

ConAdian 1994

Con report by [Evelyn C. Leeper](#)

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ConAdian, the 1994 World Science Fiction Convention, and the 52nd World Science Fiction Convention, was held September 1 through September 5 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. (That's Canada for the geographically-challenged.) The attendance was at one point announced as 4156, but later recalculated as somewhere around 3500. (The higher figure was for people who bought attending memberships, as opposed to people who were actually attending [a.k.a. "warm-body count"].) In any case, it was pretty small for a North American Worldcon. (Last year's attendance in San Francisco was 7642.) It was actually kind of nice to have a small, laid-back Worldcon, though I understand that many people who might have attended were unable to get flights into or out of Winnipeg at a reasonable time and price. (This may explain why this was the largest convention that the Winnipeg Convention Centre had in a long time.)

We had arrived in Canada about a week before the convention, spending the time in Montreal at the Montreal International Film Festival. (If anyone is interested, there is a separate report of that available on request.)

Facilities

The convention center was large enough that the gathering areas never felt crowded. But while some of the rooms were too large for the audience, others were way too small. The alternate history panel on Thursday night was packed (due to lack of any real competition, it seems); there were probably about 120 people in room with seating for 100, and people said they left without being able even to get near the door, much less get in. This was also true later with such panels as "Designing Diseases" and "Creating an Internally Consistent Religion." On the other hand, at the same time there were much larger rooms standing idle or almost empty.

And let's just say that having filking, comedy skits, or (Ghod help us!) bagpipe players in rooms next to panel items without *really* good sound-proofing is a bad idea.

The Hugo and masquerade facilities were very good. It was stadium seating (banked) rather than ballroom (flat) so unless someone really tall sat in front of you, you had no problem seeing the stage. (At the Hugo ceremonies, the audience may have had a better view of the proceedings than the nominees: we were seated in non-banked seating directly in front of and below the stage.) A large projection screen also helped people to see what was going on. There was no appreciable line for either ceremony; Kate arrived two minutes before the Hugos were scheduled to start and had no problems finding a seat, and we arrived forty-five minutes before the masquerade and got seats in the center section.

The one item I felt was missing was a clock, or better yet, clocks. It would be very helpful to have large clocks strategically placed: in the dealers room and the art show, over the information desk, and in the hallways outside the programming rooms.

The restaurant situation was mixed. There were a lot of restaurants nearby, but nothing very good. Still, this beats places like Orlando, where there were only three or four restaurants you could get to without a car. The food available in the convention centre was reasonably priced, reasonably varied, and available 24 hours a day.

Registration and All That Stuff

Registration was so fast it was over before I knew it. Well, okay, not quite, but the only reason we had to stand in line when we arrived at about 1:30 PM Thursday was that the "L" was slightly to the right of where the actual line was. Everything was pre-bagged to make it even faster. It's true that we had to go to the Green Room for our program participant material, but that was right nearby and also very fast. The speed may have been a function of the light attendance, or maybe it was just better organized.

The badge holders were very large and came only with clips, meaning that if you wanted to attach them to a T-shirt you had to clip them to the collar and then they tended to poke you in the chin. Once again I put in my vote for cons to provide a choice of clips or pins or, even better, a holder that has both.

The newsletters did list program changes and parties, but were frequently late. Friday's 10 AM newsletter came out about 2 PM, but the evening one came out in time for the party list to be of some use. Saturday and Sunday were slightly better, but not by much. Luckily there was a master schedule with the changes to it written on it posted in the central area. The jokezine scooped the main zine on the Hugos, and had other interesting information besides, leading one person to say that they thought the real zine was supposed to be informative and the joke zine funny rather than the other way around.

Program Books

The registration bags included the Souvenir Book (with nine short stories as well as the usual articles,

artwork, past Hugo and Worldcon listings, and so on), the "Canadian Speculative Fiction" issue of *Prairie Fire* ("A Canadian Magazine of New Writing"), a restaurant guide, the program guide, and a "Passport to the Universe" for collecting stamps and stickers, listing parties, and generally serving as a pocket-sized book to jot down notes in. The program book included a pocket program of sorts. The center sheets were schedules for each day, with Thursday's innermost, so you could detach one double sheet at a time, and have in addition to the schedule a program grid, a map of the convention centre, a map of Winnipeg, and extra program notations. The program book also had brief descriptions of the program participants and an index of panels by participant.

As before, I had pulled a copy of the schedule off the Net before the convention (and in fact had printed up a customized program for me of what I wanted to see, and gave a copy to Mark so he could find me). This year was slightly better than last year: the Net copy was posted fifty-two hours before we were leaving for the airport instead of last year's thirty-six hours. (Admittedly, we were leaving earlier than many, but there are always a fair number of people who leave early to sight-see, and the schedule is usually fairly firm by a couple of weeks before the convention.)

Green Room

The Green Room was not open before evening panels, which seems to imply that the convention planners had a somewhat different idea of its purpose than I did. If it is to serve as a gathering place for panelists to discuss their topics it is needed in the evenings as well as during the day. The Program Book, however, described it as a place for panelists to get away from it all, not that there was that much "all" to get away from. Coffee was usually available (there was a brief shortage on Sunday morning--I think they underestimated the effect of Saturday night), and chips, raw veggies, and small cakes throughout. (There were also electrical outlets where I could plug my palmtop in and save battery power. This may become a more common request, and I heard some people talking about providing Internet hookups at future cons!)

Dealers Room

ConAdian was five times the size of Boskone, but the ConAdian Dealers Room (a.k.a., the Hucksters Room) was only about twice as large as the one at Boskone. And the proportion of book dealers as very low, maybe about a quarter of the dealers. Apparently the customs broker who was supposed to help American book dealers get through customs lost his bond and so most American dealers couldn't be bothered going through all the hassle. Still, this doesn't quite explain why there was such a high proportion of armor, jewelry, and other non-book items.

Art Show

I find that I have less and less chance to get into the art show these days, due to my compulsion to attend panels. I did pop in for five minutes to see the Hugo nominees, and Steve Hickman's space stamps look even better in the original, which they managed to borrow back from the United States Postal Service. Every other time I had a free hour, the art show was closed. Because Rosh Hashonah starts at sundown Monday night, many convention-goers were leaving early Monday, so the convention had pick-up on Sunday as well as on Monday.

Programming

ConAdian appeared to be very lightly scheduled--it had only 287 program items (though this count doesn't include events such as the Hugo ceremonies, or films or videos). ConFrancisco had 492 program items; MagiCon had 420, Chicon V 520, ConFiction 337, and Noreascon 3 833 (all not counting films or autograph sessions). ConAdian also had 24 autograph sessions and 24 readings, and 74 (!) filking items. (Previous convention counts probably included their filking tracks.) This convention also scheduled more lightly at dinnertime, because I actually could eat dinner every night without missing something I wanted to see. One reason for the smaller program is of course the

smaller attendance.

However, the programming *process* left some people quite unhappy. On the surface, it looked fine. Potential program participants were set a questionnaire asking, among other things, for suggested program items. The second mailing had a list of all the suggestions and asked participants to check out which they were willing to do. Unfortunately, apparently no culling or combining of similar topics occurred between these two, and the result was that there were 46 items listed dealing under "Gay/Lesbian" (often with very similar subjects) and only 13 under "Television & Films." This did not reflect the final mix at all, but left at least one major media person somewhat irked at what he saw as a shoving aside of media. (This might explain why he media presentations from the studios were less substantial than at other conventions.) And looking at the list, I can say with a fairly high degree of certainty what happened. As the items were suggested, they were numbered sequentially. So the ones I suggested had sequential numbers, followed by the ones Mark suggested. 39 of the 46 gay and lesbian items are sequentially numbered, so I suspect that they were suggested by either one person or two or three people who sent in their forms together. (And they no doubt expected that this long list would be somewhat edited.) They weren't, and the result was that this "track" had more proposed panels than any other track except "Science Fiction"--more than "Space Exploration," more than "Fantasy," more than *anything*. While the final program had a reasonable balance in all tracks, the initial list may have generated some doubts as to the focus of the convention. (I suppose I should make clear that I am not objecting to a reasonable number of items on gay and lesbian issues in science fiction, or feminism in science fiction, or any other topic. But the committee needs to do some initial filtering or the program may appear skewed do to one or two people who suggest a lot in one category.)

Given that it's impossible to see everything at a Worldcon, I will cover just the programming I attended, with a few comments on a couple of other items. (Mark has a separate report on the upcoming movies presentation, available from him or from me.)

Panel: **Genre Crossing**

Thursday, 3 PM

Joe Haldeman (mod), Adrienne Foster, Peter J. Heck, Ron Sarti

Description: When is an SF story not an SF story?

At some point one of the panelists said that "genre" was defined as a "category of art distinguished by definite style, form, or content." This is probably useful to keep in mind.

As might have been expected, this spent a lot of time talking about marketing. In fact, there were really only two questions discussed: is there something antithetical between some pairs of genres, and how do you sell a genre-crossing novel?

In regard to the first question, someone cited Paul Di Filippo as having listed the attributes of the various genres. For example, in science fiction there are no gods, humans are not special in the universe, reason rules, and so on. Fantasy reverses these. Horror is a form of fantasy, but can seem rational, and the special place humans have is a bad one. However, the panelists also noted that these rules are not iron-clad; Arthur C. Clarke in particular has broken them often: "The Star" and "The Nine Billion Names of God" are both science fiction stories with a god or gods. (Well, I might argue that "The Star" is ambiguous. You can certainly interpret it as there having been a god, or you can attribute the events to pure chance.)

Isaac Asimov also wrote about the difficulties of mixing genres, in particular science fiction and mysteries. The problem there is that in a mystery (at least of the type he was describing), one needs to give the reader enough information to solve the mystery him or herself. This means that the solution

can't be based on some new science fictional concept or invention: you can't have the criminal caught because the chair in the room is actually a shape-shifting alien unless you've laid enough groundwork for that.

More time was spent discussing marketing. Foster says she can't sell her Gothic mystery novel because no one knows how to market it. Heck claimed that science fiction romance gets marketed as science fiction, but Foster contradicted him, and from what I've read in *Publishers Weekly* Foster is right. Many of the romance publishers are coming out with special lines of time travel and even alternate history romances, but they are marketed as romances.

Heck gave as a possible genre-crossing example setting a "Star Trek" story in the Old West. But he said we need to ask if the story actually adopt Western elements, or simply keeps only science fiction elements in an Old West setting. Most "Star Trek" genre-crossing pieces are what were later called cop-outs. (Another example would be the use of various genre settings for porno novels: they don't actually adopt the elements of the genre they are imitating.) Of course, as was noted, "Every reader reads a different book." On the Net this is usually expressed as "YMMV" ("your mileage may vary").

Haldeman said that in genres in general, details count (since they are often what defines the genre). So if you like science fiction details, you might like police procedural details. Indeed, there is the greatest cross-over to mysteries of any other genre by science fiction readers. As cross-genre works, there are the "Lord D'Arcy" books by Randall Garrett (alternate history fantasy police procedurals). Straight mystery authors popular with science fiction readers include Carl Hiaasen, John D. MacDonald, and the ever-popular Arthur Conan Doyle.

In vampire horror historical fiction, we have Barbara Hambley's *Those Who Stalk the Night*, as well as a fair number of Nazi vampire stories.

Our mode of reading may also make a piece seem to be cross-genre, at least in some sense. Anne MacCaffrey's "Pern" books (*Dragonflight* et al) as science fiction but seems to be read as fantasy. R. A. MacAvoy's *Tea with a Black Dragon* is fantasy, but reads more like a science fiction novel. Someone in the audience asked about Stephen King, especially his "Gunslinger" series; Haldeman replied that you can't ignore King but you can't generalize from him either. One of the panelists noted that Dean R. Koontz is another author that is to some extent his own genre, though I might claim that is more a statement about marketing than about the novels themselves. Here again we see the panel veering into the discussion of marketing and away from the discussion of art.

One reason that King and Koontz are their own marketing categories is that people seem to buy books primarily based on author. (This is not very good news for new writers, of course.) Heck cited a survey by Tom Dougherty of Tor Books which showed that the factors in determining book purchases by readers are, in descending order of importance: author, word of mouth, cover material, reviews, and other. (Well, I guess that serves to remind us reviewers what our importance really is.)

Speaking of King, Haldeman thought that King will be read in the future as a recorder of mid-20th Century, much as Dickens is read as a recorder of 19th Century English society.

According to the panelists, one reason that hard science fiction may be less involved in genre-crossing than "softer" versions is that hard science fiction needs more words to do its story properly, so there are fewer left with which to build another genre. This is true of other media as well: Mark Leeper talks about how the original *Highlander* consisted of fantasy, sword-fighting, and rock music. When the American distributors wanted the film shortened, it was the fantasy that got cut.

Another reason one doesn't see hard science fiction crossed with horror or fantasy is that, as was suggested in the initial description, there is something antithetical there. Hard science fiction fans want facts, not ghosts. Or as someone clarified, "It's not that we don't like ghosts, but we want them in fictional universes, not the real one."

One genre that wasn't mentioned until nearly the end of the hour (and so noted by the mentioner) is the mainstream literary novel. In this sense I might say that John Crowley and Jorge Luis Borges are in this genre and also in fantasy (though not in science fiction per se). Yes, it's true that Borges wrote short stories rather than novels, but I think the person naming the category was just being sloppy, in much the same way people talk about the Hugo for Best Prozone Editor instead of Best Professional Editor (as in this year's Hugo ceremonies).

I asked about the fragmentation of the market into an ever-increasing number of smaller genres. If genres are defined by how things are filed in Barnes & Noble (for example), then it seems as if a new genre is being created every few months: African-American literature, women's literature, gay and lesbian literature, etc. (One wonders where one files Samuel Delany in all this?) The panelists agreed that there were new genres in this sense, and that it did create problems, although none addressed the issue of readers becoming ever more compartmentalized and narrow in their reading from seeing just a narrow range of books in their section of primary interest.

Haldeman wrapped up by saying that his theory is that there are two ways to entertain people: give them what they expect, or surprise them, and that cross-genre pieces primarily work by doing the latter. (He also plugged his upcoming novel *1968*, a "literary novel with science fiction fans as characters.")

Panel: **SF Origins**

Thursday, 4 PM

Bradford Lyau (mod), Arthur Kyle, David Kyle, Jean-Louis Trudel, Ariane Von Orlow

Description: Are we running the Chicken and the Egg theory again? How did SF begin?

Well, it seems as if to some extent, this question is just a fancy way to get into the old argument of what exactly is science fiction. Lyau claimed that the problem with this topic in particular is that we have a Garden of Eden complex--we want one single source.

At least some of the panelists contended that science fiction as a genre emerged from a background, that of the Scientific Revolution, which also saw the birth of the modern novel and various other art forms. (One assumes this applies mostly to the West; the Japanese novel dates back almost a thousand years.) Arthur Kyle though that arguing too much about where science fiction started might lead us to lose sight of what it is. David Kyle (Arthur's father, in case you were wondering) emphasized that we couldn't have science fiction with a technological background to support it but said that lately "science fiction has been over-shadowed by fantasy; fantasy rules the roost." Part of that technological basis is also the idea of change, as he explained later. In the 19th Century, change became standard. For example, sons could follow some occupation other than that of their fathers. (I might add that evolution as the quintessential embodiment of this idea of change: the earth and all its inhabitants were not created 6000 years ago exactly as they are now, but they *evolved* to their present state.)

Trudel saw science fiction as "a social phenomenon, an idea, an artform." He pointed out that de Bergerac did a lot of what Swift did--used fiction to disguise the actual targets of his attacks. Both wanted to say things about what was going on around them, but attacking people and ideas straight out was too dangerous, so fiction--especially science fiction or fantasy--provided a safe cover.

