies" (p. 21).

He continues his challenging inquiry into sf and its terminology in four reviews in the Practice section. He unearths the schismatic sf definitions embedded in Clute and Nicholls' *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1997), troubles over the way in which generic sf stories are shoehorned into the hard sf mould, and questions the meaning of "best" in the ubiquitous year's best collections. In "The North-South Continuum", he deftly explains the difference between alternate histories and counterfactuals through an exhausting survey of works dealing with imaginative retellings of the American Civil War. However, one of the more intriguing essays is, "Mistah Kurtz, He Dead", in which he points to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) as the point of origin for British sf that diverged from the American trajectory ignited by Hugo Gernsback.

The section on Christopher Priest, only containing four articles, is probably the best representation of Kincaid's work as a group. In these four, he animatedly discusses Priest's use of doubles, implicit and explicit movement between worlds, and unreliable characters, memories, and settings. In the earlier work, "Mirrors, Doubles, Twins", the reader sees Kincaid's critical ideas that he develops further in his later essays on Priest. In this essay, he tackles the multitudinous doubled characters, including the ensuing psychosexual relationships, and doubled worlds the characters inhabit and cross between in Priest's work since the mid-1970s. Continuing the thread of identity, Kincaid argues convincingly in "Blank Pages: Islands and Identity in the Fiction of Christopher Priest", that Priest's novels hinge on the dependency between character identities and the "island", whether artificial in his earlier works or literal in those that come after. He goes on to discuss Priest's story, "The Discharge", from the 1999 Dream Archipelago collection, as a high-water mark that builds on his earlier work involving doubles, memory, and identity. In the section's final essay, "10/10 May/May: Singling Out the Duplications in *The Separation*", Kincaid excitedly argues that Priest outdoes himself in this work by creating an implicit, rather than normally explicit, crossing between worlds and those worlds are numerous rather than double, while the doubled characters, Jack and Joe, appear to be unifying rather than separating as the title implies.

In the Britain section, Kincaid argues for the uniqueness of British contributions to the sf genre. The section begins with the impressive, original essay, "Islomania? Insularity? The Myth of the Island in British Science Fiction", which runs counter to Nicholas Ruddick's claims in *Ultimate Island* (1993). Kincaid argues that the use and significance of the island in sf is a uniquely British phenomenon that develops from two complementary forks: islomania, or the island wish, and insularity, isolation and protection from the world outside. As always, he meticulously reinforces his argument with a number of examples from his reading list repertoire. Three other well thought-out works in this section chart the role of myth and place in the works of Robert Holdstock and Keith Roberts. In "Touching the Earth", he charts Holdstock's upward trajectory as a developing writer, and details the centrality of myth and ritual and the important connections between humanity and culture as well as what happens when those connections break down. Connected to this essay are two overlapping essays on Roberts. In the first, Kincaid explores the permanence of place in Robert's individualist, not-quite-libertarian first novel, *The Furies* (1966), and in the second, "Maps of a Curious Sort: Landscape in the Fiction of Keith Roberts", Kincaid looks at the way in which England, or its fictional double, is closely tied to mythology and the physical health and wellbeing of his characters.

The "world" section contains real gold in its four exemplary essays. In "Secret Maps", he theorises on the triad Steve Erickson builds into his works: time, space, and identity via memory. He reveals the connection between geography and memory, and how both cannot be wholly trusted. Also, these linked elements may be broken or distorted, but unlike an author such as Philip K. Dick, Erickson puts things back together. "Exhibits" is a fun and insightful homage, or as Kincaid puts it, "a love story", to Steven Millhauser's Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *Martin Dressler* (1998). Aping the author's disjointed style, he engages and comments on the novel's thesis that the dividing line between history and dream, and magic and reality is perception. The third essay, "A Mode of Head-On Collision: George Turner's Critical Relationship with Science Fiction", reveals Turner's effect on Australian sf through his personal conflict as a mainstream-turned-sf author and critic. Finally, Kincaid's most powerful essay in the collection is another example of his analysis of authorial evolution, "Entering the Labyrinth", in which he approaches the unexplained paradigmatic midlife shift in the work of Jorge Luis Borges. He fully engages his subject matter, both the author and his work, in a well developed essay that contextualises Borges' biography with his well-recognised stories through an analysis of authority and a distrust of mirrors and images, moral duality, the overlap and complementarities of dream and reality, and the two Borges — early and late in life, fictional and real.

