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The conference on imaginative literature, thirty-third edition.

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Readercon 18 Program

There are three things you can do while at Readercon during the day: talk to friends, browse and patronize the [Bookshop](#), or attend the program. This is a significantly shorter list than provided by other science fiction conventions (which typically include an art show, gaming, musical performances, and so on). It's thus not an exaggeration to say that Readercon is all about the program. As we used to say, it's not just the heart of the convention, but the lungs, brain, liver, and kidneys.

The Readercon Programming Philosophy

The form and content of the Readercon program are shaped by the following principles:

Form

- | The broad range of interests and tastes of our attendees should be recognized and satisfied. In terms of genre, attendees may be into any combination of hard science fiction, literary sf, fantasy, horror, or "slipstream" (unclassifiable non-realistic) fiction. They may be variously interested in the writing and reading processes, in editing and publishing, and in the criticism and teaching of sf. They may like to hear panel discussions more than author readings or solo talks or discussions, or vice versa.
- | There should be something of interest every hour for all but the most narrowly-focused

attendee.

- | It's better to force someone to choose between two attractive alternatives than to leave them with nothing of interest in a given hour. However, items with obviously overlapping interest should not be held simultaneously.
- | There should be enough programming to keep our program participants reasonably busy: at least one item for everyone, a handful or more for our best speakers.

We've found that we can satisfy these principles by featuring the following simultaneously:

- | Two panel discussions featuring five (or occasionally six or four) participants, usually including a "leader" who both directs and takes part in the discussion (sometimes with the more traditional "moderator" who directs but doesn't opine). The participants sit in arm chairs in front of coffee tables, rather than behind the usual table. Usually, the last ten minutes or so are devoted to questions from the audience, but the leader is free to solicit audience input at any stage. Although some of the panels are based on ideas given us by the participants, they are all ultimately the brainchildren of Readercon's Program Subcommittee (see below).
- | Two tracks of author readings. Usually, each consists of a pair of compatible 30-minute readings, but there are 60-minute readings as well. Unlike nearly every other convention, we give you the title (and sometimes a descriptive blurb) in the Program Guide.
- | Two tracks of solo talks and/or discussion groups (the "mini-tracks"), usually 60 minutes long, sometimes 30. Unlike the panel discussions, these are the brainchildren of the individual presenters or discussion group leaders.
- | Two author Kaffeeklatsches — an intimate get-together between an author and up to 15 readers (who sign up in advance).
- | Two autograph sessions in the Bookshop.

The items in any hour are carefully selected to avoid overlaps of genre and topic. If there's a hard sf panel discussion, there will rarely if ever be a hard sf author doing a reading, autograph session, or the like at the same time. (There's another reason for this: we want them in the audience of the panel discussion). If there's a panel we deem useful to aspiring writers (who are legion in our audience), it will not be up against a solo talk about writing. In fact, someone with a fairly narrow set of interests should be able to pick and choose their way through the program: first a panel discussion about fantasy, then a reading by a fantasy author, now a discussion, another panel, a Kaffeeklatsch, and so on. The attendee with broader tastes finds themselves (we hope) at a sumptuous but well-balanced buffet.

Content

Very simply, we pride ourselves on doing panel discussions you haven't seen at a previous sf convention. We develop our ideas at meetings of our Program Subcommittee (there were ten of us this year, which is to say roughly half of the entire convention committee). If we have a driving principle, it's to start the panel at the right point, which is often roughly where the typical panel on the topic ends. In other words, we strive for panels that *ask the next question* (the driving cognitive philosophy of sf great Theodore Sturgeon, Memorial GoH at Readercon 2).

If this sounds attractive (or like a bold claim we need to back up), we urge you to read through the programs of past Readercons!

Schedule

Come early for our Thursday night Keynotes from 8 PM to 11 PM!

Regular programming begins at 11:00 AM on Friday with just a few of our multiple tracks; we add a few each hour and have a full slate running by 6:00 PM. Special events start at 10:00 PM (see below).

Saturday's full schedule runs from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. While there's no lunch break, we do try to populate the lunchtime hours with some of our more specialized programming — and if that fails, there's a concession stand which sells very satisfying sandwiches! See the "Special Events" section for what happens after 4:00 PM.

Sunday programming once again begins at 10:00 AM and ends at 3:00 PM.

Traditional Program Items

While the bulk of the program items at every Readercon are novel, there are a handful that you can count on:

- | The "Bookaholics Anonymous" meeting Friday — a great way for folks attending their first Readercon to meet some of the regulars and get into the spirit of the weekend.
- | A set of panels appreciating the career and works of our Guests of Honor, and of the outgoing and new Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award winners.
- | A panel reviewing the year in short fiction.
- | A series of 30-minute author talks called "How I Wrote *Novel Title*." This year's titles:
 - | *Ironsides* by Holly Black
 - | *Generation Loss* by Elizabeth Hand
 - | *Bright of the Sky* by Kay Kenyon
 - | *Blindsight* by Peter Watts

You're all urged to read as many as possible before the con. (One of our past slogans was "The con that assigns homework!"). Also note this year's choice for [The Readercon Book Club](#).

Special Events

- | The presentation of the annual **Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award**, Friday night at 10:00 PM. This is followed by:
- | **The Meet the Pros(e) Party**. This is a chance to not only meet the program participants, but a fragment of their work! See the program listing for any recent convention for the details.
- | **The Rhysling Award Poetry Slan**, Saturday afternoon at 3:00 PM (as part of regular programming). The Rhyslins are the annual awards of the Science Fiction Poetry Association, and Readercon is proud to be their new annual host. (A poetry "slan" — to be confused with "slam" — is a poetry reading by sf folks. If you don't get the in-joke, ask an sf fan above a certain age).
- | **Interviews with our Guests of Honor** from 4:00 to 6:00 PM on Saturday. Our Guests of Honor are eminent and interesting enough that we don't need to program anything else (except an open Bookshop) opposite them.
- | The famous **Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition** Saturday evening (after a two-hour dinner break). To our chagrin and secret satisfaction, we are perhaps as well known for "Kirk Poland" (widely regarded as the funniest 90 minutes in science fiction fandom, and certainly the funniest 90 minutes at any literary conference) as for everything else we do combined. Again, see a recent program listing for details.
- | In some years, **Something Else** at 8:00 PM, between the dinner break and Kirk Poland. We've had a Poetry Slan, a one-act play, several James Tiptree, Jr. Award presentations and auctions. Watch this space.

Full Program Schedule

All items are "60" minutes (actually 50) unless otherwise noted. All items begin 5 minutes after the nominal time, but attendees are urged to arrive as promptly as possible. Panels end 5 minutes before the hour. (L) indicates Leader (Participant/Moderator); (M) indicates (non-participant) Moderator

only.

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Thursday

8:00 pm F **"The Real Year" is Ageless!**

John Clute, Elizabeth Hand, David G. Hartwell (L), Barry N. Malzberg, Graham Sleight.

Readercon 4 Guest of Honor John Clute introduced the concept of the "real year" of a work of fiction in the January 1991 issue of *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, and it has proven to be one of the handiest critical concepts in the field and the basis for several past Readercon panels. According to Clute, every sf text, regardless of the year it claims to be set in, has an underlying "real year" which shines through, the secret point in time that gives the work its flavor. The closer the "real year" is to the present, the more cutting-edge the fiction reads; but most authors have a characteristic real year, one often based upon key childhood or adolescent experience and concerns (the real year of most Ray Bradbury stories is 1927). It's been exactly a decade since our last "real year" panel, and the concept casts light on almost every interesting development in the field since.

