

Philcon 2015
A convention report by Evelyn C. Leeper
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[I have gotten several years behind in my Philcon reports and rather than give up altogether, I have decided to transcribe my notes without turning them into real sentences, paragraphs, etc. Maybe someday I will flesh them out, but I would not bet on it.]

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This is a brief report on Philcon 2015, held November 20-22, 2015, in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

That's Not a Story; What Is It?
Friday, 5:00 PM

Diane Weinstein (mod), Darrell Schweitzer, Anne E. Johnson, Bernie Mojzes

Description: "Rachel Swirsky's Nebula-winning and Hugo-nominated 'If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love' caused considerable controversy because some people thought it wasn't a story. What do we mean by a 'story' anyway?"

- | Weinstein: 'If You Were a Dinosaur, My Love' is more like a prose poem.
- | Johnson: Picture books don't have to have a plot: "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie", etc.
- | Mojzes: Some stories need to be linear, some not.
- | Weinstein: Have to have a point, not necessarily a plot.
- | Mojzes: No firm distinction between prose and poetry.
- | Johnson: Too many action sequences are as bad as no action.
- | Johnson: Kisho Ten Ketsu form; plot but no conflict
- | Weinstein: But has tension Audience: Tension has to be in the audience
- | [Me: "Funes the Memorious", "Pierre Menard", "The Babylon Lottery", "The Library of Babel"]

Gonna Science the \$%^ Out of This: How Realistic is the Science of The Martian?
Friday, 10:00 PM

Tobias Cabral (mod), Earl Bennett, Frank O'Brien, Dr. H. Paul Shuch, Lawrence Kramer

Description: "Matt Damon has to survive alone on Mars until he can be rescued. Could a hardy human survive in such a hostile climate? What would make survival more likely? Panelists will talk about this book and movie's excellent science geekery in the context of the Robinson-Crusoe-esque situation of the hero."

- | Cabral: Appreciated the effort.
- | Cabral: "Orbits were calculated with loving care."
- | Cabral: "MacGyver-esque" approach.
- | Kramer: Humor is a survival trait.
- | Kramer: No technobabble in the movie.
- | Kramer: Did not address weaker sunlight for growing; assume artificial light.
- | O'Brien: Says technobabble is in the book (but not babble).
- | O'Brien says dust storm is a "gimme".
- | Shuch: They didn't science the \$#^% out of this--they engineered the \$#^% out of this.
- | Shuch: Says Watney was a botanist, but omits that he was also a mechanical engineer.
- | Bennett: Book has more explanations for what happens.
- | Cabral: Movie shows what happens between log entries.
- | O'Brien: Weir specifically avoided showing negative emotions
- | Kramer: Uses critical thinking skills.
- | Audience: Martian gravity was wrong. O'Brien: It was close, and too expensive to show.
- | Audience: Solar flux on surface would be similar to earth's.
- | Audience: Would use less pressure than 12 psi and a higher O2 percentage than 20%.
- | Audience: *Race to Mars* (Canadian TV movie).
- | Audience: *The Case for Mars* (book)
- | Audience: "Iron Man" at the end.
- | Audience: *Gravity* (panel thinks it was terrible)
- | O'Brien: Don't lock doors after unmanned missions
- | Cabral: No real villains; all characters had good motivations.
- | Bennett: Man against nature.
- | Shuch: No reason to bury RTG (panel agrees).
- | Audience: Ascent vehicle is over-engineered.
- | O'Brien: Current specific plans to get to Mars are scams: no vehicle, no plans, ...
- | O'Brien: Weightlessness is a bigger problem than cosmic radiation.

Can You Trust Your Brain?

Saturday, 10:00 AM

Michael L. Brachman (mod), Ken Fink, John Monahan, Rebecca Robare, Mary Spila, Carl Fink

Description: "We'll look at perception, illusion, and awareness from the professional perspectives of those who deal with them every day: psychologists and magicians."