The penultimate section on Gene Wolfe covers a broad swath of the author's work. It begins with Kincaid's argument that the protagonist turned savior in Wolfe's first novel, *Operation Ares* (1970), serves as prototype for his future narratives. He goes on to expose the intertextuality within and without Wolfe's comedic novels, *There Are Doors* (1988) and *Free Live Free* (1984). And, in the third essay, he discusses the narrative and fictional artifice in Wolfe's widely anthologised novella, "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" (1972).

The ultimate section and final review of the collection, on Carlos Orfila Nuñez's *By-Ways on the Shining Path*, is emblematic of the energy and passion dripping from each essay and review in Kinkaid's collection, *What It Is We Do When We Read Science Fiction*. In addition to the author's energy, this collection is crammed with insight and critical analysis, which makes it a necessary addition to university libraries, because it makes available a number of significant texts on a variety of subjects for researchers and students. It would also be useful in the undergraduate or graduate classroom with a focus on the authors Priest or Wolfe. There are numerous useful gems in this collection, and for that reason, along with the way Kincaid engages and writes about his subject matter, I recommend this collection of enjoyable critical reading!

Adventure, Vol. 1

Edited by Chris Roberson (MonkeyBrain Books, 2005, 393p, $14.95 US)
Reviewed by Sue Thomason

Published in November 2005, *Adventure Vol. 1* was planned to be "The first volume of an annual anthology of original fiction in the spirit of early twentieth-century pulp fiction magazines, [featuring] stories from all genres". MonkeyBrain Books is owned and operated by *Adventure*'s editor and his wife, and is a flourishing independent small press, with a double-handful of fiction and non-fiction titles currently available. They do not include further volumes of *Adventure*, however. What went wrong?

Evaluating an anthology of short stories immediately raises two questions: what makes a good short story, and what makes a good anthology? For me, a good short story is concise, contains an interesting idea, event, situation or character(s), has a satisfying shape, and comes to a resolution or conclusion. If it were food, it would be two squares of dark chocolate: concentrated and powerfully satisfying, it would not leave me wanting more. (I wonder if short stories are not currently popular with publishers because publishers *do* want to leave readers wanting more, so that they will buy the next book, and the next... literature as fast food?) A satisfying anthology is therefore like a meal of many small courses, rather than many helpings of chocolate: themed anthologies may have to work harder than, say, best-of-year anthologies to provide the right diversity and balance, although sticking to a theme may parallel the harmony of working within a specific tradition of cookery.

This anthology's theme is pulp adventure, from any and every genre, and the most favoured cookery style is fusion: sf western, hardboiled supernatural-horror war story, historical detective story, and a splendid encounter between some close friends of the Famous Five and the Chthulu Mythos. So there is plenty of variety. Indeed, it's hard to think of a single definition of "adventure" which would cover everything included here. Some of the stories are "all-action", some are contemplative. Some involve facing death; others are about solving an intellectual puzzle. There is no unity of tone: some of the stories seem genuinely straightforward, simple and innocent, some are bitterly sophisticated, ironic and self-mocking. Similarly, there is an enormous variation in empathy/emotional involvement: Kim Newman has produced a kindly, affectionate, and genuinely playful reworking of dog-eared but clearly much-loved material, like someone making a patchwork quilt of their old favourite shirts, while Michael Moorcock has produced a dispassionately flawless exercise in style, perfect of its kind, and lacking any sense of exuberance or fun. For some authors, "adventure" is a life-changing encounter, for others, it's an extended journey of exploration, for others again, it seems to involve explosions and entrails, fighting and too much stuff happening all at once in a rather breathless, confusing way.

This is an anthology with a single editor, who must have selected — presumably must have liked — all these stories, however I find it hard to see what holds them together; what set of tastes, what set of values has selected them. One possible answer is the common small-press enthusiastic inspiration: "Wouldn't it be neat to publish a bunch of stories by all my friends?" This can produce very interesting results: "schools" of creative work by circles of friends have a long and respectable history, small independent presses may be more able to represent genuine intellectual communities than huge publishing empires, and building and sustaining communities is always worthwhile. If community-building and community representation was part of the motivation for producing this volume, it would have been interesting to have had more information about the community itself; the links between authors, their friendships and shared interests.