Von Orlow (Trudel's wife--this was a very "related" panel) returned to the idea of a technological basis for science fiction, and said that since science as we know it started in the 17th Century, science fiction could go back that far. In addition to the usual progenitors (Cyrano de Bergerac's *Comical History of the States and Empires of the Worlds of the Moon and Sun* [1651] and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* [1726]), she also mentioned Francis Godwin's *Man in the Moone* (1638). This led

Trudel to note that Lucian of Samosata (2nd Century C.E.) was the first author to say explicitly that what he was writing was fiction (even though the title of his work was *True History*). And Kepler's demon for getting to the moon in *Kepler's Dream* (1634) was not all that different from the use of faster-than-light travel today, just couched in the terms of the time.

Some other ideas were discussed. For example science, and hence science fiction, deals with humanity's relationship to knowledge and what we can and can't know. The Western scientific view is much more inclusive about what we can know than, say, that of an Eastern mystic. Does this make science fiction a purely European concept (including of course European-derived countries as well)? The consensus was yes, unless you want to extend science fiction to include myths.

The term "science fiction" was of course invented by Hugo Gernsback. Jules Verne called his works "imaginary voyages": H. G. Wells called his "scientific romances." "Fantasy" might be appropriate, but is not as constraining as "science fiction." In regard to the implied connection of "science" and "science fiction," which is not always there, Lyau said that "science fiction" was a term we were stuck with, much as we have the term "Romantic Era" to describe a period that has little to do with what we think of as romance.

Brief mention at the end of the hour was made of early science fiction in other forms, particularly in music with Delibes's *Coppelia* (1870) and Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffman* (1881).

Recommended (by me) further reading on early science fiction includes the first two chapters of Neil Barron's *Anatomy of Wonder*, Russell Freedman's *2000 Years of Space Travel* (a young adult book, but quite comprehensive), Sam Moskowitz's *Science Fiction by Gaslight*, and Brian Aldiss's *Trillion Year Spree*. Aldiss, like most literary historians (including the panelists, when all is said and done), lists many "noble ancestors" but still says that modern science fiction began with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Mary Shelley also wrote *The Last Man* (1826), which Bantam is reprinting in October (probably on the theory that everyone else will be reprinting *Frankenstein*).

Panel: **Should SF Have Rivets?**

Thursday, 5 PM

Ken Meltsner (mod), Maia Cowan, Bart Kemper, Jonathan V. Post, Allen Steele

Description: Everything in life and beyond has a structure, but must we know the "science" behind every facet of existence?

The panelists started by asking the question, "Has old hard science fiction held up well under our changing knowledge of science?" And their answer was, "Yes and no." Predictable, but not a very informative start.

As elaboration, Steele said that he recently re-read Wilson Tucker's *Year of the Quiet Sun*, written thirty years ago, in which people are sent to the future, but it was the future of when he wrote the book, so it's our past. Or rather, it's not our past. What holds up in the book, according to Steele, is not the history, but the science: the time machine. On the other hand, Poul Anderson's *Brain Wave* is dated technology-wise, but the central idea holds up. Post recommended a book on the physics of time travel in science fiction (he thought it was by someone named McVey, but I suspect he was thinking of *Time Machines: Time Travel in Physics, Metaphysics, & Science Fiction* by Paul J. Nahin). Post also summed up many people's view on out-dated science in his description of E. E. Smith's works: "Its rivets may have been rusty, but they're real rivets."

Cowan said she was all in favor of science, but she was not enthralled by "fascinating explications of angular momentum." Kemper felt that it was important at least to be accurate to current knowledge, but Cowan felt that even that was not necessarily required. And Steele seemed to agree that this may

be an unnecessarily stringent requirement when he suggested that if up-to-date science were so important, books should come with an expiration date on the cover ("Do not read after January 1, 2001"). And Post observed, "If the pace of science continues to accelerate, writers will not be able to keep up, and science fiction will become a branch of history."

Maybe because of this, short-term hard science fiction has largely been replaced by techno-thrillers. (Oddly enough, Tom Clancy, the acknowledged master of this field, says, "I don't think I'm an SF writer, because I don't know that much about science.")

Cowan insisted that science in a story should have a point, which led someone to ask just what was meant by "rivets" anyway. Someone defined rivets as "lots of explanations of science"; someone else said it's when science is one of the characters. Post said that "Melville had wooden rivets," and pretty much everyone agreed that whatever rivets were, Melville had the whaling equivalent.

Both Post and Steele suggested that "rivets" could sometimes be footnotes or, better still, hypertext. But rivets sometimes serve a plot function: use them early to convince your reader you know what you're talking about and it's easier to slip something through later. (This has echoes in what was said on the genre-crossing panel about being careful with the details.) Someone has called this the "Fleming Effect," since Ian Fleming used it in the James Bond novels to establish realism.

If you really like rivets, there are a lot of them out there. Larry Niven's *Ringworld*, Isaac Asimov's *Nemesis*, and just about anything by Hal Clement are full of rivets.

Someone said, "People will forgive a lot if it's a good book," which led Janice Eisen (in the audience) to observe that it's easier to forgive out-dated science than out-dated sociology. The example she gave was the book in which "space housewife meets space husband at door with space martini." Unfortunately, this got everyone off on a tangent about the perceived domination of the field by men, and how it is seen as a male preserve.

When the panel finally got back on track, the panelists were asked for their favorite rivets. Post liked the nine-month voyage to Jupiter in Arthur C. Clarke's *2001*, for which he saw Clarke's calculations in the margin that showed that length of time was right. Cowan liked the attention to biological and sociological rivets in Donald Kingsbury's *Courtship Rite*. Steele liked Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon*, especially the first chapter. Kemper liked *Starship Troopers*, especially after having been in the paratroopers. (I have a fondness for H. Beam Piper's "Omnilingual.")

For "unfavorite" (or missing) rivets, Cowan mentioned Michael Kube-McDowell's *Exile* which postulated a society in which women held all the property, but men were the ones educated, etc. "How did the women hold onto the property?" she had asked Kube-McDowell. "Magic," was his answer (somewhat facetiously, one supposes). Steele mentioned Dale Brown's *Silver Tower*, in which there is a very accurate space station, with no artificial gravity, in which one character picks up, drinks from, and then sets down a cup of coffee.

Panel: **Alternate Histories**

Thursday, 9 PM

Evelyn Leeper (mod), Ginjer Buchanan, Glenn Grant, Philip Kaveny, Allen Steele, Harry C. Stubbs

Description: If you could change one event in the past, how would today's history change? What are the rules of alternate histories?

[Thanks to Mark, who took copious notes at this on his palmtop, and then downloaded them to mine. Isn't technology wonderful?]

Well, we started a bit late because we were waiting for Buchanan, who was supposed to be the moderator. Eventually, I volunteered to moderate and we got started.

I began by asking why the room was so full, because this wasn't a party with free liquor. And full it was, with all the seats in the hundred-seat room taken, and a couple dozen people standing, and more who couldn't even get in the door. Someone replied that there was nothing else going on at this time, but it turned out that even when full programming was running, these small rooms tended to overflow. Eventually I concluded that everyone was at an alternate history panel because they wished they were somewhere else.

Everyone introduced themselves. Steele is a writer who has written some alternate history stories (notably "Goddard's Children"). Grant is a reviewer, writer, and editor; he never wrote any alternate history stories, but he did review *The Difference Engine*. Stubbs (Hal Clement) had an even more tenuous connection to alternate histories--he just reads the stuff. Kaveny is an author, and is interested in alternate histories as an analytic tool. You all know who I am, or if you don't, this con report will probably tell you.

We had a whole list of questions sent to us before the convention--questions which we had in turn suggested. The one I chose to start with was, "What is the appeal of alternate histories and why are they so popular?" Steele thought that there was a basic appeal in seeing what might have happened if things had been different, in part because we see dividing points in our own lives: almost being hit by a car, choosing one school over another, and so. His favorite Civil War story, for example, was about when Lee wrapped his cigars with his battle map and then left it behind at the campground, where Union spies found it.

Grant felt there were three aspects to the appeal, which he described as "funny, weird, and scary." It's funny because you can play with irony: what if Keats were a computer hacker? It's weird because seeing history differently is inherently weird. It's scary because you can see how easily things could be different: a bolt missing on the Enola Gay could result in a different plane with a different bombardier, etc. (a reference to Kim Stanley Robinson's "Lucky Strike" and also Robinson's "Sensitive Dependence on Initial Conditions"). Steele used his own story "Goddard's People" as an example: what if the German rocket program had gone in a different direction?

Stubbs thought part of the appeal as that alternate histories was that it gets great arguments going. It also gives people the ultimate excuse: "with so much in play, it wasn't my fault." Of course, the reverse is also true: every little thing you do and decision you make can have vast consequences. (Kind of makes one paranoid, doesn't it?)

Kaveny's view was that alternate history is the "bastard stepchild of history." He doesn't feel that the cigars had any real effect on the battle (a minority opinion, I believe). But mainstream history gets you thinking things occurred this way out of necessity, and alternate history shows this is not true: we need causality. And it reminds us that perhaps our analysis is not as good as we thought. Kaveny also mentioned that much of the military discussion on the Internet is about alternate history.

(At this point Buchanan arrived and announced that it was not possible to hail a cab in Winnipeg, to which my response was, "Well, not in *this* Winnipeg anyway!")

Returning to the appeal of alternate histories, I said that there seem to be two categories of people who like alternate histories: the optimists, who want to read about how things could be worse, and the pessimists, who want to read about how things could be better. The example I gave was Mark Olson's observation that French alternate histories tend to be those in which things are better--for one thing, everyone speaks French.

Buchanan said that the whole game of science fiction is "what if?" If I make this change, what will happen? She added that if you have read Susan Schwartz's "Suppose They Gave a Peace," you realize

that things may turn out the same anyway.

I then asked the panelists the question that always seems to get asked: what are the classics and what do you like, and why? Buchanan said that she had thought no one could improve on Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee*, but Harry Turtledove's *Guns of the South* topped it. I said that I knew Philip K. Dick's *Man in the High Castle* was well thought of, but it did little for me. (Dick wrote it using the "I Ching" to plot it, which explains a lot. Dick later talked about how the "I Ching" would lead you along and then betray you.) Stubbs liked L. Sprague deCamp's *Lest Darkness Fall*, because of the way the protagonist used technology to try to prevent the Dark Ages; he loved the details (the rivets, to hearken back to another panel). Grant couldn't think of one, because (he said) alternate history wasn't his favorite genre, but he did say that *Interzone* has them frequently. (True, but so do the other magazines as well.) Buchanan also mentioned Benford's *Hitler Victorious*, which reminded Grant that there was a recent issue of *Asimov's* which ran not one, but *two*, stories about alternate worlds in which Fidel Castro became a baseball player.

William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's *Difference Engine* was mentioned by Grant as having one of those ideas so great (that Babbage could have actually built his machine), that when he heard it he said, "Oh, God, this would be wonderful." Steele said he also liked this book, and that the people at *Scientific American* had built Babbage's machine and it worked. Steele particularly liked the scenes describing the huge machines. (Me, I like the pun in the title.)

Steele said, however, that the book that really "got" him was Michael Moorcock's *Behold the Man*, and it was all the rest of the panelists could do to keep him from giving away the story. He thought it took a lot of courage for Moorcock to write about Jesus and the Crucifixion, though today's readers may not realize it. I noted that other writers have done it (Joe Lansdale, Brad Linaweaver, Kirk Mitchell, and Frederik Pohl, among others) but they don't dive into it the way Moorcock does. (Actually, one may ask whether *Behold the Man* is an alternate history, or just a secret history, but it is almost always listed as alternate history.)

I filled in the gaps by listing various classics the others hadn't: Randall Garrett's "Lord D'Arcy" stories, H. Beam Piper's *Lord Kalvan of Otherwhen*, Keith Roberts's *Pavane*, and Norman Spinrad's *Iron Dream* (which Steele said he had always enjoyed, because it "pulls off a hat trick"; with a premise of being a science fiction novel written by Hitler, "it is definitely a sick pleasure, with a lot of sick shit."). I noted that a made-for-cable movie of Robert Harris's *Fatherland* will be on HBO this fall ("Now a semi-major motion picture!"). Len Deighton's *SS-GB* was another "what if Germany won the war?" book. (Many of these are out of print, but do show up in used bookstores.)

Someone mentioned the Leo Frankowski books, which Kaveny said he hated but read passionately. I said that I thought the first one interesting, but got pissed off with treatment of women.

Someone asked how you defined alternate history, since all fiction contains things that didn't happen. I immediately claimed this person must have been talking to Mark (Leeper) since that was what Mark was always saying (when he wasn't saying that chaos theory invalidates most alternate history stories). Steele responded that alternate history is a deliberate attempt to rework history. I gave the example (inspired by my many conversations with Mark) that we know Rhett Butler was fictional, but nothing about his existence or non-existence affected society's history. There must be changes on a macro-level for it to be alternate history.

Grant claimed that all science fiction becomes alternate history eventually, because the science in it will prove implausible or there will be other historical diverges. Alternate histories, on the other hand, will remain as valid as when they were written. I said this seemed to be saying that alternate history stories will last forever, and Steele talked about an upcoming story of his, "The Tranquil Alternative," set in an alternate 1995, and how he didn't have to be as concerned about it being out-dated right away.

I then asked for quick questions. The problem with this is you get a lot of non-questions. "What about history that has never happened, where Russia [sic] never lost astronauts?" Okay, what about it? Someone in the audience mentioned Robert Sobel's *For Want of a Nail*, a detailed history of North America which assumes Burgoyne won the Battle of Saratoga. It even has ten pages of bogus bibliography. (Grant claimed he used to do bogus bibliographies on papers in high school, but that is like comparing a child's drawing to a Van Gogh.) I've seen it only in hardcover and have no idea why someone hasn't reprinted it. (Buchanan, however, thought it was dull.)

Asked what they liked to see (or wanted to write) in an alternate history the panelists responded with a variety of answers. Kaveny was interested in the High Middle Ages. I said I particularly liked stories centering around a change in religious history (such as John M. Ford's *Dragon Waiting* or Poul Anderson's "In the House of Sorrows"). Buchanan said that the problem with alternate histories in which you kill Hitler is that there will be someone else to take his place.

Steele said that two years ago at MagiCon, he heard about Resnick's plan to do *Alternate Outlaws* and asked (or was asked) to do a story. He then forgot, and nine months later Resnick called him up and said, "Where's the story?" Steele asked how long he had--he had two weeks. So he did research on Jesse James, and said the crash course approach was terrific, like being in college. "You find your mind going in directions it hadn't gone before." I added that I like to run off and read about periods after I read alternate histories based on changes in them. Buchanan agreed that a good alternate history or time travel will teach you something. (Of course, you have to be careful to know what changes the author has made in history or you might end up "learning" that Lee won at Gettysburg.)

Stubbs said that one of the questions suggested was, "What if the anti-fire people had won?" He said it has been written: they died of cold and the pro-fire people came along after them. In other words, history converged.

Someone in the audience asked what would be most disturbing changes we could choose? Kaveny said he has seen the Tank Trap Memorial, and keeps thinking about what might have happened if the Germans had got to Moscow. Buchanan agreed that it would be some scenario in which the Axis had won, and Steele said most people seem to choose one that has something to do with World War II. Buchanan responded that she could handle the South winning the Civil War, but not Germany winning World War II. Stubbs also said he would have taken a change in World War II personally, because he would have been killed had the Germans won. (I noted as an aside that there seemed to be a sub-genre of alternate histories in which Germany wins World War II which use that as an excuse for explicit violence and sadism, beyond what the story seems to call for.)

Grant cited an amazing tourist photograph taken in Utah, with a big chunk of meteor in sky, which would have hit Alberta had it not burned up. He had also heard of a meteor that hit outside of Montreal, which, if it had been a bit larger, might have wiped out the city. Steele said one of his ancestors was the New Jersey delegate who signed the Declaration of Independence; as he put it, "I wouldn't be here if we had lost the Revolution." (I think chaos theory says that most of us wouldn't be here with that big a change that far back, but that's another panel.)

Grant mentioned that for those interested, there would be a panel on Saturday on alternate Canadas.

