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**Submissions**

The *SFRA Review* encourages submissions of reviews, review essays that cover several related texts, interviews, and feature articles. Submission guidelines are available at <http://www.sfra.org/> or by inquiry to the appropriate editor. All submitters must be current SFRA members. Contact the Editors for other submissions or for correspondence.

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# SFRA Review

A publication of the Science Fiction Research Association

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## What is the SFRA For?

Chris Pak

WELCOME, ALL! By now the year is well and truly underway, and with the new year come changes to our executive committee and the *Review's* editorial board. I'm sure you'll all join me in thanking Pawel Frelik, Amy Ransom and Jenni Halpin for their efforts in helping to steer our ship these last couple of years. I personally have greatly appreciated their hard work and their support in helping me to settle in to the *Review*. As they depart, Craig Jacobsen, Keren Omry and Susan A. George joins Steve Berman at the helm. All three of our new EC have all served the SFRA over the years. Among other activity, Craig has previously edited the *Review*, while Keren has served on the Pioneer Award Committee and Susan on the Mary Kay Bray Award Committee. Craig and Keren's first columns follow the departing words of their respective predecessors. Welcome to the EC!

Our fiction and media review editors, Jim Davis and Ritch Calvin, will also be leaving the editorial board after this issue. Their work on the *Review* has been stellar, and it has been a great pleasure to collaborate with them over the last year. Our new editors will be announced later in a future instalment of the *Review*.

In this issue, we have an exciting Feature 101 article by Mark Bould: "African Science Fiction 101". This valuable piece considers what it means to designate a work "African sf" and surveys many important and less well known stories. I have also written a piece aimed at filling in a little more of that space on the map of the digital humanities that Lisa Yaszek opened up in her article, "Narrative, Archive, Database: The Digital Humanities and Science Fiction Scholarship 101" ([#303 Winter 2013](#)). My piece, "Corpus Linguistics 101", explores a discipline that has been exploring computerized methods for the analysis of literature and language since the 1980s.

Over the course of the next year, we will be continuing with the project of drawing the scholarly community together and, in Keren's own words, will be looking to 'standardize, streamline, and spread out' (see her column below). As Craig points out in his column, this is a collective effort on the part of all our members. As part of that collective effort, we will be voting on our revised

bylaws at the upcoming conference at Stony Brook. The proposed bylaws can be found in the SFRA Business section. I would also like to take the opportunity to invite everyone to submit articles on topics for our Feature 101 series, as well as for our non-fiction, fiction and media reviews sections. Interviews, as well as pedagogical articles on aspects of teaching or designing courses, would also be very welcome, as would conference reports, announcements and anything else that you think would be worthwhile letting our community know about. In short, while we may not have, as Craig points out, a regular base of operations, we do have the *SFRA Review*, the SFRA website and our social media, so do feel free to make full use of these resources.

This year, alas, I will not be joining you all at Stony Brook. Rather, in my role as liaison between the SFRA and ASLE-UKI (an affiliate organization that I've reported on in [past issues of the Review](#)), I will be representing ASLE-UKI and the SFRA on a panel at the ASLE conference, which is taking place in Idaho at the same time as the SFRA 2015. So, as far as spreading out goes, I will be working to reinforce connections between our organizations and will be reporting on the event in a future issue of the *Review*,

Spurred by Keren's call for us to think about how we work within the world, I thought I might share a passage that I recently came across in Stefan Collini's *What Are Universities For?* (London: Penguin, 2012). Speaking of the assumption that people look solely to economic justification for scholarly research, Collini points out that there are other widespread but under-represented purposes for the place of universities and of scholarship in our societies. Many people, he argues,

are, rather, susceptible to the romance of ideas and the power of beauty; they want to learn about far-off times and far-away worlds; they expect to hear language used more inventively, more exactly, more evocatively than it normally is in their workaday world; they want to know that, somewhere, human understanding is being pressed to its limits, unconstrained by immediate practical outcomes. (88)

These words resonate with readers of sf. It seems to me that, from my own experience, this is certainly true, and that sf has provided a language to tap into these aspects with many diverse individuals in order to keep pushing those limits. That doesn't do away with the question

that Keren poses in her column, framed by my Nigerian friends as “how does that effect the price of tomatoes at the market?” In fact, Collini doesn’t offer these desires as exclusive of other concerns, be they economic, political, or socio-cultural. Rather, this view draws attention to the breadth of what we mean when we ask what purpose the SFRA has and places these different goals in dialectical play, prompting us to reflect on our position as scholars, teachers, archivists and librarians within our respective societies.

## **SFRA Business**

### DEPARTING PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

## **Meanwhile, at the EC HQ . . .**

Pawel Freluk

TWO YEARS PASSED before I could blink and it’s time to take stock of what we managed to do during our term. But, some thanks and greetings are in order first. I would like to thank Amy Ransom, Jenni Halpin, Steve Berman, and Ritch Calvin for their commitment, hard work, and being good friends – you were awesome and serving as President with such a team is not that much of a feat! I would like to thank all SFRA members who, during this term, volunteered to do things for the organization. Our new *SFRA Review* editors: Chris, Dominick, and Kevin. Artem Zubov and Benedict Jones, who have brought up to date the Review’s listings in the Internet Speculative Fiction Database, which were initiated by Ritch Calvin. Andrew Ferguson, who has been running our Twitter account ([@sfranews](https://twitter.com/sfranews)), now a steady stream of news for all things science fiction. All members of SFRA Awards committees in the last two years, too many to mention here but promptly named on our website. Then, I would like to welcome the new Executive Committee: President Craig Jacobsen, Vice-President Keren Omry, Secretary Susan George, and the continuing Treasurer Steve Berman. I know the organization is in very good hands.

And now, a tally. I’d like to think that we managed to complete a few worthwhile tasks outside regular operations, although perhaps not as many as we wanted. Our website received a new and long-awaited facelift. We completed the transition, initiated by the previous EC under Ritch Calvin, of *SFRA Review* to a fully electronic format. We have a vibrant Twitter feed. We prepared a radical revision of the SFRA Bylaws, whose final draft

can be found in this issue and which will be voted on during the general meeting at the upcoming SFRA conference in Stony Brook, NY. (Do remember to send an abstract before March 1!) We hope that the new revisions and amendments will make SFRA an even more efficient venue for scholarly exchanges in the field of science fiction studies. Among achievements invisible on a daily basis, we started ordering the institutional memory by creating a systematic archive of documents for the current and all future Executive Committees.

With all humility, I have to admit we didn’t manage to do everything and had to pass some challenges to the next Executive Committee. We had to postpone going abroad for our annual conference and now understand that more groundwork and advertising is needed to convince members that it does not have to be a daunting trip. Although much improved already, the content for the new website is still far from complete. SFRA’s *Wikipedia* entry remains sadly underwhelming (Any volunteers? Contact Craig at [sfra.executive@gmail.com](mailto:sfra.executive@gmail.com)). Our Facebook page updates, while gathering “likes” like nobody’s business, still elicit very little discussion. Ok, practically, no discussion at all. I am confident that the new officers will meet these challenges head on.

Serving as SFRA President was for me both an honor and an immense learning experience. Thank you for giving me a chance to add a little brick to our collective house. Over and out.

PS. Remember to follow our Twitter at [@sfranews](https://twitter.com/sfranews) and visit our [Facebook](#) page, both of which are now linked from the new website with live updates.

### PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

## **The Collective Effort**

Craig Jacobsen

THE SCIENCE FICTION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION was constructed to help support and legitimize the work of scholars of science fiction. It was built to serve particular purposes: to help build a community of scholars, and to increase the visibility of and access to their work. That the organization continues that work forty-five years later demonstrates its effectiveness. The SFRA is

people. It has no headquarters building, no permanent staff, no fixed address. It exists as the product of the ongoing collective efforts of its members, and particularly those who chose (or who are susceptible to gentle coercion) to serve, whether that be working on the *Review*, an award committee, organizing a conference, the association website, social media, or serving on the Executive Committee. Perhaps because of my susceptibility to coercion, since I joined SFRA in 1998 I've participated at least a bit in all of those efforts. That has made me keenly aware of the collective investment in SFRA required since 1970 to build, maintain, and grow the association, and to keep it relevant in changing contexts. I know many of the association's past presidents and Executive Committee members, and I am pleased and honored to add my efforts and abilities to theirs.

The best way, I think, for individual members to contribute is simply to attend the SFRA's annual conference. For a few days each year we do have a headquarters, and this year it is in Stony Brook, New York. We will gather there from around the globe, listen and talk to one another, and share meals and jokes. Every paper delivered there, every panel discussion or lunchtime debate is a contribution to the community. If you can, you should join the in-gathering. Beware, though, that the conference is also where you might be asked if you'd be willing to sit on an award committee or work on the *Review*. Don't worry, the coercion is always gentle.

#### DEPARTING VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Departing Words

Amy J. Ransom

IT HAS BEEN a wonderful two years serving SFRA and being in the thick of things! This is such a wonderful and supportive organization and I adore meeting every year to talk about SF with a lot of really smart and fun people! Working with Ritch, Pawel, Jenni, and Steve has been just awesome... what a great group. I wish the best to the new officers, Craig, Keren, Susan—you're in good hands with Steve and Pawel continuing on as treasurer and IPP.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Stony Brook!

#### VICE-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## "What's Our SFRA to Do with the Price of Tea?"

Keren Omry

IT IS WITH great excitement that I sit to write my first column as the elected SFRA VP. I want to warmly thank everyone who took the time to put in a ballot for your vote of confidence. Thanks aside, I will confess that it is with a measure of trepidation that I take on the tasks of the position: the incredible work of the outgoing EC leaves big shoes to fill. Pawel, Amy, Jenni, Steve, and Matthew worked wonders on the site and on dramatically increasing the internet presence of the organization; they consciously directed its growing internationalized content and membership, and they did a marvelous job in just generally running the ship. Lucky for me, Craig, the newly elected President, together with the experience Susan and Steve bring to the EC, promise a stellar team to help keep moving us forward.

As we start the handover process in the coming days I look forward to putting plans to practice, embarking on an assortment of collaborations, discussions, and projects that seek to extend the current scope of the SFRA vision. In addition to spreading the word locally among students and scholars of SF, seeking both formal and academic SF arena, and some less so, I will be working to collate a database of relevant SF forums, conferences, programs and venues, worldwide. As this gathers girth, I hope to standardize some marketing and informational material that you good people can easily access, use, and distribute (thanks again to the exiting team for laying the groundwork here!). In fact, I might just put *standardize*, *streamline*, and *spread out* on a bumper sticker. As technology snowballs ever onwards, the SFRA can do worse than aim to best use what means we have at our fingertips. And yet, as I sit here drawing plans for our organization to conquer the world, I look around and am given pause. Let me set the scene for you:

I am sitting in my office on the 16th floor, overlooking Haifa bay, drinking Turkish coffee, listening to internet radio broadcast from New York, and watching the news from France as nearly a million gather for an anti-terror rally. The net is aflame with condemnations, lamentations, speculations, and revelations on recent events. Brave New World indeed. And so where do we go from

here? And with all respect, “what’s our SFRA to do with the price of tea?”, as my Irish friend asks. Well let me tell you what I think – it is not in spite of but *within* the world that we read and write, work and play. And frankly we have an advantage the lot of us. Readers of SF have extensive experience with apocalypse, with moral crises, with mundane fissures in the matter of reality. It is our rare privilege to pursue and to peruse experiments in societies, technologies, ideologies, even humanities, in a plethora of cultural spaces. One such space is our upcoming SFRA conference on Suppressed Histories, Liminal Voices, Emerging Media, to be hosted at SUNY Stony Brook, NY, in June. As timely as it is central, the conference and its eagerly awaited guest speakers give us something to look forward to, a platform where we might productively question the norms of our globalized terrorized world in a discussion of aliens, alternatives, augmentations, and asteroids. And now, as I make my way down from my soapbox, I want to reiterate Amy’s suggestion of yore and to encourage all of you out there to send me any information you have on any of the other global and local SF communities. We’ll conquer the world yet!

#### SFRA Business

The SFRA Bylaws have needed attention for a while now. For a few months after the Madison conference, the EC discussed possible amendments and improvements. Some of them are cosmetic, reflecting, for instance, the use of electronic communications. Other revisions are more substantial, major among which is the extension of Officers’ terms to three years. (If passed, this would become effective during the 2016 elections for the officers taking over in January 2017.) The ultimate goal of all these amendments is to make SFRA an even more efficient venue for scholarly exchanges in the field of science fiction studies. The provisional draft of the Bylaws was published in *SFRA Review* 310 in Fall 2014 with an invitation to comment and suggest changes. Below is the final draft and the official proposal of the revised Bylaws. The straight “yes” or “no” vote will be held during the Business Meeting at the annual conference in Stony Brook in June 2015. The Executive Committee will also consider elec-

tronic ballots for all non-attending members.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Association Bylaws**

### *ARTICLE I Name and Purpose*

#### Section 1

The organization shall be named, known, and styled as the Science Fiction Research Association. It is incorporated in the state of Ohio as a non-profit organization.

#### Section 2

SFRA is irrevocably dedicated to educational and beneficial purposes, fostering the common interests of its members in the field of science fiction and fantasy by encouraging new scholarship, furthering excellence in teaching at all levels of instruction, exchanging information among students and scholars throughout the world, improving access to published and unpublished materials, aiding in building library research collections, and promoting the publication of scholarly books and works pertinent to the fields of science fiction and fantasy. SFRA also promotes the advancement of this field of study by providing financial assistance or by conferring appropriate honors upon worthy writers, students, or scholars.

### *ARTICLE II Membership*

#### Section 1

There shall be four classes of membership: active, honorary, institutional, and subsidized.

#### Section 2

(a) Active members: Individuals paying annual dues to the association (or pairs sharing a residence paying joint annual dues) thereby become active members of SFRA. They shall receive publications as designated in ARTICLE VIII sections 1 and 2, have the right to vote on all issues presented to the membership, and be eligible to hold office and serve on committees.

(b) Honorary Members: Recipients of the Pilgrim Award shall be honorary members. They shall pay no dues but shall receive all of the rights and benefits designated for active members in part a, above.

(c) Institutional Members: Certain appropriate academic or educational organizations may hold membership in SFRA. Such organizations may designate appropriate individuals to represent them in the association and, upon payment of annual dues, shall receive publications as designated in ARTICLE VIII.

(d) Subsidized Members: Students, the under-employed, and emeritus members shall be eligible to pay annual dues to the association at a reduced rate. Subsidized members shall receive all of the rights and benefits designated for active members in part a, above.

(i) Persons enrolled in accredited institutions shall qualify to enroll as subsidized members. Ordinarily, student memberships may be used no more than five times. A student may petition the Executive Committee for an extension of this period if special circumstances apply whereby he/she is a full-time student for a longer time.

(ii) Persons employed less than full-time (nine-month) in academic positions shall qualify to enroll as subsidized members.

(iii) Retired persons (and persons over age 65) who have been active members for a period of at least five years shall qualify to enroll as subsidized members.

### Section 3

The membership of any person or institution will be terminated if delinquent in payment of dues. Delinquent members will be notified by the Treasurer.

## *ARTICLE III Meetings of Members*

### Section 1

An annual conference open to all members of the association and such guests as may be determined by the Executive Committee shall be held at least once during each calendar year. The president and members of the committee of the host institution shall decide upon the time of the meeting subject to ratification by a majority vote of the Executive Committee.

### Section 2

A business meeting shall be held at some time during the annual conference. The time and place of the business meeting shall be clearly indicated on the SFRA website at least 21 days prior to the convening of the

annual conference.

(a) An agenda shall be provided to those members present at the conference. The business of the meeting shall not be limited to the agenda. Any member may propose additional business from the floor.

(b) The voting membership present at the meeting shall constitute the quorum needed to carry on business matters. A simple majority of those present shall decide an issue. Within a period of sixty days either any five members or the president in consultation with the Executive Committee may ask that a given action be confirmed or ratified by a vote of the entire SFRA membership. General membership participation shall be obtained in the same manner as described in section "e" below.

(c) The business meeting shall be conducted under the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

(d) Proceedings of business meetings and Executive Committee meetings shall be reported promptly to the general membership through the *SFRA Review*.

(e) Such items of business as cannot be delayed until the next annual meeting shall be conducted by the Executive Committee which may, where it deems appropriate, request the membership deal with the issue by means of a vote conducted through such electronic means as the Executive Committee deems appropriate. In such a case, a fair time limit shall be set, and such issues shall be decided by a plurality of the votes cast. The results of such ballots will be reported to the membership at the earliest possible time through the *SFRA Review*, and time shall be made available for discussion of these matters at the next annual meeting.

### Section 3

Other meetings and conferences of members may use the name SFRA only upon prior approval of the Executive Committee.

## *ARTICLE IV Executive Committee*

### Section 1

The function of the Executive Committee shall be to serve as the corporation and to conduct the business of the association in such a manner as to promote the aims



of SFRA as outlined in the Articles of Incorporation.

### Section 2

The Executive Committee shall be composed of the president, the vice president, the immediate past president, the secretary, and the treasurer.

### Section 3

The president shall preside at all meetings of the Executive Committee unless he/she is unable to do so, in which case the succession shall be the same as the succession of the officers.

### Section 4

The Executive Committee shall meet upon call of the president or upon call of one-third of the membership of the Executive Committee to consider such matters as may be pertinent to the association. In the event of inability to convene the meeting of the Executive Committee, the president is authorized to conduct the business of the committee by mail, telephone, or any other appropriate means of communication. All actions of the Executive Committee shall be reported to the membership at the earliest possible time following such actions by means of the *SFRA Review*.

## *ARTICLE V Officers*

### Section 1

The officers of the association shall be chosen by the membership. There shall be a president, a vice president, a secretary, and a treasurer. They shall take office on January 1 of the year succeeding their election.

### Section 2

The president shall be chief executive of the association; he/she shall preside at all meetings of the membership and the Executive Committee, have general and active management of the business of the association, and see that all orders and resolutions of the Executive Committee are carried out; the president shall have general superintendence and direction of all other officers of the association and shall see that their duties are properly performed; the president shall submit a report of the operations of the association for the fiscal year to the Executive Committee and to the membership at the annual meeting, and from time to time shall report to the Executive Committee on matters within the president's knowledge that may affect the association; the president

shall be ex officio member of all standing committees and shall have the powers and duties in management usually vested in the office of president of a corporation; the president shall appoint all committees herein unless otherwise provided.

### Section 3

The vice president shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the president during the absence of the latter and shall have such other duties as may, from time to time, be determined by the Executive Committee. At any meeting at which the president is to preside, but is unable, the vice president shall preside. The vice president shall have special responsibility for membership recruitment for SFRA (working along with the secretary, the web director, and the public relations officer).

### Section 4

The secretary shall attend all sessions of the Executive Committee and all meetings of the membership and record all the votes of the association and minutes of the meetings and shall perform like duties for the Executive Committee and other committees when required. At any meeting at which the president is to preside, but is unable, and for which the vice president is unable to preside, the secretary shall preside. The secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the membership and special meetings of the Executive Committee and shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Executive Committee or the president. In the event the secretary is unable to attend such meetings as may be expected, the Executive Committee may designate some other member of the association to serve as secretary pro tem.

### Section 5

The treasurer shall be the chief financial officer of the association and have charge of all receipts and disbursements of the association and shall be the custodian of the association's funds. The treasurer shall have full authority to receive and give receipts for all monies due and payable to the association and to sign and endorse checks and drafts in its name and on its behalf. The treasurer shall deposit funds of the association in its name and such depositories as may be designated by the Executive Committee. The treasurer shall furnish the Executive Committee an annual financial report within 60 days of the fiscal year; the fiscal year shall end on December 31. At any meeting at which the president is to

preside, but is unable, and for which the vice president and secretary are unable to preside, the treasurer shall preside.

#### Section 6

The term of office for the president and vice president shall be three years. The president and vice president shall not succeed themselves in office.

#### Section 7

The term of office for the secretary and treasurer shall be three years. Secretaries may succeed themselves in office for a second successive term but shall serve for no more than two successive terms. Treasurers may succeed themselves in office for a second successive term but shall serve for no more than two successive terms.

#### Section 8

The order of succession in the event of death or resignation of the president shall be first the vice president, then the secretary, and then the treasurer.

#### Section 9

When the position of an officer other than the president shall become vacant due to death or resignation or for any other reason, the Executive Committee shall choose from the membership to fill the unexpired term of the position.

#### Section 10

Officers, members of the Executive Committee, and members of the association shall not be entitled to any compensation for their service but shall be entitled to reimbursement for their expenses in carrying out such duties as may be designated to them.

#### Section 11

The office of the web director shall be responsible for the maintenance of the SFRA website. The web director will report to the Executive Committee and will update the contents and format of the website as deemed appropriate by the Executive Committee. The web director will be appointed by the Executive Committee, and will serve an open-ended term, which can be terminated by either the web director or the Executive Committee. The web director shall not be a member of the Executive Committee.

#### Section 12

The public relations officer will organize, in coordina-

tion with the vice president, the various internet and social media outlets, in order to publicize and further the goals and mission of the organization. The public relations officer will be appointed by the Executive Committee and will serve an open-ended term, which can be terminated by either the public relations officer or the Executive Committee. The public relations officer shall not be a member of the Executive Committee.

#### Section 13

The *SFRA Review* editor(s) shall be appointed by the president and confirmed by the Executive Committee; editor(s) shall serve for a three-year period with the first year to be probationary. Editor(s) shall be responsible for electronic preparation of the *SFRA Review*, for obtaining and maintaining advertising, for coordinating print-on-demand requests, for coordinating other electronic sales mechanisms (such as links to online stores), and for fulfilling back issue requests.

### ARTICLE VI Elections

#### Section 1

Elections shall be held triennially.

#### Section 2

The general membership shall elect the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer as set forth in ARTICLE V.

#### Section 3

In the last year of their term, the Executive Committee shall establish a time and date by which ballots for the election of officers must be received, which date shall be known as the election date.

#### Section 4

The immediate past president, in consultation with the Executive Committee, shall submit a slate of candidates of no fewer than two persons from the membership for each position to be filled at least 60 days prior to the election day. The immediate past president shall notify the membership in the *SFRA Review*, and all other appropriate and available electronic and social outlets, of this slate of candidates. Within 30 days of the publication of this slate of candidates in the *SFRA Review*, additional candidates may be nominated by submission of a petition signed by at least five persons of the membership in good standing entitled to vote in the election to



the secretary of the association. At the end of this 30-day period nominations shall be closed and the ballot shall be prepared.