There is at least one problematic item in *Adventure*, although at the time it would have been not a mistake but a risk, a gamble on the future. One selection is the first instalment of a serial story, To Be Continued in future volumes. This was obviously done partly in affectionate remembrance of serial stories in the pulp magazines which *Adventure*'s Introduction credits as being the "mulch" from which modern genre fiction grew. In a slower-moving, less information-saturated world, pleasurable anticipation could be sustained for a week, a month, between episodes of an eagerly-followed story. Time allows a story to grow in the reader's mind, to develop resonance and depth, even when its original manifestation is shallow. In today's world, few "first instalments" are attractive and compelling enough to hold an audience's attention for a year — an epic film maybe; the first section of a long written story, no. In which case, its inclusion seems rather self-indulgent, particularly as further volumes of the anthology series have not been published on the schedule originally envisaged.

So, what went wrong? What happened to *Adventure Vol. 2 et seq.* (we should be anticipating Vol. 4 this year)? Clearly time has shown that in some way it didn't meet expectations; it wasn't as much of a success as hoped, or those sequels would exist. Maybe it didn't attract much interest, didn't sell well enough to justify funding a further volume — maybe the reading public really does prefer 700-page doorstops to 5-page bonbons? There is the problem of how to do it again, the same but different, faced by every series. There is the problem of story selection — if the editor embraces diversity, many readers won't enjoy some of the stories; if the editor maintains a narrower, more unified focus, many potential readers won't enjoy *any* of the stories. I enjoyed six out of the seventeen stories in *Adventure Vol. 1*, so maybe for me it wasn't an excellent anthology, although it contains stories I find excellent. What's the answer, for small presses? Publish single stories as stand-alones? Print-on-demand, pick-and-mix anthologies like those offered by anthologybuilder.com? Small print run, subscription-only-or-mainly magazines? Turn our backs on the short story?

Is the paperback original anthology now merely a historical curiosity, is the short story a dying art form, is pulp/genre fiction passé? *Adventure* raises more questions than it answers; an interesting achievement.

Worlds Apart? Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Feminist Dystopias (Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy 1)

By Dunja M. Mohr (McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005, 312p, $39.95)
Reviewed by Maureen Kincaid Speller

In *The Darkening Garden: A Short Lexicon of Horror*, John Clute raises the issue of the ways in which people attempt to "articulate the *particularity* of various literatures" (61) [his italics]. He goes on to note that while the work of articulation is "surely necessary, there have been obvious costs". One of these is a "habit of presumption that any story needs to be considered in terms of its 'natural' fit into some category.' In the end, Clute argues, this pattern often diverts "critical attention from the argument that genres change as the world calls for them to change. Every story of any interest in any genre is a signpost of change; each genre is a highway under construction." I came across Clute's words while I was reading Dunja M. Mohr's *Worlds Apart: Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias*. They provided a curiously apposite commentary on Mohr's book, caught as it seems to be in a struggle to, on the one hand, define genre in the minutest detail, and on the other, to beat down the barriers dividing genres and break through into a very brave new world.

I would have liked to begin with a concise sketch of Mohr's arguments but her thesis frankly defies easy summary, for a couple of reasons. First, it is written in a very dense prose which actually makes it difficult to follow Mohr's train of thought at times. While I obviously accept the need to use technical terminology in scholarly writing, I am also a fervent believer in writing as clearly as possible. In this instance, meaning is too often obscured by almost impenetrable forests of prose. However, even when disentangled from the verbiage, Mohr's arguments remain puzzling.

It perhaps does not bode well that Mohr spends the first quarter of the book engaged in a tortuous attempt to define what she means by utopia and dystopia, and to make a set of elaborate and highly nuanced distinctions between the two and indeed between classical, critical and literary utopias and dystopias. Mohr positions herself as a scholar of utopian and dystopian texts rather than one who works with science fiction literature. Science fiction is discussed at some length in the first section of the book, but Mohr clearly regards it as a johnny-come-lately genre, and indeed there is also a sense that she regards it a contaminating influence in her utopian/dystopian schema. Certainly, she seems ill at ease when attempting to plot a relationship between sf and utopian/dystopian literature, and her failure to acknowledge a number of exemplary sf texts suggests that her knowledge of sf is not that broad. (The most egregious example of this comes when, during a discussion of heterotopias, she entirely fails to mention

Samuel Delany's *Triton*; when Delany is mentioned, his name is, alas, invariably misspelled.)