Parties

Well, we started toward the Boston in 2001 party in the Place Louis Riel, but as we were leaving the elevator we ran into Mike and Carol Resnick, and Carol mentioned, "Oh, by the way if you're going over to the Place Louis Riel, the elevators are all broken there." Since the party was on the 14th floor we decided to skip it and instead talked for a bit with the Resnicks about our trip to India last year. Carol said that Mike thought we were very brave to go on our own, but I suspect "brave" didn't quite express what he was thinking. Certainly other people tended more towards words like "foolish," "stupid," and "brain-damaged." Carol said they wanted to see India, but not on their own. (One of the

things they mentioned was that because the train/plane/whatever connections are not reliable, you might lose your hotel reservations. I explained that we didn't actually have any reservations after the first night, which they seemed to think pretty daring. Well, so far the only place this has gotten us into trouble was Stockholm.)

Panel: **Debunking Pseudoscience**

Friday, 10 AM

Jack Nimersheim (mod), George Flentke, Keith G. Kato, Hayford Peirce, Howard Scrimgeour, Susan M. Smith

Description: Most SF writers knowingly use pseudoscience. Where do we draw the line?

It's probably worth listing the panelists' credentials for this panel. Nimersheim writes for computer magazines. Flentke has a Ph.D. in biochemistry and is doing research in the Department of Pharmacology at the University of Wisconsin. Kato has a Ph.D. in experimental plasma physics and is on the research staff of Hughes Aerospace. Peirce is a science fiction writer. Scrimgeour is a veterinarian. Smith has a Ph.D. in biochemistry and is an assistant professor in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Wisconsin.

The panelists seemed to agree from the outset that to be acceptable in science fiction, pseudo-science must at least be consistent. For example, Asimov's psycho-history is pseudo-science, but it has an internal consistency. (I am reminded of the panelist at Boskone who was using a psychologist's definition of psycho-history--using psychology to analyze the motivations of historical figures--and couldn't figure out what the rest of us were talking about until we realized the confusion and sorted it out.) The panelists also cited creation science as pseudo-science, but were less forgiving of it.

Someone described pseudo-science as having "the trappings of science without the verisimilitude." Someone else claimed, however, that every science has passed through a pseudo-science phase. This got people talking about how science is done. For example, it used to be that when someone discovered something, he or she would search the literature and often find that someone else had already discovered this, but no one had read the earlier work. There was some question as to whether there would be less of this phenomenon with the more rapid information exchange of today, but I suspect that the limiting factor is what people can assimilate, not what can be published.

Kato pointed out that sometimes bad science is just bad experiments; my understanding is that this about sums up the problems with cold fusion.

This led to a discussion of Velikovsky. Some people said that when Velikovsky's book *Worlds in Collision* came out, scientists either didn't respond to it at all or just called Velikovsky a crank. But others said that there were in fact responses that addressed Velikovsky's claims and showed how ridiculous they were, but no one was interested in those. It was only later, when Carl Sagan attacked Velikovsky, that people started hearing this sort of response, and then only because Sagan was celebrity.

This led to the question: who should get the blame for pseudo-science? The three candidates seem to be the public, the media, or pseudo-scientists themselves. Certainly when the media covers the pseudo-scientists but not the rebuttals from real scientists, they are partly to blame. But the public seems to have developed the attitude that "if science can't prove it's wrong, it must be right." And while some pseudo-scientists genuinely believe they have arrived at their conclusions through scientific analysis, others are more interested in promoting their political, social, or religious agenda. (I've just finished reading James Morrow's *Towing Jehovah*, and he captures this attitude quite well, both for the religious and for the anti-religious. Morrow rarely shows favoritism, preferring to skewer everyone in his works.)

According to the panelists, one key to recognizing a pseudo-scientist (as opposed to a real scientist who is working on the fringes of science) is that the pseudo-scientist won't back off in light of contradictory evidence.

This got people off into a discussion of peer-reviewed articles, fueled by someone in the audience who had several of his articles rejected by peer-reviewed journals only to achieve success elsewhere. I can't say with certainty that peer review is better or worse than editorial review, but for an example of the latter, I will point out that Richard Adams's *Watership Down* was rejected by twenty-six editors before someone at Penguin finally decided to take a chance on it. It would appear, therefore, that there is anecdotal evidence on both sides, although I grant there are (or at least should be) different guidelines applied to non-fiction than to fiction. Maybe the reason pseudo-science is so popular is that people are trying to apply guidelines more suitable for fiction than for non-fiction to it: they want to believe what is sexy, interesting, or fun, not what is true.

And of course the old "water engine" idea was mentioned: did someone invent an engine that runs on water that was suppressed by the oil companies? Or as Peirce expressed it, "Is anti-gravity floating around?"

Panel: A New Look at Hard SF

Friday, 11 AM

David G. Hartwell (mod), Kathryn Cramer

Description: What is considered "hard" SF in today's market? How does it compare to what it has been in the past?

Given that this panel consisted entirely of the editors of *The Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard SF*, you might expect that this would be a discussion of that book as much as of hard science fiction in general, and you would be right.

The book got started, apparently, because Cramer didn't like what she perceived as military science fiction replacing real hard science fiction as what was called "hard science fiction." She wanted to return hard science fiction to its initial definition, which she gave as "science fiction that has science as its defining attribute," not political views, etc. (The term was actually invented by P. Schuyler Miller in the 1950s as a way of distinguishing it from the increasing amount of "soft science fiction" and fantasy that were invading the field.) The book took five years to put together and Hartwell was not involved for the first couple or so.

During that time, an argument was raging in the *New York Review of Science Fiction* about the right way to read hard science fiction, in particular Tom Godwin's "Cold Equations." Most people feel this is a straightforward hard science fiction story which confirms our faith in rationality, our belief that truth is not always beautiful but it is always truth, our faith that truth is sublime, etc. (Or as Hartwell later put it, hard science fiction is "about an emotional response to the sublimity of truth.") But some read it as having a sub-text of "How wonderful it is to get rid of this woman!" with all the political baggage that entails. (In case you hadn't figured out, I am firmly in the first camp.)

Cramer said all this leads to the question of whether one reads hard science fiction on a literal or a metaphorical level, and that neither approach is wrong. I suspect that most hard science fiction fans would disagree, and that is why they reject Ray Bradbury's Mars from the category of hard science fiction. The "intentional fallacy" (i.e., questioning the author's intent rather than taking the text as is) aside, most readers of hard science fiction believe that when an author talks about Mars, it is (and is supposed to be) the planet fourth from the sun, not some inner warlike region of one's soul, or rural Illinois.

However, Cramer's definition, or at least her application of it, has led to some raised eyebrows. The anthology included two J. G. Ballard stories: "Prima Bella Donna" (relating to Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Rappaccini's Daughter") and "Cage of Sand" (inspired by the Challenger disaster). Ballard, in fact, claims he is one of the few living writers of hard science fiction, leading many to question either his definition of "hard science fiction" or his definition of "few." (Given the number of posthumous books from Asimov and Heinlein, one might discuss his definition of "living" as well.)

In any case, one of the purposes of the book, according to Cramer, was to tell the readers to "look for the science," so they can find it where they didn't find it before. (Hmmm--if you have to look for it where you didn't find it before, can it truly be said to be the defining attribute?)

Cramer and Hartwell see a change in people's attitudes these days, from "techno-pessimism" to "techno-optimism." The result is that authors feel more comfortable writing about technological (hard) science fiction than they did in the 1980s.

The issue of pseudo-science arose here as well, with a question from the audience as to whether time travel is hard science fiction. (The same question is usually asked of faster-than-light travel.) The answer was that it depends how it is treated; it could be hard science fiction or it could be fantasy.

Cramer and Hartwell said that they often hear that "to concentrate on the science is to do it at the expense of plot and characterization." In the discussion at the genre-crossing panel, it was said that hard science fiction takes words to explain it, and that leaves fewer words for establishing other genres. Obviously it also leaves fewer words for building plot and characterization, and that was explicitly noted here as well. This is not to say it can't be done, just that it's not easy. However, Cramer and Hartwell say this is not true, and point to the works of Nancy Kress as a counter-example. They also said that this objection to concentrating on science and on the outer life of a character has in it the assumption that the presentation of the inner life of a character is "better" than the presentation of the outer life. After all, one rarely hears people say that the problem with characterization is that it does it at the expense of the setting.

Cramer spent some time talking about how her father, John Cramer, wrote the hard science fiction novel *Twister*. Apparently he told her that he was going to take some time off and write a science fiction novel--I forget whether it was six weeks or what, but it was some incredibly short period of time. She avoided telling him how ridiculous that was, which was good, because he went and did it. The novel did need some work after he submitted it, but was still on a level with many works that took a lot longer. Cramer also said when he sent the novel in, he included a huge diagram of where all the characters were at different times throughout the novel, and so on, because he thought the publisher would find this important, or useful. In other words, he wrote it the same way he wrote all the scientific papers he had written. (One result of this was that he had to spend one pass just changing passive constructions to active ones.)

Once again, a lot of time was spent discussing marketing categories: that more fantasy is published than science fiction, and that media-related science fiction (TV, movie, and gaming tie-ins) is now considered a separate category. But according to Cramer and Hartwell, all the major science fiction publishers, except possibly DAW, are still looking for hard science fiction.

Also again was raised the question of why hard science fiction is a mostly male field. Hartwell replied that was because most of the authors hadn't had a sex change yet. This may seem like a flip answer, but it has a basis in the fact that authors are not re-created anew every year, but last for five, ten, twenty, or (in the case of Jack Williamson and a few others) fifty years. If one counts only authors who have started writing in the last ten years, one suspects one will come up with quite a different proportion than if one looks at the field at large. Someone else claimed that science, for whatever reason, was mostly male, and hard science fiction authors frequently come from science. But Cramer said that while it used to seem that women were not interested in science, now she hears women saying things like, "May I borrow your earring to reboot my Powerbook?" (If it takes an earring to

reboot a Powerbook, is that why men are starting to wear earrings?)

Panel: **Enhancements to Humanity**

Friday, 12 N

Maia Cowan (mod), Glenn Grant, J. D. Maynard, Gerald D. Nordley, Mary H. Rosenblum

Description: When is the enhanced person no longer human? Where is your privacy when everybody has telepathy? Who would oppose the enhancements?

This panel stated, logically enough, by defining what they meant by "enhancements." Their difficulty merely reflects the complexity of this topic in general.

The first definition given was "that which allows people to do things beyond the norm," not just to correct deficiencies. But the panelists could not decide if eyeglasses constituted an enhancement, given that the "norm" at this point was not 20/20 vision.

As the panelists said, all this was related to the question "At what point does something become non-human?" and, more practically, "At what point does something become non-human in such a way that someone can claim ownership?"

The panelists agreed that they would like to see some bio-engineering enhancements that would adapt us to our current lifestyle and environment: better eyesight, better metabolism, better memory, better control over our emotions, better immune system, better constructed knees and spine. They agreed that of these, however, the physical enhancements will come first.

But though lots of stuff sounds nice, what are the social consequences, and what if not everyone can get them? We can already see some of the results of really basic instances of bio-engineering: when people can determine the sex of their child, the proportion of males to females increases dramatically. While this may balance out when some parents realize that females are in demand, the cycle takes years to get to that point.

Will people accept bio-enhancements? In general, people fear what they do not understand. Also, one important factor in gaining acceptance will be that of allowing personal choice. The panelists agreed that the ideal future would have bio-enhancements neither forbidden nor required. Even so, some people expressed the concern that allowing people to make unrestricted bio-enhancements might degrade the human genome. The panelists felt that while distinguishing between inheritable changes and non-inheritable changes might avoid some of this concern, as one person put it: "You have a right to be stupid." Someone noted that now we allow diabetics and other with damaging, inheritable conditions to reproduce and pass them on, and that any attempt to change this policy would result in people shouting "Nazi Germany" faster than you could blink.

It was noted that the domestication of animals was basically bio-engineering, but people either don't recognize that parallel, or are offended by it because it equates us with "lower" animals.

Is bio-enhancing just an easy out? In particular, if instead of cleaning up pollution we enhance ourselves to survive better in it, where does that leave the rest of the ecosystem? (Read Robert Silverberg's *Hot Sky at Midnight* for further elaboration on this idea.) On the other hand, everything we do to survive, from the stone axe on, is a technological fix. Where do we draw the line?

Speaking of lines, what is the dividing line between what is human and what is not? The answer to this determines our responses and actions to many things. (The whole abortion issue centers around this.) Of course, sometimes we ignore this line and apply human standards to non-humans anyway. In the Middle Ages, animals could be tried for crimes in a court of law. Even now, animals can be

deemed dangerous and ordered destroyed by a court--certainly a form of trial. What will the future hold? (It's interesting to note that those same Middle Ages courts which would call animals to trial and have them as witnesses did not allow Jews as witnesses in court.)

But the question of who is human is of vital importance. One reason that slavery persisted in the United States, and in as brutal a form as it did, was that the slave-holders insisted that the slaves were not human. If one looks at the rules governing slaves in the Old Testament, for example, it is clear that slaves there are recognized as human, and hence the rules for their treatment were quite different from what one saw in the American form.

The standard biological definition for a species is "that which can interbreed." When discussing what is human in terms of bio-enhancement, this is clearly not sufficient. For example, a woman who has a hysterectomy is unable to interbreed with other human beings; does this mean she is no longer human? Do women cease to be human when they go through menopause? (If you think these are contrived questions, consider the mess the Hawaiian legislature has gotten itself into. In an attempt to circumvent a Hawaiian Supreme Court ruling that forbidding same-sex marriages violates Hawaii's gender equal rights provision to their state constitution, the legislature said that the purpose of marriage was reproduction. The number of senior citizens' groups and disabled citizens' groups who attacked them was pretty impressive. And last I heard, they would still give a marriage license to couples in which the woman was well past child-bearing age, their supposed intention to the contrary.)

John Varley was particularly mentioned as a science fiction author who looked at the consequences of bio-enhancements (in his "Eight Worlds" series).

Panel: **Canadian SF**

Friday, 1 PM

Robert Runte (mod), Glenn Grant, David G. Hartwell, Andre Lieven, Derryl Murphy, Robert Sawyer, Michael Skeet

Description: A discussion on the differences in SF from various regions of the world.

What an odd description, unless Canada is really large enough to be called "various regions of the world."

This was one of the more interesting panels (at least for the first two-thirds--then I discovered that if I skip lunch, my ability to pay attention drops considerably, so when it veered into the more arcane aspects of local authors, I decided to grab a quick snack). But the first two-thirds had more content than the entire time of many panels.

They began by citing John Robert Colombo, who in *Other Canadas* (1979) tried to list the characteristics of Canadian science fiction. He concluded that the four trends it seem to follow were:

- | a polar world,
- | national disaster,
- | the alienated outsider, and
- | fantasy rather than hard science fiction.

I should note, by the way, that in general the panel discussed what distinguished English-language Canadian science fiction from American or British science fiction. Australian science fiction wasn't mentioned though interestingly enough many of the characteristics of current Canadian science fiction seem to apply there as well. There was some mention of French-language Canadian science fiction, but mostly in response to my question about it, and the panelists seemed all to come from the

Anglophone tradition.

Since Colombo wrote fifteen years ago, today's theory is slightly different, though not all that much. Canadian science fiction has more emphasis on setting than its American or British counterparts. (I find this true of Australian science fiction as well). It frequently has an alienated outsider, and what's more, this outsider often chooses to stay outside by the end of the story. Canadian science fiction tends toward speculative fiction, magical realism, etc., over action fiction. Perhaps because of this, it also does not have a lot of "alpha-male" heroes. Canadian science fiction goes for ambiguous endings. (American science fiction is seen as going for happy endings, British for unhappy endings, and the Japanese "stop before they get to the ending," according to one panelist.)

In contrast to the American "melting-pot" myth, Canadian science fiction stresses the "mosaic" myth. (This was also expressed as Americans have everyone joining together, whereas Canadians have people seceding from a group.) I suspect the American "melting pot" myth is being replaced by the "mosaic" myth, however, so this distinction may pass away in time.