- | [Carl Fink and Ken Fink are not related.]
- | Brachman: Worked on *Dark Star*, which he claims is obscure. [I will note that it was a Hugo finalist.]
- | Brachman: When "the room is spinning," it isn't--the brain cannot be trusted..
- | Robare: Proprioception--the sense of body position--can be untrustworthy
- | Brachman: "Phantom limbs"
- | Brachman: In the future, alternate sensors may be grafted into us
- | [Me: Mark can sense electricity in a table if an appliance on it is turned on.]
- | C. Fink: Indigo was added to the colors of the rainbow to make it an octave and create an acronym.

- | C. Fink: Color perception in animals.
- | [Me: *A Flight to Arcturus* and other books that talk about colors unknown to humans.]
- | Brachman: There once was a football game with opposing teams wearing red and green uniforms. Colorblind fans were not happy. [Seems to have been Thursday night football in 2015.]
- | K. Fink: What we see is based on contrast and relativism.
- | [Mark: Remember everyone perceives differently.]

How Do We Choose the Books We Read? Saturday, 11:00 AM

Todd Dashoff (mod), Eric Hardenbrook, Deborah Stanish, Joan Wendland, Carl Fink, Gary Feldbaum

Description: "People with broad taste choose from many different story types. On what basis do we make these choices? Why do some readers focus on one sub-genre or one writer?"

- | Dashoff: First book was *Five Chinese Brothers* (1960). Now read mysteries and science fiction.
- | Fink read Asimov, now two-thirds of his reading is non-fiction, and he is more write-focused.
- | Hardenbrook: It depends on his mood. Sometimes a good book is the wrong book at the wrong time.
- | Feldbaum: Reads more non-fiction than before, and fills in authors. His first science fiction was *Lucky Starr and the Oceans of Venus*.
- | Woodland: First book was *101 Dalmatians*.
- | Woodland: Is in an all-female book club that reads mysteries.
- | Hardenbrook: There is more information available in a book store from a physical book than online.
- | Fink: There is the cover, the front matter, and the blurb.
- | Woodland: A. Lee Martinez is funny.
- | Feldbaum: Buys from authors his is unfamiliar (in mass-market paperback).
- | Dashoff: Won't get rid of books.
- | Hardenbrook: "I'm saving [bad books] to give to someone I don't like."
- | Hardenbrook: E-book gambles can be cheaper.

Using Language Creatively Saturday, 1:00 PM

A.T. Greenblatt (mod), Christie Meierz, Lawrence M. Schoen, Joseph Berenato, L Hunter Cassells

Description: "From Hemingway's spareness to Lovecraftian atmospheric density to Chandleresque similes, there are a variety of ways language can be used to enhance the worlds you write. How do language and syntax choices affect the way a story is perceived?"

- | Greenblatt: Sent email asking panelists to come with two authors known for their language.
- | Schoen: Gene Wolfe (*Book of the New Sun*) and China Miéville (*Embassytown*) are evocative and lyrical.
- | Berenato: Juno Diaz (*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wilde*) references pop culture the way James Joyce references the classics.
- | Berenato: Natalie Goldberg, who will say "geranium" rather than "flower"
- | Greenblatt: John Steinbeck and Scott Lynch (*Lies of Locke Lamora*)

- | Everyone: Likes the e-book/dictionary combination.
- | Cassells: Ray Bradbury and A. C. Weisbecker ("master of the repetitive phrase")
- | Cassells: Tolkien preferred the general ("flower", not "geranium") and letting the reader populate it
- | Schoen: Reads about inching along a cliff face, pictures them going left, then characters "find a cave on their right": Boom!
- | Schoen: MFA seems to teach to always attach a modifier to a noun or verb
- | Berenato: *The Lord of the Rings* and *Heart of Darkness* would have been better if some else had written them.
- | Schoen: William Saroyan, Thornton Wilder, and Ernest Hemingway come alive.
- | Schoen: Kij Johnson's "Spar" conflicted effects.
- | Schoen: "The Long Price Quartet" shows two characters at four periods of their life.
- | Schoen: Need more pronouns, because naming a character makes him appear important.
- | Schoen: Neologisms--use sparingly.
- | Schoen: Play with language, but get it right.
- | Audience: Jonathan Hickman (graphic novels) and Brandon Sanderson use symbols and placement.
- | Greenblatt: Anthony Burgess (*Clockwork Orange*)
- | Schoen: "Darmok" in a "Tigger & Pooh" cartoon.
- | Berenato: OED chose an emoji as "Word of the Year".
- | Schoen: Second- and third-order symbol systems.