9:30 pm F **What Single Novel is Most Emblematic of Readercon?**

F. Brett Cox (L), Paul Di Filippo, Darrell Schweitzer, Sarah Smith.

"Readercon, to my mind, is all about books like *this one*." What's the one book? Obviously it's different for every attendee. Our answers will tell us a lot about what Readercon means to people, and what our favorite books mean to us. We'll hope to hear from every pro in attendance and as many readers as possible. *Note: please limit descriptions of plots and contents to the initial premise, i.e., what the reader might learn in the first chapter.*

Among the audience members we hope to hear from, in addition to the 8:00 PM panelists, are Guests of Honor Karen Joy Fowler and Lucius Shepard and program participants Amelia Beamer, Elizabeth Bear, Steve Berman, Ellen Brody, Charles N. Brown, Michael Cisco, Kathryn Cramer, Don D'Amassa, Daniel P. Dern, Chris Dolley, Ron Drummond, Scott Edelman, Jim Freund, Greer Gilman, Adam Golaski, Glenn Grant, Alexander Jablovkov, Matthew Jarpe, Kay Kenyon, John Langan, Barry B. Longyear, James Maxey, Victoria McManus, Yves Meynard, Sharyn November, Joshua Palmatier, Jennifer Pelland, Ian Randal Strock, Sonya Taaffe, Paul Tremblay, Jean-Louis Trudel, Eric M. Van, Peter Watts, Diane Weinstein, Rick Wilber, and Gary K. Wolfe.

Friday

11:00 am F **A Heinlein Roundtable.**

Charles N. Brown (M), John Clute, Graham Sleight, Gary K. Wolfe.

(60 min.) *Locus* magazine interviews our panelists for a Heinlein centenary piece.

11:00 am NH **Karen Joy Fowler** reads from her work. (60 min.)

12:00 noon F **Reading the Super-Long Narrative.**

Ellen Asher, John Crowley, Don D'Amassa, David G. Hartwell (L), Kay Kenyon.

It's one story, but it's coming out a volume at a time, at an interval of a year or much longer. Some of us have the self-control to wait till it's all in print, but most of us don't. Even if we consume it at one go, works of this size present challenges to the reader that single-volume works don't. And if we read it a volume at a time, the challenges mount. Do you reread the entire book before each new volume? Or do you resign yourself to missing some of what's going on?

12:00 noon NH **Jeffrey Ford** reads an unpublished story, "The Drowned Life." (60 min.)

12:00 noon VT **Sonya Taaffe** reads "Notes Toward the Classification of the Lesser Moly." (30 min.)

12:00 noon 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Lucius Shepard; Maureen McHugh.

12:30 pm VT **Vandana Singh** reads from the novella "Infinites." (30 min.)

1:00 pm F **Brilliant But Flawed.**

John Crowley, Karen Joy Fowler, Kelly Link, Barry N. Malzberg, Darrell Schweitzer (L).

William Hope Hodgson's fiction often has scenes of great visionary power, but there's no denying that it also has qualities that could qualify it for the Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose competition.

Characterization is lacking, prose is creaky—but then there are the images. Our reading experience of flawed texts like Hodgson's can vary remarkably, from reader to reader or even from text to text. At times it's possible to be taken in by the one good aspect of a text while ignoring many flaws, while at the other extreme, there are times when a single flaw can poison our experience of an otherwise excellent work. We'll start our discussion by talking about works we've found problematical and whether we sank or swam with their weaknesses. What part of our response lies in ourselves, and how much in the text? Can we figure out what sorts of readers can or can't read what sorts of flawed works?

1:00 pm H **The Slipstream / Fabulation / Magic Realism Canon.**

F. Brett Cox (L), Paul Di Filippo, Ron Drummond, Theodora Goss, John Kessel, Victoria McManus, Graham Sleight, Catherynne M. Valente.

(c. 100 min.) There are lists galore of the best 100 sf, fantasy, or horror novels, but nothing at all for their odd cousin, the slipstream novel. Until now! Each panelist has submitted a list of the best 50 or 100 works of fiction of all-time that are in some important way non-mimetic or fantastic, but would not ordinarily be regarded as sf, fantasy, or horror. We've compiled the lists and provided you all with a handout; the panelists will talk about the best and most controversial of the works.

1:00 pm NH **Robert Freeman Wexler** reads from a new novelle, "Sidewalk Factory: A Mini Story-Suite." (30 min.)

1:00 pm VT **Hildy Silverman** reads "Picky," forthcoming in an anthology from the Garden State Horror Writers. (30 min.)

1:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Laura Anne Gilman; Holly Black.

1:30 pm NH **John Langan** reads from "Snow," an upcoming story. (30 min.)

1:30 pm VT **Mary Robinette Kowal** reads "Body Language." (30 min.)

2:00 pm F **Writing and the Rest of Life.**

Jeffrey Ford, Kay Kenyon (L), Barry N. Malzberg, Laurie J. Marks, James Maxey, Vandana Singh.

Writers often experience conflicts between their writing, and their family and job obligations. Is it possible to use these conflicts productively? If that's impossible, how do you build a firewall between work and the rest of life? Does being enmeshed in or removed from your real life while you're at the keyboard result in different flavors of fiction?

2:00 pm H **The Slipstream / Fabulation / Magic Realism Canon. (cont.)**

F. Brett Cox (L), Paul Di Filippo, Ron Drummond, Theodora Goss, John Kessel, Victoria McManus, Graham Sleight, Catherynne M. Valente. (c. 40 min.)

2:00 pm NH **Paul Witcover** reads from "Everland," the title story in his forthcoming collection from PS Publishing. (30 min.)

2:00 pm VT **Louise Marley** reads from her short story collection, *Absalom's Mother & Other*

Stories. (30 min.)

2:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer; Greer Gilman.

2:30 pm NH **Paul Tremblay** reads "There's No Light Between Floors" from *Clarkesworld Magazine*. (30 min.)

2:30 pm VT **Leigh Grossman** reads "Watching Shadows." (30 min.)

3:00 pm F **The Retold Fairy or Folk Tale.**

Holly Black, Ellen Datlow, Theodora Goss (L), Gavin J. Grant, Catherynne M. Valente.

It's become a thriving and very interesting sub-genre, highlighted by Angela Carter's *The Bloody Chamber*, Tanith Lee's *Red As Blood*, the Fairy Tales Series of novels edited by Terri Windling, and the *Snow White, Blood Red* series of anthologies edited by Windling and Ellen Datlow (there are doubtless many other examples). We'll discuss the appeal of these works and the myriad evident approaches. What are the separate advantages to hewing close to the original and to taking great liberties?

3:00 pm H **The Fiction of William Hope Hodgson, Current Cordwainer Smith Award Winner.**
Don D'Amassa, Adam Golaski, Darrell Schweitzer (L), Diane Weinstein.

3:00 pm ME **Implausible Teaching.**

Laurie J. Marks.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). Marks teaches Freshman English at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, where the majority of incoming freshmen haven't been well served by their high schools, and are first-generation Americans or first-generation college students. Marks says it's a bit like being a medic in the trenches during WWI: "I have a clear sense of purpose, but I'm shell-shocked, and I wish I had some ammunition." When she was in graduate school, one of her mentors advised, 'Don't teach writing. Teach students.' This implausible emphasis on audience rather than subject has surprising implications for all teachers. Marks will review practical, theoretical, and ethical aspects of teaching students, with lots of examples, slides, and even a handout.