This is perhaps ironic, given that Mohr's main aim in the early part of the book is to undertake that most science-fictional of projects, identifying a new subgenre. In Mohr's case, she believes she has located something that she chooses to call a feminist transgressive utopian dystopia, a subgenre she exemplifies through Suzette Haden Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy, Suzy McKee Charnas's *Holdfast* series, and perhaps inevitably, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*. Mohr incidentally feels that none of these novels are actually science fiction, even though she acknowledges that they do contain elements and trappings of science fiction. For all her titanic struggle to achieve a good working definition that accommodates so many disparate literary elements, Mohr does not convince me that this microgenre actually exists. One hates to reach for the *reductio ad absurdam*, but I think, by their very nature, most dystopian novels, even implicitly, hold out some hope of a move towards the utopian, for the reader if not for the characters. Likewise, utopias and dystopias are, by their nature, transgressive: each posits a better way, a utopia proposing what it might look like, a dystopia what will happen if we don't look for a better way. We can probably agree on the 'feminist', but here I have an impression that Mohr finds her chosen texts to be somewhat lacking in proper feminist credentials.

It's clear that Mohr addresses her texts outside the science fiction genre, and equally clear that she sees utopian and dystopian texts not so much as literary artefacts but more as sociopolitical exempla to be scrutinised through multiple theoretical lenses, and their failings as much as their worth brought to light. This is an approach that might work well when dealing with social and political theories, and indeed when scrutinising actual utopian community experiments, but novels are frail objects that buckle all too easily under so searching a gaze. On more than one occasion Mohr takes to task her chosen authors for not following a particular train of thought or for not utilising a particular theoretical approach, having apparently forgotten that part of a novel's *raison d'etre* is to entertain as well as educate the reader, and that authors can and indeed do make choices based on that fact.

I also find her analytical approach to the novels erratic. If Mohr has indeed found a whole new subgenre, one might reasonably suppose that she would trace its components through the various novels in a fairly structured way, showing how the different books are related to one another in terms of themes and strategies. Instead, Mohr lines up a battery of theoretical approaches, feminist, postcolonial, deconstructionist, and literary critical analysis, and employs a scattergun tactic to try and flush out elements she sees as being transgressive, or feminist, or utopian or dystopian. as an approach it appears to be very unsatisfactory, and in many instances, it's a matter of pointing at something and saying 'this is an example of ...'. More than once I found her readings of situations and structures to be suspect. To take but one example, Mohr attempts to demonstrate how Suzette Elgin transgresses literary forms by breaking down the linear structure of her novels through a series of devices, including multiple narrators and shifting viewpoints. Is this transgressive? Possibly, but it's not a new approach, and I hardly think it is the significant break in standard practice that Mohr seems to propose.

In the end, the force of Mohr's argument is lost in the welter of complex theorising that characterises this book. To put it crudely, too many ideas are smashed together in the hope that something coherent will emerge. Unfortunately, any genuine points to be made are lost because of Mohr's failure to make things clear for the reader. Too often, her theses are lost in a mass of contradictory theoretical material or submerged in overly complicated prose. By the end of the book, there is little if any convincing evidence to support the existence of the feminist transgressive utopian dystopia, and indeed the very concept seems to have got lost along the way. What the reader is left with is an author who seems to be very disappointed that her chosen writers did not do what she wanted them to do, and an author who, while she has argued strongly for the breaking down of boundaries, has nonetheless attempted to erect them round the books she discusses.

The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction, Volume Two

Edited by George Mann (Solaris, 2008, 416p, £7.99)
Reviewed by Alvaro Zinos-Amaro

The second volume in *The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction* (*TSBONSF*) anthology series, published in early 2008, has gathered quite a bit of attention. It has been reviewed no less than three times by *Locus* magazine (in the January, February, and October 2008 issues, by Gardner Dozois in that last one) as well as in a dozen other places. The general consensus appears to be that it's a good collection of work by great writers. With the third volume forthcoming in early 2009, we might consider whether that's a valid assessment and, if so, why it's good rather than excellent. To best assess the evidence at hand, and considering the broad thematic and stylistic scope of this anthology, let us to consider each story in turn.