#### Section 5

Not later than October 1 of the election year, a ballot containing the names of the nominees shall be made available to the membership via a secure electronic, on-line voting format. The voting process will remain open for a four-week period.

#### Section 6

Except as provided in these Bylaws, the Executive Committee shall provide for administrative workings of the elections and the method of return and receipt of ballots cast by the membership. Except as otherwise specified herein, the immediate past president shall be responsible for conducting the election including the preparation and counting of ballots.

#### Section 7

Those candidates receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be elected.

#### Section 8

The Executive Committee may fix a time not more than 60 days prior to the date of any meeting of the membership or date of election as a record date for the determination of the persons holding membership entitled to notice and to vote at such meetings or election.

### *ARTICLE VII Dues*

#### Section 1

The annual dues shall be set annually by the Executive Committee.

### *ARTICLE VIII Publications*

#### Section 1

All members of the SFRA will automatically receive the publications which are recognized as official publications of the SFRA, which are listed in section 2, below.

#### Section 2

The *SFRA Review* is an official publication of the SFRA and shall be published four times per year or as directed by the Executive Committee. The expenses of the *SFRA*

*Review* shall be paid from the association's general fund.

#### Section 3

SFRA will continue to explore ways in which to sponsor and promote future publication of material valuable to the study of science fiction in the various media.

#### Section 4

Arrangements involving publications will be made by the president of the association with advice and consent of the Executive Committee, and such arrangements shall be reported to the general membership at the earliest time after completion through the medium of the *SFRA Review*.

### *ARTICLE IX Affiliate Organizations*

#### Section 1

Appropriate regional, subject matter, and other special interest groups may seek affiliation with the Science Fiction Research Association. Such affiliation must be approved by the general membership upon recommendation of the Executive Committee. Such recommendation shall be made only following approval by the committee of the group's constitution, Bylaws, and fiscal procedures.

### *ARTICLE X Assignment of Assets*

#### Section 1

Should SFRA cease to be a viable organization, dissolution shall be effected in the same manner as amending the Bylaws described in Article XI.

#### Section 2

In the case of a dissolution, the Executive Committee shall determine at that time to which qualified tax exempt fund, foundation, and/or corporation organized or operating for charitable or educational purposes any SFRA assets remaining after payment of debts or provisions shall be distributed and paid.

### *ARTICLE XI Amendments*

#### Section 1

Amendments to these Bylaws shall be proposed by the Executive Committee or by petition to the committee by no fewer than five percent of the persons holding membership in the association at the time of presentation of

the petition to the Executive Committee.

### Section 2

The proposed amendments shall be distributed by appropriate electronic and social media 60 days prior to the meeting or the voting process.

### Section 3

The membership may by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a meeting or by a majority of votes cast in electronic voting pass such an amendment.

\* \* \*

The following sections were changed as a result of a vote of the membership of the SFRA in October 1992: Article I:1, 2; II:b; III:2, 2.d, 2.e; IV:2, 4; VI:5; VIII:2,a,4. A new Article X: Assignment of Assets was created; old Article X became Article XI: Amendments.

The following sections were changed as a result of the vote of the membership of the SFRA in June 2004: Article III:2a; V:3, 7; VIII:2a.

The following sections are proposed for change/addition by vote of the membership of the SFRA in June 2015: Article II:1,2; III:1, 2; IV: 2, 4; V: 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13; VI; VII; VIII: 1, 2; XI.

## African Science Fiction 101

Mark Bould

IN ALMOST EVERY imaginable way, I am not qualified to write this piece. I am neither an Africanist nor an expert on African literatures and cultures, and my English degree is sufficiently ancient (and Leavisite) as to have been completely untroubled by critical engagement with world literature, orientalism, postcolonialism, diaspora, globalization, hybridity, the subaltern, and so on. However, thanks to the patience and generosity of many others who made the learning curve of editing the 2013 [Africa SF issue](#) of *Paradoxa* rather less steep than it otherwise would have been, there are some things I can pass on. As with that project, this essay is intended as an invitation – to engage with unfamiliar writers and texts, to broaden our vision of sf, and to look together to a global future.

But can we speak of “African sf”?

Africa covers nearly 12 million square miles and has a population of more than a billion (over 20% of the Earth’s land surface and 15% of its population). It stretches from the northern temperate zone to the southern temperate zone and contains, in effect, 65 countries. Its peoples speak somewhere between 1000 and 2000 languages (and multilingualism is commonplace). In the light of such numbers, the adjective in “African sf” runs significant risks: of homogenizing diversity; of creating a reified, monolithic image of what it might mean to be “African”; of ghettoizing the sf of a continent as some kind of subset or marginal instance of a more “proper” American or European version of the genre; of patronizing such sf as somehow not yet fully formed, “developing” rather than “developed”; of separating such fiction from the wider culture(s) of which it is a part; of colonizing such cultural production by seeing it not through its own eyes but through those of Americans and Europeans.<sup>1</sup> In teaching African sf, one way to avoid some

1 It has been argued, for example, that the European success of Sony Labou Tansi’s debut novel, *Life and a Half* (1979), was indebted in large part to its misidentification as “magic realist,” a categorisation that produces significant misunderstandings of both the novel and Congolese culture (labelling it as sf shifts how it can be understood but of course invites exactly the same criticism). At “Imagining Future Africa: SciFi, Innovation

of these problems might be to focus more closely on a single African country, enabling a more detailed and nuanced exploration of a particular culture (or set of intersecting cultures within that nation), but hitherto only South Africa and Nigeria have really produced enough sf in English for that to be feasible.

There are vast differences between – and within – North and sub-Saharan Africa. Across the continent, the influence of Arabic, European, Islamic, and Christian cultures has played out in myriad ways, as have colonialism, postcolonialism, and neo-colonialism. There are important distinctions to be drawn between – and within – indigenous and settler cultures, both in Africa and in diaspora. There are complex questions to be asked of the many hybridities thrown up at the lived interfaces and interweavings of these cultures and identities. At what point does an immigrant “count” as an African, or an émigré cease to “count” as one? Should Manly Wade Wellman, that stalwart of the fantastic pulps from the late 1920s onwards, who was born in what is now Angola, be considered an African sf writer? How about Doris Lessing? She was born in Persia in 1919, lived in Southern Rhodesia from 1926-1949, before settling in the UK, where most of her fiction was written. How about Buchi Emecheta, born in Nigeria in 1944 but resident primarily in the UK from 1962? Or Scottish-born Jonathan Luedgard, the East African correspondent for *The Economist* and director of The Future Africa Afrotech Initiative (<http://afrotech.epfl.ch/>), who currently lives in Africa? Or Nnedi Okorafor, who was born in Cincinnati to Igbo parents and maintains close ties to Nigeria? While such questions have no straightforward answers, there is much to be gained by thinking collectively about them. My own instinct is not to try to nail down a rigid schema, but to keep matters fluid, relationships open, and potentials in play, and to recognize the specific conjunctural value of “African sf” as a temporary, flexible, non-monolithic, and, above all, strategic identity.

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and Technology,” the closing panel at the third annual *Africa Writes* festival at the British Library (11-13 July 2014), British-Nigerian Tade Thompson raised a related problem: without regular, paying markets in Africa for sf of African origin, African writers are likely to orient their fiction towards US or European markets rather than pursue more indigenous forms and concerns. (December 2014 saw the launch of *Omenana* ([www.omenana.com](http://www.omenana.com)), a free bimonthly online magazine of African and Afrodiasporic sf, edited by Mazi Nwonwu and Chinelo Onwualu.)

All of the stories and novels discussed below were either written or have been translated into English. There are undoubtedly works in indigenous languages to be unearthed, as well as in Arabic<sup>2</sup> and other European colonizer languages. In terms of which texts are in print, a course on African sf would have to focus on fiction from after the post-World War 2 independence struggles, with the possibility of shifting emphasis from “literary” to “popular” fiction the closer it draws to the present; it is difficult to imagine an sf course that would contain so many Nobel laureates and so much experimental prose, while at the same time requiring students to find the value in pulp. Such a course would probably be suitable only for upper level undergraduates or post-graduates, which indicates the importance of incorporating African sf into general courses on sf, African literature, children’s and YA fiction, and so on.

I have noted below whether pre-1980 out-of-print texts are held by the British Library (BL), Library of

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2 For example, the *SFE*’s “Arabic sf” entry refers to untranslated sf by the Egyptians Tawfiq al Hakim, Mustafa Mahmud, Yusuf Idris, and Ali Salim, the Libyan Yusuf al-Kuwayri, the Tunisian Izzaddin al-Madani, and the Algerian Hacène Farouk Zehar, who wrote in French (as did Algerian Mohammed Dib, whose sf novel I discuss in this essay). Some of Tawfiq al Hakim’s sf has been translated into English. His “In the Year One Million” (1947), depicts a sexless, immortal, future humanity rediscovering love, mortality, and religion; it is included in *In the Tavern of Life and Other Stories* (1998). Some of its themes are developed in his four-act play *Voyage to Tomorrow* (1957) and his one-act play *Poet on the Moon* (1972), both of which can be found in *Plays, Prefaces and Postscripts of Tawfiq Al-Hakim, volume two: Theater of Society* (1984). In the former, a doctor and an engineer, both facing execution, are offered reprieves if they will pilot an experimental rocket into the depths of space. After a fatal crash, they find themselves revived as immortal beings on an empty alien world, faced with the emptiness of eternity. They return to Earth, somehow human once more, and find that during their three-hundred-year absence, the world has become a utopia of peace and plenty – and that humanity faces a similarly meaningless future. In the latter play, a poet maneuvers his way onto a lunar expedition. He alone is able to perceive the alien inhabitants, living at peace since becoming sexless, and to recognize that his fellow astronaut’s discovery of the Moon’s mineral wealth can only result in colonial devastation.

Congress (LC), the Eaton Collection at UC Riverside (E), the Merrill collection at Toronto Public Library (M), or the Foundation collection at Liverpool University (F); post-1980 texts are much easier to find second-hand.

### Was There African SF Before World War 2?

All the examples I have found are by white South Africans, and only one of them (Timlin) is currently in print. Joseph J. Doke’s *The Secret City: A Romance of the Karroo* (1913; BL, E) is a Haggard-inspired lost race novel, written by the Johannesburg-based Baptist clergyman who also wrote the authorized biography of Gandhi. In the frame tale, Justin Retief, a Cape Town settler, discovers a manuscript describing the adventures of his grandfather two centuries earlier. In the framed tale, Paul Retief witnesses the destruction of the millennia-old Nefert, a forgotten outpost of the ancient Egyptian empire, while rescuing his abducted wife, Marion, believed to be a reincarnation of the legendarily cruel queen Reinhild. The prequel, *The Queen of the Secret City* (1916; BL, E), tells of the rise to power (and the struggle over the soul) of Reinhild – again taken from a manuscript discovered by Justin. It is positioned as an overtly Christian refutation of pernicious Nietzscheanism, but rather clumsily, as if an afterthought. Both books are rare and costly.

Archibald Lamont’s *South Africa in Mars* (1923; BL, LC) is a posthumous account of encounters with the deceased great and good – including Shakespeare and Cecil Rhodes – on Mars, and involves a supernatural interplanetary scheme to save South Africa from its own failings. The brief description in Everett Bleiler’s *Science Fiction: The Early Years* (1990) astutely “wonders why the book was written” (418). It is not too expensive second-hand.

British-born William M. Timlin emigrated to South Africa in 1912, aged twenty, where he became an architect and, more notably, an interior designer of picture palaces. His only novel, *The Ship that Sailed to Mars* (1923), is considered one of the most beautiful children’s books of the period – and one of the rarest. 2000 copies were published in London, priced at five guineas (250 of them were exported to the US, and sold for twelve dollars each). In 1926, Paramount announced a film adaptation, to star the now largely forgotten Raymond Griffith, but it went unmade, and the book was not reprinted until 2011. It contains 48 pages of text – not typeset but replicating Timlin’s calligraphy – and 48 paintings, telling the story of how fairies help the Old Man build a ship to travel, in a roundabout way, to the red planet, and of the fantastical civilization he finds

there. Timlin's whimsical blend of sf and fantasy recalls the films of Georges Méliès, perhaps, or Winsor McCay's *Little Nemo*, though without the latter's manic energy or sometimes sharp bite; visually, it is much closer to Arthur Rackham.

Leonard Flemming, a farmer and occasional journalist, included the brief story 'And So It Came to Pass' in *A Crop of Chaff* (1925 BL), a collection of slight vignettes and humorous pieces. It is slight, but not remotely humorous. After whites have been eradicated, black people and coloured people turn on each other, destroying the human race.

Another early South African sf novel, published just after WW2 is *When Smuts Goes: A History of South Africa from 1952 to 2010, first published in 2015* (1947; BL, LC, E, M) by Arthur Keppel-Jones, a professor of History at Witwatersrand University. Intended as an intervention into post-war South African politics, it projects a future in which Anglophone government is overthrown and replaced by a fascist Afrikaner state. The white Anglophone population deserts, or is hounded out of, the country. Black Africans eventually achieve a rather compromised victory over their oppressors, but prove incapable of building or maintaining a modern, thriving nation. Overall, it is one of those oddly racist anti-racist books, reiterating that old nonsense about British colonialism being more benevolent and efficient than that of other European nations. Nonetheless, it is worth the effort of finding one of the reasonably-priced second-hand copies.

### First Encounters

For a class on African sf, a provocative opening exercise – I am entirely indebted to Isiah Lavender III for this idea – would be to read Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) alongside Nigerian Chinua Achebe's debut novel, *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Although neither is sf, both do science-fictional things. Conrad's novel is somewhat reflexive about the colonial adventure fiction of the period, but remains deeply problematic in its depiction of Africa and Africans (as Achebe's devastating critique in his 1975 lecture "An Image of Africa" (1978) persuasively demonstrated, single-handedly changing the way the novel is understood). Conrad depicts the journey into Africa as also one into a prehistoric past, transforming a common colonial trope of travelling backwards along the path of progress into something more akin to Verne's *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864). The abandoned relics of previous colonial incursions into the continent suggest there is nothing

inevitable about "progress," while also echoing the "last man" tradition of a traveler finding Europe in ruins. The recurring sound of distant blasting and especially the image of a French battleship blindly shelling the jungle indicate the violence of colonial conquest and render modernity absurd. And if we can now also see the sf structures and moments in Conrad's tale, Achebe's novel – which is set in a fictional Igbo village in the late nineteenth century, and tells of the coming of white people, Christianity, and colonial governance – can also be read as a science-fictional account of first contact but from the other side.

Ideally, I would add Nigerian Buchi Emecheta's *The Rape of Shavi* (1983) into this mix. Told primarily from the viewpoint of the inhabitants of Shavi, an isolated African kingdom, it depicts the arrival of a group of albinos in a "bird of fire" – in fact, westerners fleeing what they fear is a nuclear war – and of the various, increasingly tragic, misunderstandings as both peoples see the other through their own cultural standards and preconceptions. Perhaps inevitably, colonialism wins; the Shavians certainly do not. However, as the novel is out of print, an alternative elaboration on this exercise might be to introduce two of the very best stories about colonial encounters American sf has produced, Sonya Dorman's "When I Was Miss Dow" (1968) and Octavia Butler's "Bloodchild" (1984), which draw out in more overtly science-fictional ways some elements of colonial ideology – especially around gender, sexuality, reproduction, cooptation, and cooperation – that are central to neither Conrad nor Achebe.

### Irreal Africas, Postcolonial Fictions

One place to look for traces of African sf is in critical volumes which would never dream of using the term, or would at least prefer not to, deploying instead a de-science-fictionalized discourse of utopia and dystopia, and labelling anything irreal as some kind of postcolonial magic realism or avant-gardist experimentalism. Gerald Gaylard's *After Colonialism: African Postmodernism and Magical Realism* (2005) is a treasure trove in this regard. Without Gaylard, for example, I might never have come across South African Ivan Vladislavić's satirical, often Kafkaesque short stories collected in *Missing Persons* (1989) and *Propaganda by Monuments* (1996), many of which – for example, "The Omniscope (Pat. Pending)," "We Came to the Monument," and "A Science of Fragments" – contain sf elements. (Both volumes are out of print, and second-hand copies of *Flashback Hotel* (2010), the omnibus edition intended to make these stories ac-

cessible once more, are even harder to track down.)

*Who Remembers the Sea* (1962; BL in French, LC) – written by Algerian Mohammed Dib while exiled in Paris for his opposition to the French colonial occupation of Algeria – is set in a phantasmagorical city that constantly shifts and changes. Strange beasts roam the city, and violent conflict brings death and devastation. Apart from several more or less straightforwardly realistic flashbacks to the narrator's youth, the novel is told in an elusive manner. It is replete with neologisms and neosemes, used with the consistency one would expect of sf world-building, even if the objects to which they attach are not brought into clear focus. Events and entities never quite seem to hold still. The revolution, if that is what it is, happens offstage, just out of sight. Each chapter seems to have forgotten the preceding one, and sometimes this is the case with paragraphs, too. It is a remarkable account of living under occupation.

In the Egyptian Moustafa Mahmoud's slender *The Rising from the Coffin* (1965; LC), an Egyptian archeologist visits Indian Brahma Wagnosis, and then timeslips (or perhaps merely dreams) his way back to the era of the Pharaohs, in which Imhotep seems also to be Wagnosis. Scientific and spiritual worldviews are brought into collision, only for the narrator/protagonist to learn that they are not necessarily contradictory. Mahmoud's *The Spider* (1965) was translated and serialized (1965–66) in *Arab Observer*, but I have been unable to locate any copies.

The Ghanaian [B.] Kojo Laing writes complex, experimental confections using sf, fantasy, and realist elements. *Woman of the Aeroplanes* (1988) brings two immortal communities – Tukwan, a fantastical community in Ghana, and Levensvale, a disintegrated Scottish village – into complex contact with each other. *Major Gentl and the Achimota Wars* (1992) is discussed below. *Big Bishop Roko and the Altar Gangsters* (2006) is his largest, most sprawling, and most difficult novel to summarize, but it does involve, among many other sf elements, genetic engineering that makes it increasingly difficult for rich and poor countries to interact. Nigerian Ben Okri's even more massive *The Famished Road* (1991) is easy reading in contrast. In a ghetto of an unnamed African city, the *abiku* (spirit-child) Azaro is constantly pressed by sibling spirits to return to their realm. In this often oneiric blend, sf imagery recurs.

The novels I would choose to teach, though, are Congolese Sony Labou Tansi's *Life and A Half* (1977) and Kenyan Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Wizard of the Crow* (2006). The former, set in the fictional republic of Katamalana-

sia, tells of resistance to a murderous dictator called The Providential Guide, and of the numerous, equally deadly and deranged offspring who compete to replace him. It culminates in an apocalyptic war that involves such superscience weapons as mutant flies whose sting turns their victims into radiant carbon, radio-flies with beam weapons, the radio-bomb, and the real rifle of peace. It is brief, hyperbolic, brutal, and comic. Thiong'o's novel, set in the fictional state of Abruria, is much more accessible, but much more massive. An irreal burlesque, indignant at the state of postcolonial Africa, it excoriates brutal domestic corruption and its interrelations with a global economic system constructed to serve the interests of the former and neo-colonialists. For example, in one strand, a government minister jockeying for position plans to build the tallest building in the world – so tall, in fact, that Abruria must develop a space program in order to take the President, by rocket, to its penthouse. An alternative for those daunted by the sheer size of *Wizard of the Crow* might be Ivorian Ahmadou Kourouma's *Waiting for the Wild Beasts to Vote* (1998), which recounts the life of a shapeshifting dictator and the history of African decolonization/neo-colonization. Utterly fantastical and in some ways completely true, it is shorter yet more grueling than *Wizard*, but lacks Thiong'o's humour and overt sf elements.

### **Pulp Africas, Cyberpunk Africas**

There are a number of African texts which we can think of as being closely related to western pulp traditions. Ghanaian Victor Sabah's brief, self-consciously naïve 'An Imaginary Journey to the Moon' (1972) was collected in Harry Harrison and Brian Aldiss's variously titled *Best SF: 1972* (1973) and again in Aldiss and Sam Lundwall's *The Penguin World Omnibus of Science Fiction* (1986), although editors seems reluctant to detail where it first appeared. South African Claude Nunes – sometimes with Rhoda Nunes as co-author – published a couple of short stories, 'The Problem' (1962) and 'Inherit the Earth' (1963) in, respectively, John Carnell's *Science Fantasy* and *Science Fiction Adventures* magazines in the UK, before seeing a pair of short novels, *Inherit the Earth* (1967) and *Recoil* (1971), as halves of Ace Doubles in the US. *The Sky Trapeze* (1980) was published in the UK. All three novels are available on kindle. They are competent enough, and their depiction of struggles between humans and posthumans of various sorts could be seen as commenting on Apartheid. However, they are so grounded in American sf – apocalyptic wars, androids, mutants, psi powers, group minds, interstellar

travel – that their occasional African settings and traces of a South African perspective are rather overwhelmed. *The Apex Book of World SF 2* (2012) and 3 (2014), edited by Lavie Tidhar, include stories from Gambia, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Ivor Hartmann's *AfroSF: Science Fiction by African Writers* anthology (2012) contains 22 new short stories from across the continent (including Gambia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, and, primarily, South Africa). This groundbreaking collection displays various, often quite complex, interrelations between African content, settings, and culture, and US pulp traditions, protocols, and story types. A sequel volume of novellas is forthcoming.

There are also a number of thrillers with significant sf elements. The popular and prolific Kenyan David G. Maillu, winner of the 1992 Jomo Kenyatta Prize for Literature, wrote several sf novels. *The Equatorial Assignment* (1980) introduces special agent 009, Benni Kamba. He works for the covert pan-Africanist security organization NISA (National Integrity Service of Africa) in the struggle against neo-colonial power, here represented by Dr Thunder's SPECTRE-like operation, which is engaged in removing any remotely effective African head of state and replacing him with a puppet ruler. The influence of the James Bond films (rather than Ian Fleming's novels) on this slight and rather crudely written YA novel is clear. Every woman 009 meets is beautiful and sooner or later ends up in bed with him, though only one of them subsequently betrays him (but her confused feelings for him then lead to a moment of weakness which enables him to triumph). *Operation DXT* (1986) is a sequel, while *Kadosa* (1975; BL) is an sf romance, in which the eponymous alien woman visits contemporary Kenya. Nigerian Valentine Alily's *Mark of the Cobra* (1980) is another Bond-inspired short YA novel: Ca'afra Osiri Ba'ara, aka the Cobra, has developed a devastating solar weapon, and only Nigeria's Special Service Agent, SSA2 Jack Ebony, can thwart his plans for global domination. The villain even acknowledges when he is quoting from *Live and Let Die. A Beast in View* (1969 BL, F), by anti-apartheid South African exile Peter Dreyer, was banned in South Africa on publication. In this rather more literate near-future thriller, the League of South African Democrats uncover a scheme to frack oil from shale by detonating a nuclear bomb in the Karoo region.