3:00 pm NH **Lucius Shepard** reads a new story, "Larissa Miusov," or from a rewrite of his 2005 novel *Viator*. (60 min.)

3:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Barry B. Longyear; Paul Levinson.

3:00 pm E Autographs. John Crowley; Elizabeth Hand.

3:30 pm NH **Victoria McManus** reads "Detox" (by "Elspeth Potter") from the forthcoming anthology *So Fey: Queer Faery Fiction*, and if time allows, "Poppies Are Not the Only Flower" from the forthcoming *Lipstick on Her Collar, and Other Tales of Lesbian Lust*. (30 min.)

4:00 pm F **Rebel, Rebel: Ex-Rocker Writers.**

F. Brett Cox (L), Glenn Grant, Elizabeth Hand, Sharyn November, Lucius Shepard.

The attitude of rebellion (or the conscious stance of being a societal outsider) is central to rock 'n' roll and important in sf, where rebellion is both a frequent theme of the fiction and inherent in the career choice. We ask our writers with a significant rock 'n' roll past (as performer, critic, DJ, or the like) to reflect on the theme of rebellion in their lives and fiction. How has their early experience as an outsider shaped their approach to character in fiction?

4:00 pm H **Smooth and Lumpy Expanded Universes.**

Michael Cisco, James Alan Gardner (L), Yves Meynard, Ian Randall Strock, Rick Wilber.

There are convincing and unconvincing ways for a writer to build on a created world. The introduction of the Bene Tleilax in *Dune Messiah* strikes many readers as an off-note, because it's

inconceivable that the organization wouldn't have been mentioned in the original novel. In contrast, the Order of the Phoenix fit beautifully into J. K. Rowling's world. Isaac Asimov spent the last years of his career relentlessly expanding and merging his created universes, with controversial results. What other examples stand out? What are some of the tricks of the trade?

4:00 pm ME **Remember to Breathe: The Secrets Behind Great Public Readings.**

Mary Robinette Kowal.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). You may be a good writer, but reading aloud is a separate skill. Learn to make your words sound as great out loud as they do on the page. Using both demonstration and audience participation, we will explore voicing, narration and pacing.

4:00 pm NH **Kelly Link** reads an untitled new story. (30 min.)

4:00 pm VT **Scott Edelman** reads "The World Breaks" from the upcoming anthology *Nation of Ash*. (60 min.)

4:00 pm VT **Chris Genoa** reads from his forthcoming novel, *The Monkey and the Barrel: A Novel of Kung Fu and Foolish Love*. (30 min.)

4:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Karen Joy Fowler; Steve Berman, S. C. Butler, and Michael J. Daley.

4:00 pm E Autographs. Kay Kenyon; James and Kathryn Morrow.

4:30 pm NH **Jeffrey Thomas** reads (30 min.)

5:00 pm F **"The Singularity Needs Women!"**

Elizabeth Bear, Kathryn Cramer, Louise Marley, Victoria McManus (L), James Morrow.

At Readercon 14 (2002), GoH Octavia Butler said "As the only woman up here, this may be a strange question, but I can't help wondering how much of this speculation about a post-human future has to do with men's desire to control reproduction." We sadly can't ask Octavia exactly what she meant, but we want to pursue this striking statement. Does the post-humanist ideal of freedom from bodily constraints clash fundamentally with the ideal of freedom for the more than half of the population with female bodies? Or might the Singularity actually be a means to the freedoms sought by feminism? Has anyone written fiction about how these ideals interact, and if not, is this an opportunity?

5:00 pm H **Awe, Horror!**

John Clute, Ellen Datlow, Nick Mamatas, Kim Paffenroth, Gary K. Wolfe (L).

The May 2007 issue of *Locus* featured a roundtable discussion of horror, focusing on John Clute's model of horror story structure as presented in his recent book *The Darkening Garden*. Gary K. Wolfe beautifully summed up Clute's most important idea: the best horror tales don't "need to set out to scare us—they reveal to us that we're *already* scared." Clute calls the feeling evoked at the end of a horror tale when the true and inimical nature of the world is revealed "vastation," which Peter Straub argued was in fact a form of transcendence. Elsewhere in the issue, authors Ramsey Campbell (admitting to being a horror writer) and Caitlin R. Kiernan (denying the same) both argue that the best horror evokes the emotion of *awe* rather than fear. We think they're talking about the same feeling as Clute and Straub, and that this insight is the key to relating Clute's ideas to the more conventional view in which horror is defined not by its characteristic story structure but by the effect it produces on the reader. We'll review Clute's model and then focus on its (arguably awesome or awful) final stage.

5:00 pm ME **Writing Sequels.**

Paul Levinson.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). Which novel or novels should you choose for a sequel (when you have at least three choices)? When should you go public about writing the sequel (and perhaps risk giving away part of the ending of the prior novel)? In the long run, is a writer better off writing a sequel, or a

novel in a brand new universe? This talk will consider these and other fascinating facets in the realm of sequeldom.

5:00 pm NH **John Kessel** reads "Powerless" or "Pride and Prometheus," forthcoming stories. (60 min.)

5:00 pm VT **Tom Purdom** reads "Installment Eight: Doubling Up," from his online *When I Was Writing, A Literary Memoir*, telling how he sold his first Ace Double in 1963. (30 min.)

5:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Kelly Link and Gavin J. Grant,; Matthew Kressel.

5:00 pm E Autographs. Michael J. Daley; Barry B. Longyear.

5:30 pm VT **Theodora Goss** reads from her short story collection, *In the Forest of Forgetting*. (30 min.)

6:00 pm F **Hunted Jaguars: Fiction In Another Land.**

Paul Di Filippo, Mary Robinette Kowal (L), Shariann Lewitt, Paul Park, Lucius Shepard.

Much memorable speculative fiction has been set either in the developing world or in an obviously fantasticated version of it. These stories are attractive to writers and readers for a number of different reasons. Our panelists talk about the genesis of these stories and their motivations for using such a setting.

6:00 pm H **Absent Friends: Remembering the People We've Lost This Year.**

Jim Freund (M), Chris Genoa, John Kessel, Sonya Taaffe, Diane Weinstein.

Jack Williamson, Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., John M. "Mike" Ford, Wilson "Bob" Tucker, Nelson Bond, Robert Anton Wilson, and Lloyd Alexander are among the sf greats who've left us in the last year. We pause to remember them and others, and celebrate their time with us.

6:00 pm ME **Why the Small Press Matters.**

Matthew Kressel.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). Why are big names like Jeff Ford, Rick Bowes, Catherynne M. Valente and others sending their stuff to the small press? Why should we pay attention to smaller markets like *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *Electric Velocipede*, *Say*, and *Sybil's Garage*? If one were to start a small press magazine, what pitfalls should one look out for?

6:00 pm RI **Bookaholics Anonymous Annual Meeting**

Laura Anne Gilman, Nancy C. Hanger (L), Walter H. Hunt, Joshua Palmatier.

Discussion (60 min.). The most controversial of all 12step groups. Despite the appearance of self-approbation, despite the formal public proclamations by members that they find their behavior humiliating and intend to change it, this group, in fact, is alleged to secretly encourage its members to succumb to their addictions. The shame, in other words, is a sham. Within the subtext of the members' pathetic testimony, it is claimed, all the worst vices are covertly endorsed: book-buying, book-hoarding, book-stacking, book-sniffing, even book-reading. Could this be true? Come testify yourself!