Paul Di Filippo's "iCity" gives literal shape to the dizzying rate of change of technology and the ever-altered environments in which we live. This story is Present Futurism at its best. Competitive urban planning is all the rage and has reached unprecedented degrees of both speed and physical possibility. The first-person narrator, Frederick Law Moses, begins to obsess about the newest competitor to steal away his popularity, Holly Grale, and takes what action he can. The ending's implications about the birth of new trends in art or social culture are highly enjoyable. While there is a glossy sheen of techno — polish to this story that doesn't quite dress up its more conventional contrivances, the pyrotechnic ideas on display are engrossing, the inventiveness is superb, and the pacing, driven by an irreverent lightness of tone, is irresistible.

Robert Reed's "Fifty Dinosaurs" packs a lot in, and while the exact shape of its events may remain outside of the reader's grasp (for good reason), it is nonetheless memorable reading experience. To say even that the protagonist, Kelvin, is a resurrected human being is a bit of a stretch — he is a non-human human-archetype-representing being who is one of fifty recreated "party favors" for a "sentient plasmoid" celebrating the analogue of a birthday. The setting is bizarre, and the premise takes most of the story to be worked through, which makes it rich and conceptually dazzling. Reed's prose is appropriately clear and straightforward. One thing that resonates long after the surprising and touching ending is that from the fifty recreations, only five are comprised of primates and dinosaurs. The rest are intelligent microbes and AI-devices, or as the story eloquently describes, "slimes and wires; bacteria and batteries." This leaves one with the lasting impression of humanity's minor role in the Grand Scheme of things, an honored theme in sf that seldom receives such thoughtful treatment as in the stories of Robert Reed. This one is no exception.

Kay Kenyon's "Space Crawl Blues" is an entertaining but unspectacular musing on a spaceship captain's reluctance to accept new quantum teleportation technology that will make his job obsolete (a similar theme was explored in the episode "Realm of Fear" of Star Trek: The Next Generation in which Reginald Barclay developed a fear of transporting). The fact that the captain's concerns turn out to be justified weakens the story dramatically. The smart-aleck tone of the narration is perhaps the highlight. Consider the delightful irreverence of prose like the following: "Blake'd rather entangle with a grizzly or a European glide eel than with quantum states."

Chris Roberson's cleverly-titled "The Line of Dichotomy" is a Celestial Empire story (the Dragon Throne, i.e. Chinese, and Mexic Dominion, i.e. Aztecs, have developed technological empires which are battling it out over possession of the Fire Star, i.e. Mars). The story focuses on a Dragon Throne mission to rescue the Fifth Regional Tech and Resupply Division crew, under attack from Mexic soldiers and trapped inside a bacteria farm. This is undemanding, action-filled no-frills military sf. The prose is sturdy and functional, marred only by the occasional repetition (for example on p. 52 "Yao shook his head, fractionally" and then on p.82 "Yao moved his head fractionally"; on p.85 "his teeth gritted against the pain" and then on p.96 "gritting his teeth against the pain in his chest", etc.). The ending, which integrates the Empire's differences in cultural ethos functionally into the story with a measure of success but still too timidly, is perhaps the most thoughtful part, and leaves things wide open for a sequel.

Neal Asher is featured twice in this anthology, with two stories in his Mason's Rats series. While they are funny and well-crafted, this is problematic. Why give one author two slots in an anthology of new fiction? Another author might have been featured, providing that much more stylistic and thematic variety. For me this was an eyesore when looking at the table of contents. As it is, and despite their merits, these stories are not particularly sf-nal, either. In the first, "Mason's Rats: Black Rat", farmer Mason must come to terms with a new boss black rat that ingeniously uses technology to evade capture and fight back. In the second, "Mason's Rats: Autocrator", he must find a way to appease or overcome the bureaucratic forces that threaten to shut down his operation because of the sanitary risks posed by his rats. Asher's timing and sense of situation, as well as his characterization of Mason and even the black rat, are excellent. The plotlines are almost necessarily pat in their resolution, but still diverting.