However, probably the best route into thinking about African sf in relation to western pulp sf is through cy-

berpunk.<sup>3</sup> South African Lauren Beukes' first two novels, *Moxyland* (2008) and the Clarke Award-winner *Zoo City* (2010) are both cyberpunk-ish – the earlier more obviously so, but I would recommend teaching the stronger, later novel, which might also be considered as urban fantasy, not least since the best critical work on Beukes also focuses on *Zoo City*.<sup>4</sup>

A brilliant, and rather more challenging, companion novel is Ghanaian [B.] Kojo Laing's experimental *Major Gentl and the Achimota Wars* (1992), whose phantasmagorical tale has a cyberpunkish setting. Set in 2020, it tells of the war between Major Gentl and the mercenary Torro the Terrible, with the fate of Achimota City and perhaps all Africa hanging in the balance. It is dense, fantastical, poetic – and, I have just discovered, no longer in print.

Perhaps, then, the Egyptian Ahmed Khaled Towfik's *Utopia* (2008), often considered proleptic of the Arab Spring, might do instead. Cyberpunk elements lurk in the background of a world divided between the walled enclaves of the rich and the masses of impoverished and disenfranchised peoples living in the ruins. A young man from the former ventures into the latter for kicks, runs into trouble, returns, but doesn't really learn anything. Or maybe Efe Okogu's novella 'Prop 23' in *AfroSF*, which reworks elements of *Neuromancer* and biopolitical perspectives in a future Lagos. Or, from among Afrodiasporic texts, *The African Origins of UFOs* (2006), the afro-psychedlic noir novel by British-Trinidadian poet and musician Anthony Joseph (his reading of extracts on the 2005 *Liquid Textology* CD is also highly recommended). Or perhaps Parisian-born Tunisian Nadia El Fani's film *Bedwin Hacker* (France/Morocco/Tunisia 2003), a low-key political thriller about neo-colonial power relations in which a French Intelligence agent tries to track down a North African hacker. It is available on DVD – whereas Cameroonian Jean-Pierre Bekolo's *Les Saignantes/The Bloodiest* (Cameroon 2005),

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3 Ghanaian Jonathan Dotse ([www.afrocyberpunk.com](http://www.afrocyberpunk.com)) has been working on a cyberpunk novel, *Accra: 2057*, for several years, although it remains unclear how soon it will be completed.

4 Beukes' subsequent novels, *The Shining Girls* (2013) and *Broken Monsters* (2014), combine serial killer thrillers with sf and fantastical elements. They are a useful reminder – as is Doris Lessing's sf, which I have omitted from this outline since her work is already well known – that we should not expect African writers necessarily to set their fiction in Africa.



which plays with cyberpunk imagery in much more challenging ways, is not.

### YA Fiction

I have not read Ghanaian J.O. Eshun's *The Adventures of Kapapa* (1976; F), about a scientist who discovers anti-gravity, nor have I been able to find a copy of *Journey to Space* (1980),<sup>5</sup> a novella by Nigerian Flora Nwapa, who is widely regarded as "the mother of modern African literature."

The Arizonan writer Nancy Farmer spent 17 years living and working in Africa – South Africa, Mozambique, mostly Zimbabwe – where she started to publish fiction. After winning the 1987 Writers of the Future gold award, she returned to the US. Her debut novel, *The Ear, The Eye and The Arm* was published in Zimbabwe in 1989; the much-revised 1994 version won numerous awards.<sup>6</sup> Set in 2194, it tells of the abduction of General Matsika's children, of their adventures in Harare's various communities, and of the search for them by the three hapless, mutant detectives of the title.

It is tempting to select Nigerian-American Nnedi Okorafor's *Zahrah the Windseeker* (2005), *The Shadow Speaker* (2007) or *Akata Witch* (2011) as the YA novels to teach; they are highly-regarded and easily available, and they nicely trouble distinctions between sf and fantasy. However, a course on African SF might be better served by her adult novels, and by instead looking at YA sf from other writers: Zambian-born naturalized South African Nick Wood's *The Stone Chameleon* (2004) and Botswana-resident South African Jenny Robson's *Savannah 2116 AD* (2004). The former is a relatively slight adventure novel in a post truth-and-reconciliation South Africa of 2030. Race is no longer an issue, apart from all the ways it continues to be one. Kerem, the fifteen-year-old protagonist, and a handful of friends from his new school, find themselves standing up to a neighborhood criminal gang – complete with heavies genetically altered to incorporate physical traits of wild animals – and questing for an ancient source of power that will heal the African communities desolated

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5 WorldCat notes copies are held by four German universities and by Northwestern in the US.

6 Her other sf includes the bleak, near-future diptych, *The House of the Scorpion* (2002) and *The Lord of Opium* (2013), set on the contested US-Mexico border. *The Warm Place* (1995), the Zimbabwe-set *A Girl Named Disaster* (1996), and the *Sea of Trolls* trilogy (2004-2009) are fantasy.

and divided by European colonialism and its long aftermath. Robson's novel, aimed at older readers, is a little longer, more complex and more accomplished. It imagines a 22nd-century Africa in which the majority of humans – called, dismissively, "Homosaps" – live on reservations so as to enable the continent's flora and fauna to recover from global anthropogenic ecocatastrophe. The teenage Savannah, and her new boyfriend, D-nineteen, who is one of the mysterious "gens" – that is, he has been genetically engineered so that, at the age of eighteen, his organs can be harvested and, ostensibly, transplanted into struggling animals – discover all is not as it seems. Both novels are also susceptible to readings from animal studies and biopolitical perspectives.

### The Borderlines of SF

In Africa, as elsewhere, fiction often lurks right on the edges of the genre. For example, *The Last of the Empire* (1981) by Senegalese Ousmane Sembene – not only a leading African novelist but also "the father of African Cinema" – is a political thriller about a military coup in a newly independent African nation; it is also almost a *roman à clef* about Senegal, satirizing its first president, Léopold Sédar Senghor, with whom Sembene often butted heads. This hesitancy about the nature of the novel's setting gives it an oddly science-fictional air. A similar science-fictionality haunts the Zimbabwean Dambudzo Marechera's *The Black Insider* (written 1978, posthumously published 1990), in which autobiographical reminiscences are told from within a derelict university building outside of which a war rages. The non-specific location of J.M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980), which takes place in a frontier settlement as war between the Empire and the barbarians looms, draws it even closer to sf.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, South African Nadine Gordimer's *July's People* (1981) is clearly set in the near-future, with resistance to Apartheid becoming open revolution. Despite this specificity, the novel feels perhaps less science-fictional than *Waiting for the Barbarians* since its focus is on the shifting relationship between a liberal white family and their black African servant who shelters them in his village, a remote home to which the pass system would only otherwise have permitted him to return every two years. J.M. Ledgard's *Submergence* (2012) juxtaposes the lives of James and Danny before and especially after they meet one Christmas and fall in love: a British spy, and a descendant of Thomas More, he

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7 His *In the Heart of the Country* (1977) features a fleeting UFO appearance.

is abducted by jihadists in Somalia; a biomathematician, she studies microbial life in the Hadal depths of the Atlantic ocean. Occasionally too precious for its own good (it is the kind of novel in which one character will quote Rilke in German to the other), it establishes a series of genuinely effective contrasts between the immediacy of James's experience and the sublime spaces and times of Danny's. I would, however, select a couple of debut novels to probe our understanding of the relationships between genres, the ways in which texts are comprised of multiple generic elements and tendencies – and to question the process of using Anglo-American categories to consider African novels.

Nigerian Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani's *I Do Not Come to You By Chance* (2009) won a Commonwealth Writers' Prize, a Wole Soyinka Prize, and a Betty Trask Award.<sup>8</sup> It is a fast-paced comedy of desperation in which the well-educated Kingsley lacks the right connections to get a job as an engineer. When his father falls ill, and essential medical treatment proves too costly, Kingsley – now also responsible, as the *opara* (first-born son), for the wellbeing of his whole family – finds himself propelled into the world of 419 scammers. If it had been written by William Gibson or Neal Stephenson, no-one would think twice about treating it as sf.

Nii Ayikwei Parkes was born in the UK and raised in Ghana. In *The Tail of the Blue Bird* (2009), Kayo – who trained in the UK as a forensic pathologist and worked as a police Scenes of Crime Officer – returns to Accra, hoping to pursue similar work. The Ghanaian police are uninterested in hiring him until the girlfriend of a government minister discovers baffling remains – they might be human, or not – in a distant village. Caught up in the potentially fatal machinations of an ambitious police officer and the webs of everyday urban violence and corruption, Kayo finds a rather different kind of community, with a deep history and traditional wisdom. The novel never quite becomes sf, and its treatment of forensic science refuses the absurd certainties of *CSI*, but fantastical elements emerge.

### Alternative and Future Africas

All of the books in this section would work well on an African sf course – and since I do not actually have to choose between them, I will not.

French-resident Djiboutian Abdourahman A. Waberi describes an alternate world *In the United States of Africa* (2006), in which Africa is the global superpow-

er and Europe a mass of uncivilized tribes constantly fighting each other. This kaleidoscopic novel is not an alternative history as sf normally understands it – there is no jonbar point of historical divergence, nor is it entirely clear whether pre-colonial African civilizations just continued on in to the present. Furthermore, its descriptions of European internecine strife are not an inaccurate description of the continent's actual history – Waberi merely refuses to drape it in the self-serving narratives of civilization and progress, instead imposing upon it the kind of supremacist myths that typify many European treatments of Africa. Malaika, a French girl adopted by an African doctor when he was working on an aid mission in the benighted continent, returns as an adult to her birthplace in the hope of finding her mother and a clearer sense of her own confused identity. This is a dazzling book, sharp and funny, and there is no way a synopsis can do it justice.<sup>9</sup>

The Nigerian-American Deji Bryce Olukotun's *Nigerians in Space* (2013), largely written and much of it set in South Africa, is an intriguing thriller focused less on the neatly decentered scheme around which it is organized than on its aftermath. In the early 1990s, a politician recruits top scientists from the Nigerian diaspora to return home as part of the "Brain Gain" intended to transform the country through high-tech innovation; in the present day, it transpires that only one of the scientists escaped assassination before the project – or was it just a scam? – could cohere.

Nnedi Okorafor's World Fantasy Award-winning *Who Fears Death* (2010) is set in a post-apocalyptic future in which technology and magic operate side by side, and in which dark-skinned Okeke are oppressed by light-skinned Nuru. Onyesonwu, the child of a Nuru woman raped by an Okeke sorcerer, learns to use her powers to prevent the genocide her father plans. Similarly structured to her YA novels, *Who Fears Death* is about rape,

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<sup>9</sup> *Africa Paradis* (Sylvestre Amoussou Benin/France 2006) conjures a broader similar near future after the collapse of Europe, the newly-risen African superpower is plagued by the problem of illegal immigrants from Europe; it is available on DVD. Yet another version of this role-reversal milieu features in the final and longest film in Omer Fast's *Nostalgia* (2006), a triptych shown as a gallery installation. It is more nuanced than Amoussou's feature film, but pretty much unavailable unless you are near a gallery where it is showing. Even though both films would work well as accompaniments to Waberi's novel neither of them is in its league.

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<sup>8</sup> Nwaubani's mother is a cousin of Flora Nwapa.

female genital mutilation, violation, trauma, the legacies of violence, the justifications for violence, ethnic struggles, gendered power, political and ethical responsibility, among other things, and wisely avoids proffering easy solutions. In *Lagoon* (2014), Okorafor leaves behind her YA structure for a fast-paced thriller, and offers a more optimistic vision of a future Africa – or, more precisely, a future Lagos. By her own account, she started the novel as a response to the infuriating *District 9* (Blomkamp US/NZ/Canada/South Africa) but, as she wrote, it transformed into something else. Aliens land in the lagoon, bringing chaos – a gang wants to kidnap the aliens, evangelical Christians want to convert them, an underground LGBT group sees in them a harbinger of revolution, the government is too slow and corrupt to respond effectively – and transformation; and Nigeria for once appears in the global mediascape as something other than a source of oil and location of violence.<sup>10</sup>

*Lagos 2060* (2013) edited by Ayodele Arigbabu, collects eight stories developed out of a workshop in 2010, Nigeria's golden anniversary year, concerned with imagining Lagos, already Africa's most populous city, a century after the country's independence. The stories contain different futures, though with some elements in common, and address global warming and other ecological concerns, nuclear disasters, the continuing role of foreign capital in determining the national economy and thus daily life, the nature of a post-oil Nigerian economy and state, the potential secession of Lagos and balkanization of the Federal State, the polarization of the wealthy and the impoverished, and developments such as the Eko Atlantic City as a moneyed enclave. They are quite pulpy and sometimes crudely written – further evidence of the need Tade Thompson described for regular paying markets for sf in Africa in order for writers to develop their craft – but they represent an important step in the development of African, and specifically Nigerian, sf.

African sf is already at least a century old. It is – as I hope this undoubtedly incomplete overview suggests – wonderfully diverse and increasingly common. It challenges us to rethink our understanding of the genre, and

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10 A somewhat less compelling vision of apocalyptic transformation can be found in *The Feller of Trees* (2012), by Zambian Mwangala Bonna, who lives and works in South Africa and Botswana. In it, Berenice struggles to reconcile her Christian faith with the political machinations necessary to unite and save Africa when the continent begins to sink.

how we think about the past, the present, and the future. It deserves – indeed, demands – our attention. Not as a poor relative in need of charity, but as an equal from whom we all have much to learn.

## Corpus Linguistics 101

Chris Pak

MY CURRENT INVOLVEMENT on the Leverhulme funded project “People”, “Products”, “Pests” and “Pets”: The Discursive Representation of Animals’ (<http://animaldiscourse.wordpress.com/>) has encouraged me to think more deeply about the role of the digital humanities for sf scholarship. This collaboration between researchers at King's College London and Lancaster University involves constructing a corpus of digitized texts about animals for computer aided analysis of their linguistic patterns. Guy Cook (2004), the lead investigator for this project, wrote a book based on a previous corpus-driven research project on organic and non-organic foods: *Genetically Modified Language*. This work references John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* and *Frankenstein* in connection with contemporary discourses about genetically modified foods, highlighting a fruitful point of intersection between sf scholarship and digitally-aided linguistic analysis. Known as corpus linguistics, this discipline, as Kim Ebsgaard Jensen (2014) argues, is intimately related to the digital humanities. Corpus linguistics has been exploring quantitative approaches to computer based analyses of naturally occurring language for applications in grammar and lexicography, foreign language teaching, comparative linguistics, forensic linguistics, critical discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, corpus stylistics and a range of other sub-fields in linguistics.

Corpus linguistics emerged as a discipline in the 1960s and 1970s, although precursors have existed since the 1950s and earlier. In “The Meaning of the Digital Humanities”, Alan Liu (2013) considers the opportunities that the digital humanities offer to the humanities broadly speaking, and draws attention to projects and tools such as Heuser and Le-Khac's (2012) use of *Correlator* for their quantitative analysis of 2958 nineteenth century British novels. What is conspicuous about this discussion of the digital humanities is that the discipline of corpus linguistics is not mentioned, despite much discussion of the process of compiling dictionaries and

thesauri – which make extensive use of corpus linguistic methods – and the survey of tools and concepts that initially emerged from within the field. McEnery and Hardie (2013) explain how Chomsky’s repudiation of corpus linguistics meant that despite several early research centres having been established in America, much of its development occurred in the UK. This has resulted in contemporary interest in the digital humanities tending to overlook the pioneering work of researchers in corpus linguistics. One of the aims of this article is to attempt to show how research in corpus linguistics offer ways to explore the relationship between qualitative and quantitative approaches to the humanities – questions that are at the heart of Liu’s article. Given the growing call for engagement with the digital humanities, it seems sensible to cross the short distance along the proverbial corridor into English language scholarship and the domain of corpus linguistics.

This article touches on issues raised in Lisa Yaszek’s overview of the digital humanities in “Narrative, Archive, Database: The Digital Humanities and Science Fiction Scholarship 101”. In this 101 article I will survey some of the basic concepts associated with corpus linguistics, consider the varieties of online corpora and discuss ways researchers can build specialized corpora for their own research. Although there is a large body of literature dealing with statistical methods for assessing the significance of quantitative results and methods for digitizing texts, this article will not explore these domains in any great detail in the short amount of space available, but rather will remain focused on introductory concepts and on practical uses of corpora to enable those who are interested in beginning their engagement with corpus linguistics to explore the opportunities the discipline offers to the study of sf. A range of articles and links to corpora and corpus linguistic software is listed in the bibliography to assist with further research.

### Types of Corpora

Interpretation of the results derived from any given analysis must be made with reference to the type and structure of the corpus used. Because of this, awareness of corpus construction methods is fundamental to corpus linguistics. For example, statements about the discourse of sf cannot be made with reference to a corpus comprising solely of sf novels from the 1970s. Likewise, statements regarding contemporary spoken English must be made with reference to a representative corpus of contemporary Englishes. These examples are in many ways obvious, and yet finer grained problems

regarding what can be said about the English language, for example, mean that issues of sampling and representativeness are fundamental. With regard to contemporary spoken English, the question as to what “English” is and how representative a dataset can be if it comprises only spoken English from subjects based in London – given the varieties of English in England, let alone the world – complicates these basic questions. Likewise, broad statements about sf discourse can only be made with a corpus that samples a variety of forms and genres of sf. What exactly should be included? The answer to this question depends, of course, on the questions being asked by the researcher and on how that researcher chooses to define sf.

There are a wide variety of types of corpora, including monitor corpora, balanced or sample corpora, parallel and comparable corpora, specialized and thematic corpora and opportunistic corpora. Monitor corpora like the *Bank of English (BoE)* developed at the University of Birmingham (UK) or the *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)* developed at Bingham Young University (Utah) increase in size over time by incorporating new texts according to a sampling method that takes into account parameters such as text type, word count, date of publication and a range of other factors. Monitor corpora that do not exclude older texts as new ones are incorporated are diachronic, allowing researchers to track changes in the English language over time. Balanced or sample corpora include a representative range of text types that form sub-corpora, each of which is limited by number of words, thus allowing for meaningful comparisons between sub-corpora. The texts that are incorporated are chosen so as to accurately represent the range of language use within the defined period of time. Examples of this type of corpora include the *Brown corpus*, developed at Brown University, and the *British National Corpus (BNC)*. Texts that are included are often sampled as the inclusion of full texts may skew the results of the data. For example, the *BNC* includes samples of novels and other texts of no more than 45,000 words. Careful consideration of the balance between sub-corpora is essential for constructing a representative corpus (appropriate statistical methods can also help overcome issues of comparison).

Parallel corpora include texts in more than one language or dialect and so allow for cross-linguistic comparison between languages. The same texts in different languages may be included in a parallel corpus or a looser comparable corpus may be constructed, which might include a variety of texts – not necessarily the

same ones – in different languages. These corpora are especially useful for translation, foreign language teaching and learning, and comparative linguistics. Examples include the *Canadian Hansard*, *The Oslo Multilingual Corpus* (OMC, University of Oslo) and the *Hong Kong Parallel Text* (Linguistic Data Consortium, University of Pennsylvania).

Specialized corpora include texts of a specific type. For example, a corpus may be constructed that represents the spoken discourse of the university, as the pioneering researcher Douglas Biber (2006) has done. The first transfer of written works to digital format was Father Busa's *Index Thomisticus*, a corpus of the works of St Thomas Aquinas that was planned in 1948 and completed in 1978 <<http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/it/index.age>>. Corpora of the work of Shakespeare, Goethe or Proust, among other writers, have also been collected. A specialized corpus of pulp sf texts from 1926-1939 would be an invaluable resource for sf and genre scholars. Constructing specialized corpora in this way allows for a modular approach, and several small projects could be devised to build a corpus that represents the variety of sf throughout time. Thematic corpora are similar in that they are built to explore a specific theme, although they may include a wider variety of text types. The corpus that I am currently constructing as part of my current research project is a thematic corpus of written and transcribed spoken discourse about animals. I hope to build on the skills I am currently developing to construct a thematic corpus specific to speculative fiction.

Finally, opportunistic corpora use texts that are readily available to hand, and so are not built according to a specific sampling frame. This may be because of issues of copyright, necessitating the use of texts freely available, or it may be due to technical limitations – the difficulty, for example, of working with manuscripts that cannot easily be digitized – or it may simply be for “quick and dirty” analyses of specific texts.

### Corpus Linguistic Tools

Corpus linguistics emerged as a way to analyze naturally occurring language for a variety of English language studies. There is still some resistance to corpus linguistic methods for analyzing literature, although scholars such as Michaela Mahlberg (2013) have been exploring how corpus linguistics can be synthesized with approaches in stylistics to aid in the analysis of fiction. Her book, *Corpus Stylistics in Dickens's Fiction*, offers a useful model for those seeking to apply corpus linguistic approaches

to the study of sf. Corpus linguistics has also been a rich resource for researchers in critical discourse analysis, an interdisciplinary approach that analyzes how language reproduces social and political domination. The kinds of analyses that emerge from this discipline include such investigations as Paul Baker et al's (2012) “Sketching Muslims: A Corpus Driven Analysis of Representations around the Word ‘Muslim’ in the British Press 1998–2009”, John Flowerdew's (1997) “The Discourse of Colonial Withdrawal: A Case Study in the Creation of Mythic Discourse” (on the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China) and Arran Stibbe's (2003) “As Charming as a Pig: The Discursive Construction of the Relationship Between Pigs and Humans”. Norman Fairclough's (1989) *Language and Power* is a key text in this area.

For those who view the quantitative approach corpus linguistics offers as detrimental in some way to the interpretation of literature, it must be emphasized that corpus linguistics can be seen as a tool and a series of methodologies rather than a prescriptive approach to analysis and interpretation. Tognini-Bonelli (2001) distinguishes between corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches. Corpus-based approaches make use of corpus data to explore a theory or hypothesis and to muster supporting evidence to validate or contest its premises; it can also be used to support the qualitative analysis of texts. Corpus-driven approaches view corpus data as the sole source of hypotheses about language. Theories should emerge from the analysis of the data itself, rather than derivation from some external source. Given this distinction, those who look with suspicion at any use of quantitative methods for textual analysis are likely to find corpus-based approaches more palatable.