6:00 pm NH **Laurie J. Marks** reads from *Water Logic* and / or *Air Logic*. (30 min.)

6:00 pm VT **James Maxey** reads from his just-published novel *Bitterwood*. (30 min.)

6:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Matthew Jarpe; Jeff Hecht.

6:30 pm NH **Elizabeth Bear** reads from novel-in-progress *All the Windwrecked Stars*, from *Whiskey and Water* (published days ago by Roc), and / or something else (audience choice). (30 min.)

6:30 pm VT **Catherynne M. Valente** reads from *The Orphan's Tales, Vol. II: In the Cities of Coin*

and Spice, forthcoming from Spectra in October. (30 min.)

7:00 pm F **Young (and Very Young) Adult F&SF.**

Holly Black, Michael J. Daley, Sarah Beth Durst, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Sharyn November (L), Elizabeth Wein.

This is a golden age for young adult speculative fiction, and part of the blossoming comes from the broadening of the YA category to include middle readers, between the ages of 8 to 12. Novels like *The City of Ember* by Jeanne DuPrau and *The Devil's Arithmetic* by Jane Yolen have joined classics like Madeline L'Engle's *A Wrinkle in Time* in school curricula across the nation. Magical tales by Diana Wynne Jones, Cornelia Funke, and Neil Gaiman grace the shelves next to reprints of Roald Dahl. Our panel of YA and very YA authors discuss their work, and the challenges and essentials of writing for a young audience.

7:00 pm H **The Fiction of Lucius Shepard.**

Adam Golaski (L), John Langan, Graham Sleight, Michael Swanwick, Paul Witcover.

7:00 pm ME **The Public Domain Land, by William Hope Hodgson, et al.**

Leigh Grossman, Paul Levinson (L), James D. Macdonald, Laura Quilter, Peter Watts.

The fiction of William Hope Hodgson, this year's Cordwainer Smith winner, is in the public domain. Much of it is online, and a number of writers have written excellent new works in the Night Land universe. Would Hodgson be as well remembered as he is without this freedom to use his work? What can we make of this example, in light of current debates on intellectual property/copyright issues?

7:00 pm RI **Speculative Poetry Workshop.**

Mike Allen.

Talk / Workshop (60 min.). What is speculative poetry? How do you write it, why would you want to, and which editors will buy it? Come prepared to write on the fly.

7:00 pm NH **Maureen McHugh** reads "The Lost Boy: A Reporter at Large," a forthcoming story. (60 min.)

7:00 pm VT **F. Brett Cox** reads something you haven't heard before from his forthcoming work. (30 min.)

7:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Rosemary Kirstein; Chris Genoa.

7:30 pm VT **Darrell Schweitzer** reads a recent short story, "Thousand Year Warrior." (30 min.)

8:00 pm F **Filling in the Middle.**

Chris Dolley, Kay Kenyon, Rosemary Kirstein, Shariann Lewitt, James D. Macdonald, Rick Wilber (L).

Stories are often conceived of with a beginning and an ending and nothing in between. The writer's challenge is to figure out how to get from the start to the end, to figure out what could possibly happen to bring about the ending given the initial conditions. [Some more stuff here . . . eventually say:] A look at the nature of the middle of stories and at some of the techniques for filling them in.

8:00 pm H **Beyond Dick and Tiptree: SF Writers Who Deserve Biographies.**

Fred Lerner, Barry N. Malzberg, Gordon Van Gelder, Jacob Weisman (M), Gary K. Wolfe.

There haven't been too many literary biographies of sf greats. A few candidates for future biographies led famously interesting lives, such as Paul Linebarger / Cordwainer Smith and Theodore Sturgeon. We suspect that there are others whose lives were more interesting than they might seem at first glance. A discussion of the best candidates and of the issues involved (scholarship, commercial viability).

8:00 pm ME **The Readercon Book Club.**

Judith Berman, Ron Drummond (L), Elizabeth Hand, Graham Sleight, Konrad Walewski.
In celebration of its 25th anniversary edition, an in-depth discussion of John Crowley's *Little, Big*.

8:00 pm RI **"Nightfall," Forgotten Classic of Horror Radio.**

Adam Golaski with Neil Marsh.

Talk (60 min.). "Nightfall" was broadcast in the late 70s early 80s as an original horror anthology series for the CBC. Thirteen episodes were rebroadcast on NPR in the early 80s. Golaski and expert Neil Marsh play excerpts, talk about the history of the show, the many literary adaptations done, and about their own enthusiasm for "Nightfall"—a radio show as good as "Lights Out!" and "Inner Sanctum"—just not as well known.

8:00 pm NH **James Morrow** reads from novel-in-progress *The Philosopher's Apprentice*. (60 min.)

8:00 pm VT **Broad Universe Rapidfire Group Reading.**

Jennifer Pelland (host), with M.J. Danville, Heidi Lampiotti, Margaret Ronald, Morven Westfield, Trisha J. Wooldridge, and Phoebe Wray.

Broad Universe is an international organization of women and men dedicated to celebrating and promoting the work of women writers of science fiction, fantasy and horror. (60 min.)

8:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Ellen Datlow; John Joseph Adams.

9:00 pm ME **F&SF Reviewing in the Blogosphere.**

John Clute, Kathryn Cramer, Jim Freund (M), Ernest Lilley, Tom Purdom, Gordon Van Gelder.

A guide to what's online, and a discussion of the ways in which online reviewing differs from the print variety. What are the good and bad aspects of the more personal and informal tone of much online criticism?

9:00 pm RI **Creating Interfictions.**

Theodora Goss (L), Vandana Singh, Catherynne M. Valente, with Tempest Bradford, Michael DeLuca, and Joy Marchand.

Discussion (60 min.). Meet with editor Theodora Goss and several of the *Interfictions* writers to discuss how the anthology was created. How did the writers think about their stories—did they set out to write "interstitial," or did the stories just come out that way? How did the editors select the stories that appear in the anthology? What does "interstitial" mean anyway? And when can you start submitting for *Interfictions 2*?

9:00 pm NH **John Crowley** reads from a work in progress. (60 min.)

9:00 pm VT **Elizabeth Wein** reads from *The Mark of Solomon* and new work. (30 min.)

9:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Walter H. Hunt; John Langan.

9:30 pm VT **Sarah Beth Durst** reads from *Into the Wild*. (30 min.)

10:00 pm F/H **The 2008 Cordwainer Smith Rediscovery Award Ceremony.**

Barry N. Malzberg, Gordon Van Gelder.

(15 min.) The Smith Award, honoring a writer worthy of being rediscovered by today's readers, is selected annually by a panel of judges that include longtime Readercon stalwarts Barry N. Malzberg and Gordon Van Gelder. Past winners include Olaf Stapledon, R.A. Lafferty, and Edgar Pangborn, Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore, and Leigh Brackett.

10:15 pm F/H **Meet the Pros(e) Party.** (105 min.)

Each writer at the party has selected a short, pithy quotation from his or her own work and is armed with a sheet of 30 printed labels, the quote replicated on each. As attendees mingle and meet each pro, they obtain one of his or her labels, collecting them on the wax paper provided. Atheists, agnostics,

and the lazy can leave them in the order they acquire them, resulting in one of at least nine billion Random Prose Poems. Those who believe in the reversal of entropy can rearrange them to make a Statement. Wearing labels as apparel is also popular. The total number of possibilities (linguistic and sartorial) is thought to exceed the number of bytes of data in George W. Bush's brain that correspond to objective reality.