Sherlock Holmes in the 21st Century
Saturday, 3:00 PM

Hildy Silverman (mod), Melissa James, Anastasia Klimchynskaya, Victoria Janssen, Steve Vertlieb, Richard Stout

Description: "There's been a lot of activity centered around 221b Baker Street in the last few years. Which adaptations are trying to keep characterizations and plot elements as close to canon as possible, and which are just using the original stories as a jumping-off point? And perhaps most importantly, which ones have you enjoyed the most?"

- | Klimchynskaya: The Baker Street Irregulars pretend that Sherlock Holmes is real.
- | Vertlieb: Wrote for the "Monster Times"
- | Silverman: What has gotten people revved up now?
- | Klimchynskaya: People were always revved up. Now it's Robert Downey, Bernard Cumberbatch, and the series *Elementary*, as well as transmedia story-telling.
- | James: It is also the popularity of forensic science and a brilliant but anti-social hero.
- | Janssen: Sherlock Holmes is an intelligent super-hero, mythic.
- | Vertlieb: There was never a lack of interest in Sherlock Holmes. Doctor Who is just an intergalactic Sherlock Holmes.
- | Silverman: Who is currently your favorite Sherlock Holmes?
- | Stout: Bernard Cumberbatch, because he is so nuanced. Doyle gave Holmes so many details and quirks.
- | Vertlieb: Robert Stephens.
- | Janssen: Jeremy Brett.
- | James: Bernard Cumberbatch.
- | Klimchynskaya: Bernard Cumberbatch.
- | Silverman: What are some adaptations with changes that did or did not work?
- | Janssen: "My Dearest Watson" made them lovers.
- | Klimchynskaya: Everything has been done; *Sherlock* modernized the story well.
- | James: *Elementary* is good but the hour-long format is a problem.
- | Janssen: She *used to* collect adaptations.

- | Vertlieb: *Sherlock* and *Doctor Who* are good.
- | Me: I liked the BBC adaptations with Carleton Hobbs and especially with Clive Merrison. (The latter is the only actor to have portrayed Holmes in adaptations of every canonical Sherlock Holmes story.)
- | Klimchynskaya: Holmes tended to ignore the law a lot.
- | [The panel did not really focus on the 21st century.]

Things You Should Read (But Don't Know About Yet)

Saturday, 5:00 PM

Fran Wilde (mod), Dena Heilik, Joseph Berenato, Alex Shvartsman

Description: "Not every amazing book is a best-seller. Whether it's an unsung classic or a recent author, come talk about the fiction you've found that, strangely, nobody else seems to be talking about."