Brenda Cooper's "Blood Bonds" emphasizes the emotional link between two twins, Lissa and Aline, and from it extrapolates deeper significance about the bonds that tie humans and sentient beings to one another at large. Cooper demonstrates an excellent eye for detail and atmospheric setting; her future is well thought-out and made consistent by a range of congruous speculative elements (the functions of VR, planetary mining, terrorism, the meaning of AI, advances in bio-technology, information security, etc.) The story is grounded in emotion, and even when the concept of identity becomes deliberately muddled in the crafty but predictable climax, it never loses sight of it. Perhaps further stories will follow in this milieu.

Petter Watts's "The Eyes of God" is a highlight for anyone who enjoys stories about ideas and hard thought-experiments in social trending. The story contains little action but packs a massive punch. As the first-person protagonist shuffles his way toward the front of a compulsory pre-flight scan line, his observations on how technology has been modified to make the world safer, and the private hell this has created for him personally, evoke nightmarishly plausible scenarios. One of the strengths of Watts's take is his dexterous use of cadence and rhythm in his manipulation of language; he skillfully replicates the most intimate thought patterns of a real person, including jarring changes of imagery and informal expressions, so that we are absolutely inside the viewpoint of the narrator. By the story's end we may wish we hadn't been, but it is an arresting and powerful choice to drive home difficult questions about social rights and the nature of evil and personality.

"Sunworld" by Eric Brown narrates the coming-of-age of Yarrek, who upon finishing college reluctantly accepts the role of further study his parents have chosen for him. Yarrek is to become Inquisitor General for the Church (this is one of two stories in this collection to feature Inquisitors — could this be the birth of a new subgenre?) in distant, bleak Icefast. The story does contain many standard elements: the discovery by the protagonist of his true origins and his acceptance of his destiny, his transformation by profound perceptual revelations, and his growth into maturity. The setting and secondary characters are sharply developed, and the intricately geometric world and mythology that Brown creates feel rich and boundless. The final scenes are grander-than-life and the suspense is prolonged somewhat theatrically, since the conclusion is almost foregone — but it is still a thoughtful and pleasant adventure, with an almost innocent, retro-sf heart.

Recent John W. Campbell winner Mary Robinette Kowal effectively demonstrates how less can be more even in sf, with her tale "Evil Robot Monkey," the shortest story in the collection and one of the most convincing. Sly is with a monkey with an implant. How has this enhanced intelligence affected his quality of life and his connections to both other monkeys and his human caregivers? Written in uncluttered, unsentimental prose that reaches genuine pathos and complexity, the almost vignette-constructed story raises valid questions and offers penetrating observations. I wonder if Sly is a distant cousin of some the chimps we saw in Robert Silverberg's masterful "Pope of the Chimps".

Dominic Green's "Shining Armor" blends several genres to highly rousing effect. Described as "clearly influenced by anime" (Locus October 2008), it plays with multiple stereotypes — martial arts training, the secret knowledge of the older generations, mechanical Guardians, bully corporations that pollute the environment, etc., but it does so ingeniously and never takes itself seriously. This is perhaps not the most outright comical story in *TSBONSFV2*, but it may be the most zany and energetic.

The presence of "Book, Theatre, and Wheel" by Karl Schroeder raises the obvious question of what is sf, and if this tale qualifies, how, but that shouldn't discourage any potential readers, as it is one of the best items in the lot. It tells of the investigation of Lady Genevieve Romanal by Neville Dumoutier and Brother Jacques. If not suspected of outright paganism or witchcraft, it quickly becomes apparent that her skills in the art of reading and symbol deciphering, not encouraged for one of her station, least of all her gender, are uncanny. The precise mechanism behind the true Art of Reading, perhaps, is the story's true sf-nal conceit, but it ultimately doesn't matter much, since it works so well on all levels. The evolving character dynamics and discoveries by Neville are enthralling. Perhaps the only weakness is the slight predictability of the ending.

"Mathralon" by David Louis Edelman is thankfully short, and as deliberately dry as the mineral whose mining and processing techniques it minutely describes. The narrative shifts from an immersive second-person singular to a first person plural, laced with several authorial intrusions and observations on the story itself. The unifying element is detailed exposition. The story's many questions seemed forced, and while the invented world centered around *mathralon* does hold one's interest, it doesn't justify the sacrifice of traditional dramatic elements nor the strained breaches in suspension of disbelief.