Saturday

10:00 am F **Must Great Narrative Art Have Humor?**

Judith Berman, Paul Di Filippo, Craig Shaw Gardner, Barry B. Longyear, Eric M. Van (L). (90-100 min.; continues in RI) (*Was: Getting No Respect: Humor as the Rodney Dangerfield of Aesthetic Responses.*) At Readercon 17, Eric M. Van presented the beginnings of a neuroscientific theory of aesthetic responses to narrative art. There were four fairly obvious responses, which corresponded to the standard qualities of beauty (of prose or cinematography), character, plot, and depth of meaning. The surprise was that humor seemed to be a fifth primary quality rather than a subset of any of the other four. The notion that humor is as fundamental a story quality as plot or character suggests that every great narrative work should possess it, an assertion we're not sure we've heard before. We'll analyze the nature of humor by looking at our favorite jokes, comedy routines, and prose passages, and try to answer the titular question. Can we name any great works of narrative art that are essentially humorless?

10:00 am H **The Year in Short Fiction.**

Kathryn Cramer, Ellen Datlow, David G. Hartwell (L), Gordon Van Gelder, Sean Wallace.

10:00 am ME **Other Points of View.**

David Louis Edelman, Laurie J. Marks (L), Maureen McHugh, Wen Spencer, Peter Watts. In several places, Karen Joy Fowler's *The Jane Austen Book Club* adopts a first-person plural viewpoint: "we" are thinking about the conversation described, and the reader gets to think about who, exactly, "we" may be—not everyone in the room! While third person and first person singular are the standard viewpoints in fiction, here we talk about the alternatives, and when we (you?) can best employ them.

10:00 am RI **How (and Why) I Wrote *Generation Loss*.**

Elizabeth Hand.

Talk (30 min.).

10:00 am NH **Paul Park** reads from *The Hidden World*, the forthcoming final volume of the Roumanian Quartet. (60 min.)

10:00 am VT **Sarah Smith** reads a work in progress, *Memory House*. (30 min.)

10:00 am 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald; Catherynne M. Valente.

10:00 am E Autographs. Jeffrey Ford; Nina Kiriki Hoffman.

10:30 am RI **Willa Cather: Medievalist and Fan.**

Faye Ringel.

Talk (30 min.). So, all you ever knew about Willa Cather you learned in high school, when you were assigned "O Pioneers!" or "My Antonia"—and you've avoided her realistic novels ever since? Who knew about Cather's early years, when she was a fanatical medievalist who wrote romantic poems, idolized the troubadours, and devoured tales of fantastic adventure? If she had grown up in 1990 instead of 1890, she would have posted on LJ and joined the SCA. Ringel has just returned from following Cather's footsteps through Provence. Come and learn more about this surprising American

master.

10:30 am VT **Laura Anne Gilman** reads from the new "Retrievers" novel, *Burning Bridges*. (30 min.)

11:00 am F **Political Beliefs and Fiction.**

Paolo Bacigalupi, David Louis Edelman, Karen Joy Fowler, John Kessel (L), James Morrow, Lucius Shepard.

Both our Guests of Honor have histories of political activism. We've learned from other authors that the relationship between strongly held political beliefs and fiction is not always what it seems: apparently apolitical stories have hidden political motivations, or the overt political elements which would seem to be central to a story's conception are in fact late additions. Our panelists discuss their stories with political elements or motivations. How do different creative circumstances (e.g., coolly rational vs. mad as hell) lead to different flavors of fiction or different degrees of success?

11:00 am H **"The Door Dilated," Needless Exposition Contracted: Heinlein as Narrative Innovator.**

James L. Cambias, F. Brett Cox, Daniel P. Dern (L), Fred Lerner, Tom Purdom.

Robert A. Heinlein was the first sf author to regularly write about the future as though the reader already lived there. From our current perspective it may be hard to imagine just how radical an innovation this was. We celebrate the centenary of his birth by examining the profound influence he's had on the art of sf storytelling.

11:00 am ME **Short Fiction Outlets You've Never Heard Of.**

Ellen Datlow, Adam Golaski (L), Matthew Kressel, Jennifer Pelland, Paul Tremblay.

A survey of the obscure places that short speculative fiction appears today, for both writers and readers.

11:00 am RI **Must Great Narrative Art Have Humor? (cont.)**

Judith Berman, Paul Di Filippo, Craig Shaw Gardner, Barry B. Longyear, Eric M. Van (L). (c. 40 min.)

11:00 am NH **Elizabeth Hand** reads "Winter's Wife." (30 min.)

11:00 am VT **Greer Gilman** reads from the new third story in the Ashes cycle, following "A Crowd of Bone" and "Jack Daw's Pack." (60 min.)

11:00 am 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Michael Swanwick; Paul Park.

11:00 am E Autographs. Joshua Palmatier; Catherynne M. Valente.

11:30 am NH **Nina Kiriki Hoffman** reads a new "pseudo sf" story, "Discards." (30 min.)

12:00 noon F **James Frey Recapitulates Santa Claus.**

Judith Berman, Karen Joy Fowler, Adam Golaski (M), Alexander Jablokov, Barry N. Malzberg, Maureen McHugh.

We don't have to tell you how valuable invented stories are to the human mind—after all, you're here at this convention. And yet James Frey was unable to sell *A Million Little Pieces* until he passed it off as *true*, and when it was exposed as mere autobiographical fiction, we were hugely pissed. In fact, our experience was the precise opposite of reading a fantastic narrative, as we suffered the *unwilling suspension of belief*. Which is furthermore what every five-year old undergoes when they learn the truth about Santa or the Tooth Fairy. It seems that for all the importance of made-up stories, true ones may be even more important, and *learning to tell them apart* may be the most important thing of all. Is one of the functions of fiction to teach us how to do this?

12:00 noon H **Sense of Wonder, or Sense of Cool?**

John Joseph Adams, Thomas A. Easton, Laura Anne Gilman, Ernest Lilley (M), Ian Randal Strock.
Sf seeks that sense of wonder, but we think much of today's best sf brings forth a different feeling. To some of us, stories such as those in Charles Stross's *Accelerando* sequence evoke a response more along these lines: "It really might be like that? Cool!" The emotion is less an awed contemplation of the universe and its inhabitants, and more the delight we have toward a new, really loaded computer, electronic gadget or online capability-what can we do with it, what are the implications? What the author shows us may be amazing, beyond present technology or knowledge, but it feels better understood and more under our control than the cosmic wonders of older sf. Cool is more widely shared than wonder, but less, er, wonderful. Can this be part of the reason for the decline in the popularity of sf-cool can be reliably found in more places? Does fantasy supply wonder more reliably today?

12:00 noon ME **Talking Film With Lucius Shepard**

Lucius Shepard.

Discussion (60 min.). Our GoH is a longtime film reviewer for *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. Join him for a free-flowing film discussion.

12:00 noon RI **New Writing Tricks.**

Wen Spencer.

Talk (60 min.). Learning how to write has been described as being like backing up a flight of stairs; you don't know you've gotten better until you realize you're one step up. Spencer shares some writing tricks she's discovered that she's never seen in how-to books.

12:00 noon NH **Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald** read from a work in progress. (30 min.)

12:00 noon VT **Sybil's Garage Group Reading.**

Matthew Kressel (host), with Leah Bobet, John Bowker, and Barbara Krasnoff.