Basic corpus linguistic tools include concordances, distributions, clusters and N-grams, collocates, word lists and keywords. Anne McCarthy and Michael O'Keeffe (2010) point out that the first concordances, the *Concordantiae Morales* (which were based on the Vulgate), were compiled in 1195-1231, but it was not until after the 1970s that computer generated digital concordances became widespread (3). Concordances are lines that feature a particular search term – a node word – and the words to the left and right of the node. The examples of words in context offered by dictionaries are based on concordances. Using the concordance tool, a particular word – for example, ‘robot’ – can be searched for and all results displayed in a column that can be sorted by any of the words to the left or right of the node. This allows subtle patterns in language to be qualitatively identified and categorized. Although only a



limited number of words to the left and right of the node are displayed (some programs allow you to modify this number), most corpus linguistic software allows you to click on the node to display the full text, and so each line can be analyzed from within the context of the whole. No data is lost, and traditional qualitative methods for the analysis and interpretation of texts can be combined with these digital approaches.

Collocates, clusters and N-grams allow the identification of frequently occurring groups of words. Searches for collocates of a given word can be conducted, or all the frequently occurring clusters within a given text can be identified using N-grams. Collocates refer to words that frequently co-occur with others: 'sun' and 'light' are collocates, as are 'search' and 'light' and so on. Corpus software allows researchers to identify collocates within a dataset in a variety of ways and, when the results are compared against other corpora, it allows them to determine whether a text or group of texts make use of language in unique ways. Mutual Information scores (MI) are a statistical measure commonly used for assessing the strength of the relatedness of two words. For smaller corpora, a t-score provides a more accurate assessment of the confidence with which we may assert a relationship between two words. Distributions or file plots locate all instances of a given word using a simple visual display for each text, giving researchers a tool that allows them to take account of some of the structural features of language use.

Wordlists display every word in a corpus and orders them by frequency of occurrence, assigning each word a rank. The number of words within a given corpus are known as tokens, the number of unique words as types. Using a simple formula, a type/token ratio (TTR) can be generated from the results of a wordlist, offering a measure of vocabulary variation within a given text (type / token x 100). It should be remembered that this method is crude, and that texts with greatly differing word counts are not comparable using this measure. Wordlists offer a valuable overview of the terms that occur within a given set of data, organizing them in such a way as to highlight important terms that might otherwise have been overlooked. These results can be extended using a keyword analysis, which essentially allows comparison between two wordlists. Terms that are unusually frequent or unique to the wordlist for which keywords are generated rise to the top of the keyword list, offering a way to identify terms that are central to the discourse(s) of a given corpus.

One school of corpus linguistics worth mentioning is

what McEnery and Hardie (2013) refer to as the Neo-Firthian School, which builds on John Sinclair's pioneering work at the University of Birmingham. Sinclair's Idiom Principle sees discourse as constructed of ready-made units that are stitched together in the context of a particular utterance. This principle sees collocation as a fundamental feature of language itself, and not simply as a way to analyse language. Building on Sinclair's Idiom Principle, Michael Hoey's theory of Lexical Priming describes how individuals are primed to expect or anticipate a given word or group of words when another is uttered. This priming occurs as a consequence of language acquisition and is continually refined over the course of an individual's experience. What distinguishes Hoey's theory is its psycholinguistic characterization, as opposed to those theories that view collocation as part of the strictly discursive aspect of language use. This school offers useful linguistic theories for reconsidering the nature of the sf megatext and parabola, along with Samuel R. Delany's view of sf discourse detailed in "About 5,750 Words".

### Existing Corpora Online

There are a number of accessible online corpora available for immediate use. *SketchEngine* (<http://www.sketch-engine.co.uk/>) offers free access to the *ACL Anthology Reference Corpus* (ARC), the *British Academic Written English Corpus* (BAWE), the *British Academic Spoken English Corpus* (BASE) and the *Brown* corpus, and offers several tools based on collocates, including Word Sketches, a Thesaurus function and a Sketch-Difference tool (which compares collocates of two words). The *BNC* is available for use with limited features at <http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/>. Leeds University hosts the IntelliText portal (<http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/itweb/htdocs/Query.html>), which gives access to a range of language corpora (including Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Kannada and others). English language corpora available from this portal include the *Seabed Minerals Corpus*, the *Reuters Collection from Newswires*, the *Brown* corpus, and a range of online corpora. *WebCorp* (<http://www.webcorp.org.uk/live/>) is an online system that uses the internet as an opportunistic corpus. Because of this, it is able to draw on a vast amount of data and offers a quick and easy way to generate initial findings to support literary-critical research.

One extremely useful portal is the Bingham-Young collection (<http://corpus.byu.edu/>), created by Mark Davies. It hosts the *Wikipedia* Corpus (1.9 billion

words), the *Global Web-Based English (GloWbE)* corpus (1.9 billion words from 20 countries between 2012-13), the *Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)* (450 million words of American English between 1990-2012), the *Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)* (400 million words of American English from 1810-2009), the *TIME Magazine Corpus* (100 million words of American English between 1923-2006), the *Corpus of American Soap Operas* (100 million words of American English from 2001-2012), the *BNC* (100 million words of British English from the 1980s-1993)

and the *Strathy Corpus* (50 million words of Canadian English from the 1970s-2000s). It also includes interface access to Google N-grams – itself based on principles of corpus linguistics – in American and British English, Spanish, and through the *One Million Books* corpus. For the rest of this section, I will use this portal to outline some of the uses that online corpora can be put to.

The first page of the Bingham-Young portal lists the various corpora available for use. Users can run a limited number of queries before they are prompted to sign up for a free account. Free accounts offer 100 queries per

Created by Mark Davies, BYU. [Overview](#), [search types](#), [researchers](#), [corpus-based resources](#).

English	# words	language/dialect	time period	compare
<a href="#">Global Web-Based English (GloWbE)</a>	1.9 billion	20 countries	2012-13	
<a href="#">Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA)</a>	450 million	American	1990-2012	*****
<a href="#">Corpus of Historical American English (COHA)</a>	400 million	American	1810-2009	**
<a href="#">TIME Magazine Corpus</a>	100 million	American	1923-2006	
<a href="#">Corpus of American Soap Operas</a>	100 million	American	2001-2012	*
<a href="#">British National Corpus (BYU-BNC)*</a>	100 million	British	1980s-1993	**
<a href="#">Strathy Corpus (Canada)</a>	50 million	Canadian	1970s-2000s	
<b>Other languages</b>				
<a href="#">Corpus del Español</a>	100 million	Spanish	1200s-1900s	*
<a href="#">Corpus do Português</a>	45 million	Portuguese	1300s-1900s	
<b>N-grams</b>				
<a href="#">Google Books: American English</a>	155 billion	American	1500s-2000s	*
<a href="#">Google Books: British English</a>	34 billion	British	1500s-2000s	
<a href="#">Google Books: One Million Books</a>	89 billion	Am/Br	1500s-2000s	
<a href="#">Google Books: Spanish</a>	45 billion	Spanish	1500s-2000s	

\* Our architecture and interface to the [BNC](#), which is distributed by IT Services (formerly OUCS) at Oxford University (on behalf of the BNC Consortium)

### Homepage of the Bingham-Young Portal (<http://corpus.byu.edu/>)

day, with a maximum of 100 KWIC entries (Keywords in Context, i.e. concordances) per page and 10,000 KWIC entries per day. As a researcher in linguistics, you can apply for increased access for free.

It is worth spending some time exploring all the corpora available through this portal, but *COHA* and *COCA* are of special interest to sf scholars. *COCA* is a 440 million word corpus of 190,000 texts from 1990-2012 that is evenly divided into sub-corpora of 88 million words organized into the following categories: spoken, fiction,

magazine, newspaper and academic. *COCA* divides its fiction category into five groups, one of which is a category for sf and fantasy (FIC:SciFi/Fant). Once *COCA* is selected from the homepage, you are brought to the interface at <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>. Note that the left hand panel is divided into sections containing the possible operations that can be conducted on the corpus. The appropriate section for the sf/fantasy corpus can be selected from the list in the middle of the left hand panel; it is highlighted in the screenshot overleaf.



**CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH** ACCESS: 3/3

450 MILLION WORDS, 1990-2012 [DOWNLOAD ALL 190,000 TEXTS] history | lists | profile | logout

DISPLAY: LIST CHART **KWIC** COMPARE

SEARCH STRING: WORD(S) COLLOCATES POS LIST RANDOM SEARCH RESET

SECTIONS SHOW: 1 SPOK:Indep 2 IGNORE SPOKEN FICTION MAGAZINE NEWSPAPER ACADEMIC

SORTING AND LIMITS: SORTING FREQUENCY MINIMUM FREQUENCY 10

CLICK TO SEE OPTIONS

There are a wide range of additional resources that are based on the BYU corpora:

- Full-text**: Download 440 million words of full-text data for COCA (190,000 texts), or 1.8 billion words for GloWbE (1,800,000 texts). With this data, **you will have the texts from the corpora on your own computer**, rather than having to use the web interface. The data comes in three formats: tables for relational databases, word/lemma/PoS (vertical format), or text (linear format).
- Word and Phrase (analyze texts)**: Enter entire texts and see detailed frequency information on the words in the text, and create word lists based on your text. Click through the words to see detailed information on any word. Highlight phrases in your text and have it search for related phrases in COCA.
- Word and Phrase (frequency lists)**: Search and browse the most complete frequency dictionary of English. See detailed information (all on one page) -- definition, frequency by genre, collocates (nearby words), concordance lines, synonyms, and Wordnet-related words, all with useful links from one resource to another.
- Word Frequency**: You can also download lists showing the frequency of the top 60,000 lemmas by genre (and sub-genre), as well as the top 200-300 collocates (nearby words) for these lemmas (4,800,000 node/collocate pairs). There is also a free list of the top 5,000 lemmas in COCA. And now you can download the 100,000 integrated word list from COCA, COHA, BNC, and SOAP -- the largest, corrected frequency list of English.

LIMITS ON USE

For reasons of copyright, licensing, and server load, there are some limits on queries and KWIC displays

Limit	Explanation	Range (depends on <a href="#">your status</a> )	Your limit	Your usage
Total number of queries per day	Number of searches run from the search form	100-600	300	0
Total KWIC entries per day	Total number of Keyword in Context (KWIC) entries (lower right-hand frame) that you can retrieve each day.	5,000-30,000	20000	

### Bingham-Young Interface for COCA

Results are displayed in the top right window, with additional information in the bottom right window.

One useful feature is the 'chart' function, the second radio button option at the top of the left hand panel. Selecting this option and running a search for 'robot' in the 'word(s)' section of the 'search string' module re-

turns the results shown below.

This chart displays the frequency for the search term 'robot' for each sub-corpus and illustrates the distribution of the term by year range to the right. The period 2000-2004 shows a marked increase in the use of 'robot' when compared to previous year ranges, from 550

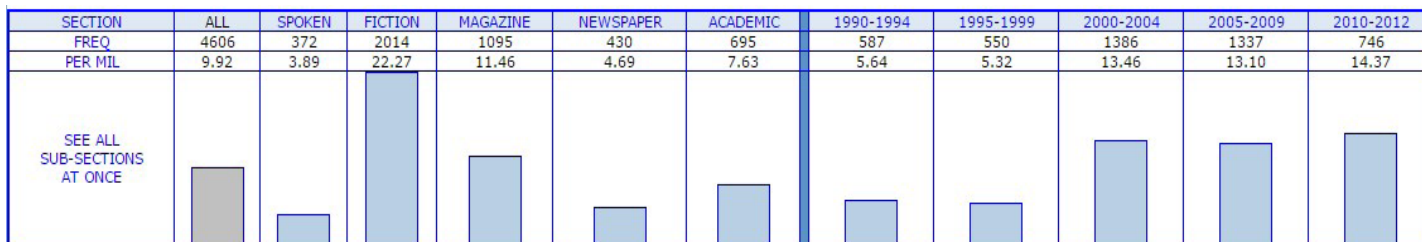


Chart results for 'robot' using COCA

hits to 1386 hits. A frequency per million words is also displayed for the purposes of comparison across sub-corpora: there is an increase from 5.32 to 13.46 occurrences per million words from 1995-1999 and 2000-2004. Note, too, that 'robot' occurs far more frequently in fiction than in any other text type, with 22.27 occurrences per million words as compared to the second most frequent discourse type, magazines at 11.46

occurrences per million words. These results are suggestive of a change in the English of specific discourse genres (i.e. fiction and magazines) as the concept of the robot increasingly infiltrated popular discourse. Further investigation, however, is required to make sense of these patterns. Nevertheless, the chart feature does point to useful avenues for the detailed examination of language use.

A breakdown of the distribution of the search term throughout the sub-sections of the corpus can be obtained by clicking on the 'see all sub-sections at once' option, which returns a list with frequencies per million words, total number of tokens for the search term and total number of words in the sub-section.

Clicking on any of the sub-sections returns KWIC results so that the occurrences can be examined in more detail. The screenshot displays KWIC results for the sub-section 'MAG: Sci/Tech', for which there are 604 tokens. As can be seen, the date and the source for each example is displayed to the left, and other details for each source

**CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH**  
 450 MILLION WORDS, 1990-2012 [DOWNLOAD ALL 190,000 TEXTS] ACCESS: 3/

RESULTS FOR [ROBOT] CLICK ON A COLUMN HEADING TO RE-SORT

SECTION NAME	# PER MILLION	# TOKENS	# WORDS
1 FIC:Sci/Fant	68.90	1375	19,956,836
2 MAG:Sci/Tech	47.96	606	12,636,244
3 FIC:Movies	43.28	387	8,941,861
4 ACAD:Sci/Tech	34.17	481	14,075,316
5 FIC:Juvenile	19.00	60	3,158,501
6 MAG:Soc/Arts	18.95	145	7,650,584
7 MAG:Children	14.07	23	1,634,649
8 MAG:Entertain	11.55	47	4,070,117
9 ACAD:Medicine	11.19	75	6,700,484
10 NEWS:Life	9.57	152	15,880,999
11 MAG:Financial	8.37	44	5,256,801
12 MAG:News/Opin	7.85	146	18,603,163
13 SPOK:MSNBC	7.37	6	814,156
14 ACAD:Misc	6.81	29	4,256,632
15 SPOK:IPD	6.78	118	17,200,734

SECTION: MAG:Sci/Tech (604)

CLICK FOR MORE CONTEXT [?] SAVE LIST CHOOSE LIST ..... CREATE NEW LIST [?]

LINE	DATE	SOURCE	POS	CONTEXT
1	1994	MAG PopScience	A B C	as the so-called "invisible tank." Behind enemy lines, fleets of computer-controlled <b>robot</b> scouts will roam the terrain, communicating
2	1994	MAG PopScience	A B C	human. With its wheels spinning and sliding in the wet clay, the car-size <b>robot</b> climbs on, absorbing information about its surroundings;
3	1993	MAG PopScience	A B C	; they have now been indefinitely postponed. The new focus will be on cheaper <b>robot</b> probe that can be built in less time an quickly la
4	1993	MAG Astronomy	A B C	seems to ring a bell, you're right. NASA's quest for inexpensive <b>robot</b> explorers has a rich tradition stretching back to the Pioneer-anc
5	1993	MAG Astronomy	A B C	achieved Mars orbit at the end of January 1989. For two months, the <b>robot</b> imaged Mars and Phobos, studied the Martian atmosphere
6	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	the bench to the marketplace and the relatively modest contribution one makes to have a <b>robot</b> mindlessly sequencing DNA, " conten
7	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	trail blazed by Mariner 4, culminating in 1976 with the triumphant touchdown of two <b>robot</b> laboratories called the Viking Landers. After
8	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	that moment more than 13 years after the radio transmitter of the last surviving Viking <b>robot</b> went silent -- NASA's network of giant g
9	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	conditions on the plains of Chryse (pronounced CRY-see) and Utopia, where the <b>robot</b> laboratories touched down. # Planetary scientis
10	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	remnant of ancient lakebeds (SN: 6/5/93, p.357). A lander or <b>robot</b> space buggy could then explore such a place up close. # Russian
11	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	explore such a place up close. # Russian space scientists will spearhead the coming <b>robot</b> invasion of the Red Planet. In 1994, they p
12	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	researchers from Russia and France will watch over a second mission that will deploy additional <b>robot</b> explorers on the surface. # NA
13	1993	MAG ScienceNews	A B C	the soil, measure seismic rumblings, and possibly let loose a pack of desktop-sized <b>robot</b> crawlers. NASA hopes to launch MESUR Pat

KWIC results using COCA for 'robot' with a breakdown of occurrences by sub-section

and an expanded context for the term can be viewed by clicking on the source name. Lists can also be saved for qualitative analysis at a later date.

Viewing concordances using the 'chart' method can be difficult, but there is a way of sorting the data so that linguistic patterns are highlighted. Selecting the 'KWIC' radio button from the left hand panel and running a search for 'robot' returns 4,606 examples organized as concordances that can be sorted in a variety of ways.

The concordances that are returned position the node word in the middle and – by default – sorts the data by the first three words to the right of the node. Data can be sorted alphabetically according to the first three words to the left or right of the node, or can be organized by date or genre. One useful feature of this method is that it displays part of speech (POS) tags for relevant words. POS tags are annotations that categorize words by syntactic function, such as by noun, verb and so on. POS software such as CLAWS (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws/>), TreeTagger ([\[uni-muenchen.de/~schmid/tools/TreeTagger/\]\(http://uni-muenchen.de/~schmid/tools/TreeTagger/\)\) and the Stanford tagger \(<http://nlp.stanford.edu/software/tagger.shtml>\) automate the process of assigning tags to a corpus, and while the results are not completely accurate and may require some manual editing, they are accurate enough to justify their use. Each POS program may categorize language in different ways; COCA is tagged using CLAWS 7 \(<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/claws7tags.html>\), which has 137 different grammatical categories. The Bingham-Young interface colour codes basic grammatical categories, allowing linguistic patterns to be identified with greater ease.](http://www.cis.</a></p>
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Running a concordance using the 'KWIC' function for 'robot' followed by a verb returns 776 results, 102 of which relate to the construction 'robot is'. Qualitative analysis of these lines – which is outside the scope of this paper – can help us understand how robots are typically characterized in a range of discourse types. Other frequently occurring constructions include 'robot was' (79 hits), 'robot can' (46 hits) and 'robot could'

**CORPUS OF CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ENGLISH** ACCESS: 3/3

450 MILLION WORDS, 1990-2012 [DOWNLOAD ALL 190,000 TEXTS] -- START -- history | lists | profile | logout

RESULTS FOR [ROBOT] CLICK ON A COLUMN HEADING TO RE-SORT CLICK ON ANY SECTION TO SEE THE WORD IN CONTEXT

SECTION NAME	# PER MILLION	# TOKENS	# WORDS
1 FIC:SciFi/Fant	68.90	1375	19,956,836

4,606 TOKENS

NO.	YEAR	GENRE	TEXT	POS	CONTEXT	WORD	CONTEXT
1	2000	SPOK	NPR_ATC	A B C	's associated with movement . Those wires were attached to a	robot	arm in another room . Miguel Nicoletis led the team .
2	2006	SPOK	CNN_LiveSat	A B C	portion , this extension , this 50 foot extension to the	robot	arm of this space shuttle , which is in itself 50 feet
3	2006	SPOK	CNN_LiveSat	A B C	? Is it safe enough for them to use that extended	robot	arm to do repairs on parts of the shuttle that would otherwise
4	1991	ACAD	RehabResrch	A B C	that their patient was at risk of being hit by the	robot	arm of Appendix B , Q 10 ) . The answers indicate
5	1992	NEWS	Houston	A B C	of the payload bay , Thut on the end of the	robot	arm positioned over the middle of the payload bay , and
6	2007	NEWS	Houston	A B C	to fit on the end of the station 's 57-foot Canadian	robot	arm of Preparing for Japanese lab # The mechanical arm and
7	2009	ACAD	TeachLibrar	A B C	Naifeh . Scholastic , 978-0-439-85562-4 . # How to build a	robot	arm of Tips on defending the earth against alien invaders .
8	2010	MAG	PopScience	A B C	own cars . Lee 's students build complex software to govern	robot	behavior and human-robot interaction . These are some of the
9	1990	FIC	Mov:Hardware	A B C	warehouse at the center of the yard . # INT :	ROBOT	BREAKER of WAREHOUSE - DAY # Mo and Shades step through the
10	1991	FIC	BkSF:FromDuskTill	A B C	did n't see how that could be . A little open-topped	robot	bus took them across to their hotel . The air was cool
11	2012	FIC	Analog	A B C	accidents and fires and crime scenes quite often . So a	robot	can become a hero by taking a risk , but will the
12	2000	FIC	Analog	A B C	kind of way , but mind you this came from a	robot	capable of picking up one end of a six-foot couch without
13	2006	FIC	Analog	A B C	through the community of knowledge robots : The condition ,	Robot	Category Separation Syndrome , attacked the central
14	2001	FIC	Analog	A B C	ever again , if he chose not to . The Freeman	Robot	Company had instantly offered him a huge settlement worth many
15	2006	MAG	PopScience	A B C	Earth Stood Still An alien ambassador to Earth , the peacemaking	robot	could evaporate weapons without harming his enemy . 1956 Robbie
16	2005	MAG	ScienceNews	A B C	so nicely , " Ruina says . # Still , the	robot	could only walk down a slope . So , Ruina and several
17	2009	ACAD	MechanicalEng	A B C	performing tasks . " At its least complicated level , a	robot	could use simple behaviors to confirm its model of the
18	2001	FIC	Analog	A B C	's room , wondering what I was getting into . The	robot	did n't say anything . It just stood there . When I
19	1999	MAG	TechReview	A B C	a commercial launch pending a reduction in production costs . A	robot	dog of opposite page , bottom ) from Sony Computer Science
20	2009	ACAD	MechanicalEng	A B C	also govern Roomba . " You have a behavior that the	robot	engages in by default , " Adams said . " A default
21	2008	FIC	Analog	A B C	driver . Upon this newfound acceptance , Argus leased one driver	robot	for each company yard . At other trucking companies ,
22	2001	FIC	FantasySciFi	A B C	" At the heart of all this is that fiend in	robot	form known as The Boss Robot , the intelligence of The Robot
23	2010	FIC	Poetry	A B C	of hunger ? And peace is a coming to rest ?	ROBOT	FOUR And why did those young men Beat that nurse to .
24	2001	FIC	Analog	A B C	, which tasted like the spectrum of every star the little	robot	had ever studied , with Fraunhofer lines for its fingerprints
25	2007	FIC	Analog	A B C	flare of the rocket exhaust . Around the curve came a	robot	hauling wagons of ore . With a pulse of his side thrusters
26	2004	FIC	Mov:IRobot	A B C	walk through the crowd , we hear the quiet WHIR of	robot	heads as they turn in succession to watch Spooner pass . 22

### KWIC results for 'robot' using COCA

(36 hits), but other interesting results further down the list include 'robot named' (20 hits) and 'robot called' (13). It is at this stage that an intersection between literary and linguistic analysis can be established through familiar literary-critical approaches applied to an analysis of concordances. There are other tools available through this system, and the various corpora Bingham-Young hosts display their results in slightly different ways, depending on the nature of the corpus itself. There is also a function that allows two corpora to be compared side by side. This limited overview of COCA points to some of the most useful tools that can be readily incorporated into traditional literary-critical research methodologies.

