

**Millennium Philcon**  
**A convention report by Evelyn C. Leeper**  
**(with some panel coverage by Mark R. Leeper)**  
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(This con report was already scheduled to be delayed by the Toronto International Film Festival, running immediately after it, but the events of September 11, 2001, have delayed it even more. However, I expect to write this as if it were written at the time, and will not be discussing changing air travel, security, etc. Also, the final three panel descriptions are by Mark R. Leeper.)

Millennium Philcon took place August 30-September 3, 2001, in Philadelphia. The daily newsletters never gave a "warm-body" count, or any other sort of count, but later I heard a warm-body count of about 4600. (I did hear that they ran out of badges and had to print more, but this was due more to under-estimating the number needed for their pre-registered members rather than to a massive at-the-door influx.)

Getting to the Convention Center and Marriott was a bit confused, since the directions sent out were incorrect. The exits on the Interstate had been renumbered, but the exit number in the directions was the old exit number, not the new. There were also no directions or instructions for people who were arriving by air, train, or bus.

Registration was fast for us, but they apparently lost a lot of pre-registration packages (including Guest of Honor Greg Bear's), and these people had to stand in long lines to get their situation resolved.

The Green Room had a clock! It also had a great view of the Dealers Room and Art Show, being a sort of "skybox" above them. The coffee, juice, and other refreshments were just about right-not overdone, but not so Spartan as to cause complaint. (They tried to have sugar-free versions of all the sweet stuff, a nice touch.)

The Dealers Room was big, with wide aisles, but nothing special. (Mark says one problem with Dealers Rooms is that they are "non-Euler traversable.") There were books, of course, but there was a high percentage of non-book material. I suppose we will see even more of this in the future. Now that books are easily available over the Internet, fewer people need to stock up at conventions. But the shirts, mugs, artwork, etc., are not as easily found, and are more impulse items, so they will increase. (The book dealers will still do well on books recommended in various program items, and on books by authors who have autograph sessions.)

The Art Show seemed more of the same to me, though there was Sergey Poyarkov, a new artist from Kiev whose work caught my eye. Some of the three-dimensional work was also quite striking, but on the whole I found little to excite me.

**Rediscovered Authors: Eric Frank Russell, Fredric Brown,  
Henry Kuttner, & Others  
Thursday, 2:00PM  
Jack L. Chalker, Peter J. Heck, Rick Katze, Steve Miller, Mike Resnick**

Katze, who edited the NESFA volume of Russell, said that the three authors named in the panel title share one thing in common: they're dead. When an author dies, he becomes too expensive to publish. Why? Well, sales of older books are usually spurred by the release of newer ones—for example, a new David Brin book might be accompanied by a parallel reprinting of one of his older books that would benefit from the general publicity, or even if not, readers who picked up his new book might also buy older ones by him at the same time, or after reading it. But, with very few exceptions, dead authors do not publish new books.

Resnick said that in regard to rediscovering new books, NESFA is the most important publisher in science fiction today. But he questioned whether these authors are really being rediscovered in the sense of having been forgotten in the interim, since most continued to be talked about and respected by large numbers of people even if they were out of print. He also noted that sometimes when an author dies, he becomes more prolific, and gave Robert E. Howard as an example. (L. Ron Hubbard is another obvious one.)

Regarding authors he felt should be rediscovered, Resnick named C. L. Moore, particularly her "Northwest Smith" stories. He also mentioned Sheckley (whom he has edited) as a living author who should be rediscovered, or at least more widely available.

Chalker said of Eric Frank Russell that he had bullied Del Rey into reprinting five of Russell's novels when Del Rey wanted his (Chalker's) "Well of Souls" books, and now NESFA was re-issuing them as the omnibus *Entities*. Chalker said he even did both sets of introductions (they are different). From Russell's letters before he died, Chalker says he could tell "the man still had it" but just quit writing, and for a long time *Wasp* was the only one of Russell's novels people were interested in keeping around.