"A Magazine of Speculative Fiction, Poetry & Art" mixes 21st century sf, fantasy, horror and slipstream fiction with 19th century engravings. Its fourth issue is out now. (60 min.)

12:00 noon 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. John Crowley; Elizabeth Hand.

12:00 noon E Autographs. Rosemary Kirstein; Paul Levinson.

12:30 pm RI **Ergonomic Solutions on the Cheap (And a Few Otherwise).**

Sarah Smith.

Discussion (30 min.). Discussants share ergonomic goodies, experiences, tips and tricks. With a hands-on demonstration of the semi-legendary Comfort Keyboard, the Cadillac of ergonomic keyboards.

12:30 pm NH **Kay Kenyon** reads from *Bright of the Sky*.

(30 min.)

1:00 pm F **Fantasy as Inner Landscape.**

John Crowley, Greer Gilman, Kelly Link, Kathryn Morrow (L), Paul Park, Michael Swanwick.

It's easy to criticize fantasy for its apparent acceptance of outmoded social structures, and in fact we've done so in past panels such as "Efland Über Alles" and "The Return of the Prime Minister." But are the social structures of fantasy actually a metaphor for *inner* experience? The king, the knights, the aristocracy, and the noble peasants who aspire to one or more of the above-do these appeal to writers and readers not because of any fondness for their reality, but because they provide a map of human experience and growth? *Readercon hopes to put the audio recording of this panel online at some point after the convention.*

1:00 pm H **Blindsided by the Fantastic: Slipstream as Fiction Without Expectation.**

John Clute, Shira Daemon (M), Scott Edelman, Theodora Goss, Graham Sleight.

Sf films like *The Truman Show*, *Open Your Eyes / Vanilla Sky* and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* were not marketed as sf, and for good reason: the tales were more effective if we didn't know beforehand that they were science fictional. There aren't too many novels that are more effective if the sf aspect blindsides us—*Sarah Canary* is one, and Michael Bishop's *Brittle Innings* is another—probably because the authors know that the game will be given away when "science fiction" is stamped on the spine. Is there any hope that slipstream can be established as the genre (or anti-genre) where such reframing of the story is possible? What kind of books might be written if authors had this freedom?

1:00 pm ME **What's On Your Bookshelf?: LibraryThing.**

abby, avalong (L), AsYouKnow_Bob, Elizabeth Bear, Laura Quilter.

Discussion (60 min.). Join the LibraryThingers who lurk among you to celebrate (or learn about) LibraryThing, a fast-growing online service to help you catalog your personal library online. It's also an amazing network connecting people with similar libraries all over the world. We'll share the thrills, the chills and agonies. With over 200,000 members and 13 million books catalogued, LibraryThing "is quietly achieving cult status among bookworms around the world, creating a network with one of the highest IQs in cyberspace." —Business 2.0 magazine.

1:00 pm RI **Odyssey Writing Workshop Presentation.**

Jeanne Cavelos.

Talk (60 min.). Director Cavelos discusses the pros and cons of writing workshops, and describes the workings of Odyssey, an intensive six-week program for writers of sf, fantasy, and horror held each summer at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, NH. Odyssey is an internationally respected program with guests that have included George R. R. Martin, Dan Simmons, Elizabeth Hand, and Harlan Ellison. Former and current Odyssey participants will share their experiences.

1:00 pm NH **Barry B. Longyear** reads "Starborn" and some other stuff. (60 min.)

1:00 pm VT **Michael A. Burstein** reads "The Soldier Within" and/or "Moving Day" (two short stories). (30 min.)

1:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Mike Allen; Jacob Weisman.

1:00 pm E Autographs. Sarah Beth Durst; Elizabeth Wein.

1:30 pm VT **Matthew Jarpe** reads from *Radio Freefall*, forthcoming next month from Tor. (30 min.)

2:00 pm F **The Case for Archetypal Evil in Fantasy.**

Ellen Asher, S. C. Butler, Jeanne Cavelos, James Morrow (L), Joshua Palmatier.

The pervasive trend in modern fantasy is to give the bad guys moral complexity and psychological depth—good reasons to be bad. This approach stands in stark contrast to the legions of past Dark Lords who were utterly evil because, well, they were utterly evil. Tolkien, however, wrote pages of philosophy on the nature of Melkor / Morgoth (published in *Morgoth's Ring*), suggesting that our rejection of the old model was a reaction only to badly done Dark Lords. Is there an argument for making things at least somewhat black and white (how much psychological depth does a human sociopath have, anyway)?

2:00 pm H **The Fiction of Karen Joy Fowler.**

Amelia Beamer, Ken Houghton (L), John Kessel, Maureen McHugh, Victoria McManus.

2:00 pm ME **The Megaverse, the Landscape, and the Anthropic and Holographic Principles.**

Carl Frederick.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). Frederick discusses the new, new physics, including the nature of dark energy, the cosmological constant, and the accidental push creationists have given to modern theory.

Recent work by Leonard Susskind, Gerard 't Hooft, Alan Guth, Steven Weinberg *et al* is so new that many physicists are still unaware of it. It's all very science-fiction-like and some of it might even be true (or true enough).

2:00 pm RI ***Dead Reckonings.***

John Langan with Jack Haringa.

Discussion (60 min.). A discussion about the new review journal of the horror field, edited by Jack and S.T. Joshi.

2:00 pm NH ***The Coyote Road Group Reading.***

Ellen Datlow (host), Steve Berman, Holly Black, Jeffrey Ford, Theodora Goss, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Kelly Link, and Elizabeth Wein. The Coyote Road: Trickster Tales, an anthology edited by Datlow and Terri Windling and illustrated by Charles Vess, will be published in two weeks by Viking Juvenile. Over half the contributors are present or former Readercon program participants. (60 min.)

2:00 pm VT **Paul Di Filippo** reads "The New Cyberiad." (60 min.)

2:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Paolo Bacigalupi; Sarah Beth Durst.

2:00 pm E Autographs. David G. Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer; Donald Kingsbury.

3:00 pm F **The Rhysling Award Poetry Slan.**

Mike Allen (L), Theodora Goss, Darrell Schweitzer, Lucius Shepard, Sonya Taaffe, Catherynne M. Valente, with Mary Alexandra Agner, Erik Amundsen, Leah Bobet, Lila Garrott, Drew Morse, Peter Payack, and Lorraine Schein.

(60 min.) (A "poetry slan," to be confused with "poetry slam," is a poetry reading by sf folks, of course.) Climaxed by the presentation of this year's Rhysling Awards.

3:00 pm H **Towards a Promiscuous Theory of Story Structure.**

John Clute, John Crowley, James Morrow, Sarah Smith, Eric M. Van (L).

The world is bad, and there is a revelation as to how to make it good. That's fantasy (according to John Clute's theory of fantasy structure, grossly oversimplified). The world seems to be good, and is revealed to be bad. That's horror (ditto; see the blurb for "Awe, Horror!"). The world is good, and there is a revelation that it is becoming bad. That's the awful warning sf novel (according to us). The world seems to be bad (closed or restricted), and is revealed to be good (open). That's the most common version of the sf story structure known as "conceptual breakthrough" (ditto). All of these story structures share a contrast between two versions or views of the world and hinge on the discovery or recognition of the difference. Are there other specific story structures that use these two elements, perhaps in combinations different from the above? Just how crucial is the difference between a world that can and will be changed, and one that can't or needn't be? How about the difference between discovering the truth about the world, and recognizing a truth we knew but were denying?