Much American science fiction is based on the idea (or myth) of the "Wild West," while Canada's science fiction draws on its form of western expansion, which involved the RCMP going first to prevent a lawless frontier from existing at all. And the RCMP was followed by what was termed "settlement by committee."

The panelists pointed out that all this was to some extent self-fulfilling prophecy, however, because when people started to compile anthologies of Canadian science fiction, they looked for stories that had just these features. Other stories that didn't fit were rejected because "they weren't really Canadian." Someone said that the *Tesseracts* anthologies used them as criteria, but that sometimes stories were selected because they conformed to them, and sometimes precisely because they *did* run counter to them.

Canadian science fiction is searching for its identity. Panelists felt there might be some parallel with regional science fiction in the United States, and I would agree that some of the characteristics of the latter include an emphasis on setting, a trend toward speculative rather than action fiction, and a trend away from "alpha-male" heroes. But then again, maybe these *are* what defines regional fiction in general. (And the panelists noted that Canadian science fiction had its regional schools as well.)

Hartwell felt that Canadian science fiction was in an "active, conscious search of what its identity can and should be, but doesn't have one yet." It draws on both British and American traditions, but on others as well (for example, magical realism). There is also a much heavier female influence--as Hartwell put it, "Canadian science fiction didn't have any founding fathers, but it had several founding mothers."

To a great extent, of course, one needs to define who Canadian science fiction authors are before one can define Canadian science fiction. What makes the trends listed self-fulfilling in another way is that many people seem to doing the reverse: anyone who isn't writing in that way is dismissed as "not Canadian." This is (naturally) most common with authors who have lived in both Canada and the United States (or, less frequently, Britain). If I understood him correctly, Grant, for his anthology *Northern Stars*, defined Canadian science fiction as science fiction which was written in Canada. This sounds to me like a definition a tax lawyer would cook up. I wrote my Montreal film festival entirely in Canada; does that make it Canadian writing? If Robert Charles Wilson (to name an author who is, I believe, unambiguously Canadian) goes to a convention in Detroit and happens to write a story while he's there, does that disqualify it from being Canadian? (It is possible that Grant meant that the bulk of an author's writing should be done in Canada, but even so, I question this definition. Hemingway, in spite of writing most of his works in places like France and Cuba, was still an American author.) Various authors whose categorization was a matter of dispute were mentioned: William Gibson and Spider Robinson (who were born in the United States but now live in Canada), A. E. Van Vogt and Gordon R. Dickson (who were born in Canada but now live in the United States), and even Elizabeth

Vonarburg, the best-known of the Francophone science fiction writers in Canada, who was born in France.

Murphy felt that there was a new internationalization of science fiction, which presumably might wipe out or mute some of the distinguishing characteristics of Canadian (or any other national) science fiction.

Sawyer said that his book *Far-Seer* was quintessentially Canadian. Margaret Atwood (perhaps the most famous Canadian author of today) in her latest book has the theme that "you must fight the land or die." *Far-Seer*, Sawyer said, also had that theme. (Yes, but so did Kim Stanley Robinson's *Red Mars*, or for that matter Tom Godwin's *Space Prison*.) Sawyer also mentioned his Aurora-winning story "Just Like Old Times," which appeared in *Dinosaur Fantastic*. He described *Dinosaur Fantastic* as "purely commercial" and said that this meant that "Just Like Old Times" was very Canadian and very American.

I asked about French-language science fiction, but about all the panelists could offer was that it was technophobic (even more so than the somewhat technophobic English-language science fiction of Canada), featured the biological sciences more, and tended to use extended allegories.

Presentation: **That Crazy Kepler**

Friday, 2 PM

Dr. Martin Clutton-Brock

Description: Basic Astronomy from the Past. Kepler, as performed by Dr. Martin Clutton-Brock, tells the audience how he made his discoveries, all the while battling nagging wives, drunken roommates and stupid bureaucracy.

Last year I had waxed enthusiastic over Mark Twain as the "Dead Guest of Honor" at Con Francisco, and the wonderful job done by the man impersonating him. Well, ConAdian didn't quite go that far, but they did have an hour-long "guest appearance" by Johannes Kepler.

Dr. Clutton-Brock apparently has several of these forty-minute presentations, but he usually does them for his astronomy classes rather than for a science fiction convention. I suppose Kepler was chosen because he actually wrote some science fiction (unlike Galileo or Brahe, though I suspect Brahe would be fun to see). For this Clutton-Brock dresses up in full 17th Century costume and relates the story of his life and work in the first person. If you've seen Hal Holbrook doing Mark Twain or James Whitmore doing Harry Truman, you know the sort of thing I'm talking about. It was enthralling, I probably learned a lot about Kepler, and I hope future conventions look for this sort of programming. (Can Intersection get H. G. Wells or even better, Mary Shelley to put in a guest appearance?)

Panel: **Bantam Books Presents**

Friday, 3 PM

Jennifer Hershey (mod), Tom Dupree, Janna Silverstein, Christian Waters

Description: A slideshow and panel presentation which will preview science fiction and fantasy publications coming from Bantam Spectra Books over the next several months, presented by the staff of Spectra. Color slides will feature artwork from upcoming titles.

(This was scheduled opposite a reading by Connie Willis, one of Bantam's most popular authors. Go figure.)

Coming up in October (meaning in the bookstores in September) are the third Jedi book by Kevin J. Anderson, *Champions of the Force* (not a big thrill for me but your mileage may vary); the fourth book in Vonda McIntyre's "Starfarers" series, *Nautilus* (as well as a re-issue of the first three books with new covers, and her earlier novel *Dreamsnake*); Angus Wells's *Lords of the Sky* in trade paperback; *The Secret Oceans* by Betty Ballantine (described as "Dinotopia goes under the sea") in hardback; and Bruce Sterling's new novel (in hardback) *Heavy Weather* (which looks very promising--in the near future, hackers known as "Storm Troopers" try to break up the violent storms that are raging in the skies over west Texas). Of *Heavy Weather*, Dupree says, "If you read *Wired*, this is for you."

November must be National Paperback Book Month or something. There will be *Globalhead*, a paperback collection of thirteen Bruce Sterling stories; a paperback edition of Arthur C. Clarke's *Hammer of God*; a paperback edition of Roger Stern's *Death and Life of Superman* (with a new piece of artwork inside the front cover--this seems a blatant attempt to get the people who bought the hardback to buy the paperback, but will probably serve only to annoy them, much like reissuing a collection, but adding one new story); a paperback edition of *The Multiplex Man* by James P. Hogan; Ian McDonald's *Terminal Cafe* in trade paperback (about scientifically resurrecting the dead; I found it a bit difficult to follow the language, though I usually like McDonald); and a hardback edition of Patricia McKillip's *Rich and Strange* (the second in Brian Froud's "Faerielands" series).

In December (just in time for the Christmas gift-giving season) is a hardback edition of Vonda McIntyre's new "Star Wars" book, *The Crystal Star*, and a paperback edition of Kathleen Tyer's "Star Wars" book, *Truce at Bakura*. (Bantam seems to be trying for one hardback and one paperback "Star Wars" book every December, as well as others during the year.) Also coming is Sheri Tepper's new novel *Shadow's End* (no description given), and a paperback edition of her *Plague of Angels*. Katharine Kerr has revised *Daggerspell* and it is being reissued in paperback along with its sequel *Darkspell*. There is also a trade paperback of Chris Claremont and Beth Fleischer's *Dragon Moon* (illustrated by John Boulton) at US\$14.95 with a special edition with autographs "tipped in" at US\$50. ("Tipped in" means that the people signed a stack of sheets of paper which are later glued into the books. I assume the special edition is a hardback, though they didn't say.)

There will also be a new novel from Norman Spinrad, not under the "Spectra" imprint nor marketed as science fiction, called *Pictures at 11* about a group of eco-terrorists who take a news show hostage in Los Angeles. And finally, Bantam will be reprinting *The World of Michael Whelan*, but still in the hardback edition at a hardback price (US\$60, I believe).

In January 1995 are the paperback releases of Isaac Asimov and Robert Silverberg's *Positronic Man*, Paula Volsky's *Wolf of Winter*, and Gregory Benford's *Matter's End* (a collection of his short fiction). Note that all Bantam's single-author collections seem to be coming out in paperback only; I guess hardback single-author collections don't sell well enough for them (though Tor and many small presses can manage to make something on hard-cover collections). (Actually, if I understood correctly, Tor may not actually make money on the hardbacks, but needs to issue them to get reviews et al from periodicals that don't review paperbacks. So they may write off some of the hardback cost as publicity for the paperback.) Also coming is Alan Rodgers's *Pandora* (which assumes that a UFO really did crash into the Southwest desert in the late 1940s and an alien child survived).

February 1995 will see paperback editions of Michael Bishop's *Brittle Innings* and Robert Silverberg's *Hot Sky at Midnight*. (This is good timing for both of these. I think Bishop's book is already a Hugo contender, but this might make it even stronger. And it could make a real difference for the Silverberg by getting it into the hands of "the masses" in time for the nominations.) The Bishop has a new cover (the old one tested well with women but not with men, so the new one shows a baseball field instead of a Southern home). *Brittle Innings* is also in development for a movie, possibly with Arnold Schwarzenegger, though I suspect they're waiting to see how a certain one of this fall's movies does first.

Another February highlight (for me anyway) is Connie Willis's new novella, *Remake*, set in a future Hollywood where you can computerize and digitize remakes so that (for example) you can remake *Casablanca* with River Phoenix and Madonna. The bad news (for many people) is that it's coming out as a trade paperback at US\$11.95 (even though the editor on the panel said it would be priced "well under ten dollars").

Neal Stephenson (of *Snowcrash* fame) has a new hardback coming out in February: *The Diamond Age*. It's set a hundred years in the future and has a variety of social "tribes" (for example, there are the neo-Victorians). The plot concerns an interactive education device that gets into the "wrong" hands.

Also in February, Arthur C. Clarke and Gentry Lee's *Rama Revealed*, Isaac Asimov's *I, Asimov*, and Maggie Furey's *Harp of Winds* will be released in paperback.

In March we get the first book of yet another "Star Wars" trilogy, this one by Roger MacBride Allen. The first book is titled *Ambush at Corellia*, and will be in paperback. The second book should be out in July and the third in November.

Elizabeth Vonarburg will have a novel out in paperback, *Reluctant Voyagers* (translated from the original French). It's about someone in Quebec who wakes up one morning to "find everything a little bit left of reality." (It could be alternate history, so I'll be looking for this one.)

Robert Silverberg will have a new "short novel" out in hardback, *The Mountains of Majipoor*. (It's the same number of pages as Willis's novella--206--so I suspect it's really a novella, and it's priced at US\$19.95.) James P. Hogan will have a new trade paperback, *Realtime Interrupt*, about a programmer who finds himself in the virtual-reality town he created.

Also in March will be paperback reprints of Harry Harrison's *Stainless Steel Rat Sings the Blues* and Robert Charles Wilson's *Mysterium* (too late to remind people to nominate it for a Hugo, but it was originally a trade paperback rather than a hardback so that might help).

In the summer of 1995 there will be a hardback release of Gregory Benford's *Sailing Bright Eternity*, the sixth in his series.

Coming up in the future are a trilogy from Mike Resnick, a trilogy from Kristine Kathryn Rusch (I sense a distressing trend here), a novel from George R. R. Martin, an a novel from Connie Willis that is a "loose" sequel to *Doomsday Book* (whatever that means). By the way, *Doomsday Book* is in its second paperback printing, without the perfectly awful "romance novel" cover of the first--it now has a Celtic knot motif.

And last, but certainly not least, Bantam reports that Walter M. Miller is "90% done" on his sequel to *A Canticle for Leibowitz*. Let's see ... the book came out in 1960, so it took 34 years to finish 90%, so it should be done in another four years--plus a year or so for the publishing process.

Panel: **Designing Diseases**

Friday, 4 PM

Shariann Lewitt (mod), Jeri Freedman, Ian K. Hagemann, Judy Lazar, Perrienne Lurie, J. D. Maynard

Description: A discussion of disease and how it works to help you in your world.

The panelists started by announcing that this panel was about designing diseases for fiction, not for germ warfare, and one of my friends immediately left, quite disappointed.

The first question to ask is, "Why design new diseases in literature at all? Aren't there enough good *real* diseases?" Someone mentioned *The Control of Communicable Diseases in Man* by the American Public Health Association, which lists and describes (in gory detail) all known real diseases. This led everyone on the panel to list their favorite diseases, apparently based on how disgusting the symptoms were.

This was followed by the panelists talking about the diseases they would design, with several jokes about diseases that would kill only lawyers. While the panelists did get around to saying that authors invent diseases because they need to make a disease do what is necessary for the story, the discussion didn't seem to be going anywhere interesting (to me), so I left early.

Panel: **Is Modern SF A Reactionary Literature?**

Friday, 5 PM

Peter Nicholls (mod), J. R. Dunn, Daniel Fresnot, Dr. Elizabeth Anne Hull, Martha Soukup

Description: Is SF currently reactionary against mainstream literary ideas, against "society's" ideas, or against itself?

(Someone on the panel [either Soukup or Hull] mentioned in passing that they weren't in the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* because they had not written a novel, only short stories. Does this mean Harlan Ellison is not included either?)

The first point of discussion was whether the question of "reactionary" was being applied literarily or politically. Dunn claimed that literarily science fiction "hasn't developed at all since the 19th Century." If this is true, it is reactionary in form, even if not in content. And it does copy mainstream techniques. One panelist suggested that it "needs to be rooted in the past to go into the future": that is, because the *content* is unusual, innovative, or hard to understand, adding unusual literary tricks would make the work incomprehensible. Also, the use of non-realistic forms works against the realism that science fiction (usually) strives for.

At this point Fresnot said, "If reactionary means opposed to progress, then well-done art cannot be reactionary." Since this did not seem to be in response to anything anyone else had said, I suspect Fresnot (who is Brazilian) was working against a language barrier and had to spend some time formulating responses either to earlier comments or perhaps to the questions the panelists were given ahead of time.

In any case, the panelists thought that science fiction did not have to be reactionary and could indeed be subversive. But reactionary themes still abound: manifest destiny, for example. Nicholls claimed that politically reactionary science fiction was dying out even in the 1970s. Dunn said that fantasy is taking over the real reactionary elements of speculative fiction (aristocracy, etc). But it seems to me that Baen Books is still around, publishing lots of stuff that most people would call reactionary. (Each publisher has its own character, in my opinion. Ace publishes fantasies and science fiction which seem to try to follow the latest trend. Baen publishes mostly two kinds of books: fantasies and war stories. Bantam is the literary publisher (their seemingly endless number of "Star Wars" books notwithstanding). DAW publishes lots of theme anthologies as well as books from their established authors, but doesn't seem to be cultivating many new ones. Del Rey publishes a lot of "crank-'em-out" science fiction and fantasy, especially in series. Tor publishes good, solid, high-quality science fiction. I haven't figured out what AvoNova specializes in yet.)

Now that I have totally digressed...

The panelists (remember them?) said the science fiction *follows* social trends, but doesn't lead them, so in this sense it is reactionary. Dunn said that sometimes readers may be too simplistic in their

appraisals of reactionary, liberal, etc. For example, he thinks Nancy Kress is both libertarian and leftist, a combination most fans think contradictory. (I would say "oxymoronic" except then someone would surely mis-read this as saying that Kress was moronic, which is certainly *not* my intent.) This led someone else to observe that in North America, there is no left in the same sense that there is in Europe; what we call leftist they call centrist.

Political correctness came in for some discussion. According to Dunn, "PC can be called left-wing McCarthyism." The mention of McCarthyism and political correctness led Nicholls to say that a historian had once calculated that the United States has purges every thirty-five years (in other words, one every generation). Now we have political correctness, thirty-five years ago was McCarthyism, thirty-five years before that were the "Red Scares" of the 1920s, and so on. This recent political correctness trend affects childrens' publishing in particular.