- | [This was done by categories this year.]
- | One author:
 - | Wilde: Ousman Malik
 - | Heilik: Zen Cho
 - | Berenato: Juno Diaz
 - | Shvartsman: Will McIntosh
 - | Rosenberg: G. Willow Wilson
- | Poetry/Flash Fiction (venues, stories, or authors):
 - | Wilde: *Nature* ("Futures" column)
 - | Shvartsman: "Daily SF", Deborah Walker
- | Short Stories:
 - | Wilde: "Strange Horizons", Sam Miller
 - | Heilik: Leonard Richard, "In Praise of Awesome Dinosaurs" (goodreads.com)
 - | Berenato: *Pangea* (anthology)
 - | Shvartsman: "Clarkesworld", Xia Jia, Matt Kressel
 - | Rosenberg: tor.com
- | Novellas/Novelettes:
 - | Heilik: Nnedi Okorafor, "Binti" (tor.com); Seanan Maguire, *Every Heart a Doorway*
 - | Shvartsman: Tachyon Publishing; Daryl Gregory, "We're All Completely Fine"
 - | Rosenberg: Crossroad Press; Leviticus Moore, "I Am Number 4"
- | Novels:
 - | Wilde: Matt Kessel, *House of Shards*; Lara Elena Donnelly, *Amberlough*; Lawrence Schoen, *Barsk*; Aliette de Bodard; Daniel Jose Older
 - | Heilik: Parke Godwin, *Waiting for the Galactic Bus*; Minister Faust, *The Coyote Kings of the Space-Age Bachelor Pad*; R. Lee Smith, *The Last Hour of Gann*
 - | Berenato: Jim Beard, *Sgt. Janus, Spirit-Breaker*; James Cantrell, *Manifestation*
 - | Shvartsman: Ken Liu, *race of Kings*; Tom Doyle, *American Craftsman*; Brian Michael Bendis, *Defenders*
 - | Rosenberg: Brian Stanley, *Emperor's Blades*; Richard Kadrey, *Sandman Slim*; Scott Lynch, *The Lies of Loch Lamora*
- | Local Authors:
 - | Wilde: A. C. Wise, *The Glitter Squadron*
 - | Heilik: Gene Doucette, "The Immortal" series
 - | Berenato: Phil Junta; Daniella Ackly McPhail
 - | Shvartsman: David Walton
- | YA:
 - | Wilde: Justina Ireland; Fonda Lee
 - | Heilik: Justine Labelastier, *Team Human*; William Ritter, *Jacoby*; Robin McKinley

- i Berenato:
 - i Shvartsman: Tina Conolly, *Seriously Wicked*; Lea Syprus, "Deathmarch" series
 - i Rosenberg: Rosamund Hodge, *Abaddon* and *Polaris*; Sara Prinius
- i Miscellaneous Audience Recommendations:
 - i Annu Bilette
 - i Charlie Janes Anders
 - i José Saramago (yes, that was me)
 - i Johnny Erthen
 - i Lana Myers
 - i Nick Sagan, *Idlewild*
 - i Edmond Hamilton, *City at the World's End*
 - i *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*

Final comments were to check social media for recommendations, and to read anthologies (particularly the various "Year's Best" anthologies).

Science Fiction and Theories of History

Saturday, 6:00 PM

Siobhan Carroll (mod), Christopher Weuve, Day Al-Mohamed, John Grant, Robert Fenelon

Description: "SF stories such as *Dune* or the *Foundation* series frequently deal with long stretches of time and the historical process itself. Some of them are based on specific theories such as those of Spengler, Marx or others. How does this influence the way we think and write about the future?"

- i Al-Mohamed: Civilization/societies operate in cycles.
- i Al-Mohamed: Social conflict theory--those on top want to stay on top.
- i Al-Mohamed: "Star Wars" cycle.
- i Weuve: Autonomous robots but no guided missiles in "Star Wars" cycle
- i Grant: There are long-term histories, and future histories. "Future history is a dead animal."
- i Audience: What about *Babylon 5*
- i Audience: "Star Wars" will have cycles, "Dune" series also has cycles (fall, rise, fall, rise)
- i Fenelon: Mad Jack Churchill
- i Weuve: Richard Todd
- i Audience: Kim Stanley Robinson's "Mars" has historical scope: people, environment, technology.
- i Fenelon: Yoshiko Tomido and mobile suits
- i Fenelon: Greeks vs. Achaemenids (Persians)--Persians had stagnated on technology
- i Audience: A. E. Van Vogt's *Voyage of the Space Beagle* had characters use Oswald Spengler's theory (i.e., that a culture acts like an organism with a limited lifespan) to defeat enemy.
- i Audience: Scott Westerfield.
- i Fenelon: The British Empire looked strong until 1944, then sacrificed itself for war.
- i Fenelon: Look at Chinese dynastic cycles.
- i Al-Mohamed: Cycles, economics, politics, military.
- i Fenelon: Effects of philosophers on history.
- i Fenelon: Montesquieu -> Adams -> Madison
- i Audience: Malthus was wrong, but he thought we would peak and then decline due to birth rates.
- i Fenelon: Environmental issues dropping food supplies.

No one talked about the scale: years vs. centuries vs. millennia.