3:00 pm ME **The Challenge of Near-Future Political Scenarios in SF.**

Gavin J. Grant, Glenn Grant, Walter H. Hunt (L), Matthew Jarpe, Anil Menon.

Most writers shy away from the near future out of fear of being overtaken by events, and this is doubly true of political scenarios (Charles Stross has written about looking over his shoulder while writing his upcoming *Halting State*). Who has done this successfully, and what can we learn from them? What are the arguments for creating realistic near-future scenarios even if they are destined to become outmoded, i.e., is there something we get from these above and beyond the mere prediction?

3:00 pm RI **How I Wrote *Ironside*.**

Holly Black with Steve Berman. Talk (30 min.).

3:00 pm NH **Michael Swanwick** reads from *The Dragons of Babel*, forthcoming from Tor next

January. (60 min.)

3:00 pm VT **Ellen Brody** reads "The Courtship of Mr. Lyon" by **Angela Carter**. (60 min.)

3:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Elizabeth Bear; Scott Edelman.

3:00 pm E Autographs. Karen Joy Fowler; Laura Anne Gilman.

3:30 pm RI **How I Wrote *Bright of the Sky***.
Kay Kenyon. Talk (30 min.).

4:00 pm F **Lucius Shepard Interviewed**
by *Jeffrey Ford*. (60 min.)

5:00 pm F **Karen Joy Fowler Interviewed**
by *Adam Golaski*. (60 min.)

8:00 pm F/H **The 21st Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition.**

Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald, Craig Shaw Gardner (L), Glenn Grant, Yves Meynard, Eric M. Van (M).

(90 min.) Our traditional evening entertainment, named in memory of the pseudonym and alter ego of Jonathan Herovit of Barry Malzberg's *Herovit's World*. Ringleader Craig Shaw Gardner reads a passage of unidentified but genuine, published, bad sf, fantasy, or horror prose, which has been truncated in mid-sentence. Each of our panelists—Craig and his co-moderator Eric M. Van, champion Yves Meynard, ex-champion Glenn Grant, and new challengers Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald (as always, writing as a team)—then reads an ending for the passage. One ending is the real one; the others are imposters concocted by our contestants (including Craig) ahead of time. None of the players knows who wrote any passage other than their own, except for Eric, who gets to play God as a reward for the truly onerous duty of unearthing these gems. Craig then asks for the audience vote on the authenticity of each passage (recapping each in turn by quoting a pithy phrase or three from them), and the Ace Readercon Joint Census Team counts up each show of hands faster than you can say "Bambi pranced." Eric then reveals the truth. Each contestant receives a point for each audience member they fooled, while the audience collectively scores a point for everyone who spots the real answer. As a rule, the audience finishes third or fourth. Warning: the Surgeon General has determined that *this* trash is hazardous to your health; i.e., if it hurts to laugh, you're in big trouble.

Sunday

10:00 am F **Beyond Spacetime and DNA: The Other Sciences in Hard SF.**

Ted Chiang, Thomas A. Easton, Carl Frederick, Paul Levinson (L), Louise Marley.

A reader might easily think that physics (and specifically quantum mechanics and relativity) and biology (and specifically genetics and neuroscience) are the only fit subjects for hard sf. But Hal Clement based most of his fiction on chemistry, and Kim Stanley Robinson has made wonderful use of geology (planetary science) and climatology. We'll discuss the best exceptions to the seeming rule, and talk about scientific fields that deserve more attention (anyone for rheology)?

10:00 am H **I am forced into speech because a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife: Horror and Social Observation.**

Michael Cisco, Karen Joy Fowler, Laura Anne Gilman, Adam Golaski (L), John Langan.

It's easy to think of our two GOHs as being quite different—a writer of dark fantasy and horror, and one of fine observation of individual and social consciousness. But we've noticed that these seemingly disparate approaches to literature have a surprising common ground. In the novel of social observation, the protagonist often begins with an incorrect model or set of assumptions about the way the world works, and discovers through a series of revelations, some slowly accumulating and some

shattering, that the world is in fact more complex and difficult to navigate. That sound a lot like horror to us—and, in fact, it's precisely John Clute's proposed archetypal horror novel structure (see the blurb for "Awe, Horror!"). What would Jane Austen and H.P. Lovecraft agree about? And where would they part ways?

10:00 am ME **Extreme Brain States and Brains.**

Eric M. Van.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). Recent research now puts the prevalence of synaesthesia not at .05% of the population but at an astonishing 5%, 99% of whom were unaware that everyone's brain didn't work that way. Van's own interest in neuroscience began when he discovered that he personally falsified one of the leading theories of personality traits. A brief, informal talk about unusual brain states (including myriad states of consciousness) and brains leads into a free-for-all discussion where audience members are invited to share their own unusual experiences and characteristics. How many different states of consciousness have Readercon attendees had among us?

10:00 am RI **How To Write Good.**

Barry B. Longyear.

Talk / Workshop(120 min.). Longyear presents a crash course on getting started in fiction writing (based on his online writing seminar, "The Write Stuff") in the form of an introductory talk and Q&A followed by a uniquely structured open workshop of stories. *No story is required for attendance* (there's a lot to learn by seeing the writing problems of others addressed). Authors should bring a printout of their story and the question(s) they want answered about the piece (if there are no questions, the story should be in front of an editor); all attendees are urged to bring a notebook or recording device. There is no limit to the number of workshopped stories (Longyear says he's never gotten too many in 24 years of practice).

10:00 am NH **Paolo Bacigalupi** reads a new story. (30 min.)

10:00 am VT **Mythic 2 Group Reading.**

Mike Allen (host), Sonya Taaffe, Catherynne M. Valente, with John Benson and Leah Bobet. *Mythic* is a series of trade paperback digest anthologies of fantasy prose and poetry, published by Mythic Delirium Books in conjunction with Prime Books. (60 min.)

10:00 am 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Donald Kingsbury; Victoria McManus.

10:00 am E Autographs. Ellen Datlow; Lucius Shepard.

10:30 am VT **Walter H. Hunt** reads from his next novel, *A Song In Stone*. (30 min.)

11:00 am F **See it Like Saruman: Reconciling Fantasy and Progress.**

Judith Berman, John Crowley, Ken Houghton (L), James Morrow, Michael Swanwick.

History is written by the winners. That explains why Tolkien never mentions that the destruction of Fangorn Forest and other efforts towards industrialization by Saruman significantly raised the standard of living for the wild men of Dunland, in fact creating (for the first time in Middle Earth) a comfortable middle class. While there is a natural opposition between the romantic and pastoral ideal embodied in traditional fantasy and the Enlightenment ideal of progress (especially in its modern industrial and technological modes), we don't believe they are completely incompatible. What works of fantasy have attempted to accommodate both? What interesting new direction might the heroic fantasy novel be taken if the true positive effects of modernization were acknowledged? *Readercon hopes to put the audio recording of this panel online at some point after the convention.*

11:00 am H **The Fiction of Angela Carter.**

Greer Gilman, Theodora Goss, Elizabeth Hand, Sarah Smith (M), Sonya Taaffe.

11:00 am ME **Molecular Self Assembly and the Origins of Life.**

Matthew Jarpe.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). Life didn't begin with DNA (or even RNA). Before macromolecules began to catalyze and codify, other molecules had to compartmentalize. The chemical reactions of life cannot proceed without unequal concentrations of reactants in different places. What are the thermodynamic forces that lead to this un-thermodynamic situation? And what does this mean to the search for life on other planets?