### Building Your Own Corpus

While pre-existing online corpora are an excellent resource for corpus linguistic analysis, they have limited functionality and restrict users to corpora built for purposes that may not adequately reflect the needs of the researcher. For those who would like to build their own specialized or thematic corpora, a range of software is available. A limited version of Mike Scott's Wordsmith can be downloaded for free from <http://lexically.net/wordsmith/index.html>. Paul Rayson's WMatrix ([\[ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/\]\(http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/\)\), Andrew Hardie's CQPWeb \(<https://cqpweb.lancs.ac.uk/>\) and Michael Barlow's Monoconc \(<http://www.monoconc.com/>\) and Paraconc \(<http://paraconc.com/>\) all offer a variety of tools for corpus linguistic analysis. All, however, require a fee or a subscription for access to the full version of the software \(unless you are able to subscribe through a participating university\). Laurence Anthony's AntConc, however, is a completely free corpus linguistics program that provides the core tools for corpus linguistic analysis; it is an excellent program and I highly recommend downloading and experimenting with it: <http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html>. Anthony has also programmed a range of useful tools for text manipulation and conversion, including AntFileConverter, which batch converts pdfs into plain text files, EncodeAnt, which detects and converts encoding for Windows, and TagAnt, a POS tagger. A parallel corpus linguistics program, AntPConc, is also available from his website.](http://</a></p>
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Why build specialized or thematic corpora? The research questions that arise in sf scholarship and the sensitivity to genre that the field has fostered is not adequately reflected by the corpora currently available. Corpus linguistics can be very useful for author studies,



for the analysis of specific forms of discourse associated with sf, and for a thematic analysis of tropes. Corpus linguistics software also allows easy identification of intertextual features of the language of a text and offers a way to examine the discourse of sf as opposed to its particular instantiations. They are also relatively easy to build, especially with the accessibility of many works online.

Corpus linguistics software read plain text files. While different software can read different types of encoded texts, I would recommend processing them in UTF-8 format for use with AntConc. I use Notepad++ (<http://notepad-plus-plus.org/>) to process texts, and Textcrawler (<http://www.digitalvolcano.co.uk/textcrawler.html>) to conduct batch search and replace operations when necessary (both, like AntConc, allow the use of regular expressions for flexibility). Bulk Rename Utility ([http://www.bulkrenameutility.co.uk/Main\\_Intro.php](http://www.bulkrenameutility.co.uk/Main_Intro.php)) is a useful piece of freeware that allow the modification of multiple filenames as a batch. Macros can be built using Notepad++, allowing regular operations with text files to be automated. Alternatively, texts can be copy and pasted into Microsoft Notepad and saved as a plain text file with limited formatting. Once a corpus has been constructed, it is a simple task to open these files in AntConc to perform a range of operations. What follows is an illustrative if limited example to show how tailored corpora can be used to aid in sf scholarship.

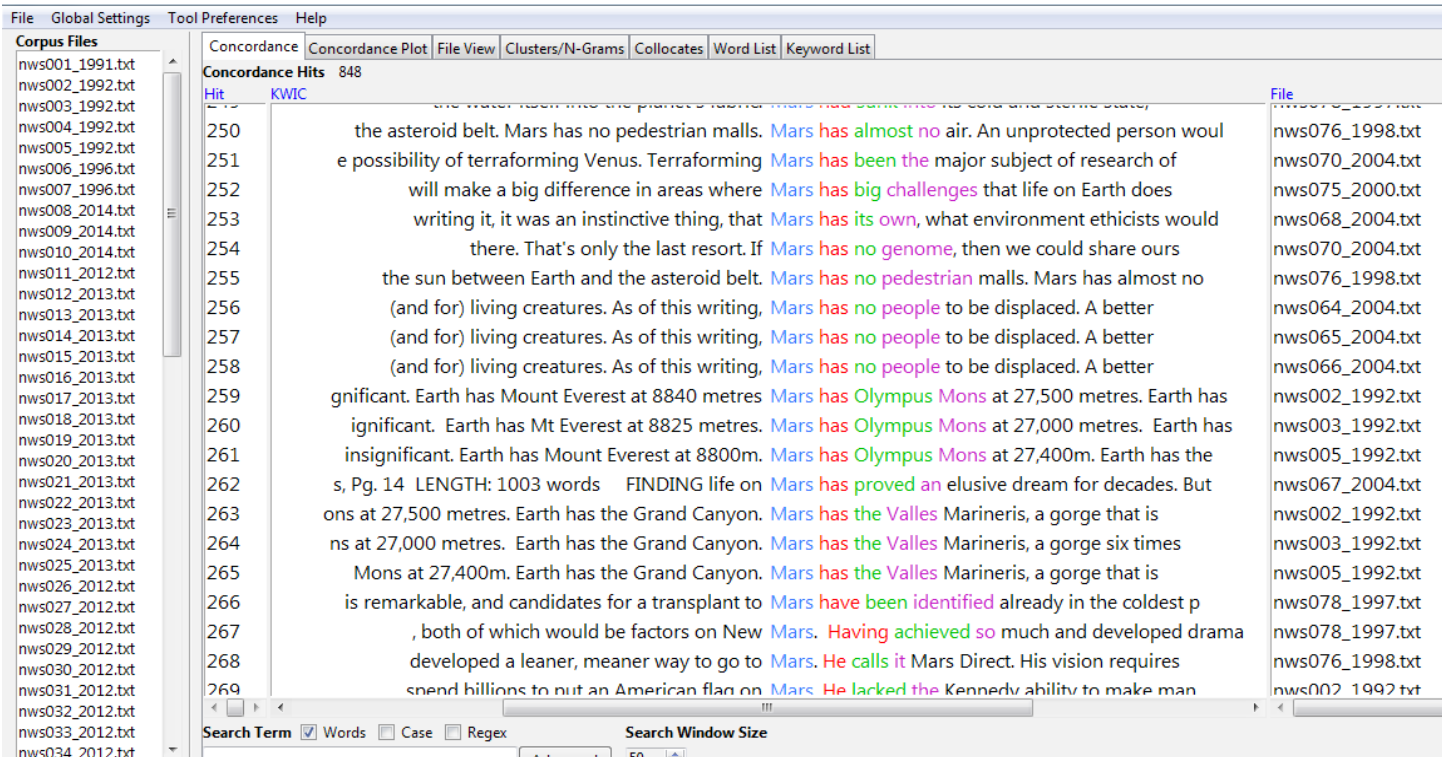
I used *LexisNexis* to obtain 82 newspaper articles that contain at least two instances of 'terraform' or its inflexions. This database allow texts to be downloaded as a single plain text, Word or pdf file. A macro in Notepad++ allowed me to separate them into individual UTF-8 plain text files in less than twenty minutes. Alternatively, they can be separated by bookmarking each article and splitting the document using Adobe Acrobat and then converting them into plain text files using AntFileConverter. I was able to construct a small corpus of 100,686 words with 10,026 types, giving me a TTR ratio of 9.96%. This figure needs to be compared against results from another corpus to be made meaningful. These articles display a higher degree of vocabulary variation when compared to a corpus of promotional food websites and scientific journal articles about animals, and less variation when compared to a corpus of animal campaign literature (the choice of comparisons was opportunistic, they being the corpora I had ready to hand).

AntConc's functions are arrayed as tabs at the top of the main window and underneath the options menu bar. Running a wordlist on the whole corpus highlights the word 'Mars' as significant; it appears 848 times and

is assigned a rank of 15 out of 10,026. We can tentatively say that 'terraforming' – as would be expected – is most frequently associated with Mars as opposed to other planets in the discourse of news media (but this should be verified through concordances). Other important lexical words are 'earth' (302 occurrences / rank 42), 'planet' (264 occurrences / rank 45), 'space' (255 occurrences / rank 48), 'life' (234 occurrences / rank 55) and 'game' (196 occurrences / rank 67). By clicking a word in the wordlist, concordances can be generated that can be sorted in a variety of ways (see next page).

Note that in the screenshot (on the following page), each concordance line is assigned a number to the left, and is paired with a filename to the right. Choosing appropriate filenames aid in identifying the source of the concordance at a glance, though clicking on the node word will open up the full text for the line. I have sorted these results by the first three words to the right of the node. There are several concordances for 'Mars has'; analysing these constructions, along with constructions such as 'Mars is' and 'Mars will', can help us explore the ways in which Mars is represented in the discourse of news media. Note that some of these lines are very similar: they reflect the fact that different newspapers sometimes report on the same stories. Examples of linguistic variation and differences in reported facts – such as the height of Olympus Mons, as shown in lines 263 to 265 – can be a useful source of information regarding the stance of the writer or publication. Alternatively, one might want to exclude texts that are similar so as to ensure that the corpus is representative of discourse as a whole and that similar texts do not skew the results of any analyzes. The choice of what to include in a corpus ultimately depends on the research question that is posed.

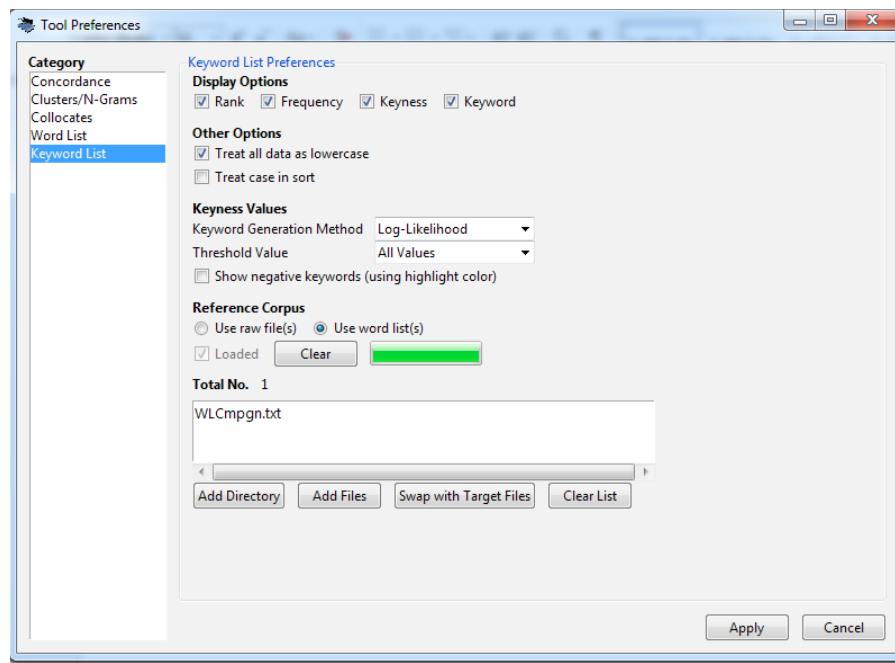
Keyword lists can also be generated. This requires two corpora and two wordlists, one of which functions as a reference list. To generate a reference wordlist, run a wordlist with another corpus and export that as a plain text file by selecting the 'File' option in the options menu bar at the top of the interface, then select 'Save Output to Text File'. To run a keyword search, load this wordlist by selecting 'Tool Preferences' in the menu options bar. To load the reference wordlist, select 'Keyword List' in the 'Category' column to the left of the window that appears, and click the 'Add Files' button at the bottom of the main menu screen. After browsing for and selecting the previously generated reference wordlist, check the 'Use Word List(s)' radio button and click the 'Load' button. That button should then change to a 'Clear' button



### Concordance results for 'Mars' in AntConc

and the bar to its right should be filled in green. Once this is done, click 'Apply' and run a new wordlist with the corpus for which you want to generate keywords. Once the wordlist is generated, select the 'Keyword List' tab and run the tool.

I generated a keyword list for the terraforming newspaper corpus, making use of Log-Likelihood measures for statistical analysis of the significance of returned results. This is expressed as a 'Keyness' factor in the keyword list results. Log-Likelihood is a way to check whether a



Tool Preferences Menu for Loading Reference Wordlists for Keyword Searches

term appears within a corpus by chance, or whether its appearance tells us something significant about the discourse under examination. A Log-Likelihood of 3.84 is often taken to tell us that there is a possibility of 5% that the results are due to chance, and is expressed in terms of statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ). A Log-Likelihood of 6.63 indicates a 1% likelihood that the results occur by chance ( $p < 0.01$ ). AntConc automatically generates these figures, but there is an online calculator available for those wishing to run statistical tests on their own or others' data (<http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>).

Mars is the first keyword returned in the list, with a keyness of 733.403. Other terms noted in the wordlist appear here, too, with keyness scores of over 100. Lexical keywords that were not obvious in the wordlist include 'atmosphere' (keyness: 91.675), and 'greenhouse' (keyness: 32). Major collocates for 'greenhouse' are 'effect' (18 instances; t-score: 4.24) and 'gas(es)' (16 instances; t-score: 4.12). The t-scores here are relatively high and indicate a strong degree of confidence that these two words are strongly associated in the corpus. Concepts related to climate change are – according to these indicative findings – a key part of the discourse of terraforming in news media. Using a combination of wordlists, keyword lists and concordances, we are able to uncover routes for approaching the analysis of large bodies of digitized texts that might not otherwise have been possible. There are great gains to be made in terms of time; the whole process of obtaining texts through *LexisNexis*, preparing them and conducting a pilot analysis took no more than two hours. I did not attempt an analysis of the concordances in this article, but simply used the corpus as an illustrative example to introduce some of the basic concepts and ideas related to corpus linguistics. I would also like to emphasise that this analysis should be greatly extended in breadth and depth were I to conduct research on the discourse of terraforming in news media. Having little space to do anything other than barely scratch the surface of the possibilities corpus linguistics offers, this article is aimed more at providing an introduction to the field and a resource for further investigation.

There are many resources for constructing a corpus of sf texts. For short stories and novels, the "Science Fiction (Bookshelf)" on the *Project Gutenberg* website offers many items in plain text format ([https://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Science\\_Fiction\\_\(Bookshelf\)](https://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Science_Fiction_(Bookshelf))), as does *Free SF Reader* (<http://freesf.blogspot.co.uk/>). *Efanzines.com* offers an ideal resource for a corpus linguistic analysis of fan discourse (<http://www.efanzines.com/>).

<http://www.feedbooks.com/list/22/creative-commons-science-fiction>, <https://creativecommons.org/?s=science%20fiction>). Projects such as the University of Iowa's digitisation of 10,000 fanzines from the James L. "Rusty" Hevelin Collection show how the resources available to sf scholars interested in corpus linguistics are only becoming more accessible. OCR software such as the ABBYY FineReader (<http://www.abbyy.com/>) offer ways to incorporate non-digitized texts into a digitized corpus. This article has aimed to provide a hands on approach for those interested in the digital humanities to engage in their own corpus linguistic analysis of texts through accessible online portals. Those interested in incorporating corpus linguistic methods into their research can find many resources online, from Youtube tutorials of various software such as Laurence Anthony's channel, AntLab <<https://www.youtube.com/user/AntlabJPN/videos>>, to articles, primers and even a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) run by Tony McEnery from the University of Lancaster (<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/corpus-linguistics>). Ultimately, these tools provide an alternative and flexible approach to the analysis of fiction and non-fiction alike.

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## Stanislaw Lem: Selected Letters to Michael Kandel

Cait Coker

Peter Swirski. *Stanislaw Lem: Selected Letters to Michael Kandel*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014. Hardback, 170 pages. \$120.00, ISBN: 978-1-78138-017-8.

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

THEODORE STURGEON famously declared Stanislaw Lem to be the most widely-read SF writer in the world. (Perhaps unfortunately for Sturgeon, since Lem in turn regarded him as little better than a hack.) I've always had the impression, accurate or not, that Lem has usually been underread stateside, and a brief survey of the scholarship cited online in the SFRD seems to confirm this: rather a lot of the work out there is not in English and dated at that. So it's a pleasant relief--if not actual redress--that Liverpool University Press has just released this volume of Lem's selected letters. The editor and translator, Peter Swirski, is Lem's second American translator--the first being Michael Kandel, the recipient of the letters in this volume. Swirski conducted a lengthy series of interviews with Lem for the volume *A Stanislaw Lem Reader*, published in 1997, and also edited a volume of essays on Lem, including one by Kandel, for the more recent collection *The Art and Science of Stanislaw Lem* (2008).

The letters span the dates from 1972 to 1987, with the vast bulk of them written during the 70s. Then-contemporary world events provide Lem ample room to expound with increasing cynicism on the world stage and especially on America. He dourly predicts America's descent into a police state, and is frustrated by world leaders' reluctance and inability to address climate change and the energy crisis. (The letters offer a perhaps useful if depressing exercise for younger readers to find that the more things change, the more they stay the same.) Even more often, however, he is given to reflect on the nature of totalitarian government, which usually surfaces in discussions of Kafka and Orwell, or occasionally in memories of his youth in wartime Poland. Then in one especially illuminating letter from October 1974, he

writes during a stay in Frankfurt that he wants to take the opportunity to write a letter that he knows won't be opened or censored; he describes the recent disappearance of an unnamed party member and relates it to increasing delays in publishing both for himself and others. Some people may want to read this volume alongside Robert Darnton's newest tome, *Censors At Work: How States Shaped Literature*, for further insight into a process that Lem takes for granted and that he, presumably, can't discuss further.

Speaking of deletions: The expurgations from this book are numerous, though Swirski assures us in his introduction that they most often consist only of "Lem's countless, not to say obsessive, invocations of FAME & FORTUNE (virtually always cast in BLOCK TYPE)" (2). We should hope this is true, and yet some missives conclude so abruptly--such as that dated 1 August 1972, in which Lem glances at his memories of the German occupation and declares that "Still--there is a time for dying and there is a time for living" (36)--that we might wish for more of his indulgences to his ego. They are illustrative of his character--which is, at this time, an author at the height of his popularity and acclaim. In those moments when Lem pauses and steps away from his career as author and critic, he reveals himself as a man continually haunted by the Holocaust, as an irascible elder aware of his foibles ("I'm emotionally cold and can't stand PHYSICAL contact with people" (89)), and an imaginative philosophe ("I had this idea about a desacralized version of a pact with the devil." (109)).

Readers plumbing for nuggets of Lem's criticism will find much to enjoy here: his letters discussing the fracas regarding his honorary membership within the SFWA--and his subsequent removal--appear in full, along with his remarks regarding the kind letters he received from "Mrs. Le Guin" afterwards. There is nothing regarding his noted opinions on Philip K. Dick, and rather little regarding his opinions of other American SF authors (and none of that favorable, of course). Rather more time is spent discussing Kafka and Orwell, and occasionally Vonnegut, Arendt, or Eco.

As a final note, I will say that for me the greatest hurdle in this short, dense book is its typography. This may sound like nitpicking at its worst, but after years in academia my eyes have become accustomed to reading academic texts in something at least approaching Times New Roman. The introduction, annotations, and index are all printed in that font, but the letters themselves are set in a large Courier font that, at first blush, lends the volume an air of amateurishness that is totally unwar-

ranted. Having read other volumes in the Liverpool Science Fiction Texts and Studies series, I know this to be an unusual decision. Swirski's notes on typography in the introductory matter discuss his apparatus for denoting Lem's texts in various languages so that the attentive reader will know when Lem himself is providing English phrases versus those of his translator. Nothing is said about the font shifts, which makes me wonder if it is meant as a literary device (allowing the reader to pretend s/he is reading Lem's original typescript letters) or an aesthetic choice (a friend more knowledgeable than I on the topic of Slavic translations claims that the usage is not unusual).

This book is of course going to be of most interest to devotees of Lem, as well as academics particularly interested in international SF and SF criticism. Its price point is outside of the range of those outside of academic libraries or true completists, but it is a valuable book for all that. One can only hope for a more complete second edition.

## ***Internet Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Television Series, 1998-2013***

Lars Schmeink

Vincent Terrace. *Internet Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Television Series, 1998-2013*. Jefferson: McFarland, 2014. Paperback, 284 pages, \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-7864-7993-1

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"A HISTORICIST CRITICISM cannot be compared to a literary critical criticism, not because one is better than the other, but because they are apples and oranges" (89) writes Farah Mendelsohn in a piece about the theoretical aim of her work, which is based in her training as a historian, in comparison to literary criticism. Her argument is that literary scholars view each text as an original piece of writing, concentrating on the exceptional pieces and their value, whereas historians see the individual text as a piece in a greater puzzle, as "a brick in the castle of literature" (ibid.). This is not a deflation of the value of literature, but simply a question of outlook, Mendelsohn argues: "I as a historian think the castle is

as interesting as the brick, for me, there is a narrative about how those bricks are made, how they fit together, and how they create the castle" (ibid.).

In keeping with the analogy then, the approach employed by Vincent Terrace in his book *Internet Horror, Science Fiction and Fantasy Television Series, 1998-2013* is neither to argue for the value of specific bricks as literary criticism would, nor to analyse how they all fit together to build this wonderful castle as Mendelsohn's historicist criticism would. Instead, Terrace prefers to give us an inventory of all the bricks, as complete a list as he can get, detailing the measurements of each brick, the material it consists of and its weight. What value each brick holds or what possible structures could be built from it? Those questions are not his concern; the meticulous keeping of a ledger is.

If you will, Mr. Terrace has thus been the historian-accountant of television's 'bricks' for more than thirty-five years, providing a library of publications, which take stock of all things television: shows, episodes, themes, pilots, specials, and characters. With his latest, the author adds to this immense repertoire another nuance of television so far not explored, because it has only recently challenged traditional notions of TV. The internet, according to Lars Qvortrup, needs to be understood as a "multi-semantic system, its main 'quality' being to integrate all known media into one converged multimedia system. The computer and the digital network is a medium that can copy any other medium" (350). As such, the Internet has become a new platform for television, one that offers an alternative mode of publication to classic broadcast or cable services. New formats, new production methods, and especially new forms of distribution have become available via the convergence medium Internet. Television series are no longer a matter of large budgets and professional studios; instead, digitalization makes it possible for media consumers to become producers, allows consumption of specific texts by a global "communication community" (limited by access to the digital media only; Qvortrup ibid.) and thus opens spaces for new forms of social, political or aesthetic commentary.