Fresnot said that we remember the artists, not the politician, and as proof, asked who was Czar when Tolstoy was writing, or Prime Minister during Dickens's time. (Czars Alexander II and III and Nicholas II; and a bunch of them, including Lord Palmerston, Benjamin Disraeli, and William Gladstone; why?) Clearly this is not completely true. We remember Queen Elizabeth I, Napoleon, and Hitler, rather than the artists under them (with the exception of Shakespeare). Actually, this points out that a truly reactionary politician may result in *no* artists of note flourishing under him.

One reason that readers may think science fiction is more reactionary than it is that they don't always realize that the message "this is a possible world--learn from it" does not necessarily mean "I want this world." One writer frequently misread this way (according to many) is Robert Heinlein, whom one panelist described by saying that Heinlein was "politically extremely conservative, but socially a revolutionary." Another writer to suffer this fate is S. M. Stirling.

One other impression I got from all this is that there seems to be a philosophical connection between the left and pre-determinism (or predestination) and between the right and free will.

Film: *The High Crusade*

Friday, 7:30 PM

This was a German film (made for German television?), though it seemed to be made with Anglophone actors speaking English. There was a bit too much low comedy for my tastes (especially with the aliens), and they left out one of the bits I liked the most, but I suppose people trying to film classic novels should be applauded for that alone unless they make a total hash of it--which this isn't. This will probably show up on cable or videotape rather than in your local theater, so watch for it there.

Panel: **What Should Have Made It on the Hugo Ballot, But Didn't**

Friday, 9 PM

Joseph T. Mayhew

Description: A moderated group discussion of what (or who) should have, but didn't make it onto this year's Hugo ballot.

[I didn't attend this, but two people who did said that unfortunately it turned into more of a discussion of technical details about nominating (eligibility periods, word counts, what to do about repeat winners, etc.) than a list of stuff people liked. And one of the two people I talked to was Mayhew. I suspect a topic like this needs a panel, not just one person.]

Parties

We dropped by a few parties: Niagara Falls to talk to Bruce Burdick about his trip to twelve European countries (including Albania), the @ party, Boston in 2001 (where Mark picked up the proofs of his golem article for *Proper Boskonian*), and Antarctica in '99, a hoax bid by two people, one of whom had been to conventions but never a Worldcon before and one who had never been to a convention before. This was certainly the cleverest party: there were marshmallows for making snow sculptures, a list of films for the film program (all set in the Antarctic or the Arctic), a scale model of the facilities (a quonset hut made of corrugated cardboard), a satellite feed to the site (the television turned to a non-channel and broadcasting snow), and a list of the "Top Ten Reasons to Vote for Antarctica in '99":

10. More down under than Down Under
9. Annoy famous research scientists
8. Cool...Way Cool
7. No mosquitos, no sales tax and no minimum drinking age
6. A lovely island in the South Pacific with fabulous white beaches
5. All those penguins can't be wrong
4. Home of the 3-Minute-Tan
3. Beat Global Warning
2. All the krill you can eat
1. Conveniently close to exciting Tierra de Fuego

Panel: **Reviewing/Criticism**

Saturday, 10 AM

Dean Wesley Smith (mod), Rick Foss, Ashley D. Grayson, Paula Johanson, Janeen Webb, Tom Whitmore

Description: What is the difference between a reviewer and a critic? How can you be a successful one?

(I don't have Smith down on my actual list of panelists, but I can't remember now for sure if he was there or who moderated in his place if he wasn't.)

Foss started off by claiming that the difference is that a reviewer does not have to learn how, in his software, to put footnotes in his article.

A more serious difference was that criticism establishes the "canon" (which may, of course, be of interest only to other critics). Also, critics engage in more of a dialogue with each other than reviewers. Reviewers, on the other hand, "mediate" between the producers and the consumer.

Whitmore says as far as length goes, "I tend to err on the side on conciseness." This is probably another difference between reviewers and critics--critics seem much less concerned with conciseness.

Grayson mentioned that some reviews seem to be merely "reprosings" of the advertising blurb. Often when she reads reviews, Grayson says, she gets the feeling that "none of the reviewers come from the same planet, much less have anything common with each other." (An early review of Robert Forward's *Dragon's Egg* said it was a great book because it did such a good job with its orbital calculations.)

Someone in the audience asked the reviewers what they did if they got an assignment they didn't want to do. Most reviewers say they try to write mostly positive reviews, preferring to tell the reader what is good than to spending the time warning them against a book the reader probably wouldn't have bought anyway. But a reviewer needs to write the occasional negative review, both to establish some credibility and to give the reader a better idea of what the reviewer does not like as well as what he or she does. Foss says he writes negative reviews only of books by big-name authors who *should* do

better. Someone else said that if you don't see any reviews for a book by a major author, it probably means something negative. But it would be foolish to draw this conclusion simply because any individual reviewer chose not to review it. And even a negative review, if it gives the reasons for its negativity, may convince some readers that they would enjoy the book.

In any case, given that there are over 1600 science fiction and fantasy books published each year, reprints and re-issues rarely get reviewed. Some publishers don't send out review copies. (This is particularly true of small presses.) And most media tie-ins get skipped as well. So there are lots of reasons why you might not see reviews of any given book.

When you do see a review, however, you have the right to expect honesty from a reviewer.

Someone pointed out that newspapers, with their general book review columns, reach far more people than even *Locus*, and that critics have an even smaller audience. (True, but the audience of *Locus* has a far higher percentage of book readers and buyers than the average newspaper.)

As for prerequisites for being a reviewer, the panelists said that reviewers need to have a firm grounding in reality and in real life: the technophile is probably *not* the right person.

Panel: **Alternate Canadas**

Saturday, 11 AM

Robert Sawyer (mod), Glenn Grant, Evelyn Leeper, Andre Lieven, Derryl Murphy, David Nickle

Description: As Canada moves from crisis to crisis, can stability come from merging with the U.S.?

[Thanks again to Mark for taking the notes for this.]

I was apparently the token "United-Statesian" on this panel. (Actually, since all the Canadians seemed to refer to me as an American, I will use that designation. Just understand that I do know the difference.)

When I initially proposed this panel, I had envisioned an alternate history panel, and the title certainly implied that to some audience members, but the description seemed to deal more with alternate futures. As a result we did a little bit of each.

We started by asking one of my suggested questions: what if the Norse settlements had survived? Lieven thought that was an interesting question, in that it sort of underlined that the Norse had their equivalent of the Apollo program: "They came, they saw, they hung out, they pulled a few rocks, and they left." Because of that, of course, currently the defining aspect of Canada is between the French and the English. Norse settlements would have added a whole new culture to the mix. (One must question if the French and the English would have gotten as strong a foothold if the Norse were well-established in Canada.) Grant said that disease vectors were a factor to consider in any such scenario. For example, the high densities of people in Europe made Europeans more resistant to disease. (Some also think that the Europeans' close proximity to domesticated animals built up resistance as well.) On the other hand, the high densities meant that when a disease did take hold, it would wipe out large numbers. Someone said that continued contact with Europe would have meant that the Americas would have had the Black Death sweep through them in the 14th Century. I noted that since 90% of the casualties to Native Americans during the period of conquest were due to disease rather than warfare, this issue would be critical.

I put forth the theory that since the Norse came for different reasons, the resulting interfaces with the local indigenous population would also have been different. For example, because the Norse were more interested in finding fish than in sending large amounts of gold back to Europe, there might be

less enslavement of the local population for mining, etc. Also, with a less "narrow" view of religion, the Norse might have been more willing to intermarry with the local population, resulting in a more homogeneous and less stratified society. Murphy also believed that based on what the Vikings did elsewhere, there would have been more co-mingling, more blending, and in general more like the "Old West" (although that is hardly an example of inter-mixing). In any case, Murphy felt that history would have been "a much more violent past and a much more gun-happy future." (I am not convinced that this is true, partly because the Norse in Europe changed before guns came along.)

(Someone in the audience felt there was evidence that the Vikings of this period were Christian, which might negate some of this, but I don't believe that they were as violently evangelical as many of the other Europeans.)

Nickle felt that the problem was that Vikings were not stereotypically Canadian. (This certainly seems to be reversing cause and effect!) On a more serious level, Nickle said that Norse cultures were not set up for long-term dealings with other cultures, but tended to just kill outsiders. The small settlement which would have been established in Canada would need "a different kind of Norsemen."

In any case, the continued knowledge of the Americas throughout Europe would certainly have resulted in other groups coming over earlier, resulting in a faster European expansion. But as someone pointed out this earlier expansion would have meant that the invaders did not have as wide a technological edge over the indigenous population.

Since we had spent far more time on this than Sawyer had expected, we proceeded apace to my other question, "What if the invasion of the United States had succeeded?" A Canadian immediately responded that *we* had invaded *them*. This led fairly obviously to the other half of the panel, "What lies ahead for Canada?" "Will Canada and the United States become one country?" Given our histories, we could have ended up as one country in the past; is that the future?

Lieven seemed to imply that a union was unlikely, because (based on what he said) Americans would treat Canada as sort of a poor orphan they adopted. For example, CNN gives the exchange rates for many major currencies, but not the Canadian dollar, nor do they report on the Toronto Stock Market, even though Canada is the United States's biggest trading partner.

Lieven noted that Canadians "are historically not Americans; historically we are different from Americans. We are trying to find our own way."

One major difference is how the dividing lines within each country are drawn. In the United States, the division has traditionally been north-south. In Canada it is east-west. In fact, as Grant pointed out, there is only one highway connecting the eastern provinces with the western ones. Given the size and lack of connectivity, he's surprised Canada hasn't broken up already. (I noted that the United States had already given that approach a shot.) Someone else said that big, centralized governments tend to fall apart. I said that this didn't seem to be true of Russia (not the Soviet Union, but Russia). On the other hand, it may be that what keeps the United States together is that it is *not* a giant centralized system--there is a lot that is done on the state or local level.

But I've always liked the way Canada and the United States were a sort of special case: the border was not strictly patrolled, and you didn't need a passport to cross it. But it's getting tighter and the European borders are getting looser (at least in Scandinavia).

Of course, any ideas of what might happen have to factor NAFTA into the picture. And many people seem to think that any union between Canada and the United States will be primarily an economic one. Most attempts to paste together two or more independent countries have failed. In the case of Yugoslavia, this failure was rather dramatic, but there have been many other examples: both United Arab Republics, for example. (The only example I could think of that worked was Tanzania, but that occurred not all that long after the independence of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, and Tanzania is not

exactly thriving today.)

Sawyer felt that there were serious roadblocks to an economic union. For example, Americans would never accept a two-dollar bill or a one-dollar coin. I noted, however, that since both currencies are called the dollar, no one would have to "change" to the other country's currency name. Dunn said that was okay as long as we make the United States bills look like the Canadian ones. (For the non-travelers among you, the United States has some of the most boring-looking money around. It's amazing it's as popular as it is. The fact that people will willingly trade really interesting-looking money for ours is proof that there are considerations in life besides art.)

Of course years ago, when the Canadian and United States dollars were at par, people in the New England states would take Canadian coins as readily as United States ones. The only difference was that meters and machines were pickier.

Sawyer also felt our politics could use some improvement. Just as he said he "wanted to see a woman Prime Minister [in Britain] but not that one," he also "wanted to see a black President, but not Jackson."

Dunn said that in regards to an economic union, people are talking about Alvin Toffler's "Cascadia," an economic union of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana (and Manitoba and North Dakota?). This union might eventually expand to include California and the countries of the Pacific Rim. Of course, such a move would mean even more balkanization of Canada (and the United States) than we have now. And people wouldn't want to give up everything that the central Canadian government provides (Dunn gave the CBC as an example). I assume there's something we get from our central government in the United States that we'd miss but nothing comes immediately to mind. Dunn also said that economically we might re-align, but politically we would want to keep the same ties. (Consider the British Commonwealth as an example of this. Canada is still a member of that, but is in NAFTA rather than the EEC.)

Dunn said that high-level talks about economic union of Cascadia, including part of United States, are going on now. Grant said that other parts of the world have thought about it also (e.g., an economic union based in the Pyrenees).

Sawyer noted that David Brinkley once said union between Canada and the United States wouldn't happen, because no United States administration would want to bring in 60,000,000 Democrats. I pointed out that wasn't a problem with the current administration.

Grant thought that globalization was nearing its end, and we won't have a free market everywhere. He said he would not be surprised if the EEC is temporary as well. "There won't be any reason to globalize."

Someone in the audience asked about *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* by Joel Garreau, who also wrote *The Nine Nations of North America*, aligned by common interests. Grant said that one of them (Cascadia plus California?) would immediately have the world's largest GNP.

Nickle commented that a lot of this reflects the fact that the role of nations has become radically different in the last two hundred years.

Nickle also said that while the idea of the British successfully invading the United States warms his heart, he couldn't see that it could have lasted. As it was, the example of the American "secession" from Britain as what inspired Canada to seek independence as well. Without independence there would be a "bunch of little Canadas" and they would have been involved in World War II a lot earlier. And without independence, we would have been involved in World War I a lot earlier. As it was, we waited until millions had already died on both sides, then came in and took credit for winning it for the Allied Forces. Actually, World War I was the final straw for the Canadians: they had achieved

partial independence from Britain in 1867, but when Britain declared war on the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914, they told Canada, "By the way, you're in it too." After the war was over Canada said, "Don't *ever* do that to us again!" and so the more complete independence of 1931 was established.

Nickle felt that the independence of Canada led to the break-up of the British Empire sooner than might have happened than if the Revolutionary War had failed, since other colonies saw that independence was achievable (an existence proof, as it were).

On the other hand, independence may not be the ultimate goal. Brian Burley (from the audience) pointed out that Ireland fought to become independent of Great Britain, then turned around and joined the (then) Common Market. I suppose this is just another example of countries or areas wanting to form economic unions independently of political ones.

At some point I mentioned that I was not quite sure what a "dominion" was (as in "the Dominion of Canada"). Sawyer responded that he was still baffled by the "Commonwealth of Massachusetts." I couldn't explain that (or the Commonwealths of Kentucky, Pennsylvania, or Virginia either), but did say it was not the same as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, which was *really* hard to explain.

Someone suggested that if there had been only a few small changes in the exploration and settlement of North America, Canada and the United States would be even more similar, and would be as hard to tell apart as Austria and Germany. Someone else said that you should never say that to an Austrian or a German. This led someone else to say that there was a cultural difference between Canada and the United States that Americans just don't see. Sawyer said that was true: "Our Pizza Hut is different." What I noted was that when Canadians try to define what is Canadian, they often do it in terms of being "not America" rather than from scratch.

Someone said they never heard Americans talk about separation (of Quebec). Perhaps that is true, but I observed that in the United States we have our own non-English-language area talking about separation: Puerto Rico. Of course, I think on the whole Puerto Rico is happier being part of the United States than Quebec is of being part of Canada, but I could be wrong.

Regarding the upcoming elections in Quebec and whether it would separate from the rest of Canada, the Canadians on the panel seemed to think not. Grant said that Jacques Parizeau visited a bathtub factory and told them they were an example of how Quebec could go it on its own. The owner replied that if not for Federal government help, the company could not exist. And Lieven said that apparently the Olympic Committee is trying to encourage Montreal's bid for the Games in the future by telling them that even if Quebec secedes, Ottawa would contribute to the cost of the Olympics.

Panel: **SF Films**

Saturday, 1 PM

Steve Fahnstalk (mod), Myra Cakan, John M. Landsberg, Mark Leeper, Craig Miller, Michael Skeet

Description: A discussion of SF from Hollywood: The good, the bad, and the cyberpunk.

The first question the panelists discussed was, "Have science fiction films grown up or just more expensive?" Certainly there are more in number, so numerically there are more good ones, but there is not necessarily a higher percentage of good ones.

One reason for this is that science fiction films are seen as a way to break into the market, especially the direct-to-video market. Companies like Charles Band and Troma are putting out, in the words of one panelist, "a lot of trash." Leeper claimed that the top-end films are better now than they were previously, but not everyone agreed with that.