Beyond Lovecraft: The Cthulhu Mythos Today
Saturday, 8:00 PM
John Ashmead (mod), Darrell Schweitzer, A.C. Wise

Description: "Exploring how the Cthulhu mythos has evolved beyond its creator."

- | Edmond Wilson's "New Yorker" article, "Tales of the Marvellous and the Ridiculous" was cited. ("Surely one of the primary rules for writing an effective tale of horror is never to use any of these words ['hideous', 'monstrous', and 'blasphemous']--especially if you are going, at the end, to produce an invisible whistling octopus.")
- | Ashmead: Lovecraft has had much much influence than the size of his oeuvre would warrant.
- | Ashmead: *Alien* is his favorite Lovecraftian movie: a cold, indifferent universe, alien aliens, etc.
- | Wise: Prefers *Prometheus*: going into ruins, etc.
- | Ashmead: Reading the *Necronomicon* in the new "Mummy" movies is a bad idea.
- | Schweitzer: Googling Cthulhu on eBay and you get 5000 hits.
- | Schweitzer: Lovecraft is still mostly for readers; is now in Penguin Classics and the Library of America.
- | Schweitzer: Providence, Rhode Island, is known in Japan as the home of Lovecraft.
- | Schweitzer: There is a whole Lovecraftian tourist industry, and a tour book about Lovecraft and Miskatonic University.
- | Ashmead: Lovecraft gave us a new appreciation of the spirit of a place.
- | Schweitzer: Likes the idea of Innsmouth taken over by yuppies.
- | Schweitzer: Both Lovecraft and Olaf Stapledon affect many more writers than just those who read them.
- | Ashmead: Lovecraft pastiches are outnumbered only by Sherlock Holmes pastiches.
- | Ashmead: Lovecraft is more like John le Carré than Ian Fleming.
- | Schweitzer: Lovecraft admired Arthur Machen and Ambrose Bierce (especially "Willows")
- | Ashmead: "The Call of Cthulhu" has an elaborate narrative structure.
- | Ashmead: Lovecraft was trying to cope with new scientific discoveries (e.g., relativity, quantum physics) as well as World War I.
- | Schweitzer: Lovecraft influenced Robert E. Howard's *The Fire of Asshurbanipal*.
- | Ashmead: Likes "Full Frontal Horror" as a title.
- | Ashmead: Lovecraft is good at mise-en-scene.
- | Schweitzer: Lovecraft was a scientific rationalist.
- | Schweitzer: Thomas Ligotti's "Nethescurial" in *Weird Tales* (Winter 1991/1992)

It's All About Soul: The Films of Alex Garland
Saturday, 9:00 PM
Jeff Warner (mod), Tony Finan, Rodney Somerstein, Jon McGoran

Description: "From his first script "28 Days Later" to his Directorial debut "Ex Machina," Alex Garland has explored the implications of a Soul in SF settings. The common thread amongst all the stories is the looming specter of Death. Let's discuss Alex's work, the futures of morality and artificial immortality, and the relevance of death."

- | Mostly a list/description of his films.
- | What is your soul?
- | What are you doing with your life?
- | Killing without emotional attachment.

Why Can't I Get My Book Club to Read What I Want?
Sunday, 10:00 AM
Evelyn Leeper (mod), Rodney Somerstein, Eric Hardenbrook

Description: "How do you propose a title in a way that makes people want to read it? How does one run a successful book discussion group in general?"

- | Do not duplicate authors.
- | Reading groups as singles bars.
- | Bookstore logistics (for groups that meet in bookstores).

Forgotten Masterpieces of Fantasy Art
Sunday, 12:00 N
Richard Hescoc (mod)

Description: "A slideshow display of seldom seen paintings by famous artists you may know- and many you have never heard of- from the 19th century."

[Lots of artworks, I will list as many I noted down. I do not guarantee that the names are spelled correctly.]