Russell had a mysterious past, according to Chalker. He was apparently a junior clerk for the division of MI6 that practiced various deceptions on Germany and other Axis powers. Russell was assigned to the Pacific Theatre, however, and was not too active. His European Theatre counterpart was more active, and perhaps better known: Ian Fleming. Out of this experience came *Wasp*, which Chalker described as a "wonderful manual for terrorists." (Reminder: this was before September 11.)

However, *Wasp* has several different editions. The British edition is longer; the American one was cut down by Avalon, because all Avalon books were exactly the same size and length. Chalker said that Robert Lowndes (as editor for Avalon) did a brilliant job editing, cutting single words in places rather than the wholesale gutting of long passages, but NESFA uses the full-length British edition. Katze concurred on Lowndes's work, saying he had to compare line by line between the British and American editions to detect the edits. He agrees he used the British edition, but admits to using some of the American "translations" of British terms. (I imagine this means something like replacing "flat" with "apartment.") On the other hand, *Sentinels from Space* was almost complete, even in the Ace Double.

Chalker talked about the publishing history of Russell's *The Space Willies*. As *Next of Kin* it was about 77,000 words long. John W. Campbell, Jr., requested a novella-length core to run in *Analog* (that would be about 30,000 words), and Ace then published a 45,000-word version as *The Space Willies*.

All this talk of Ace Doubles led Resnick to relate that Poul Anderson once got a royalties statement that claimed one half of an Ace Double for which he wrote both halves had sold 11,000 more copies than the other half! Heck said that Tom Purdom had the "flip side" of Delany's *Empire Star* but even though Delany sold very well, it didn't stop Ace from turning down Purdom's next book because they claimed his last had not sold well!

Tor tried doing doubles, pairing a classic with a newcomer. The first problem was that if they were shelved with the newcomer facing out, sales were very low. But even after they dropped the back-to-back, double-cover format, they didn't sell well.

Heck said that one problem with rediscovering authors is that many stories don't travel well over time, and Miller said that another problem is that with some of Kuttner's work, you could tell he was paid by the word.

Heck asked again to what extent these authors are being rediscovered. Are the books being bought just by people who already knew about them? Katze said that this wasn't true, because (at least for all the NESFA books) libraries are buying them, so they are sitting on the shelves next to Robert Jordan and all the other new authors where they will be checked out (one hopes) by a whole new generation of readers.

Resnick said that Brown was both "the master of the short-short" and "a very good serious novelist" (citing *The Lights in the Sky Are Stars* and *What Mad Universe?* as examples of the latter). Kuttner he described as "along with Theodore Sturgeon, the master stylist of the 1940s." And Sheckley's humor works only in science fiction, Resnick said, calling *Dimension of Miracles* "one of the five or six best science fiction novels ever written."

Chalker wondered what was necessary for an author to be rediscoverable- being obscure wasn't enough. Miller noted that most of the authors being talked about were already known to the audience (although these may just mean that the audience was pre-selected by the panel title). Heck said that an author can become neglected without dying, and said that during a lot of Alfred Bester's lifetime, you couldn't find a copy of *The Stars My Destination*. (I thought of John Brunner as well, whose work was all out of print when he died.) As Heck said, "You don't have to die to become neglected and require rediscovery."

It's not only NESFA who is being these authors back. Katze said that NESFA had planned on doing a volume of Avram Davidson, but stepped aside when a mainstream publisher expressed interest.

I asked about the practice at Baen books of "modernizing" the text of the older authors they are re-printing (first James Schmitz and now Andre Norton). Katze thought this was wrong, saying he agonized over every change he had to make, and would prefer that the original be preserved. (One change he made was to change a date thirty years in the future from when the story was written to thirty years in the future of when it was reprinted, on the reasoning that it was not supposed to represent an absolute date, but just a relative one.)

Miller said that even though control of the rights pass to one's heirs, one can specify that they are not allowed to authorize any changes. He said that while some punctuation changes might be justified, taking out the smoking and non-PC stuff in Schmitz is wrong. Similarly in Norton's work, changing the enemy to be more contemporary is "ridiculous and really bad." The work no longer represents the time in which it was written. (At least one reader found himself thinking how prescient Norton must have been until he realized what had been done.) Miller thought this would lead to ideas like, "Let's fix 'The Twonky.'"