Skeet said, "Cinema doesn't lend itself as a medium to the most sophisticated science fiction." One example of this given was Robert Silverberg's *Dying Inside*, which seems as if it would be impossible to film successfully. Leeper noted, however, that we should probably be comparing films to novelettes, not to novels.

In an attempt to make more money, many science fiction films are not sold as science fiction. For example, *Starman* was marketed as a romance. Fantasy seems to be much more acceptable: *Field of Dreams*, *The Natural*, and *Ghost* were all successful with mainstream audiences. Of course, fantasy films have a longer heritage, including the classic fantasy cycle of the 1930s and 1940s (Thorne Smith stories and such).

Miller said that along these lines, a science fiction film set in our real world with one small element of science fiction or fantasy (such as *Cocoon* or *Short Circuit*) will succeed better with audiences than a film with an entirely different world (such as *Conan the Barbarian*), which requires more suspension of disbelief. It's still a bit hard to explain why *Ghost* succeeded when *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (a very similar film) did not.

One must also distinguish between commercial cinema in Hollywood and art films, foreign films, and other non-Hollywood products. Some of the latter which were mentioned as being good were *Closetland*, *Wings of Desire*, and *Until the End of the World*.

Miller, in talking about Hollywood in general and *Robocop* in particular, said, "The process of sequelization involves extracting the marketable elements," which may not be what made the first film good. Skeet was less positive about the first *Robocop*, however, saying, "When you get below the surface, you find more surface," to which Miller replied, "That's better than finding nothing."

Hollywood is also into "high concept" films rather than more complex stories. In fact, the panelists noted that it was surprising how well *Back to the Future* fared considering it had some "fairly deep science stuff."

The panelists closed by listing cliches they could do without. Leeper mentioned "barbarians on motorcycles in the future"; Fahnstalk said, "cyber-anything." Skeet said there was nothing he'd rule out if it was done well. And Miller closed by observing, "There's bad and there's dreadful."

Panel: **Economic/Political Aspects of Future History**

Saturday, 2 PM

Philip Kaveny (mod), Briccio Barrientos, M. Shayne Bell, David Hayman, Timothy Lane

Description: Are we moving toward a global economy or just re-entering the Dark Ages?

While the panelists agreed that to ask if we were entering the Dark Ages sounded dystopic, one need only look at Bosnia or Rwanda to see that perhaps it was a reasonable question. Lane thought the key factor was whether the educational system continued to function. (It was not clear here if he meant within the United States or globally.) Bell said that we (the more affluent nations) were suffering from "donor fatigue," or the "erosion of good will." There are only so many pleas for help one can answer. I have seen this discussed elsewhere, and one explanation of the basis of the problem lies in how our morality was shaped by our limitations. That is, it used to be that individuals were limited in what charity they could perform. You could help only those in your tribe, or village, or city. The fact that millions were dying in a famine or a war on the other side of the globe was unknown to you, and so you had no responsibility. But because you did have such a limited field of action, you were deemed to have a responsibility to act within that field. Now our fields of knowledge and of action are global in scope, and individuals cannot cope with that. (See "The Beggar in the Living Room" by William John Watkins for an extrapolation of this.)

Can we escape Malthus? Some people said we could handle 5.5 billion people now only because most are impoverished. Others thought this was just a distribution problem. Compounding this is the fact that a lot of the good arable land is being turned into cities instead of being farmed, and the question still remains, "What are the people at the top willing to give up?"

Kaveny mentioned Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*, which was described as anti-Baconian and anti-"knowledge is power." Merchant claims, for example, that the land "healed itself" during the Black Death.

Politics often confuses the issue. In Idaho, land-use planning was branded as "Communism" and rejected. Then Communism fell (at least in Europe--I find it amazing that people can ignore the fact that the vast majority of people living under Communism in 1985 are *still* living under Communism), and people decided land-use planning was okay. (The problems that arose from lack of planning may also have affected their opinion.)

Other changes are affecting our economic world. Kaveny claims, "There's a lot of useful work that needs to be done that we can't pay people to do." Whether this is because minimum wage laws have priced these jobs too high to be cost-effective, or whether labor unions prevent people from hiring non-union workers to do these jobs, or whether people have decided that these jobs are "beneath" them is not clear. A combination of all three plus others is most likely.

Someone in the audience cited the sociological theory that people naturally live in groups of five hundred, and that many of our problems come from trying to maintain larger communities than that. (Is this why smaller conventions seem to have a very different character than larger ones, not just a qualitative one?)

Barrientos said that one factor preventing us from finding solutions is that "society likes dualities and dichotomies; everyone likes to have an enemy." No one system will win, he says. Lane hit a hopeful (?) note when he declared "It's certainly possible that the United States will remain stable."

Kaveny also mentioned Sandra Harding's *Whose Science, Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives* as an example of non-traditional thinking on these issues. And Lane recommended *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World* by Hernando de Soto.

Panel: **Dinosaurs in SF**

Saturday, 3 PM

Ric Meyers (mod), Richard Chwedyk, Stephen Dedman, Stan Hyde, Hayford Peirce

Description: An exploration of the recent glut of dinosaurs after being extinct for 65 million years.

What is it with dinosaurs?

That's not my question, but rather how Meyers started this panel off. The panelists suggested that dinosaurs were popular because they could deal with their frustrations; because they're no longer around (so they're safe); because their size is awe-inspiring; because they're big, fierce, and extinct (sounds like just a rephrasing of the first three); and because they're not copyrighted or trademarked. As Chwedyk expressed it, "Dinosaurs were created when God still had an imagination."

Why do we want to give dinosaurs intelligence? Dedman claimed, "Dumb characters make for boring plots." The example he gave of an author doing this with other animals was Richard Adams's *Watership Down*, which had smart rabbits. (*Shardik*, however, did not have a smart bear, although Adams did add more human characters in that work.) Hyde said that another reason we make dinosaurs smart is that we anthropomorphize everything. "Look at the fronts of cars."

Someone mentioned Harry Harrison's "West of Eden" series in which the dinosaurs did not die off, and instead continued to evolve, but humans evolved as well. Dedman pointed out that dinosaurs didn't *need* to develop intelligence, so they wouldn't have. And the likelihood of humans evolving contemporaneously with dinosaurs seems remote, to say the least. (Until the dinosaurs died off, how much chance did any mammal have?)

There was, of course, the obligatory discussion of *Jurassic Park*. Someone said the whole security system they showed was ridiculous, because zookeepers *know* animals escape, a fact no one in the movie seemed to acknowledge. Most of the other points about the movie touched upon have been thrashed to death elsewhere so I won't go into them here. One fact I hadn't heard before was that more money was spent in making the film than has been spent for all of dinosaur research for the last hundred years.

I believe it was Meyers who said that *Jurassic Park* was consciously designed to be like a roller coaster: a big slow climb up to the first huge shock, then a series of ups and downs, and so on.

What is next? Well, Sony is making a movie of "Dinotopia." (Hyde predicted a glut of dinosaur movies--pun intended--but Meyers didn't agree.) But the problem with creating new dinosaur stories is that you usually can't move dinosaurs to other planets or times very well. Peirce suggested *The Dinosaur Cookbook*. Someone else said that there has already been a dinosaur pet care book.

Interesting factoid: There are 665 species of dinosaur known at this time, so maybe 666 really is the "Number of the Beast"!

For those who want to read more, *Modern Geology*, Volume 18, Number 2 had a couple of overviews of dinosaurs in pop culture.

Panel: **Editing Magazines & Anthologies**

Saturday, 4 PM

Ellen Datlow (mod), Gardner Dozois, Scott Edelman, David G. Hartwell, Mike Resnick

Description: If you are an editor, what's the difference between magazines and anthologies? How far should an editor go to shape a story?

The first question the panelists answered was one they say they get from people a lot: why do editors do "invitation-only" anthologies? Why not allow everyone to submit stories? The basic answer, according to Resnick, is that editors of anthologies aren't paid enough to read all those slush pile stories. The editor has a responsibility to the reader which is sometimes better filled by soliciting only from known authors. (Even Resnick admitted this was not a hard and fast rule, and one need only recall that Nick DiChario's Hugo-nominated "Winterberry" was an unsolicited manuscript for Resnick's *Alternate Kennedys* to see why. DiChario, a Campbell nominee, now shows up regularly in Resnick's anthologies.)

I suppose I should explain that there are basically three types of anthologies: reprint anthologies, "invitation-only" anthologies, and open anthologies. (This is a split by selection criteria; one could also distinguish between theme anthologies and general anthologies.)

When asked how many stories an editor must solicit to get (say) thirty usable stories, the answers varied widely. Hartwell said that he needs to ask about 150 authors to get that many stories but Resnick said that since his anthologies were so specialized that it might be difficult for an author to sell a story written for him elsewhere if he didn't print it, once he has gotten a commitment from an

author on a specific topic, he won't refuse the story. This may mean working with the author to bring the story up to a certain level, or even ultimately "burying" a sub-standard story in the middle of the anthology, but he feels that in the long run this helps the authors. (Resnick's anthologies have enough stories than he can do this, but sometimes the spottiness shows.) As he pointed out, he has edited over twenty books, and printed forty-one new authors, eight of whom made to Campbell ballot. Hartwell said that this nurturing of new writers was something he really admired in Resnick, and of course Resnick did make the Hugo ballot for Best Professional Editor this year. As Resnick later said, "You don't pay back in this field, you pay forward, because the guys you owe don't need it."

On the other hand, some authors are not happy with the changes editors "help" them make. Dozois told of A. Bertram Chandler, who wrote a story for John W. Campbell which Campbell helped him "improve." It went on to become Chandler's best-known story, but Chandler in later years said that he was still wistful for his original story. Of course, as someone pointed out, that was for a magazine, not a theme anthology, and editors do different things depending on the type of final product, which segued nicely into the actual stated topic of the panel.

In a theme anthology there is, not surprisingly, a theme. This theme is usually pretty specific (e.g., time travel, cats, green vegetables). A magazine, on the other hand, is looking for balance and variety in each issue within the general scope of the magazine (e.g., hard science fiction, fantasy). Dozois said that the issue of *Asimov's* that had two alternate history baseball stories with very similar premises was an exception. And Edelman said, for example, that *Science Fiction Age* has one fantasy story per issue.

The mechanics of editing are different as well. In an anthology, if a story ends in the middle of a page, that's okay; you just leave the rest as white space. Not in a magazine. Some magazines use poems, cartoons, quotes, or artwork as filler, but Datlow said that for a while *Omni* didn't do that. The result was that stories had to be a precise length, and she described trying to cut exactly 130 lines from a Stephen King novelette to make it fit. The first thing you do, apparently, is figure out which paragraph breaks you don't need. (*Omni* has since changed their policy.) Someone mentioned that Algis Budrys once wrote an essay, "Non-Literary Influences on Science Fiction," which talked about things like this.

Although anthologies don't have this problem, they do have others. For any anthology you need a minimum number of stories, and for a theme anthology, this may be difficult to accomplish. Sometimes you have a maximum as well; Hartwell said he would have liked to add stories by Robert Forward, Joe Haldeman, and Charles Sheffield to *The Ascent of Wonder*, but it was already a thousand pages long.

Someone asked why Martin Greenberg seemed to be involved with every anthology published. Resnick explained that Greenberg sells the idea to a publisher and does all the paperwork involving rights and royalties, but leaves all the editing to his co-editor. In movie terms, I suppose one would say that Greenberg was the producer and Resnick, Friesner, Kerr, or whoever, the director. (Resnick says that Greenberg *thinks* in anthologies.) One idea that Greenberg and Resnick have been trying to sell is a sports anthology with each story about a different sport. They have found eighty-seven sports with stories about them, but can't convince anyone that a reprint anthology would sell well. (I assume these are science fiction stories, though Greenberg has done many non-science-fiction sports anthologies.) They also can't seem to sell the proposed reprint anthology *Under Asian Skies*, which I suppose means that the earlier *Under African Skies* and *Under South American Skies* did not do very well.

Greenberg's fame has gotten to the point, in fact, where he does not always put his name on the cover for fear that people will decide anyone who edits that many anthologies must be doing a hack job.

Dozois said that "putting together a reprint anthology is like arranging a Japanese rock garden." Erdman and Dozois both said that reprint anthologies were important because they prevent the loss of

the history of science fiction.

Someone asked about the possibility of republishing an out-of-print anthology, but the panelists agreed that an out-of-print anthology is pretty much dead. Even Greenberg probably couldn't sort out all the rights issues.

Last Dangerous Visions was mentioned, but only to say it would be impolitic to mention it.

Resnick mentioned that his anthologies *Alternate Outlaws* and *Deals with the Devil* should be in the bookstores in a few days. (They were.) His *Alternate Worldcons* was on sale in the Dealers Room (and sold out over a hundred copies). The latter had its origins last year at ConFrancisco when someone talking about the convention at a party said, "It could be worse." Someone else asked, "How?" and thus was born *Alternate Worldcons*. (The answer to this particular question was that Zagreb could have won, but to the best of my knowledge, at the time of ConFrancisco Zagreb was not in a war zone or under any sort of trade sanctions. I mention this because people seem to confuse Zagreb with Sarajevo, or sometimes with Belgrade. Whether the intervening war would have disrupted the planning is, of course, a separate question.)

Panel: Utopia: Who Wants to Live There?

Saturday, 5 PM

Dr. Arlan Andrews (mod), Dr. Janice Bogstad, Donald Kingsbury, Frederick Andrew Lerner, Jack Nimersheim

Description: The pros and cons of the Utopian society.

The first question to be answered is, "Who defines utopia?" The second is, "Who pays for it?" Nimersheim said it was defined by whoever is in charge. Lerner's response was, "Who does the work?" If a utopian proposal doesn't answer this question (or at least ask it), said Lerner, it's isn't worth reading. A lot of utopias, the panelists noted, rely on slave classes to do all the work. And Lerner also mentioned that there never seemed to be any shortages in literary utopias.

Also, many utopias are anarchist, even though one panelist said that the only really successful anarchies in history were fandom and the Internet. One panelist recommended *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* by Robert Nozick.

Another unlikely feature of most literary utopias is that they never have conflicts.

One author who writes utopian works which don't have these defects is Ursula LeGuin. *The Dispossessed*, "The Ones who Walk Away from Omelas," and other works by her look at all these issues.

Too many utopian stories are just reversals that don't fix anything, but just put a different set of people on top. This is particularly a problem with many of the "feminist utopias," but one sees it in real life in the Russian and Chinese Revolutions.

Bogstad said that since she grew up on a farm, she didn't find the "back to Nature" impulse that drives many utopias very attractive.

Another question to be asked about a utopia is whether one can leave it at will. This is the difference between, say, Resnick's Kirinyaga and Tepper's world in *Sideshow*. For that matter, if you go a new utopia, must they take you in? Bogstad asked if a utopia was still a utopia if it interacted with the outside world, thereby supporting or perpetuating non-utopias. Kingsbury said that perhaps the ante-Bellum South might be an example of this, in that blacks were "outside" the utopia, yet the utopia

depended on them.

Someone noted that we are trying to build utopias all the time--we just don't call them that. But we're always trying to get more good and less bad. Sometimes we make the same sorts of errors in whose utopia it will be. Someone said, for example, that the various planned cities, houses, and so on all seem planned for mobile, agile, healthy people with no children. Lerner responded that utopian plans and utopias need to take into account how people behave. The Modernist movement in the 1920s thought that perfect geometrical designs would result in a perfect society but oddly enough, people didn't behave that way.

Nimersheim thought that in any case "we advance through adversity," and if we eliminate adversity, we stagnate. In large part it boils down to the fact that our choices are always constrained by other people's choices; utopias are relative. On the whole, Nimersheim thought we couldn't have utopia because of human nature.

The classic literary utopias are of course those of Sir Thomas More (*Utopia*) and Edward Bellamy (*Looking Backward*). In fact, the name was coined by More.

(No doubt in response to the poor sound-proofing between the room for this panel and the activity next door, Nimersheim said at one point, "Utopia is a dead bagpipe player.")