- | Jose Sagreas, Beethoven illustrations
- | John William Waterhouse:
 - | "Ulysses and the Sirens"
 - | "The Mermaid" sketches
 - | "Merman" (unfinished)
 - | "Cleopatra"
- | Sir Lawrence Ontataama, "Pandora"
- | Gustave Doré, "Between Earth and Sky"
- | Jean-Francois Millet, "The Tempest: Ariel"
- | Edward Poynter, "The Cave of the Storm Nymphs"
- | Frederic Leighton, "Perseus and Andromeda"
- | Arnold Böcklin:
 - | "The Isle of the Dead" (five versions)
 - | "Travellers on a Road, Being Frightened by a Dragon"
 - | "Centaur and Blacksmith"
 - | "Mermaid and Birds and Merman"
 - | "Ulysses and Cyclops"
- | Ferdinand Keller, "Tomb of Böcklin"
- | N. C. Wyeth:
 - | "The Giant"
 - | "The Sea Serpent"
 - | "The Sea Calls You"
 - | "Fishing in New England"
- | John Singer Sargeant, "Alligators"
- | Carl Hogg, "Viking"
- | J. Spillar, "Water Goblin in Winter"
- | Elihu Better:
 - | "Sea Serpent's Lair"
 - | "Questioner of the Sphinx"
 - | "Memory"
- | Jean Verbert, "Goose of the Republic"

- | John Charles Dalman:
 - | "The Unknown"
 - | "Famine"
 - | "Mowgli"
 - | "The Temptation of St. Anthony"
 - | "Ride of the Valkyries"
 - | "Borrowed Plumes"
- | Briton Rivea:
 - | "Aphrodite"
 - | "St. George and the Dragon"
 - | "Apollo Charming the Beasts"
- | Arthur Worrel:
 - | "Mermaid and Polar Bears"
 - | "Long Quotes"
- | Frederic Edwin Church, "Icebergs"
- | Jules Clarent, "Desert Scene"
- | Caspar David Friedrich, "Ship Crushed in the Ice"
- | Gunther Meltzer, "Isle of Cyclops"
- | Henri Le Sidaner, "Street Scene"
- | Achille Theodore Chesbron, "Allegory of Scent of Flowers"
- | Herbert Draper, "Gates of Dawn"
- | Edward Robert Hughes, "Heart of Snow"
- | Carl Waterson:
 - | "Spirit of Spring"
 - | "Balanced Daughter"
- | Lucien Laveedomure, "Seaweed"
- | Albert Gantner, "Allegory of Absinthe"
- | Edgar Maxens, "Spirit of Forest"
- | Bully Heath Robinson, "Mermaid and Ship"
- | Franz Von Stuck, "Sin"
- | William H. Mugaral, "The Pearl"
- | Arthur Hacker, "The Cloud"
- | Albert Guillaume, "Profound Love"
- | George Roshchose:
 - | "Fall of Babylon"
 - | "Knight of the Flowers"
- | Giulio Aristide Sartorio, "Green Abyss"
- | Sangreas:
 - | "Boy Who Was Not Afraid"
 - | "Cask of Amontillado"
 - | "Gold Bug"
 - | "Kittens"
 - | "System of Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether"
 - | "Genie"
 - | "Gnomes and Jar"
 - | "Black Cat"
 - | "Masque of the Red Death"
- | Harry Anderson, "Big and Small"
- | Robert Anning Bell, "Mermaid"
- | Bastion Le Page, "Joan of Arc"
- | Alexander Benoit, "Bronze Horseman"
- | John Bauer:
 - | "Eagle"
 - | "Children and Snow Troll"
- | Franklin Booth, "The Fine Islands of the Night"

- | William Arthur Breakspeare, "Mermaid"
- | Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale:
 - | "Tempest"
 - | "Moth"
- | Zdeněk Michael František Burian, "Lost World"
- | Herbert James Draper:
 - | "Pearl"
 - | "Sea Maiden"
 - | "Sea Nymph"
- | Gaston Boussoer, "Sirens"
- | Byam Shaw, "Interrupted Spear"
- | Alexandre Cabanel, "Cleopatra Testing Her Poisons"
- | Frank Dixie:
 - | "Viking Funeral"
 - | "La Belle Dame sans Merci"
- | Heinrich Kley, "The Race"

The Uses of Time Travel

Sunday, 1:00 PM

Lawrence Kramer (mod), Lawrence M. Schoen, Michael A. Ventrella, John Ashmead, Michael L. Brachman, JJ Brannon

Description: "Why do you want to travel into the past or future? Knowledge? Loot? Talking yourself out of bad decisions? Setting up the best prank ever? If given the opportunity would you, or wouldn't you?"