If you saw a magic trick performed by a master magician, but didn't understand what you had seen, and therefore could not appreciate how remarkable the performance was, would you still be able to enjoy it? "Modem Times" is the trick, and Michael Moorcock is the veteran conjurer of words. Moorcock has written brilliant works, and there is no doubt to his skill. This particular flight o' fancy concerns Jerry Cornelius, and the narrative is about as linear as a double-strand of DNA mutated by a massive particle accelerator. Having never read a Jerry Cornelius story, I had a devil of a time working out who the characters were, and what basic motivations to ascribe to them. Time-stream, slip-stream ... but what about the story-stream? This seems more a collection of scenes and observational vignettes that serve to expose a series of theoretical statements about social culture and even storytelling than any conventional dramatic narrative. Allusions and commentary are aplenty, and there are riffs on history and literature that even casual readers will pick up on: consider, for instance, the mention of "Maria Amis, Julia Barnes and Iona MacEwan." Judging the piece by its own little-defined and unconventional standards, one might infer that it is a success, at least in the negative, since it neither entertains nor provokes deep emotion. Despite the virtue of being closer to pure art than any other piece in the anthology, and despite the sophistication and intertextuality of the design that make the aforementioned possible, its inclusion is unfortunate. Only that sub-group of Jerry Cornelius devotees in the sub-group of Moorcock fans in the sub-group of (mostly) genre readers will appreciate it. In short, the story's appeal, when weighed against its novella-length, is far too limited.

Dan Abnett's "Point of Contact" is a sardonic exercise in the deconstruction of sf's most common First Contact tropes. The story's strategy is simple; deflate the extraordinary through repeated negation and by comparison with the ultra-mundane. What results is a short, breezy, skewering look at a lot of genre clichés. The piece doesn't outstay its welcome because of its sustained comic undertones but it also fails to create any lasting impression.

In the Introduction, George Mann comments that "short fiction is the lifeblood of the SF genre", and this anthology demonstrates that it *can* be that, but may also offer little new or vital. Mann's mission statement, "We wanted to appeal to fans and new readers alike", is one borne out by the selected pieces. Several of the more straightforward, accessible stories will probably appeal more to newer readers of sf. One might observe that setting out to entertain both newbies and connoisseurs alike could easily become a losing proposition, leading to reading material that would displease both. It's difficult to summarize the difference in story elements that might set aside works preferred by devoted readers from those welcomed by newcomers, but perhaps one thing that the Solaris series of books should not forget is that the *ambition* (and technique) of the stories should always be as high as possible, across the board. Mann has managed to include something for everyone in the Solaris Book of New Science Fiction Volume Two, and that is not a trivial achievement. It also means the anthology falls short of being quite the landmark it had the opportunity to become, with a couple of less sophisticated entries (perhaps geared towards those "new readers") and a novella that will likely only satisfy an overly narrow audience keeping it from feeling truly cohesive.

ENDNOTE

Mann's selections also have the virtue, perhaps more through happenstance than editorial deliberation, of practically avoiding all the authors that subsequently appeared in this year's two other major original short fiction anthologies, *Eclipse 2*, edited by Jonathan Strahan, and *Fast Forward 2*, edited by Lou Anders. Of the writers represented in the three anthologies, only two are double-exposed (outside of Neal Asher's twin appearance in *TSBONSFV2*): Karl Shroeder, who appears solo or in collaboration with strong entries in all three, and Kay Kenyon who appears in *TSBONSFV2* and in *Fast Forward 2*. This creates a cornucopia of choices for all readers, and that's a good thing regardless of genre or reading sensibility.

Postsingular

by Rudy Rucker (Tor, 2007, 320 pp, $25.95)
reviewed by Darrell Schweitzer

The Singularity, generally, loosely defined, or at least chatted about a lot, also known as the Rapture of the Nerds, is that point at which technological progress reaches such an astonishingly accelerated pace that *nothing* makes sense anymore from a contemporary perspective. The future becomes opaque. This has been a topic in science-fiction circles, about which some science fiction has been written, and very possibly it has also been an excuse for *not* writing science fiction. If the future is incomprehensible, how can you write about it? Try an alternate history instead.