Heck said that in one sense it doesn't really affect a dead author, but if an editor tried to do that to his work, he would "tear their arms off."

Chalker talked about how this was happening in other areas as well. *Pearl Harbor* was re-written to avoid offending the Japanese. And there are frequent suggestions of "Let's re-write Mark Twain!" S. T. Joshi has made an entire career, Chalker said, of correcting H. P. Lovecraft manuscripts. He bemoaned the fact that when Schmitz was alive he was never invited to conventions, then after his death was discovered by feminists and made politically correct.

Resnick was quite adamant on the issue of re-writing: he owns it and you can't change it.

Resnick said he had actually thought of an author who was truly rediscovered: L. Ron Hubbard. Hubbard had been almost completely forgotten by the science fiction community and had gone unread for thirty years before Bridge Publications started republishing his earlier work. Of course, there were also new novels being promoted as well, so this doesn't quite follow the paradigm of a dead author with no new books to promote, and other factors were at work as well. (Chalker said that Hubbard once told him he liked one of Chalker's books, and Chalker told Hubbard to tell his followers.)

Katze said that some authors are too expensive to rediscover. In particular, the Kuttner and Moore estates want more money than NESFA, at least, can afford to allow reprints of their works. He also said that Peter Beagle is an author he would like to see rediscovered.

The panel was cut off at this point by Ops (who on the whole did a very good job of keeping things moving smoothly).

**Camera Obscura: SF and Fantasy Films You Haven't Heard Of**  
**Thursday, 3:00PM**  
**Daniel Kimmel, Mark R. Leeper, Nicki Lynch, Craig Miller**

(This is a panel that seems to surface at every convention, often with the same people. While it's worthwhile, maybe it's time to give it a rest. In any case, Leeper has a list with descriptions at <http://www.geocities.com/markleeper/forgot.htm>.)

The panelists discussed beforehand exactly what was meant by an "obscure film." Leeper felt it was a film that not many people currently alive have heard of, which rules out all big release and pretty much all studio films. (At a Boskone [I think], and audience member suggested *Forbidden Planet* as an obscure or forgotten film. It isn't.) Older ones were often seen as the second half of double features, but age is neither necessary nor sufficient. For example, Miller noted, everyone has heard of *Metropolis* and *The Wizard of Oz*. And even current films can be obscure. (Both *Resurrection* and *The Stunt Man* were obscure before they were rediscovered on video.)

Lynch said it was also important to distinguish between "obscure" and "cult movie."

Kimmel gave the example of *Just Imagine* (from Leeper's list) as a truly obscure film-most of the people in the audience hadn't even heard of it, let alone seen it. *Dr. Cyclops*, on the other hand, is less obscure-even though not widely seen, at least people have heard of it.

How do older films get rediscovered (or at least fall out of obscurity)? Lynch listed several ways: home video, cable, convention film programs, and just plain word-of-mouth.

Leeper said many films are pushed into obscurity because they are in black and white or, even worse, silent. After its last change of management, for example, AMC decided to cut back on black-and-white films and show more color films. (They also started editing the movies, and adding commercials between, and now in, them. Miller said that they are falling behind in ratings after all this. I have no sympathy.) Kimmel mentioned that they were showing films like *Snow White and the Three Stooges* on AMC, which may also explain their ratings slide.

Kimmel also said that obscure films often show up at places like the Boston Science Fiction Marathon. He said that they show films like *UFO* (which he described as deservedly obscure), but also *Bladerunner*, which was revived by having the right audience.

Miller said that word-of-mouth has been much assisted by the Internet, and so films deserving of attention are more likely to get it.