- | Brachman: We time travel when we sleep, or when we use a DVR for sports.
- | Ashmead: Used the term "Spreadsheet Time Travel" for how changes ripple down.
- | Ashmead: Sending information back in time is theoretically possible.
- | Ashmead: Saberhagen used the term "paradox noise" for what cancels paradoxes.
- | Brachman: Wants to time travel to become rich and solve mysteries.
- | Ventrella: Mentioned Isaac Asimov's "The Dead Past".
- | Ashmead: Would use time travel to demythologize the past.
- | [I would suggest Poul Anderson's "The Man Who Came Early".]
- | Ashmead: One could find guaranteed artifacts.
- | Kramer: There are problems with going to the future, such as disease.
- | Kramer: In Asimov's *The End of Eternity* time travel causes stagnation by eliminating every possible risk.
- | Schoen: Wesley Chu's *Time Salvager*
- | Schoen: Temporal PTSD from seeing people die (or killing them).
- | Ashmead: C. L. Moore's *Vintage Season*
- | Schoen: Calvinistic time travel is when everything is predetermined.
- | Kramer: Robert A. Heinlein's "By His Bootstraps" and "All You Zombies", David Gerrold's *The Man Who Folded Himself*
- | Ashmead: Robert Silverberg has written multiple time travel stories.
- | Schoen: Eric James Stone, "A Lincoln in Time"
- | Kramer: *About Time* movie
- | Audience: Experiments on theories of history and the scope of small changes.

Spooky Science: The Physics of the Soul

Sunday, 2:00 PM
John Grant (mod)

Description: "Is it possible to weigh the soul? To photograph it? Even to smell it? 100 years ago some scientists thought so. John Grant gleefully describes some of their experiments and glances, too, at the recent fad for visiting Heaven and returning to tell the tale."

- | People started studying the physics of the soul in the 19th and early 20 century.
- | In 1882, the Society for Psycical Research was founded.
- | In 1927, Ryan did card-guessing tests at a laboratory at Duke University .
- | Ideas were not foolish in their day.
- | What was unscientific was persistence without evidence.
- | The field was characterized more by frauds.
- | Scantily-clad assistants distract the victims.
- | Richard Hodgson.
- | People were trying to prove something existed without evidence.
- | Physics tries to discover the properties of things.
- | Colin Wilson's "Faculty X" was indescribable.
- | Lucretius speculated on the soul's particles.
- | Spirit photography started with a double exposure, but then double exposures were used to defraud.
- | Arthur Conan Doyle: "incandescent rubicant, tweed-clad rage"
- | Attempts to weight the soul go back to the Egyptians.
- | One claim was a 21-gram (or 24-gram) weight loss at death for humans, but not for dogs. However, there were six patients, and the experimenter eliminated two.
- | Sweat might explain the human/dog difference, but not likely to weigh 21 grams.
- | The decline in weight is due to loss of moisture (demonstrated by a test tube experiment).
- | The Pareidolia Effect is when humans see a pattern where none exists.
- | Wool attracted good dust and repelled bad dust.
- | Kirillian Photography is coronal discharge.
- | Heaven(ly) Tourists or Tourism
- | *Twenty-Three Minutes in Hell, Heaven Is Real*
- | *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven* by Alex Malarkey, who eventually admitted it was a hoax.
- | Eben Alexander wrote *Proof of Heaven* and *Map of Heaven*, claiming to have visited Heaven after being declared brain-dead.
- | Can consciousness exist apart from a functioning brain?
- | Alexander cited tests proving him brain-dead but those were not the correct tests for that.
- | "The Prophet" by Luke Dittrich in *Esquire* debunks Alexander's claims.