Terrace's book offers an encyclopedic account of this dramatic shift in media format, as it chronicles over 400 television series (or web series) that have been exclusively distributed through the Internet in the last 15 years. It offers the website, a synopsis of the show, an episode guide and some information on actors and credited production personnel, if available, for each of these series. Terrace also feels the need to provide a short commen-

tary on the show in question. Though these provide a first evaluation of the series, their erratic format (some as short as 2-3 lines, some as long as 2-3 paragraphs) and orientation (focusing on anything from special effects, to acting, to narrative arc, to production value) make them highly unreliable.

In general, the encyclopedic value of the book is high, giving a thorough account of the 'bricks' that media scholars might want to use when building their specific castles: Are you looking for vampire love stories, camp science fiction, or high fantasy to build your next paper presentation? No problem, you can find material here – that is, with time and effort when browsing the book. The ultimate problem, the one Terrace has missed when dealing with the new “multi-semantic system,” is that it continuously changes and adds different layers of meaning on top of old ones.

First, problems already arise in the research for a project like this. The entries given in this book are highly irregular and prone to changes. Series from obscure sources or in hard to reach national places – like China or India – are not even considered. Some entries simply have gone cold: some productions are made by non-professionals, thus websites can easily be switched off or episodes can be taken down. Others are now gathered in aggregator-websites or streaming-services, and thus have become hidden behind a paywall or need to be searched from their archives. Also, the quality of both show and entry vary immensely: SyFy or Netflix productions are included and offer a broadcast television style production, whereas some Youtube-series might not even name their creators and have only a single pilot episode. (At what point does a show constitute a series, one might ask?)

Second, and even more of a fallacy when dealing with a medium that also works as a “meta-archive” in which “knowledge can be accessed through search engines” (Qvortrup 350), is that the book itself as an encyclopedia is utterly out-dated. As a scholar, looking for zombie TV series, I will have to painstakingly look through the book and note down each time the series' description mentions the word 'zombie'. There is an index, but it only provides names of people (most of whom are completely unknown) and titles of series (which are the sorting basis for the entries anyway), not specific themes. In dealing with the new medium and its technological and social dimension, the author should have realized the irony in capturing digital information in an analogue medium. Instead of a book, Terrace would have been more astute in creating an online archive. This could have been up-

dated regularly, producers could have contacted him to be included, and it would have been digitally accessible for research. That this is possible and very useful is not only proved by the *Internet Speculative Fiction Database* (www.isfdb.org), which catalogues literary works of SF, but also by the transmutation of the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (www.sf-encyclopedia.com) into an online archive, migrating from print to online with its third edition. But maybe, after having discovered “an exciting new world of television programming” (2) on the internet, Mr. Terrace will also be able to embrace the exciting new world of publishing that it offers and move his otherwise very intriguing work into the digital age. An account of all that is there, archived and readily available for research, would provide us with the ultimate opportunity to examine the bricks and build castles from this new digital source material.

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## ***Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination***

Simon Spiegel

- Tom Moylan. *Demand the Impossible. Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*. Oxford, Berlin, Bern: Peter Lang. Paperback, 328 pages, \$55.95, ISBN 978-3034307529.

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IT MIGHT SEEM A BIT ODD that a series devoted to the classics of a certain academic field includes a book written by one of the series' editors. But in the case of *Demand the Impossible*, which has now been re-issued



as part of the Ralahine Classics series, the decision is justified. Tom Moylan's book is undoubtedly a cornerstone of both science fiction and utopian scholarship. The concept of the critical utopia, which Moylan introduced almost 30 years ago, has long been part of our shared nomenclature.

In contrast to the utopian novels of the classic tradition, the critical utopia does not present a finalized draft of a better society. As Moylan says in a much quoted passage "[a] central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as a dream" (10). But the novels analyzed are not just anti-utopian critiques; they do offer alternatives, though imperfect ones, which are subject to continual change. The emphasis is not on the final design but rather on a dynamic, never-ending process.

In his informative new introduction, Moylan stresses this activist aspect. Although *Demand the Impossible* was not published until 1986, the book itself, as well as the works it deals with, grew out of the specific situation of the 1970s, "a time that produced a structure of oppositional, indeed utopian, feeling" (xii). The critical utopia as conceived by Moylan is therefore both an interpretive and a periodizing concept. It designates not only textual features but also a moment in history when utopian writing "was saved by its own destruction" (10).

After a compact introduction to the history and theory of literary utopias, the bulk of the book is devoted to the analysis of four novels: Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*, Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, and Samuel R. Delany's *Triton*.

Moylan proceeds chronologically and starts with *The Female Man*, finished in 1971 but published in 1975. He underlines the fact that all four critical utopias are science fiction. This is not self-evident. While the two genres have always shown considerable overlap, several important utopian texts of the 20th century, e.g. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* or B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, can not really be called sf proper. The premise of alternative temporal probabilities, which lies at the heart of Russ's novel, is an established sf trope, however. And it is precisely this sf setting that not only allows the novel to tell the story of its four female protagonists living in different times and places, but that also enables Russ to reject "single-minded, linear, authoritarian, totalized visions of reality or indeed of opposition to the present reality" (59).

*The Female Man* is in many ways a typical New Wave

novel, a complex and often challenging mixing of "a variety of literary forms" (81). Its critical quality is actually as much an effect of its content as of its formal strategies, since they prevent a single totalizing perspective. It is instructive that the most formally traditional of the four novels examined, Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, has not only turned out to be the most successful one but also serves as the target for Moylan's harshest criticism. In the new introduction, the author expresses regret for some of his remarks; nevertheless his observation that Le Guin's "ambiguous utopia" surprisingly often remains in a conservative and heteronormative position is still convincing.

In terms of style, Piercy's novel is located between Russ and Le Guin, but its story, the rebellion of protagonist Connie who is put into a mental institution and ends up poisoning her doctors, shares Russ's radical vision. Finally, Delany's *Triton*, which "can be read as a response to both [Russ and Le Guin]" (149) is the most extreme reworking of the utopian model. Not so much interested in the description of a society but rather in a look "from the underside" (161), it focuses on a protagonist unhappy with the utopian order. Delany's "heterotopia," a term borrowed from Michel Foucault, "flatly denies utopian writing in order to set free the impulse [...] toward a future fulfillment that is not yet achieved but yearned for" (185).

For the new edition, Moylan has not only written a new introduction but also added a chapter on Huxley's *Island*. In addition, there are twelve shorter pieces from colleagues and friends who share their thoughts on his book. The texts vary in length, content, and style, but one of the main issues discussed is the double nature of Moylan's concept. Should it better be reserved for a particular period or can it serve as general heuristic tool? It's no surprise that the different authors arrive at different conclusions.

Although Moylan states that he didn't set out to canonize the four novels, today all of them are considered classics. It might have been interesting to investigate to what degree Moylan's book was nevertheless instrumental in establishing their canonic status. Unfortunately, this question is picked up by none of the authors. Also, there is little discussion of critical utopias after 1980, but rather a strong focus on early predecessors. This is also true for the new chapter on *Island*, Huxley's last novel, which has been much-neglected in utopian studies. While certainly interesting in its own right, Moylan's final assessment that *Island* can not really be called a critical utopia does not add much to the exist-

ing book. Perhaps a chapter on writers who have taken the tradition further would have been more insightful. This criticism aside, *Demand the Impossible* remains an important study and the additional material of the new edition – altogether more than 100 pages – is very useful for putting Moylan’s achievement into a historical perspective. Let’s hope that other classics of our field – Suvin’s *Metamorphoses* comes to mind – soon undergo a similar treatment.

## ***Environments in Science Fiction: Essays in Alternative Spaces***

Jerome Winter

*Environments in Science Fiction: Essays in Alternative Spaces*. Ed. Susan M. Bernardo. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland, 2014. Paperback, 208 Pages, \$37.95, ISBN 978-0786475797.

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

FROM FREDERIK POHL and Cyril M. Kornbluth’s *Space Merchants* (1952) to Paolo Bacigalupi’s *Wind-Up Girl* (2009), science fiction has arguably always been green. In *Environments in Science Fiction: Essays on Alternative Spaces* (2014), number 44 in the *Critical Exploration in Science and Fantasy Series*, Susan M. Bernardo joins in the recent call to arms — see, for instance, *Green Planets* (2014) edited by Kim Stanley Robinson and Gerry Canavan, Eric Otto’s *Green Speculations* (2012), and *Environmentalism in the Realm of Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature* edited by Chris Baratta (2012) — to make the case that a parallel greening should take place in science-fiction studies as well. In this collection of critical essays, Bernardo curates a bridging of canonical science-fictional works and “ecocriticism” or the academic study of literature and the environment that began to accelerate in the early 1990s and is perhaps best typified by Lawrence Buell’s *The Environmental Imagination* (1995).

To pre-empt charges of misrepresentation, however, I must hasten to add a necessary *caveat emptor* that the title of the collection, as well as its opening forays into literary ecology, may be misleading. Bernardo’s book immediately expands its focus well beyond the specifically ecocritical in scope. In the introduction, Bernardo states that the book explores the connection between the envi-

ronment and science fiction in a wider, more theoretical sense of both operative terms. The essays that Bernardo has edited are primarily concerned with the broad way “space, place, and the environment” (Bernardo 2) intersect with individual human beings and larger group dynamics in a rather capacious sense of what counts as speculative fiction in a long historical view that dates back to Mary Shelley. Bernardo therefore splits the book into three parts: essays that focus on the science-fictional representation of excluded minorities through spatial metaphors, that is, “In the Margins: Recentring Individuals, Societies, and the Environment”; essays on science-fiction texts that set out to reinvent the received categories of space and place attachment, that is, “Shifting Worlds Through Re-Creation”; and the final section of essays entitled “Re-Viewing Damaged Worlds Through Quests” that concern modern quest narratives seeking to recuperate cataclysm for a brighter future.

The first section begins with Lauren J. Lacey’s “Heterotopian Possibilities in Science Fictions by Stephen Baxter, Terry Pratchett, Samuel Delany, and Ursula K. Le Guin.” This essay deploys Foucault’s deconstruction of alternative, resistant spaces (“heterotopias”) to explore the simultaneous co-extension of hierarchy and reciprocity in humanity’s complicated relationship with its natural surroundings. In the next essay, “Acceptance of the Marginalized in Marge Piercy’s *He, She, and It* and Melissa Scott’s *Trouble and Her Friends*,” Melanie A. Marotta charts what she categorizes as prototypical second-wave cyberpunk texts and their depiction of the corporate foreclosure of utopian communities. The section concludes with “*Anathem*’s Flows of Power,” in which Jonathan P. Lewis contends that the tug-of-war between right-wing climate change deniers of the contemporary United States political world and the data-driven academic generation of technoscientific regimes of knowledge is allegorized in Neal Stephenson’s *Anathem* (2008) by way of the struggle between the cloistered Convents and the State powers in the far-future space-opera world, Arbe, following the paradigm-shifting discovery of an ancient alien starship in their orbit. Lewis relies on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s controversial “schizoanalysis” and its high-theoretical arsenal of “rhizomes,” “striations,” and “lines of flight” to make the case for the serious contemporary relevance of Stephenson’s space opera.

The first essay of Part Two also enters Deleuzian air space as Adam Lawrence uses the complicated notions of “deterritorialization-reterritorialization” to interpret Karel Capek’s *War with the Newts* (1936). This essay is

followed by Mathew Haley's examination of the role of the laboratory space in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1823). Lastly, for Part Two, in "Ecotopian London," Margaret Kennedy writes the most explicitly ecocritical essay of the collection, updating our understanding of William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) by way of eco-critic Wendell Berry's notion of remedying the "disease" between our bodies and our world in conjunction with Morris's vision of sustainable work in a technologically progressive, urban-industrial ecotopia. In the equally cogent first essay of Part Three, "Underworlds of Despair and Hope in Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*," Justin T. Noetzel explores the way McCarthy's bleak novel deploys tropes of domestic underworlds (bunkers, cellars, shelters, graves) as an inversion of the naturalized binary between enclosed, human-centered, domestic interiors and non-human, exterior, public spaces and as a recurring contrast to the terrestrial nomadic wandering of father and son on the post-apocalyptic road.

In "The Silence of the Subaltern," Sharyana Bhattacharya invokes Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) to offer a reading of Amitav Ghosh's Arthur C. Clarke Award-winning *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) to investigate the secret history the novel constructs of medico-scientific research into mosquito-derived malaria and the decentering lacuna in such Western modes of knowledge-seeking through which the voiceless masses of the subaltern can make their absent presence known. Bhattacharya's chapter expertly shows that Ghosh's novel both demystifies the Western denial that technoscientific advances do indeed emerge from the postcolonial periphery and the equal and opposite conclusion that non-Western subjects often seek regimes of knowledge antithetical to the empirical paradigms of the global North. In "A Case for Terraphilia," Susan M. Bernardo revisits Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep* (1968) to persuasively argue that the near-extinction of animals, the overcrowded urbanization, and the nuclear fallout draw the survivalist, post-apocalyptic community of both androids and humans paradoxically closer together as they grieve the collective loss of environmental belonging. Finally, in "Discursive Transgressions and Ideological Negotiations," Keith Elphick discusses the metafictional use of textual compositions (diaries, religious poetry) by characters in George Orwell's *1984* (1949) and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* (1993) as critical tools that promise to pitch oppositional, ecologically conscious discourses against a status quo of dystopian pessimism.

*Environments in Science Fiction* variously attempts

to encourage a sense of connectedness and integration between our understanding of science-fiction literature and the unimaginably urgent ecological concerns facing our planet today. As such, these essays dislodge a comfortable faith in our anthropocentrism that has led to melting polar ice sheets, superstorms, rising sea levels, the severe loss of biodiversity, and all the terrifying climate-change impacts that have not been registered yet. Whether volumes such as these serve to enlarge the horizon of science-fiction studies to incorporate the growing body of ecocriticism remains to be seen, but the essays do provide a compelling, theoretically informed discussion of space, place, and environment in some canonical science-fiction works.



## Political Future Fiction: Speculative and Counter-Factual Politics in Edwardian Fiction

Jason Ellis

Macdonald, Kate, Richard Bleiler, and Stephen Donovan, eds. *Political Future Fiction: Speculative and Counter-Factual Politics in Edwardian Fiction*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013. Print. Hardcover, Three Volume Set, 1008 pages, \$495 USD, ISBN 978-1-84893-348-4.

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

*POLITICAL FUTURE FICTION: Speculative and Counter-Factual Politics in Edwardian Fiction* collects six, largely forgotten, Edwardian-era political novels focused on issues of empire, feminism, and imperialism, but veiled in various forms of SF. In this three-volume set, editors Kate Macdonald, Richard Bleiler, and Stephen Donovan pair these six novels with impressive annotations, and reprints of contemporary reviews and letters that expertly contextualize these novels for contemporary readers. While these collected novels provide important insight into turn-of-the-century British politics, they also provide readers with new perspectives for thinking about contemporary political issues and politically charged events.

*Volume 1: The Empire of the Future*, edited by Richard Bleiler, includes the collection's general introduction by Kate Macdonald titled, "Utopian Ideals in Edwardian Political Future Fiction," Samuel Barton's *The Battle of the Swash and the Capture of Canada* (1888), portions of the Canadian edition of *The Battle of the Swash*, Robert Cole's *The Struggle for Empire: A Story of the Year 2236* (1900), contemporary reviews of Barton, and contemporary essays by Cole and others. Besides a thorough set of notes and introductions to each Edwardian fiction, Bleiler contextualizes and historicizes the included texts with his introduction, "On the Naming of Nineteenth-Century Speculative Fiction," and his concluding discussion essay, "Taking the Future War Fever to Space." *Volume 2: Fictions of a Feminist Future*, edited by Kate Macdonald, includes Allan Reeth's *Legions of the Dawn*

(1908) and Una L. Silberrad's *The Affairs of John Bolsover* (1911). Macdonald begins the volume with an introduction titled, "Feminist Future Fiction," and ends it with a commentary on the texts. *Volume 3: Speculative Fiction and Imperialism in Africa*, edited by Stephen Donovan, includes Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer's *The Inheritors* (1901) and John Buchan's *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906), and an introduction, bibliography, and extensive notes on the texts by Donovan. *The Inheritors* is followed by reviews and correspondence and *A Lodge in the Wilderness* is followed by selected reviews. Also, an addendum of silent corrections is included separately from editorial notes.

Macdonald's general introduction to the collection, included in *Volume 1*, is an important contribution to SF studies, because it situates these collected novels within the larger SF tradition. She places them within the realms of utopian literature and speculative fiction, and writes:

If we extend the idea of the 'ideal scheme' to set a utopia in or as an ideal world, we can introduce the speculative to reinforce the utopian location of a separate, isolated space by setting it far, far away from the reality of its readers, or in the future. For these novels in particular, readership was important. They were written to be read: to change hearts and minds, and to encourage speculation to become reality. This, in turn, positions them as texts intended for political lobbying. Stories of a better future, where the possible becomes tangible, and improbability is ignored for the pleasure, or urgency, of social and political speculation, are utopian by definition of their concern with social change, and the imaginative means by which change is effected. (Macdonald vii)

While two of the novels—Cole's *The Struggle for Empire*, set in 2236, and Silberrad's *The Affairs of John Bolsover*, set in 1960—are set in the far future, the rest of the novels are set closer to the time when they were originally published. The far future, technological changes, hidden subversions of social systems, and utopian experiments characterize the different 'ideal schemes' at work in these novels. The earnestness of each novel in this collection conveys the sense that they were meant to serve a role in the political sphere—to inform, caution, and persuade—and not meant to be simple entertainments.

As the first novel of *Volume 1: The Empire of the Fu-*

ture, Samuel Barton's (1839-1859) *The Battle of the Swash and the Capture of Canada* follows the model of Sir George Tomkyns Chesney's *The Battle of Dorking: Reminiscences of a Volunteer* (1871), but Barton's imagined future war focuses on what he identified as an unprotected eastern seaboard. With an intense attention to detail, Barton guides the reader through each political and military maneuver of England's machinations to relieve itself of Canada's weight and force the United States to buy it. England forces its will on the United States by demonstrating its mastery over the United States' poorly defended eastern seaboard. Ultimately, Lord Randolph Churchill (Winston Churchill's father) leads the British charge to hold U.S. cities on the Atlantic hostage in exchange for a ransom that also serves as payment for the secession of the Canadian territory to the U.S.

Barton weaves contemporary technology into the telling of his cautionary tale. For example, the city's workers phone home to coordinate evacuation with their families before the British bombardment of the city, because in 1888, telephones were widely available in New York. He describes the technological superiority of the British military, and the desperate tactical innovations on the part of the Americans. The British fleet, "[represent] the most formidable naval power in the world, and presumably [contain] all the best and most approved offensive weapons known to modern science" (Barton 60). Besides rifled guns that can shoot over 10 miles, they also feature electric searchlights. However, these weapons are deployed in different ways. The British use their lights for spotting and intimidation while the Americans use buoyed lights as decoys during a nighttime offensive using suicide boats (the pilots and crew jump at the last moment before impact).

Two connections to our contemporary lack of preparedness come to mind while reading this novel. First, the location of the first British fleet's staging represents a contemporary lack of defense against attack: Sandy Hook. As in the present day, Barton's Americans were caught unaware by a different kind of murderous tragedy. Second, this novel firmly extrapolated from Barton's present has much to say about our contemporary present in the U.S. For example, Congress suffers an eerily similar kind of gridlock by central and western legislators who want to reduce budgets and taxation, because there are so many surpluses from contemporary levels of taxation. However, those surpluses are not used to fortify the eastern seaboard. When it becomes clear that New York will likely take a shelling from the British fleet, "A member from one of the so called 'Granger

States' even went so far as to intimate that he would rejoice to see these soulless monopolists and capitalists of the eastern cities brought down a peg or two. They had for years been sapping the foundations of the country's prosperity by vast accumulations of capital, and had levied extravagant tolls on everything that the farmers of the Great West bought and sold, thus increasing the cost of their living, while diminishing the product of their labor" (Barton 81). The United States' failure results in large part from, "the almost incredible failure of Congress to act properly" (Barton 82). Despite the passage of time, some things seem to remain the same in American politics.

While there is little biographical information remaining of the writer Robert William Cole (1869-1937), we do have his excellent novel from 1900, *The Struggle for Empire: A Story of the Year 2236*, which is the second novel of *Volume 1*. About what would happen if Earth-bound/Anglo-European imperialists met similarly inclined aliens in outer space, Cole's story innovates naval tactics as the method of waging interstellar war. Furthermore, it is the first SF novel about interstellar invasion, and the first space opera. Inspired by Alfred Lord Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" (1842), which imagines: "heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, / Pilots of the purple twilight dropping down with costly bales; / Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rain'd a ghastly dew / From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue;" (Tennyson 121-124) and "Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle-flags were furld / In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world" (Tennyson 127-128), Cole's novel features "airy navies" in the sky and space coordinated by a world legislative body.

Besides its cautionary tale, Cole's work is a novel of ideas. Cole's year 2236 is achieved after the revolutionist wars when the humanities were abandoned and the STEM fields were embraced. In some ways, these changes prefigure the "Fourth Dimensionists" in Conrad and Heuffer's *The Inheritors*, which is discussed later in this review. As a result, new technologies were developed and new scientific discoveries were made, which led to the creation of antigravity technology and efficient lighting powered by new energies including, "Dynogen, Pralion, and Ednogen" (Cole 137). These energies enabled the navigation of space.

It seems that these technological advances enabled the conquest of Earth and homogenization of its people. Cole situates London as the center of world, solar, and stellar systems, "until finally the Anglo-Saxon race was

dominant over all the globe” (Cole 136). While he mentions the absorption of the Turks by white Europeans, he says nothing of the other races on Earth. However, he aligns the story with imperialism when he writes, “They had found Mars, Mercury, and Venus uninhabited, and only waiting to be taken possession of. The others were inhabited, but the natives were quite harmless” (Cole 138). Finally, Cole takes H.G. Wells’ nightmare future from 1895’s *The Time Machine* and reconfigures it as a Social Darwinist feature of his imperialist future: “But the moral progress of the race did not go hand-in-hand with its intellectual advances. The human race had gradually become divided into two parts—those who had great brain power and those who had very little. The former did all the commanding and organizing, the latter did the menial work” (Cole 138). The haves could not have conquered all of Earth’s resources without the efforts of the have-nots. Of course, these explanations are as likely rationalizations on the part of the imperialists. On this point, there is none of Wells’ concern or warning; instead, it is a promise of unapologetic justification for continued imperialist domination and expansion.