11:00 am NH **Alexander Jablokov** reads "The Boarder," a story forthcoming in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*. (30 min.)

11:00 am VT **Michael Cisco** reads from his recently-published novel, *The Traitor*. (30 min.)

11:00 am 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. John Kessel; Tom Purdom.

11:00 am E Autographs. Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald; Louise Marley.

11:30 am NH **Donald Kingsbury** reads from his work. (30 min.)

11:30 am VT **Don D'Ammassa** reads "Choosing Sides." (30 min.)

12:00 noon F **SF Cinema in the DVD Era.**

Mike Allen, Chris Genoa, Lucius Shepard, Hildy Silverman, Eric M. Van (L), Donnie Darko, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, Primer, The Prestige—this millennium has seen an upsurge in the number of great sf movies with plots so challenging or intricate that they genuinely require (and hugely reward) the repeat viewings now made possible by DVD. We relate to these stories very differently than we do to their relatively witless SFX blockbuster brethren; in fact, in some ways they're as much like literature as cinema. We'll take about these films and others, about great predecessors from before the DVD, and about the promise of what almost at times seems like a whole new art form. *Note: we'll poll the audience as to whether to avoid spoilers for each of these films, but attendees are strongly urged to see them all beforehand.*

12:00 noon H **After Rowling and Pullman.**

Steve Berman, Holly Black (L), Sarah Beth Durst, Kelly Link, Sharyn November.

The Harry Potter books and *His Dark Materials* have been watersheds in the history of YA speculative fiction. We'll survey the field in the years since the Rowling and Pullman series began, and look at how it has been influenced by the two masterworks. Does China Mieville's *Un Lun Dun*, for example, show their influence?

12:00 noon ME **What, No Flying Car?**

Jean-Louis Trudel.

Talk (60 min.). Why you expected one and why you may not see a technological singularity in your lifetime.

12:00 noon RI **Storyboarding.**

Kay Kenyon.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). How to build scenes using classic elements such as Relationships, Dialogue, Subtext and Action. Learn to create drama where before there was loose inspiration and drift.

12:00 noon NH **Interfictions Group Reading.**

Theodora Goss (host), Vandana Singh, Catherynne M. Valente, with Tempest Bradford, Michael DeLuca, and Joy Marchand.

See *Creating Interfictions* (program item #72) for the background of this anthology. (60 min.)

12:00 noon VT **Adam Golaski** reads "Worse Than Myself." (30 min.)

12:00 noon 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. James and Kathryn Morrow; John Clute.

12:00 noon E Autographs. Elizabeth Bear; Walter H. Hunt.

12:30 pm VT **Rosemary Kirstein** reads from the untitled fifth volume of the Steerswoman series. (30 min.)

1:00 pm F **Personal Archetypes.**

Debra Doyle, Karen Joy Fowler, James Alan Gardner, Greer Gilman, Barry B. Longyear, Paul Park (L).

The Jungian notion of archetype is a useful tool for explaining why certain fantasy tropes speak powerfully to us. But clearly, not everyone responds to every archetype to the same degree, and this may well be one of the reasons why different people respond differently to different books. (One of us, e.g., is moved nearly to tears by any well-done scene of communication with animals, and suspects that not everyone else is.) As readers, where do our personal archetypes come from? Early life experience, or our first favorite books? (Or is the latter hypothesis begging the question?)

1:00 pm H **I Have a Truly Marvelous Proof of This Proposition Which This Story is Too Commercial To Contain.**

Michael A. Burstein (L), Jeff Hecht, Donald Kingsbury, Louise Marley, Peter Watts.

Actual calculations are generally excluded from sf—they're not what the reader is looking for. But hard sf often requires that the *writer* do the math and / or the physics and chemistry, and many stories are backed up by thick sheaves of notes that the reader never sees. Our panelists discuss examples from their personal experience. Should the "technical appendices" be published more often? Isn't the Web the natural place for them?

1:00 pm ME **Lucius, Central America, and Us.**

Lucius Shepard.

Talk (60 min.). Lucius Shepard talks about his current involvement in Central America, the region's history, how that relates to his writing, how Central America affects us, and how we can affect its people. Includes a 15 minute video.

1:00 pm RI **Persistence Pays Off: *Shanghaied to the Moon's* Fifteen-Year Trajectory From Ms. to Book.**

Michael J. Daley.

Talk / Discussion (60 min.). It took over 40 rejections and a half-dozen re-writes over the years until Daley's YA novel found that one editor who fell in love with it. A success story for aspiring writers in need of courage, pros gathering rejections, and the general reader who wonders just what it takes to make it as an author.

1:00 pm NH **Paul Levinson** reads from *Unburning Alexandria* the sequel to *The Plot to Save Socrates*. (30 min.)

1:00 pm VT **Joshua Palmatier** reads from *The Cracked Throne*. (30 min.)

1:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Kay Kenyon; Ian Randal Strock.

1:00 pm E Autographs. S. C. Butler; Chris Dolley.

1:30 pm NH **Wen Spencer** reads from *Endless Blue*, forthcoming from Baen in December. (30 min.)

1:30 pm VT **Daniel P. Dern** reads from *Dragons Don't Eat Jesters*, and / or a novel in progress. (30 min.)

2:00 pm F **Intimidated By Story Potential.**

Elizabeth Bear, Ron Drummond, Scott Edelman, Laurie J. Marks (L), Paul Witcover.

There is nothing more discouraging or terrifying than the prospect of actually writing a story you've conceived, or finishing one you've started, and having it be (inevitably?) a pale shadow of that shining slab of brilliance you knew it could be, if you only had the chops to do it justice. And yet without that dream of the perfect tale, what would be our motivation to write better? The infinite potential of the great story idea can lead to writer's block or to the disappointment of falling short. How do you learn to profit from dreams of greatness and avoid these pitfalls?

2:00 pm H **SF in Other Tongues: What Are We Missing?**

David G. Hartwell, James Morrow (L), Kathryn Morrow, Vandana Singh, Jean-Louis Trudel, Konrad Walewski.

English-speaking writers are responsible for most of the sf we talk about here. And yet, from Verne to Kafka, Borges to Lem, non-Anglophone fantastical literature has delineated, enriched, and shaken up the field. *The SFWA European Hall of Fame*, published last month by Tor Books, represents an attempt by editors James and Kathryn Morrow to "liberate" sixteen contemporary classics of Continental science fiction into English via nuanced translations fashioned through extensive three-way cyberspace conversations. Does this anthology and other such efforts foretell the shape of transmutations to come?

2:00 pm ME **How I Wrote *Blindsight*.**

Peter Watts. Talk (30 min.).

2:00 pm NH **David Louis Edelman** reads from his forthcoming novel *MultiReal*. (30 min.)

2:00 pm VT **Steve Berman, S. C. Butler, and Michael J. Daley** read. Berman reads from his debut novel, *Vintage*, and / or from an upcoming YA fantasy story; Butler from his novel *Reiffen's Choice*; and Daley from his novels *Space Station Rat* and *Shanghaied to the Moon*. (60 min.)

2:00 pm 456/8 Kaffeeklatsches. Elizabeth Wein; Leigh Grossman.

2:30 pm NH **James L. Cambias** reads "Balancing Accounts." (30 min.)

3:00 pm F **Readercon 18 Debriefing**

Members of the Readercon 18 Committee. (60 min.)

Breadcrumbs

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