The counter-argument is that to a reader of the year 1000, or perhaps even to one of 1900, the Singularity has *already* occurred. Our age of the internet, virtual reality, bioengineering, etc. would surely be incomprehensible to people of the past, but we've managed to go on writing science fiction anyway, thank you.

Whenever a science-fiction writer tells you that science fiction is no longer possible, he's signalling the end of his own career and no one else's. Remember Alexei Panshin and his "paradigm shift". Whole new careers, notably William Gibson's and Rudy Rucker's, have grown up since. At the same time, some eternal verities *don't* change, the chief of which may be summed up as *You gotta have a story,* with recognizable human emotions in it, Singularity or no. Love, longing, laughter, fear, greed . . . that sort of thing.

The problem with Rudy Rucker's *Postsingular*, to put it candidly, is that it reads like it was composed on the far side fo the Singularity.

We try to parse out the plot. There is a nicely written opening chapter, in which two boys prepare to launch a model rocket on a beach. Something goes wrong. It explodes. One of them is killed. The other, Jeff Luty, we learn in later chapters, grows up to be a slightly mad scientist. He is responsible for releasing nanobots into the environment (by chapter 2) which threaten to turn the entire Earth into something between a non-stop virtual reality experience and mush. Our hero, Ond, inserts his autistic son Chu into the expanding unreality, because Chu's unusual powers of concentration have enabled him to memorize the reverse code, which turns off the nanobots and restores the world to its former state.

Then Ond, now a hero, for no discernable reason infects the world his with *own* version of nanobots, called "orphids", and, as the jacket flap assures us "most of the story takes place in a world after a heretofore unimaginable transformation." Yes, it does, but, alas, it's also a nearly indescribable transformation. The narrative itself vanishes into the Singularity. Large dollops of gibberish follow:

> As for those luminous humanoid beings -- AIs now reported that these were so-called angels from a parallel sheet of reality that had recently been dubbed Hibrane. The best current models indicated the higher-space distance to the Hibrane must be about a thirtieth of a vatometer, that is, 0.03 decillionths of a meter. Due to the Randall-de Sitter interbrane warp factor, Hibraners at this remove would be scaled six times larger than humans and move six times slower.
>
> In addition, the Hibraners'quantum phases were almost totally orthogonal to ours; this meant that the Hibraners barely interacted with normal light or matter . . . (p. 74)

This is certainly not a break-out-of-genre book. To a reader not totally immersed in the very latest science fiction, *Postsingular* will surely be impossible to follow. Even the most veteran readers are likely to go down in defeat before it because it lacks a strong story. We think of how the great pulp writers of the past would have handled the above-quoted passage. Henry Kuttner, in *Startling Stories* in 1947, would have tossed off some phrase like "they came from another dimension and their atomic vibrations were different" and gotten on with the action, knowing full well that this makes no more or less sense than the "Randall-de Sitter interbrane warp factor" and the reader doesn't give a damn anyway. If the author really knew how to radically transform the world, he wouldn't be writing a science-fiction novel. He would be, at the very least, collecting his Nobel Prize. We *know* that all such technobabble is precisely that -- babble. Philip K. Dick would have developed a strong chase plot, with darkly comic edges. James Morrow (to cite a contemporary writer of comedy and far-out ideas) would have given the book a central human drama, which, by its sheer emotional validity, would drag us through any amount of weirdness and emerge coherently on the other side.

Rucker may be attempting something like romantic comedy, but none of his characters (after the first chapter) are real enough or convincing enough or coherently motivated enough to make anyone care. What this book probably needs is some instantly-recognizable, even near-cliché plot, which would serve as a coherent structure and illuminate Rucker's manic inventiveness by sheer incongruity. Weirdness embedded in familiarity works a lot better than weirdness embedded in more weirdness. This is why the film *Bladerunner* and the novel *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sleep?* (probably the film more than the novel) depend so heavily on and work so well with a detective/chase plot, which the film emphasized even more with the *noir* imagery. In that context, the genuinely new and strange Dickian elements are easy to follow. In *Postsingular*, as *everything* changes before anything is well enough grounded in human reality, the result is exactly what Ond defeated at the end of chapter 2: nanotechnolgical mush.

CONTRIBUTOR NOTES

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