Allan Reeth’s *Legions of the Dawn* (1908) is the first novel of *Volume 2: Fictions of a Feminist Future*. Little is known of Reeth or the writer’s alleged real name, G.H. Davies. Nevertheless, *Legions of the Dawn* is a worthy novel to compare with Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s *Herland* (1915). Unlike the men in *Herland*—Van, Terry, and Jeff—who venture into South America to confirm or deny the existence of an Amazonian society, Reeth’s male adventurers—Dr. Augustus “Gus” Smith and Mr. Adolphus “Dolly” Smith—join with an experienced group of women traveling together into the interior of Africa—Miss Katherine Darcy, Dr. Agnes Smith, Mabel Denver, and Edith Faresby, because Gus is smitten with Miss Darcy. The women offer Gus and Dolly a chance to tag along on their journey as long as the men follow the women’s orders. The novel follows Gus’ (and eventually Dolly’s) transition from a privileged man of European patriarchy to a subservient man of the women’s gynarchy called Sah. The name of this hidden matriarchy originates from, “The native name for the two valleys, ‘Sah,’ means ‘Dawn,’ and the local tribe calls itself ‘Ama-sah,’ or ‘People of the Dawn’” (Reeth 43).

The men learn that they are in the “Republic of Sah,” “a settlement by women and for women” where, “Gentlemen may not interfere with any public matters, or trade, or do anything such as they did in the lands they come from” (Reeth 18-19). They are offered a pledge to sign reading:

I, the undersigned, hereby renounce my citizenship of any State other than that of this Republic: whose laws I will ever obey, and whose customs I will be found by. I sign this, knowing full well that I thereby renounce the sphere and privileges acquired elsewhere by my sex, and forgo all public careers and activities, here reserved for women. (Reeth 18)

Dolly refuses, but Gus eventually signs this pledge, because he wants to be with Miss Darcy and Dolly convinces him to learn about the interior of the “Darkies’ Continent” (19). This latter comment is a recurring tension throughout the novel between the rights of women and imperialism. The women of Sah see their efforts in the interior of Africa as a civilizing force, but nevertheless, their efforts are founded on imperialist ideals and promoted by military might. This is made most clear in a speech given by Sah’s President, who proclaims:

...the knowledge that we were outnumbered as twenty to one by a barbarous race losing its awe of the civilized. The strain was becoming too great for those in responsible positions, when the savages, in defiance of them, gathered their warriors to break the peace it is our duty to maintain. . . . Your well-earned success has not only removed the dark cloud which overhung us all, but has put it into our power, as a Government, to still further justify our position in this land, by conferring on the ancient inhabitants the most civilizing of all agencies—the sex-system which is the foundation-stone of our State. (Reeth 88)

Despite the progressiveness of the women’s country, Reeth configures them as imperialists driven by duty, justification, and conferring their system on the peoples they subjugate. Sah’s experiment with switched gender power relationships cannot escape the worldview of the colonizer over the colonized.

Reeth gives the reader many details about the utopia in Sah and their challenges from without by the indigenous peoples surrounding the area they control. Gus begins his transition from male-dominated society to female-dominated society by changing into a robe supplied to him by Darcy. Men are given every consideration by the women of Sah as long as they abide by these two laws: “we may not compete with the women

in public affairs; and we must wear a dress undivided to the instep" (Reeth 31). Women soldiers are called "amazons" (Reeth 35). Alec, Gus's young mentor in Sah, tells him, "It's not unladylike to be an amazon; they look so nice and grand. Besides, the blacks would not be kept in order if they knew that there were no amazons; we could not fight them, you know!" (Reeth 35). On the eve of battle between the Sah women and indigenous African men, Gus observes, "The lady-visitors were too anxious to talk with the State Secretary to trouble me. I thought them very independent-looking dames, but it also struck me that they were not masculine in appearance. Perhaps I had rather been expecting caricatures of the 'woman's-rights' type" (Reeth 46). During the church service prior to battle, Gus experiences cognitive estrangement when looking at Kate in her Amazonian battle mail: "The service was choral, and included a short sermon. Every now and then I fancied myself at home; but a glance at Kate's glittering mail assured me that I was 'extremely elsewhere'" (Reeth 47). Later, Dolly experiences an epiphany relating to the reversed roles of men and women in Sah society: "Now . . . the coast is clear, and we'll go out for a stroll. I'm beginning to realize what it is to be a woman in a man's land. Here's we've got to keep out of the women's way" (Reeth 59).

Another aspect of Reeth's descriptions of Gus' coming to terms with his new situation within Sah's gynarchy has to do with the performance of gender. For example, during his work as a doctor on the front lines hospital, Gus opined, "Try how I would to remember that I was only acting a part, I constantly found myself doing it unconsciously, and doing it all the better for not thinking about it" (63). There are other examples of sex and gender performance that deserve further investigation.

The second novel in *Volume 2* is Una L. Silberrad's *The Affairs of John Bolsover* (1911). Unlike Reeth/Davies, more is known about Silberrad (1872-1955), who wrote a number of novels in a range of genres including historical dramas and detective fiction, and included in most of these works a scientific thread. Also, Silberrad is the only confirmed woman writer included in the collection. Her novel *The Affairs of John Bolsover* begins when Leonard Patterson, journalist for the fictitious *Morning Telephone*, happens to bump into a woman on a foggy night in November 1960. He believes that the woman he saw was in fact John Bolsover, Prime Minister of England. The remainder of the novel is a journalistic detective story arranged in episodes that culminate with the discovery that Bolsover is really a woman once known as Jean Bolsover.

We learn from one conversation with Miss Lee, a long-time confidant of Jean Bolsover:

I remember once she spoke at father's debating society; she was not asked to, but after she had sat and listened for a while she got up as if she could endure no longer and spoke. She was the finest speaker I ever heard, better than any preacher. But father was very cross. They were debating something political that he thought he knew all about it, as men do sometimes, and she converted every one away from his way of thinking to her own. He said afterwards she was a dangerous woman. She wasn't at all, though certainly you always felt there was more in her than showed—people are like that sometimes. (Silberrad 238)

One person's "dangerous woman" is another's person deserving respect as person and as a person of certain accomplishments. This point was never fully recognized by the reporter. Furthermore, Patterson incredulously observes about Bolsover's disguised visits to Miss Lee's house:

He does not seem to have made any slip in his part or roused the suspicion of the servants... principally, one may suppose, because he can hardly be said to have assumed a part. He does not appear to have really pretended anything, but to have been his reserved, self-contained self; in opinions, expressions, and, to a great extent, manner—all the trivial but vital things of individuality—he was boldly the same at Bloomsbury Square as elsewhere. He made no referent then to the other part of his life, just as he made not reference to this in the other life; but he cannot be said to have concealed himself, any more than when he put on the women's dress he really disguised himself. His self in each case was left standing out, with an amazing and daring recklessness which would almost seem to have helped him to deceive as no planned deception or assumption of character or part would have done. (Silberrad 209-210)

In this additional example of gender performance ("part"), Patterson refuses to recognize Bolsover's sameness as evidence of her/his transcendence of culturally imposed gendered differences of appearance. As Patter-

son unravels the mystery, he configures Jean Bolsover's advantages of public speaking and logical mind as disadvantages:

Truth to tell, she was odd. Miss Lee, her most intimate acquaintance of those days, said so, though she did not know how odd, for poor Jean, knowing the disadvantage of her oddity, tried to hide it. In heart and soul, in ambition, nature, instincts, everything that really matters, she was different from other women. (Silberrad 246-247)

Patterson characterizes Jean Bolsover as "odd" and "different from other women." It is up to the reader to recognize what Patterson cannot: the stereotyped and socially instituted differences between men and women in Edwardian England. However, as John Bolsover, Jean transcends stereotyped gender differences through becoming "a great Power:"

And her strange, neuter soul and stupendous man's brain were reborn in John Bolsover—John, who dared to keep her personality and tastes, her ascetism and innate solitariness and some little of her woman's pity for those who fail. But who grew and developed, becoming neither he nor she, but just a great Power, large enough at the last to fill the realm and the minds of men, great enough to sway the destiny of empires, and stand in lonely pre-eminence, impersonal, unbiased, far-seeing, and unafraid. (Silberrad 261)

Unfortunately, she has to resort to hiding her sex in order to accomplish the great works of a public leader even in the distant year of 1960!

Finally, Patterson represents a darker side to journalism that continues to resonate today: journalists outing queer persons, such as in the tragic case of the golf club engineer, "Dr. V." who killed herself when threatened of being outed as transgender by Grantland.com journalist Caleb Hannan, who nevertheless published his story shortly after her death. In the novel, Patterson lies and misrepresents himself to gain the information that he seeks without any ethical reflection on his actions or the ramifications of the ensuing scandal.

*Volume 3: Speculative Fiction and Imperialism in Africa* begins with Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) and Ford Madox Hueffer's (Ford Madox Ford, 1873-1939) *The Inheritors: An Extravagant Story* (1901). It is a thinly

disguised *roman à clef* about the manipulation of the British political establishment by imperialists from the Fourth Dimension who intend to conquer our world. Specifically, the Fourth Dimensionists are a kind of Nietzschean Übermensch, and intend to colonize our dimension by destabilizing the British government with an orchestrated scandal involving a plan to colonize Greenland (representing Africa in the novel). The beginnings of these manipulations originate when a failed writer named Arthur Etchingham Granger encounters a beautiful woman who claims to be from the Fourth Dimension. In recollection, Granger tells the reader that she describes the Dimensionists to him as, "a race clear-sighted, eminently practical, incredible; with no ideals, prejudices, or remorse; with no feeling for art and no reverence for life; free from any ethical tradition; callous to pain, weakness, suffering and death, as if they had been invulnerable and immortal. She did not say that they were immortal, however. 'You would—you will—hate us,' she concluded" (Conrad and Hueffer 7). To prove to Granger that she is otherworldly, she demonstrates her powers with a projected X-ray vision and telepathy, and places him in the path to success as a writer in the promotion of her project. Unfortunately for Granger, his attraction for the mysterious girl never materializes as she chooses to wed his rival after the success of her political machinations.

As much as this novel represents an experiment for Conrad and Hueffer, it is equally an experiment in writing style. The most challenging aspect to reading this novel as compared to the other five novels in the collection has to do with its extensive conversation passages. The conversations between characters are at times difficult to follow due to its authentic patterning with absences, silences, and fragments. However, the conversation and its development between characters likely have much to say about social and political relationships. Instead of those relationships being stated, they are revealed between the lines, in silences, false starts, etc. In this way, these conversations while constructed in explanatory prose read like a screenplay and deserve additional study.

The second novel in *Volume 3* and the final novel in the collection is John Buchan's (1875-1940) *A Lodge in the Wilderness* (1906). The novel follows an annual meeting arranged by the millionaire Francis Carey at his estate on the edge of the Rift Valley in Africa. Carey selects his guests from the upper echelons of public life, service, and business to discuss a topic of his choosing. Like meetings of the exclusive Bilderberg Group, Car-

ey brings together aristocrats, political leaders, policy makers, the wealthy, military officers, and social influencers: nine men (including Carey) and nine women (Buchan 143). They all represent different political affiliations, but one thing unites them all on this particular summit: support for Empire and imperialism. To begin the proceedings, Carey gives a syllabus to the Canadian politician, Mr. Ebenezer Wakefield, which he reads to the others on the morning following everyone's arrival at Carey's estate:

In my opinion, also, there are too many women for a really helpful discussion. We must, above all things, be practical. Now, I have here a kind of syllabus which Carey gave me last night—a list of the subjects we are to consider, and the order we are to take them in. To-night we are to begin with contemporary English politics and the present position of parties. . . . Then we go on to the constitutional apparatus of Empire, the question of our topical possessions, the economic and administrative problems. . . . But I notice at the end the sinister announcement that the concluding days are to be spent in talking about the ethical basis of Empire, and its relation to intellectual and aesthetic progress. . . . We must keep Imperialism out of the clouds, or how on earth is it to commend itself to business men? (Buchan 159)

Despite Wakefield's concern about the contributions of women to the conversation, over the days that follow, all of the men and women contribute to the discussion, which ultimately leads to consensus regarding the ethics of empire. While the presupposition that empire serves a greater good is inviolate to the group, the justifications and rationalizations fuel the disagreements and on-going conversation driven by long speeches by different characters as the narrative unfolds.

Largely on the periphery of the proceedings, Carey offers his audience his own views on imperialism when they visit a Scottish Mission late in the novel. He begins, "I will take advantage of this testimonial, and talk to you in this church about secular things. Every country and every group of men have some special problem of their own. . . . Your business, on which everything else depends, is the wise management of the native peoples that live round about you" (Buchan 226). After developing his ideas about the forms that this secular management takes, he argues:

We may live to behold the nations of Africa engaged in the calm occupations of industry, in the pursuits of a just and legitimate commerce. We may behold the beams of science and philosophy break in upon this land, which at some happy period in still later times may blaze with full lustre, and, joining their influence to that of pure religion, may illuminate and invigorate the most distant extremities of that immense continent. (Buchan 229)

Even though these words are meant to be Carey's alone, they represent a common theme of Europeans leading the way to "illuminate" what Henry M. Stanley termed the "dark continent."

While admittedly expensive, *Political Future Fiction: Speculative and Counter-Factual Politics in Edwardian Fiction* is a smart addition to many libraries' holdings. The collection brims with useful, difficult-to-find material for scholars working in a variety of disciplines, including African studies, British literature, British Empire, feminism, gender, imperialism, postcolonialism, race, and women's rights. Most specifically, libraries with SF collections, or holdings focused on the well-known writers Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford, should purchase this collection and announce its presence to potentially interested faculty for research and teaching. While the volumes are neatly divided by theme, readers will find many overlapping themes and points of connection throughout the six included novels. There is a great deal of value in reading these novels together in addition to reading each as a representative work of an author or an emblem of empire, race, or gender issues. Instructors using any of the novels included in this collection might share, as appropriate, the secondary materials (introductions, annotations, reviews, and essays) with students to support lecture, discussion, and assignments. Thanks to the work of this collection's editors, we are reminded that we are the inheritors of literature bound to the politics and ideas of a bygone age that continues to have relevance more than a century later. Reading these novels today gives each of us equal share of this inheritance—to make sense of our past and present while using these valuable lessons to build a better future.

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## ***Ether Frolics: Nine Tales from the Etheric Explorers Club***

Chris Pak

Marlowe, Paul. *Ether Frolics: Nine Tales from the Etheric Explorers Club*. Sackville, New Brunswick: Syb-ertooth, 2012. Paperback, £12.99, 170 pages, ISBN 978-0-9864974-8-3.

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

PAUL MARLOWE'S *Ether Frolics* is a collection of nine short stories that recount the paranormal encounters of several members of the fictional Etheric Explorers Club, an organization dedicated to the investigation of what Dr. Raphael "Rafe" Maddox terms the 'pneumatiferous ether' (8). Our narrator informs us that the title of the collection is taken from the popular nineteenth century real-world demonstrations of the anaesthetic properties of diethyl ether and nitrous oxide, which audience members were encouraged to inhale for the entertainment value that these mind-altering substances produced. This rather playful allusion is combined with a supernatural element based on theories of the *pneumatiferous ether* that suggest, for example, that the cosmos is composed of two converging universes that bring together different laws of physics. *Ether Frolics* sets its tales in an alternative nineteenth century steampunk universe where supernatural occurrences abound. It was short-listed for the sixteenth annual Danuta Gleed Literary Award for best debut short fiction collection by a Canadian author in the English language.

The events described in *Ether Frolics* are framed with the conceit that they have been edited from 'accounts of *outré* phenomena [...] which were considered by the editors to be of too anecdotal a character, or insufficiently supported by evidence, to be published in their journal' (7). In a supposed publisher's note at the end of

the foreword, however, our attention is drawn to the fact that Marlowe – the narrator rather than the author – is too young to have been alive to begin working on this archive in the 1940s. Slippages in time, characteristic of the play with history that steampunk exploits, is ostensibly wrapped up with the production of the text itself. This frame mobilizes the nineteenth century interest in paranormal investigations and directs our attention to the allusiveness of the stories in this collection.

*Ether Frolics* adapts the literary language of the Victorian period to invest its world with a historicity appropriate to its setting in nineteenth century London. The stories balance this language with a contemporary perspective that creates a ludic space for a game of allusion that is fundamental to the poetics of the alternative history, which steampunk certainly capitalizes on for its effect. While London is the base of the Etheric Explorers' social club, some of these stories are set in other European countries or are about journeys further afield: the enjoyable "66° South", for example, recalls Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* and H.P. Lovecraft's "At the Mountains of Madness" in its narrative of an expedition to an uncharted Antarctic coast. It reprises many of the tropes of these two earlier stories and refuses closure insofar as it ultimately leaves the story unexplained or at least ambiguous – a strategy that many of these stories adopt to differing degrees.

Stories such as those in Part Two, "The Mud Men of Tower Tunnel" and "Cotton Avicenna B. iv." evoke the streets and geography of London to tell stories of the supernatural that are scrutinized from the perspective of an investigative methodology based on Maddox's theory of ether. The key to the mysteries presented by the supernatural lie in history – in relics unearthed by archaeology and in myths and legends that still hold answers to the apparitions of the present day. In the less successful "A Visit From Prospero", elements of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* are reworked and linked to the trope of ancient knowledge from the East to ground its story of an apocalypse averted. Maddox and the Etheric Explorers delve into theories of the cosmos and science, but they explore with even more consistency the lingering significance of history to their contemporary moment.

This is especially clear in the strongest series of short stories in Part One of the collection, "Ten Golden Roosters", "The Last Post" and "The Grinsfield Penitent", all of which concern war. In "Ten Golden Roosters", a Russian artist living in France paints of future wars that lie in the readers' past. In "The Last Post", a mysterious super-weapon threatens to overcome the Allied forces at the



trenches of the Great War. In “The Grinsfield Penitent”, Father Drewitt confronts his past failure to hear a confession that could have changed the course of history. In each, the supernatural becomes the basis for a parable about the individual or group’s response to violence and war.

Marlowe’s debut collection is entertaining and succeeds very well in mobilizing the language of the scientific romance to ground the setting and themes explored in the various stories. The collection as a whole balances humor and play with the intrusion of the darker elements of the human psyche and of civilization. Marlowe’s subtle use of steampunk elements and the text’s historical and textual allusiveness make reading the tales an engaging game in which this reader, at least, felt as if he were being positioned as one of the Etheric Explorers themselves, approaching the tales with an investigative eye for connections external to the text. *Ether Frolics* would be of interest to those researching and teaching alternative history, neo-Victorianism and steampunk, and several of its stories – notably those in Part One and “66° South” – would be worth including on relevant syllabi.



**Date:**  
June 25-28, 2015

**Location:**  
Stony Brook University  
Stony Brook, NY

**Guests of Honor**

M. Asli Dukan (film)  
<http://invisibleuniversedoc.com/>

Alexis Lothian (digital)  
<http://www.queergeektheory.org/>

Vandana Singh (fiction)  
<http://users.rcn.com/singhvan/>

Like any genre, and despite its historically marginal positioning vis-à-vis other genres, Science Fiction has its own canon, a general agreement on what texts are worthy of scholarly attention. But what might be revealed if we critically question the canon and consider what elisions its formation entails? What kinds of racial, gendered, classed, and sexual hierarchies are reinforced through the selection of certain texts as exemplary of the genre? What alternative genealogies might become visible if we look underneath “mainstream” or canonical SF and seek out those liminal voices that have been denied access to privileged outlets?

Given the (slowly) increasing visibility of women, LGBTQIA individuals, and people of color within the world of SF in recent years, both as creators and textual representations, it seems like an opportune moment to ask what submerged or marginal histories of the genre might be (re)constructed as well as what voices remain silenced. What can these alternative genealogies and liminal voices offer for considerations of genre definition and exploration?

Not only does taking a critical perspective on the canon lead us to ask what voices have been silenced or repressed, it also asks us to consider why SF in some media (literature, film) have been privileged over others (television, web series, theater, etc.). The development of new media technologies has generated a wealth of SF production within these emerging media. New distribution models built around streaming media services and social media platforms have provided alternative venues for science fiction films, web series, and short stories. Online fandoms have also provided generative ecologies for amateur and fan fiction in a variety of formats. What insights might be gained from more sustained critical attention to science fiction in these emerging media? What do these technological developments portend for the future of the genre?

We invite paper and panel proposals that focus on all forms of science fiction and that address (but are not limited to) the following areas:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Feminist and queer SF                              | Liminal or marginal voices in canonical SF texts         |
| Online SF fandoms and fan fiction                  | SF and new media studies                                 |
| SF beyond the West                                 | SF web series  |
| SF and the digital humanities                      | SF theatre   |
| SF poetry  | SF music (music as SF; music in SF; SF music)            |
| Science as fiction/fiction as science              | Online SF film distribution and streaming video services |
| Alternative histories and definitions of the genre |  |

The deadline for paper and panel submissions is midnight on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015. Please submit a 250-400-word abstract along with to [sfra.sbu.2015@gmail.com](mailto:sfra.sbu.2015@gmail.com). Proposals for panels will also be considered; panel proposals should be submitted as one document and should include an over all proposal and individual proposals.

All presenters **must** be members of the SFRA.

### Call for Papers—Conference

**Title:** ACCSFF '15

**Deadline:** 15 February 2015

**Conference Date:** June 5-6, 2015

Merril Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, Toronto, Ontario

**Contact:** [aweiss@yorku.ca](mailto:aweiss@yorku.ca)

**Topic:** The 2015 Academic Conference on Canadian Science Fiction and Fantasy will be held Friday and Saturday, June 5-6, 2015, in Toronto, Ontario, at the Merrill Collection of Science Fiction, Speculation and Fantasy, one of the most important collections of fantastic literature in the world.

We invite proposals for papers in any area of Canadian science fiction and fantasy, including:

- studies of individual works and authors;
- comparative studies;
- studies that place works in their literary and/or cultural contexts.

Papers may be about Canadian works in any medium: literature, film, graphic novels and comic books, and so on. For studies of the audio-visual media, preference will be given to discussions of works produced in Canada or involving substantial Canadian creative contributions.