Hugo (and Other) Awards Ceremony

Saturday, 8 PM

And the winners are:

- | Novel: *Green Mars* by Kim Stanley Robinson
- | Novella: "Down in the Bottomlands" by Harry Turtledove (*Analog*, January 1993)
- | Novelette: "Georgia on My Mind" by Charles Sheffield (*Analog*, January 1993)
- | Short Story: "Death on the Nile" by Connie Willis (*Asimov's*, March 1993)
- | Non-Fiction Book: *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, edited by John Clute and Peter Nicolls
- | Dramatic Presentation: *Jurassic Park*
- | Professional Editor: Kristine Kathryn Rusch
- | Professional Artist: Bob Eggleton
- | Original Artwork: *SpaceFantasy Commemorative Stamp Booklet* by Steve Hickman
- | Semi-Prozine: *Science Fiction Chronicle* edited by Andrew Porter
- | Fanzine: *Mimosa* edited by Dock and Nicki Lynch
- | Fan Writer: Dave Langford
- | Fan Artist: Brad W. Foster
- | John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer of 1991-1992 (Sponsored by Dell Magazines): Amy Thomson (*Virtual Girl*)
- | Seiun Award for Best Novel Translated into Japanese: *Entoverse* by James P. Hogan
- | Seiun Award for Best Short Story Translated into Japanese: "Tangents" by Greg Bear
- | Seiun Award for Best Dramatic Presentation: *Jurassic Park*
- | Big Heart Award: Jack Williamson
- | First Fandom: Everett F. Bleiler and Andre Norton

Barry Longyear (as Toastmaster) started this off with a quote from J. Danforth Quayle: "If we do not succeed, we run the risk of failure." He then did a long (perhaps over-long) bit about an award for Best Rejection Letter from an editor. (I noted that he talked about the Hugo for "Best Prozine Editor," but it's actually for "Best Professional Editor," and anthology and book editors have been known to make the ballot.) Longyear quoted Gene Fowler as having said, "An editor should have a pimp for a brother--so he has someone to look up to." Eventually the award was unveiled: the "No" award, a rocket headed *down*. It was won (predictably) by "No Award."

Several non-Hugos came first. The Golden Duck Awards (for children's books) were announced. The two novel-length Auroras were awarded; the other eight had been awarded earlier in the day. When Spider Robinson got up to present them, he immediately said, "And the winner is ... Lan Laskowski!" (a reference to the fiasco of two years ago).

There were the usual jokes and surprises during the Hugo awards themselves. George Barr presented the Original Artwork and Professional Editor awards, saying that although the program book called him "one of the nicest people in fandom," "These are the people whose hands I would most like to break." Steve Hickman (in a thank-you speech *faxed* to the convention) said, "If Harlan doesn't like these stamps I can enter the plea of being self-indulgent, and that he can't fault me on." (By the way, it is also true that the convention was told by the United States Postal Service not to mail the artwork back to them, but to send it UPS!)

Connie Willis got up and said, "You guys have got to stop doing this," but also claimed that George R. R. Martin said there was a move afoot to strip her of her awards because he claims she was on steroids when she wrote the stories.

Now for my usual editorial comments.

I still think that non-Hugo awards do not belong at the Hugo ceremonies, with the exception of the First Fandom, Big Heart, and John W. Campbell awards. Announcing the other awards, without a presentation ceremony, is perhaps a reasonable compromise, though which awards does one announce and which are too minor to be given the time?

Andy Porter said that last year he thought his win as a fluke, but this proved it wasn't. (He won by eight votes this year instead of by only one. One person said that was because this was because this year the *Locus* staff *did* vote.) I suspect that *Interzone* may win next year (Langford certainly will).

That Whelan was defeated in two categories was a bit of a surprise. The Non-Fiction award was no surprise; Hickman's win was also by a very wide margin.

Harry Turtledove was very surprised at his win: he said at the reception beforehand that he was sure Ellison had it sewed up. (I believe someone said Ellison came in last, but that may be at least in part due to the difficulty of finding his story, which appeared as a small-press novella and in *Omni*.) Sheffield was also surprised, I think.

And speaking of finally winning one, it was nice to see Stan Robinson get a Hugo at last (this was his eleventh nomination). I suspect that the vote was more for *Red Mars* than for *Green Mars*, or perhaps for the series, but I think I can live with that.

The "always a bridesmaid, never a bride" title is now shared in the fiction categories by Michael Bishop and Bruce Sterling, with eight nominations each without a win. The runner-up is Gene Wolfe with seven. (Jerry Pournelle also has eight, but four of them were co-nominations.)

I suppose I should mention the Great Hugo Controversy of 1994. (Does it seem like there's a Great Hugo Controversy every year now?) This year it was the shifting of stories from the categories into which they would have fallen had the word-count rules been "strictly" applied. However, the WSFS Constitution permits the administrators to move a story into an adjacent category if it is within 5000 words of the range of that category. So, for example, a novella of 35,100 words could be moved into the novel category (whose lower boundary is 40,000 words). What happened was that due to the "5% rule," the short story category would have had only three nominees. (The "5%" rule says that a story must appear on 5% of the ballots which nominated in that category to make the ballot.) And in fact, several longer stories that had barely missed making the ballot had more nominations than shorter ones that made it. Because of this, and because there were stories within the 5000-word boundary, the administrators decided to shift stories into the shorter categories. The result was that the winner in the

Short Story category (with a theoretical upper limit of 10,000 words) was actually a 14,400-word novelette (based on my quick estimated count).

Now the problem is that moving a novella that is within 5000 words of a novel is shifting it by about 14%, but moving a 14,400-word novelette to the short story category is shifting it by almost 33%, and many people feel this is too much like comparing apples and oranges. (One might ask why no one has protested that 40,000-word novels have to compete against 150,000-word novels. But last year people did bring a similar objection against calling Gurney's "Dinotopia" a single piece of artwork.)

I can certainly see the point of the objectors. However, I think it is foolish to rail at the administrators over this issue. The Constitution clearly says they can do this. If the members of the WSFS don't want them to do this, they should change the Constitution.

Other Awards

This is probably as good a place as any to list the various other awards that were announced during ConAdian. I will not be listing them all; for example, the *Science Fiction Chronicle's* awards may have been announced during the convention, but that seems more coincidence than planning. And I won't be listing all the Hogs because I don't feel like typing all that if I wasn't even nominated. :-)

The Auroras are the Canadian national awards. The two Auroras for novels were presented at the Hugo Awards ceremony, the others, presented earlier in the day were:

- | Best Short-Form Work in English: "Just Like Old Times" by Robert J. Sawyer
- | Meilleure nouvelle en francais: "La Merveilleuse machine de Johann Havel" by Yves Meynard
- | Best Other Work in English: "Prisoners of Gravity" (television series)
- | Meilleur ouvrage en francais (Autre): Les 42,210 univers de la science-fiction by Guy Bouchard
- | Artistic Achievement: Robert Pasternak
- | Fan Achievement (Fanzine): "Under the Ozone Hole," edited by Karl Johanson & John Herbert
- | Fan Achievement (Organizational): Lloyd Penney, Ad Astra
- | Fan Achievement (Other): Jean-Louis Trudel, promotion of Canadian SF

The Prometheus Awards, given by the Libertarian Futurist Society were:

- | Novel: *Pallas* by L. Neil Smith
- | Hall of Fame: *We* by Yevgeny Zamiatin

The Golden Duck Awards for excellence in children's science fiction went to:

- | Picture Book Illustration: *Richie's Rocket* by Joan Anderson, photographed by George Ancona
- | Children's Book, Grades 2-6: *Worf's First Adventure* by Peter David
- | Young Adult Book Grades 6-10: *The Giver* by Lois Lowry
- | Special Award: *Invitation to the Game* by Monica Hughes

(Personally, while I agree that age 15 might be "young adult," I think age 11 is pushing it.)

The Chesley Awards, given by ASFA, are as follows:

- | Magazine Cover: Wojtek Sludmak, *Asimov's* December 1993
- | Three-Dimensional Art: Jennier Weyland, "And I am the Shining Star"
- | Interior Illustration: Alan M. Clark, "The Toad of Heaven," *Asimov's* June 1993
- | Unpublished Monochrome Work: Carl Lundgren, "Impudence"
- | Unpublished Color Work; James Gurney, "Garden of Hope"
- | Art Director: Jamie Warren Youll, Bantam Books

- | Contribution to ASFA: David Lee Pancake, and Teresa Paterson and the Pegasus Management Crew (tie)
- | Artistic Achievement; Frank Kelly Freas, body of work
- | Hardback Book Cover: Tom Kidd, "The Far Kingdoms"
- | Paperback Book Cover: Bob Eggleton, "Dragons"

Panel: The End of the World

Saturday, 10 PM

Mary A. Turzillo (mod), Terry J. Jones, Sandra Morrese, Charles Pellegrino, Connie Willis

Description: Every society has their legends of how the world will end. But what happens afterwards?

[I'm sure they had their reasons, but scheduling Connie Willis on a panel starting at 10 PM when the Hugos were scheduled to start at 8 PM, *and* the record for the ceremonies is 90 minutes, *and* the committee is giving out several additional awards, *and* the chances are good that she might have to pose for press photos with her Hugo, is not one of the world's best ideas.]

Panel: Bioethics Considerations

Sunday, 11 AM

Lois H. Mangan (mod), Genny Dazzo, Kathleen Ann Goonan, J. D. Maynard, Ross Pavlac

Description: A discussion of the ethics of bioengineering.

Mangan began by saying she didn't really like the questions that were sent to the panelists; she apparently didn't remember that they were the panelists' own questions.

Pavlac said that the whole question of bioethics started with the Hippocratic Oath, which he partially described and partially read. That is, he said that the first two parts dealt with the doctor promising to worship and sacrifice to the gods and to support his teacher in his teacher's old age. He then read the part dealing directly with the doctor-patient relationship. At the time of Hippocrates, he said, the oath was quite radical.

Maynard, a practicing physician, said that the oath was interesting, but is no longer required of physicians, in part maybe because the specifics of the third part don't fit in today's society. Pavlac asked how physicians could just decide to throw out the oath without replacing it with something else. Maynard had already said that there were several replacement oaths, but based on other statements from Pavlac, I got the distinct impression that his objection was to the abandonment of the clause swearing not to perform abortions. And eventually someone asked him why he felt he could throw out the first part (regarding sacrificing to the gods), yet insist that the rest was untouchable and eternal. (He had no answer.) And indeed there was much loud argument about various people's religious beliefs. (Mangan said that she had heard several people declare that you could not be a good physician without a firm Christian background, which as a non-Christian she found personally offensive.)

When the panelists weren't debating religion, they did ask some interesting questions. Can a person in pain make rational decisions? Do you allow parents unlimited control over their children's treatment? Do you allow the government unlimited control? How do you deal with the fact that doctors are authority figures who have extraordinary influence over their patients whether they want it or not? What about designing children? What about euthanasia--who makes the decisions and how? If a disease like sickle-cell anemia is useful in combating malaria, should it be wiped out because we don't think malaria is a problem these days?

Other than the general descent into loud, pointless religious arguments, the greatest problem with this panel was that one member (who dealt with many bioethical issues on the job) too often "took over" the panel to work out his or her angst about it all instead of to provide an enlightening panel for the audience.

Panel: **What Is REALLY Killing the Backlisting of Good Books**

Sunday, 12 N

Joseph T. Mayhew (mod), Tom Doherty, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Robert Runte

Description: A discussion on the shelf-life of books and how to keep our favorites front and center in the buyer's mind.

Backlisting (just to make sure everyone knows what this panel is about) is the keeping of books in print, or bringing them back into print, after the short shelf life of the bestseller. (By the way, "bestseller" is now considered its own marketing genre, just like "science fiction" or "mysteries.")

The question was asked as to whether the lack of backlisting was particularly pronounced in the science fiction field, or occurred throughout literature, but no one ever answered it.

Many people seemed to want to blame the non-bookstore markets for this phenomenon because they carry only the latest books, but Nielsen Hayden said that rather than blame the non-bookstores we should thank them, because they are the source of new readers.

It used to be that demand outstripped supply; this is no longer true, and the sheer glut of books must certainly affect the decision to keep something on the backlist or not.

One reason Doherty and Nielsen Hayden were on the panel is that Tor is actively backlisting books and working at bringing back older works by current authors. The latter is through their Orb line, trade paperbacks on acid-free paper with larger print, and a press run of under 15,000, and a higher price than a mass-market paperback.

This statement by them led to a discussion of what exactly a trade paperback was. In common terms, a mass-market paperback is the "small" paperback size and costs about US\$5-7, while a trade paperback is larger, almost the size of a hardback, and costs about US\$10-15. In fact, the real definition of a trade paperback is that it is a lower-priced edition, distributed through regular books distributors (not magazine distributors), and fully returnable (i.e., non-strippable). (Mass-market books are strippable; that is, if they don't sell the bookstore can rip off--strip--the cover and return just that for a full refund while destroying the rest of the book. This saves on shipping costs but means that far more books need to be printed than are actually sold.) The size of the book, which is what most people use as a guide, is immaterial. The real reason for the different size is that when they tried making trade paperbacks in the smaller size, the bookstores didn't realize they were not strippable, and would rip the covers off and send just them back instead of returning the entire book. All British paperbacks are trade paperbacks, which helps explain some of the price difference.

In fact, Nielsen Hayden said that existence of mass-market paperbacks is fluke of the American magazine distribution system. Unfortunately, people have gotten used to the idea that everything will be reprinted in cheap mass-market editions, and even express resentment that publishers put out hardbacks and trade paperbacks at all. (How many times have you heard someone say, "I'll wait for the paperback"? Or complain that they can't vote on the Hugos because the publishers didn't issue the paperbacks soon enough?)

Runte then told a story which demonstrated that some publishers just can't be bothered backlisting books. It seems he was trying to get a certain book on the reading list for his regional school board.

To do this, the publisher had to promise to keep it in print for seven years. However, having it on the list guaranteed sales of 350,000 units over that time. The publisher who had the rights didn't think it was worth it. Doherty thought this astonishing, as Tor will print anything they think can sell a thousand copies over an eighteen-month period.

(This raises the issue of what the average press run for a hardback book is. Someone mentioned that Arkham House's press run for their John Kessel collection was five thousand copies, yet they are considered a small press, so I would guess that a thousand copies is a very small run indeed. Orb's "under 15,0000" covers a wide range.)

Someone asked if "books on demand" wouldn't solve the problem of storing backlisted books in a warehouse. (There was a United States Supreme Court decision, the "Thor Power Tools decision," that declared that assets in warehouse, including books, were taxable assets and could not be depreciated. This made storing books financially impractical, and a lot of books were pulped and went out of print shortly thereafter.) But the fact is that the printing and binding of individual books on demand is still too expensive for the average reader; services that do this (such as Books on Demand in Ann Arbor, Michigan) now usually charge US\$100 or so per book.

In addition to the Thor Power Tools decision, publishers have had other problems with the government. They are the only businesses not eligible for small-business loans from the government, because that would supposedly interfere with freedom of the press. That sounds backwards until you think about the fact that the *withholding* of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts has been denounced as censorship. Much better, reasons the government, to stay out of the publishing industry entirely. (All this applies to just the United States, of course. What goes on in other countries is undoubtedly different.)

Someone was surprised that publishers were considered "small businesses." Nielsen Hayden responded, "The combined janitorial staff of the automotive industry probably outnumber the entire publishing industry two to one." Someone else added, "And are probably better paid."

How can people encourage backlisting? Well, buy older books. If your bookstore stocks only the latest releases, ask them to special-order the books you want. If they won't or can't, use the mail-order services of the various specialty bookstores (Science Fiction Shop in New York City, Uncle Hugo's and Dreamhaven in Minneapolis, Other Change of Hobbit in Berkeley, and so on--I can send you a list with addresses and phone numbers if you ask for one.) Conventions could provide a list of the dealers in the Dealers Room who do mail order.

Someone noted that hardbacks, trade paperbacks, and mail-ordering were expensive. Nielsen Hayden responded to that by noting that most fans in the audience spend more on hotels for conventions each year than on books. As he put it, "You're hotel fans, not book fans." (A room in Winnipeg for four nights split two ways was about US\$200 each. That's about 40 mass-market paperbacks, 13 trade paperbacks, or 9 hardbacks. [Well, this explains why people wait for the mass-market paperback.] Of course, some people spend more in the Dealers Room at conventions than for hotels, never mind what they spend in bookstores the rest of the year.

For questions from the audience, Mayhew made people get up and stand in line for a microphone. In theory, this is supposed to make access more fair, with less favoritism shown by the moderator in calling on people. In actual practice, it's a royal pain, particularly for the disabled or those with quantities of stuff in their lap.

Panel: How We Deal with Death & Dying

Sunday, 1 PM

George Barr (mod), Connie Willis, Lois H. Mangan, Barry B. Longyear

Description: This is something that we all will do at least once in our life, but how do we really feel about it?

Barr started this by jokingly asking the panelists to relate their latest "near-death" experience, but it turned out that several of them actually had one to relate. Speaking of his own heart attack, Barr said, "I don't fear death; I fear dying. It's painful."

Willis wasn't quite sure why she was on the panel, unless it's because she "kills off everyone and everything" in her stories. (She says this is so they won't make her write sequels.)

Hayman (who is a professional bereavement counselor) said that the major problem in dealing with death and dying is that people see grieving as a sign of weakness. Barr supported this idea, adding that men are not allowed to cry. He said for a long time the only time he would cry was in movies, where it was dark and no one could see him.

Also, modern social structures do not allow time for grieving. (How much time off does *your* company give an employee whose spouse has just died?) Hayman says you should wait at least a year before making any major decisions, but frequently people are forced to decide sooner on a lot of major economic decisions.

Willis said that she never understood why science fiction was called an "escapist literature," because it's in science fiction where death and dying (and other "heavy" issues) are examined in the most detail with the most "what if?" questions. She gave as examples Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, Nevil Shute's *On the Beach*, and J. G. Ballard's *Terminal Beach*. By dealing with non-real situations, "science fiction catches things in the peripheral vision" that we can't deal with directly.

Someone in the audience thought cryonics was the solution, but the panelists were skeptical of cryonics in general and also pointed out that even if it worked, people had to die eventually. Barr was also bothered by cryonics in that, as he put it, "It makes death the ultimate obscenity." As Willis pointed out, in Victorian times sex was taboo in literature and death was described in great detail. Now it's the other way around. Barr also objected to the idea that only those who could afford immortality or longevity could have them.

The panelists touched briefly on the topic of immortality. (There have been anthologies about immortality, but ironically they are out-of-print, hence as the editing panel said, effectively dead.)

This discussion of cryonics and immortality also raised the philosophical question: is death an end or a transition? If there is something after life, what does staying here overly long mean?

Once again, one of the panelists seemed to be using this more as a personal therapy session than as a panel.

Panel: **Importance/Ethics of Terraforming Other Planets**

Sunday, 2 PM

Roger MacBride Allen (mod), Frederick Andrew Lerner, Stanley Schmidt, John Strickland Jr.

Description: How can we justify this work to the universe?

One suspects most of the panelists were in favor of terraforming. Schmidt said, "If you really want to preserve everything then you can't allow changes." Someone asked the anti-terraforming people in the audience, "Should our ancestors have come to North America?"

A fair amount of time was spent quizzing the audience on what level of indigenous life needed to exist before terraforming was wrong. Were single-celled organisms enough? What about ugly insects? What about cute, furry mammals? (The panelists seemed to think the cuteness of the animals would make a big difference to the audience.)

Someone asked, "If time travel is possible, should we go back and deflect the meteor of 65 million years ago that killed the dinosaurs?"

Since most of the panel seemed to be various variations and rephrasings of these, without much direction, I decided to use the rest of the hour to do a few odds and ends as we were leaving early the next day.

Panel: **Creating an Internally Consistent Religion**

Sunday, 4 PM

Harry Turtledove (mod), R. Fletcher, John Hertz, Robert Sawyer, David Wixon

Description: Every culture must have some sort of religion to hold it together, but can it be as easy as the "Great Potato" theory?

Well, it may have started off as a look at whether religions created for stories need to be consistent, but it turned it something far more interesting: a look at how real religions develop.

Fletcher (a chaplain) started off by saying that in real religions internal consistencies develop historically, but they must be consciously developed in fictional religions, and they are important. (Actually, to me it would seem more that writers need to work at avoiding inconsistencies than creating consistencies. The two are not identical, of course. The former would mean not having contradictory statements or attitudes, while the latter would include things like "cross-references," or resonances of one aspect of the religion in another. While consistencies are nice, I think the reader is more concerned with the avoidance of inconsistencies.)

Wixon (who has a degree in Islamic history) felt that internal consistencies were less important, and that the single most important thing in a religion is that it be emotionally satisfying to its believers.

Sawyer then said, "Being the Canadian on the panel, I will take the compromise position," that is, that what is convincing to the reader is a range of belief and beliefs, not total agreement.

Turtledove said that religion starts simple; when it gets complex is when questions of interpretation arise. Fletcher responded that Turtledove, and indeed the panel as a whole, was falling into the trap of the Western perception of the origin of religion.

Hertz said that he thinks most fans are not adherents of standard religions in a recognizable form. There is a lot of skepticism in fandom and that colors the opinions of this panel. The result is that we are the victims of our own prejudices, and (for example) authors rarely write believing Jews or Christians as sympathetic characters in science fiction.

Sawyer said that when he was writing the religious parts of *Far-Seer* he felt if he satisfied both Orson Scott Card (a devout Mormon) and a Muslim friend of Sawyer's he would be happy.

Wixon observed that it was difficult for the panelists to avoid talking about real religions and to stick to the fictional ones. Fletcher thought that was because most fictional religions were built from parts of real ones. For example, the Bajoran religion in *Star Trek: Deep Space 9* was a mixture of Judaism and Islam. This led Hertz to say that most science fiction television is written by careless atheists: careless in the sense that they use the piece-parts of religions without really thinking about them.

Others responded that the real problem was that science fiction television (or any television) was afraid of getting letters.

Someone recommended the religions in Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle's *Mote in God's Eye* and James White's *Genocidal Healer* as well thought out. I also think *Babylon 5* is doing some interesting things with religion. (J. Michael Straczynski is a self-declared atheist, but not, in my opinion, a careless one.)

Turtledove observed, "We believed that as scientific knowledge grows, the need for the spiritual decreases." But we have since changed our minds. Tying this in to an earlier point, Hertz said that when you describe religion as something that satisfies the emotions, you have already taken a position on religion. Religionists, he noted, says that religion is not there to satisfy the emotions.

Fletcher said, however, "you get strongly attached to what you think is the truth." This was described as "intellectual emotionalism" and can cause problems. (There's an understatement.) Part of this attachment, according to Turtledove, is that "what you write will reflect yourself."

Hertz thought as long as a fictional religion was at least as consistent as we insist fictional science be, then it will work, or as he put it, "It doesn't fail on the grounds that the strings of the marionettes glitter in the sun."

Turtledove talked a bit about the henotheistic universe he created for *The Case of the Toxic Spell Dump*, henotheistic being where your god is true for you, but a different one is true for your neighbor. (One need only read the first of the Ten Commandments to realize that early Judaism was quite probably henotheistic.)

In taking about fictional religions in general, Fletcher said, "Syncretic elements in religion have to be consistent with the basic premises of the religion." In other words, ideas adopted into a religion have to match up with what's there already. Turtledove gave the example of the importation of Zoroastrian dualism into Judaism (somewhat) and Christianity (wholesale). This led to a discussion of whether this dualism was in fact imported into Judaism. The story of Job is the obvious "evidence" but Hertz points out that Maimonides said that the anthropomorphism there (and other places) was poetic rather than literal, and so Hertz concludes that the dualism is also poetic or metaphoric rather than literal. By showing a conflict between good and evil, he felt it was trying to send the message, "To work for good, you can't work a little for evil."

Turtledove responded that the personification of the Devil that people see in the story of Job is indeed an importation, since Job is a very late book, written after contact with Zoroastrian ideas. Hertz noted that it was interesting how new concepts (such as the Devil) seem to take on "retroactive" life of their own and are treated as if they had always been there. Or as he quoted, "We are at war with East Asia. We have always been at war with East Asia." It's important to learn what the Party line is, he said, whether or not you believe it.

Syncretism can create inconsistencies, even in real religions, but it doesn't have to. (One example that comes to mind is the inconsistency of the story of shepherds in their fields when Jesus was born, and claiming that was in December. The latter date was imported from various pagan religions practiced in the Roman Empire.)

Another issue is whether a religion is "absolutist." Islam, for example, recognizes Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism as "religions of the Book," each with some truth. But the attitude that there may be some truth in other religions is also culturally determined.

Someone in the audience claimed that all religions, or at least all "major religions" (as the audience member put it) appeal to power, fear, or virtue. Turtledove felt this was not true of several religions, all of which happened to be non-Western, leading him to observe that most people say, "A major

religion is mine: a cult is yours."

Turtledove also reminded us, "One of the things we underestimate is the strength of belief religion can inspire." We can co-exist in the United States (and some other countries) because our theological faith is less strong, because we have science and secularism as an alternative answer. Fletcher responded that he felt that neo-paganism was a reaction, not against Christianity, but against the very secularism and atheism that Turtledove mentions. (Regarding atheism, one person noted that there may be a lot of people who claim to be atheists, but that "the god they fail to believe in is a white male.")

Wixon said that one obstacle to writing about a completely new religion is that you can't write a story about a truly alien character. About the best you can do is to write about trying to *comprehend* a truly alien character.

Regarding someone's comment about televangelists, Hertz said, "If you didn't worship idols, it wouldn't be so shocking that they had feet of clay."

Masquerade

Sunday, 8 PM

Well, the masquerade started with a Hugo presentation. It seems that Bob Eggleton, who had won the Hugo for Best Artist, hadn't been present to receive his award, but when he found out about it he was so excited he couldn't sleep and eventually decided to get a flight from Rhode Island so he could come and pick it up. (As Barry Longyear said, "O ye of little faith!") They had George Barr up to do the presenting as he had the night before and he said, "Not only wouldn't they let me have it last night, but they dragged me back here to humiliate me again. But I'm *so* nice."

(As an aside, while it was a nice gesture of ConAdian to allow Eggleton to come up to receive his award at a later time, it does set a bit of a bad precedent of giving better treatment [in the sense of not having to share the spotlight] to people who don't come to the convention unless they win over those who were there from the beginning. It also sets a bad precedent in giving sleep-deprived people more chance to give longer, less coherent speeches. Understand that I am not criticizing Eggleton for this, but someone who was thinking more clearly should have considered these issues.)

As a result of all this, the actual masquerade did not start until 8:38 PM. There were only fifty costumes, but for some reason there was an intermission from 9:30 PM to 9:50 PM, making the evening even longer. (I heard the awards were not announced until after 1 AM, which is totally unreasonable for a fifty-entry masquerade scheduled to start at 8 PM. The presentations alone took until after 10:30 PM.)

Kat Connery as the Mistress of Ceremonies was very good, being able to ad lib when necessary and keep the crowd entertained. There were also several very good costumes. John Mitchell and Scott Corwin did a very good walker in "Imperial Ground Assault Forces" which was somewhat undercut by a very similar power loader in Jeff Ergeron and Stephanie Richardson's "The Bitch Is Back: Queen Alien and Power Loader." "The Borg" by Florence Achenbach, Steve Fansher, and Missouri Smith was very good (assuming it was an original creation and not a Borg suit from a dealer). "The 19th Century League of Futurists" by Kathy Sanders, Drew Sanders, Gavin Claypool, Robbie Cantor, Laurraine Tutuhasi, Len Wein, and Twilight was one of the most elaborately designed. From where we were sitting, the detail work on Gordon Smuder and Jennifer Menken's "Carousel Armour" looked impressive, but we didn't get a chance to see it up close.

Other costumes of note were Walter Thompson's "Series W.T.3"; Steve Swope, Catherine Peters, and Toni Narita's "Afternoon Matinee"; "Radioactive Hamsters from a Planet Near Mars" by Ed Charpentier, Louise Hypher, Cathy Leeson, Cindy Huckle, and Colleen Hillerup; "Festival of Change" by Eileen Capes, Katherine Jepson, and Kevin Jepson; and "Xanadu" by Nora Mai and

Bruce Mai.

One criticism I heard from a few people was that there was a slide projected on the screen for the "Boston in 1998" entry, while no other entries (including a "Baltimore in 1998" entry) had slides. It turns out that anyone *could* have had a slide, but no one else asked. Unfortunately, this was not widely known, and the result was that ConAdian *appeared* to be showing favoritism toward the Boston bid.

Panel: **Time Travel Which Alters History**

Monday, 1 PM

Robert Sawyer (mod), Frederik Pohl, S. M. Stirling, Harry C. Stubbs, Ariane Von Orlow

Description: How would we change the present if we could change the past.

[Well, I would somehow convince the con committee to schedule this earlier, so that those of us who had to leave early for Rosh Hashonah could attend it.]

Miscellaneous

At each of the last four conventions I've gone to, someone has mistaken me for Connie Willis. Here it happened at the Australia in '99 party when someone said he really liked me on my panel about humor in science fiction. It happened a couple of other times as well, but those people were joking.

The WSFS Business Meeting passed an amendment authorizing retrospective Hugos for 50, 75, or 100 years previous to a given convention, so long as Hugos were not awarded for that year already. The motion to eliminate zones for Worldcons didn't even make it past the initial round of consideration. They passed on to Intersection a proposal to restrict Worldcons from being held within 60 miles of the NASFiC held in the voting year, to take effect starting with the 1999 Worldcon (I believe).

I used to rank all the Worldcons I had been to, but it was getting harder and harder to fit the new ones in, perhaps because the cons of twenty years ago are hard to remember in detail, so instead I will split them into three groups: the good, the average, and the below-average. Within each group they are listed chronologically.

The good: Noreascon I (1971), Midamericon (1976), Noreascon II (1980), L.A.con II (1984), Noreascon III (1989), and MagiCon (1992).

The average: Discon II (1974), Seacon (1978), Chicon IV (1982), Confederation (1986), ConFiction (1990), Chicon V (1991), ConFrancisco (1993), and ConAdian (1994).

The below-average: Iguanacon (1978), Suncon (1977), Constellation (1983), Conspiracy (1985), and Nolacon II (1988).

This con report runs about 27,000 words. Before I started, I wrote, "If this is higher than last year's (24,000), it's because I could type as I went on my palmtop. If it's lower, it's because I had to type it on my palmtop. (And also because I just finished a 6300-word report of the Montreal Film Festival.)" So I was covered either way. As you can see, verbosity and the convenience of being able to type it in while traveling in planes, trains, and automobiles won out.

And of course, I had a reputation to uphold, especially after Maia Cowan told me that at the electronic fandom panel, Ken Meltsner said I was a "one-woman information superhighway."

At ConAdian, I went to twenty-two panels, a one-man show, and a film. At ConFrancisco I went to twenty-four panels and two lectures; at MagiCon I went to sixteen panels: at Chicon V I went to twelve panels (I was a real slacker in those days!). I have probably leveled off at the two-dozen mark, so my reports will only get longer if I start transcribing every word said. (Had I not had to leave early for Rosh Hashonah, I might have gotten to a couple more panels.)

Site selection seemed a hard-fought battle, but San Antonio won by a 2-1 margin. 1437 votes were cast, compared to 1286 last year and 2541 the year before that. Algis Budrys and Michael Moorcock will be the Guests of Honor. Neal Barrett, Jr., will be the "Master of Toasts." The convention will be called LoneStarCon 2 and will be August 28 to September 1, 1997. Contact address in the United States is

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and about half a dozen other addresses. (It is the most electronically connected con I've seen.)

Next year in Glasgow!

"Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd."
-- Voltaire

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