**Submission:** Papers should be no more than 20 minutes long, and geared toward a general as well as an academic audience. Please submit proposals (max. 2 pages), preferably by email, to: Dr. Allan Weiss, Department of English, York University, 4700 Keele St., Toronto, ON M3H 3N4, [aweiss@yorku.ca](mailto:aweiss@yorku.ca).

**Title:** Sci-Fi Symposium

**Conference Date:** July 17-18, 2015

**Contact:** [info@syfisymposium.com](mailto:info@syfisymposium.com)

**Website:** <http://www.scifisymposium.com/index.htm>

**Topic:** This event will be a platform for academics from across many disciplines to meet and explore the intersection of the humanities and sciences. It will be an academic meeting, with the presentation of scholarly

papers that will explore the intersection of the humanities and the sciences. There will be inspirational presentations from national and international speakers with a programme tailored to attract a wide audience.

A similar Star Trek Symposium held earlier in 2014 had resounding success, giving the impetus to the organizers to organize a conference with a broader theme. The organizers are also in the process of compiling and publishing all presented papers of the said symposium in a book. Hopefully it will be out for the public later on this year or beginning of next year.

The event will be held under the auspices of HUMS, a programme at the University of Malta that has been set up to explore and encourage the interfaces between the humanities, medicine and the sciences, and which aims to facilitate and disseminate cross-disciplinary research. The Science Fiction Symposium is an event that will appeal to scientists and fans of science fiction alike.

**Title:** SF in Italy - Italy in SF

**Deadline:** 20 February 2015

**Conference Date:** October 16-17, 2015

UC Riverside, California

**Contact:** Umberto Rossi ([teacher@fastwebnet.it](mailto:teacher@fastwebnet.it))

**Topic:** Since the general issue of the conference is design and SF, Italy can be considered an almost unavoidable topic, inasmuch as the country has had a glorious history of design, which often interacted with SF. One might mention e.g. Elio Petri's cinematic version of Sheekley's *The Seventh Victim*, or Guido Crepax's stylish *Valentina* comics, which often had sfnal plots or backgrounds; not to mention the *RanXerox* comics series by Tamburini and Liberatore (1978-1986), considered a forerunner of cyberpunk aesthetics, or the contribution of special effects artist Carlo Rambaldi to such classics of SF cinema as Spielberg's *E.T.* or Ridley Scott's *Alien*. But the panel also aims to explore how Italy has been represented, particularly in connection to design, in non-Italian SF literature, cinema, and comics. The aim of these two faces of the panel is to encourage an exchange of knowledge and ideas between those scholars who are Italian or in any case active in the field of Italian Studies and those who come from other countries and/or other disciplines such as SF studies, cinema studies, comics studies, etc.

**Submission:** Proposals for presentations (max. 20') should be sent to Umberto Rossi ([teacher@fastwebnet.it](mailto:teacher@fastwebnet.it)) by February 20, 2015; they should be 500 words long.

The proposals will be examined by the panel proponent, then forwarded to the Eaton Conference organizers.

Please include a brief bio with your abstract and indicate whether your presentation will require A/V. Prospective presenters will be informed by April 1, 2015 if the panel proposal has been accepted.

**Title:** Current Research in Speculative Fiction 2015

**Deadline:** 9th March 2015

**Conference Date:** Monday 8th June 2015

University of Liverpool

**Contact:** The CRSF Team ([CRSF.team@gmail.com](mailto:CRSF.team@gmail.com))

With Keynote Lectures from:

Dr. Andrew M. Butler (Canterbury Christ Church University)

Dr. Sarah Dillon (University of Cambridge)

Returning for its fifth consecutive year, CRSF is a one day postgraduate conference designed to promote the research of speculative fictions, including SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY and HORROR; showcasing some of the latest developments in these dynamic and evolving fields. CRSF attracts an international selection of delegates and provides a platform for postgraduate students to present their current research, encourages discussion with scholars in related subjects and the construction of crucial networks with fellow researchers. The University of Liverpool, a leading centre for the study of speculative fiction and home to the Science Fiction Foundation Collection, will host the conference. We are seeking abstracts relating to speculative fiction, including, but not limited to, papers on the following topics:

- Alternate History •Alternative Culture •Animal Studies •Anime •Apocalypse •Body Horror •Consciousness •Cyber Culture •Drama •Eco-criticism •Fan Culture •Gaming •(Geo)Politics •Genre •Gender •Graphic Novels •The Grotesque •The Heroic Tradition •Liminal Fantasy •Magic •Meta-Franchises •Morality •Monstrosity •Music •Non-Anglo-American SF •Otherness •Pastoral •Poetry •Politics •Post-Colonialism and Empire •Proto-SF •Psychology •Quests •Realism •Sexuality •Slipstream •Spiritualism •Steampunk •Supernatural •Technology •Time •TV and Film •Urban Fantasy •Utopia/Dystopia •(Virtual) Spaces and Environments •Weird Fiction •World Building •Young Adult Fiction.

**Submission:** Please submit an abstract of 300 words

for a 20 minute English language paper and a 100 word biography to [CRSF.team@gmail.com](mailto:CRSF.team@gmail.com) by Monday 9th March 2015. Queries can be sent to the same address.

**Title:** OGOM: 'The Company of Wolves': Sociality, Animality, and Subjectivity in Literary and Cultural Narratives—Werewolves, Shapeshifters, and Feral Humans

**Deadline:** 31st March 2015

**Conference Date:** 3rd - 5th September 2015

University of Hertfordshire

**Contact:** Dr Sam George, <[s.george@herts.ac.uk](mailto:s.george@herts.ac.uk)>; Dr Bill Hughes, <[bill.enlightenment@gmail.com](mailto:bill.enlightenment@gmail.com)>; Kaja Franck <[k.a.franck@googlemail.com](mailto:k.a.franck@googlemail.com)>.

Wolves have long been the archetypal enemy of human company, preying on the unguarded boundaries of civilisation, threatening the pastoral of ideal sociality and figuring as sexual predators. Yet, in their way, with their complex pack interactions, they have served as a model for society. Lately, this ancient enemy has been rehabilitated and reappraised, and rewilding projects have attempted to admit them more closely into our lives.

Our company with wolves has inspired fiction from Ovid, through Perrault and the Grimms' narrators, to Bram Stoker and Kipling; and, more recently, to Angela Carter, Neil Jordan, Anne Rice, Marcus Sedgwick and Glen Duncan.

The Open Graves, Open Minds Project was initiated in 2010 with the Vampires and the Undead in Modern Culture conference and reconvened for the Bram Stoker Centenary Symposium in 2012. We turn our attention now to creatures not strictly undead but which haunt the peripheries of the vampire—werewolves and shapeshifters. Such beings have served in narrative fiction to question what humanity is; weres tend to reveal the complex affinities and differences between our existence as linguistic, social subjects and our physiological continuity with other animals. They also draw our attention to questions of hierarchy and sexuality, to the instinctive, and to what extent our conceptions of these are ideological.

Werewolves, along with vampires, have recently become humanised, even romanticised, as identity politics became mainstream and the Other assimilated. The ancient paradigm of Beauty and the Beast lives on in paranormal romance. And just as the vampire figure both conditions the shape of the subgenres it dwells in and draws other genres into its sphere, so fictions about werewolves, wild humans, and human-animal relation-

ships also invoke questions of genre and intertextuality. Thus, we are also interested in other narratives and discourses such as beast fables, taxonomies, human metamorphoses, and stories of feral children and those raised by animals which question the boundaries between animal and human.

Amidst concerns about our relationship with nature, in a culture informed by Romanticism and a post-Enlightenment doubt about the centrality of humanity, contemporary fictions often turn to the animal, and to transitions between animal and human (particularly the werewolf and kindred figures) to interrogate what is special about our species. In her werewolf paranormal romance, *Shiver*, the YA author Maggie Stiefvater quotes Rilke: 'even the most clever of animals see that we are not surely at home in our interpreted world'. This perhaps captures our amphibious nature and raises the kind of questions we are interested in.

The conference will explore human social existence and its animal substrate, and the intersection between the human and the wolfishly bestial as expressed in narrative media from a variety of epochs and cultures. It will provide an interdisciplinary forum for the development of innovative and creative research and examine the cultural significance of these themes in all their various manifestations. As with the initial OGOM conference, from which emerged a book and a special issue journal, there will be the opportunity for delegates' presentations to be published.

The conference organising committee invites proposals for panels and individual papers. Possible topics and approaches may include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Werewolves, lycanthropy, and shapeshifters
- Feral and wild children
- Language, culture, and nature
- Instinct and agency
- Animal studies and humanist perspectives
- Phenomenology and the philosophy of language, mind, and body
- Animality and sociality from Hobbes through Rousseau to Darwin
- Narratives of the Grimms, Perrault, Kipling, Angela Carter, Neil Jordan, Anne Rice, Maggie Stiefvater, Glen Duncan, Marcus Sedgwick
- Genre, intertextuality, and narratology
- Young Adult and children's fiction
- Urban fantasy and paranormal romance
- TV, film, and other media

- Folklore and anthropology
- Fables, fabliaux, and fantasy
- The Gothic, fairy tale, and myth
- Sexuality and romance
- Species, 'race', identity, and taxonomy

**Submission:** Abstracts (200-300 words) for twenty-minute papers or proposals for two-hour panels should be submitted by 31st March 2015 as an email attachment in MS Word document format to all of the following: Dr Sam George <[s.george@herts.ac.uk](mailto:s.george@herts.ac.uk)>; Dr Bill Hughes <[bill.enlightenment@gmail.com](mailto:bill.enlightenment@gmail.com)>; Kaja Franck <[k.a.franck@googlemail.com](mailto:k.a.franck@googlemail.com)>.

Please use your surname as the document title. The abstract should be sent in the following format: (1) Title (2) Presenter(s) (3) Institutional affiliation (4) Email (5) Abstract. Panel proposals should include (1) Title of the panel (2) Name and contact information of the chair (3) Abstracts of the presenters. Presenters will be notified of acceptance by April 2015

The programme features Neil Jordan and plenary talks from Sir Christopher Frayling on 'Angela Carter', Dr Catherine Spooner on 'Wearing the Wolf', Dr Stacey Abbott on 'The Sound of the Cinematic Werewolf', Dr Sam George on 'Wolf Children' and Dr Bill Hughes on 'Werewolves and Paranormal Romance'. There will be contributions from novelists Marcus Sedgwick and Glen Duncan (tbc) together with special guests. OGOM PhD students, Kaja Franck and Matt Beresford, will present papers on their current research involving werewolves. Delegates will have the opportunity to visit unique places associated with our theme, and to actually 'walk with wolves'.

For more information, contact Dr Sam George at [s.george@herts.ac.uk](mailto:s.george@herts.ac.uk).

The conference is organised by the University of Hertfordshire, UK <<http://www.herts.ac.uk>>. Our website is at: <http://www.opengravesopenminds.com> and our blog, with updates on the conference and project, is at [openmindsopengraves.wordpress.com](http://openmindsopengraves.wordpress.com).

**Title:** Locating Fantastika: An Interdisciplinary Conference

**Deadline:** 8st April 2015

**Conference Date:** 8th July 2015

Lancaster University

**Contact:** [fantastikaconference@gmail.com](mailto:fantastikaconference@gmail.com)

Following the success of Visualising Fantastika in 2014,



Lancaster University invites all academics with an interest in the field to participate in this interdisciplinary conference. “Fantastika”, coined by John Clute, is an umbrella term which incorporates the genres of fantasy, science fiction, and horror, but can also include alternative histories, steampunk, young adult fiction, or any other imaginative space. The theme for 2015, “Locating Fantastika,” explores all areas of space, setting, and locations, either in the fictional world of fantastika or in fantastical networks with the real world.

We are pleased to announce **Dr. Philippa Semper** and **Dr. Ruth Heholt** as our keynote speakers. Dr. Semper (University of Birmingham) lectures in medieval English, with a special interest on the interaction between text and image in manuscript studies; she also teaches and publishes on fantasy literature. Her keynote will be examining the relation between the medieval world and modern fantasy. Dr. Heholt (Falmouth University) is a senior lecturer focusing on the supernatural. Her recent work has focussed on the concepts of regions and the Gothic and haunted landscapes. She is editor of a new e-journal, *Revenant: Critical and Creative Studies of the Supernatural*: <http://www.revenantjournal.com>.

**Submission:** We welcome abstracts for 20 minute papers on fantastical locations as they occur in any medium and form. Some suggested topics are:

- buildings, houses, or other location-specific constructs
- landscapes or geography
- world-building or setting
- regional, national, or cultural spaces
- urban vs rural communities
- maps or mapping
- eco or ecology-readings

Please submit a 300 word abstract to [fantastikaconference@gmail.com](mailto:fantastikaconference@gmail.com) along with a 50 word bio-note by April 1st, 2015

Visit us at <https://fantastikaconference.wordpress.com> or like us on Facebook (“Fantastika Conference”) for more up-to-date information about the event.

**Title:** Eighth Anniversary Sessions of the Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Legend Area

**Deadline:** 1 June 2015

**Conference Date:** October 30-31, 2015

Colby-Sawyer College in New London, New Hampshire

**Contact:** Kraig Larkin ([kraig.larkin@colby-sawyer.com](mailto:kraig.larkin@colby-sawyer.com)) and Michael A. Torregrossa ([NEPCAFantastic@gmail.com](mailto:NEPCAFantastic@gmail.com))

Formed in 2008, the Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Legend Area celebrates its eighth anniversary in 2015, and we seek proposals from scholars of all levels for papers that explore any aspect of the intermedia traditions of the fantastic (including, but not limited to, elements of science fiction, fantasy, fairy tale, gothic, horror, legends, and mythology) and how creative artists have altered our preconceptions of these subtraditions by producing innovative works in diverse countries and time periods and for audiences at all levels.

Special topics:

- Given the proximity to Halloween, we are especially interested in proposals related to monsters and the monstrous.

Please see our website *NEPCA Fantastic* (<http://nepca-fantastic.blogspot.com>) for further details and ideas. Presentations will be limited to 15-20 minutes in length (depending on final panel size).

**Submission:** If you are interested in proposing a paper or panel of papers, please send please send the NEPCA Paper Proposal Form (download from <http://nepca.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/nepca-paper-proposal-form1-1.pdf>) along with an abstract of approximately 250 to 400 words and a one to two page CV to both the Program Chair AND to the Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Legend Area Chair at the following addresses (please note “NEPCA Fantastic Proposal 2015” in your subject line): Kraig Larkin, Program Chair, [kraig.larkin@colby-sawyer.com](mailto:kraig.larkin@colby-sawyer.com); and Michael A. Torregrossa, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, and Legend Area Chair, [NEPCAFantastic@gmail.com](mailto:NEPCAFantastic@gmail.com).

The Northeast Popular Culture/American Culture Association (NEPCA) is a regional affiliate of the American Culture Association and the Popular Culture Association. NEPCA is an association of scholars in New England and New York, organized in 1974 at the University of Rhode Island. We reorganized and incorporated in Boston in 1992. The purpose of this professional association is to encourage and assist research, publication, and teaching on popular culture and culture studies topics by scholars in the northeast region of the United States. By bringing together scholars from various disciplines, both academic and non-academic people, we



foster interdisciplinary research and learning. We publish a newsletter twice per year and we hold an annual conference at which we present both the Peter C. Rollins Book Award and an annual prize.

Membership in NEPCA is required for participation. Annual dues are currently \$30 for full-time faculty and \$20 to all other individuals; dues are included in conference registration fees. Further details are available at <http://nepca.wordpress.com/membership-information/>.

**Title:** The Second *Star Trek* Symposium 2016

**Conference Date:** 2016

Malta

Welcome.

2016 marks the 50th anniversary from the launch of *Star Trek: The Original Series*. To commemorate such an event, plans for the second *Star Trek* Symposium are under way. This will differ from the traditional Fan-Based Convention in that it is a platform for academics from across many disciplines to meet and explore the intersection of humanities and sciences. It will be an academic meeting, with the presentation of scholarly papers that will explore the intersection of the humanities and the sciences.

The first *Star Trek* Symposium held earlier this year was well received, thus motivating the organizers to plan and thus promote another symposium to celebrate *Star Trek's* Golden Anniversary. The organizers are also in the process of compiling and publishing all presented papers of the said symposium in a book. Hopefully it will be out for the public later on this year or the beginning of next year.

The event will be held under the auspices of HUMS, a programme at the University of Malta that has been set up to explore and encourage the interfaces between the humanities, medicine and the sciences, and aims to facilitate and disseminate cross-disciplinary research.

The *Star Trek* Symposium is an event that will appeal to scientists and fans of science fiction alike.

## Call for Papers—Articles

**Title:** The Canadian Alternative: Canadian Cartoonists, Comics, and Graphic Novels

**Manuscript Deadline:** 30 April 2015

**Contact:** Dominick Grace ([dgrace2@uwo.ca](mailto:dgrace2@uwo.ca)) and/or Eric Hoffman ([diamondjoecity@gmail.com](mailto:diamondjoecity@gmail.com))

For a proposed edited and refereed volume on Canadian graphic novelists and cartoonists. Dominick Grace and Eric Hoffman, editors of *Dave Sim: Conversations*, *Chester Brown: Conversations*, and *Seth: Conversations* for the University Press of Mississippi, are editing a collection of essays provisionally titled *The Canadian Alternative: Canadian Cartoonists, Comics, and Graphic Novels*. We seek previously unpublished essays addressing Canadian cartoonists/comics. Our primary interest is in “alternative” cartoonists and cartooning, narrowly defined; that is, figures associated with the underground, independent, and/or ground-level comics movements. Figures of key interest might include but are not limited to

- Marc Bell
- David Boswell
- Chester Brown
- David Collier
- Julie Doucet
- Rand Holmes
- Jeff Lemire (especially his independent work)
- Bernie Mireault
- Bryan Lee O'Malley
- Dave Sim
- Seth

However, and as the inclusion of Lemire above indicates, we are also interested in papers dealing with the Canadian “alternative” more broadly-defined, whether represented by the visions of specific creators who have worked in mainstream comics (Byrne, Dan and Gene Day, Lemire, McFarland, etc.) or by Canadian alternatives to mainstream US comics publishing (e.g. the Canadian “whites” of World War Two), the various attempts to create a Canadian market/national hero (perhaps best represented by Richard Comely and *Comely Comics's* Captain Canuck), and other distinctly Canadian takes on the graphic medium (e.g. Martin Vaughan-James's *The Cages*, or BP Nicholls's use of comics/cartooning).

**Submission:** Substantial essays (5,000-8,000 words) focusing on specific creators, comparing/contrasting the work of a few creators, or addressing Canadian movements in comics are welcome. Submit completed papers by April 30 2015 to Dominick Grace ([dgrace2@uwo.ca](mailto:dgrace2@uwo.ca)) and/or Eric Hoffman ([diamondjoecity@gmail.com](mailto:diamondjoecity@gmail.com)). In-

quiries/proposals are also welcome.

Though a publisher has yet to be determined, the University Press of Mississippi has expressed interest in publishing this collection.

**Title:** SFFTV Special Issue CFP: “Star Trek at 50”

**Manuscript Deadline:** 1 September 2015

**Contact:** Mark Bould ([mark.bould@gmail.com](mailto:mark.bould@gmail.com)), Sherryl Vint ([sherryl.vint@gmail.com](mailto:sherryl.vint@gmail.com)), and Gerry Canavan ([gerrycanavan@gmail.com](mailto:gerrycanavan@gmail.com))

*Science Fiction Film and Television* seeks submissions for a special issue on “*Star Trek* at 50.”

Since its premiere on September 8, 1966, Gene Roddenberry’s *Star Trek* has become shorthand for liberal optimism about the future, even as the franchise’s later entries have moved towards increasingly dark depictions of aging (ST II-VII), war (DS9), lifeboat ethics (VOY), and post-9/11 securitization (ENT). This internal tension has now culminated in the rebooted “Abramsverse” depiction that — while nominally directed towards reinvigorating the franchise by returning it to its youthful origins— has seen the Spock’s home planet of Vulcan destroyed by terrorists (ST) and the Federation itself corrupted by a coup from its black-ops intelligence wing (STID).

*SFFTV* invites fresh approaches to *Star Trek* media in the context of its amazing longevity and continued popularity, with possible emphases on:

- revivals, retcons, and reboots
- canon and canonicity
- *Star Trek* and/as “franchise”
- fan cultures, fan productions, and fan sequels
- *Star Trek* ephemera and paratexts
- lost episodes and unproduced scripts
- parody and pastiche (*Galaxy Quest*, *Star Trek XXX*, “The Wrath of Farrakhan,” etc.)
- spinoff media like video games and comics
- *Star Trek* and politics
- *Star Trek* and science/technology/invention
- *Star Trek* and race
- *Star Trek*, sex, gender, and orientation
- *Star Trek* and disability
- *Star Trek* and aesthetics
- *Star Trek* and aging
- *Star Trek*’s influence on other works or on the culture at large
- *Star Trek* and other Roddenberry productions (*The*

*Questor Tapes, Earth: Final Conflict, Andromeda*)

**Submission:** Articles of 6,000-9,000 words should be formatted using MLA style and according to the submission guidelines available on our website. Submissions should be made via our online system at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com:80/lup-sfftv>. Articles not selected for the special issue will be considered for future issues of *SFFTV*.

Any questions should be directed to the editors, Mark Bould ([mark.bould@gmail.com](mailto:mark.bould@gmail.com)), Sherryl Vint ([sherryl.vint@gmail.com](mailto:sherryl.vint@gmail.com)), and Gerry Canavan ([gerrycanavan@gmail.com](mailto:gerrycanavan@gmail.com)).

The deadline for submissions is September 1, 2015, with anticipated publication in *Star Trek*’s 50th anniversary year.

# Science Fiction Research Association

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

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

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## SFRA Standard Membership Benefits

### *SFRA Review*

Four issues per year. This newsletter/journal surveys the field of science fiction scholarship, including extensive reviews of fiction and nonfiction books and media, review articles, and listings of new and forthcoming books. The *Review* also posts news about SFRA internal affairs, calls for papers, and updates on works in progress.

### *SFRA Annual Directory*

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

### *SFRA Listserv*

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

### *Extrapolation*

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

### *Science Fiction Studies*

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

## SFRA Optional Membership Benefits

### *Foundation*

(Discounted subscription rates for members)  
Three issues per year. British scholarly journal, with critical, historical, and bibliographical articles, reviews, and letters. Add to dues: \$36 (seamail); \$43 (airmail).

### *Science Fiction Film and Television*

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

### *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*

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

### *Femspec*

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