Kimmel said that DVDs (and the Internet) also provide for the ultimate in viewer-friendliness-the "Viewer's Cut." (Apparently there are versions of *Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace* circulating minus Jar-Jar Binks.) Kimmel says there is also a lower-tech version: he was showing his six-year-old daughter *King Kong* and was worried about how she would react when Kong was killed, but right about the time Kong was on the Empire State Building and being shot at, she turned to him and said, "Daddy, it's time to go to bed now."

Lynch suggested as a recent obscure film *Six-String Samurai*. We've seen it, and while we might agree that it is obscure, we might also say it is deservedly so." She also mentioned *The Bride with White Hair* and *The Arrival*. When someone suggested the latter couldn't be that obscure, because it had had a sequel, she said, "A sequel? Really?"

Miller said that there were actually several films that were relatively obscure before their sequels came out: *Mad Max*, *First Blood*, and both *From Russia with Love* and *Dr. No*. (For *First Blood*, I suspect it actually remains obscure.) Kimmel said that it was finally announced that there would be a DVD of *Mad Max* released in North America with the original Australian soundtrack.

Kimmel mentioned an obscure Humphrey Bogart science fiction film, *The Return of Dr. X*. He also talked about *Creation of the Humanoids* (which is not connected to the Jack Williamson story in any way). This was supposedly Andy Warhol's favorite movie, and is full of gems like the "Society for Flesh and Blood" and "My sister is in rapport with a clicker?!" There is also *The Falls*, Peter Greenaway's first film), and a favorite obscure film of Kimmel's, *The Sticky Fingers of Time*.

Miller also had a list of obscure films, such as *Cat Women of the Moon*, also known as *Rocket to the Moon* and remade as *Missile to the Moon*. It was obscure in both versions under all three titles. At LAcon II in 1984 they had announced they would be showing *Star Wars* in a double feature with *Cat Women of the Moon*. People were convinced that they would really be showing *Star Wars* with *The Empire Strikes Back*, so they showed up in droves. When *Cat Women of the Moon* actually came on, they left in droves. (This doesn't quite make sense to me in terms of release dates.)

Miller also mentioned *You Never Can Tell, It Happens Every Spring, Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (the first one), and *The Man in the White Suit*. (I didn't realize the last three were obscure, but who knows?)

Miller said *Damnation Alley* was obscure, which was ironic, since Fox thought this would be their big hit of 1977 and *Star Wars* might break even if they were lucky. This is just an example, he said, of William Goldman's famous First Rule of Hollywood: Nobody knows anything. And again, he emphasized that some films are deservedly obscure.

Someone suggested *Final Fantasy* but Kimmel felt that would be a major landmark in animation, so would not become obscure. Someone in the audience saw some similarities in its popularity pattern to *The Rocketeer*. Leeper said he loved the atmosphere in *The Rocketeer* and while it fell flat here, Japan loved it. Miller thought it "fails in a number of unfortunate ways." For example, the hero isn't heroic enough. Someone suggested that this "heroism thing" may be an American thing, which is why it did better overseas.

There was some discussion of high-budget films versus low-budget ones, and Miller (who has been in the business since 1977) said that the main way to distinguish them is by looking at the sound and lighting.

Other obscure films discussed briefly included *Phase IV, Unearthly Stranger*, and *Last Man on Earth*. Audience members suggested *Picnic at Hanging Rock, Blood and Donuts, Pi*, and *The Undead* (based on Lovecraft's "Charles Dexter Ward").

### **SF Ben Franklin Could Have Known: The Very Early History of SF**

**Thursday, 4:00PM**

**Elaine Brennan, Debra Doyle, Louise Marley, Charlie Petit**

This was part of the academic track, so was more "academic" than it might otherwise have been. This in spite of the title of the panel, which was part of Millennium Philcon's seemingly desperate attempt to tie as much as possible in to Benjamin Franklin. (One negative effect of this on this panel was to get people discussing more whether a particular work from, say, 1750, was available in the various places Franklin might have been as opposed to actually discussing the work itself.)

(One reason Marley might have been on the panel was that her recent book, *The Glass Harmonica*, has Benjamin Franklin as a character, so she was moderately familiar with the period. Another recent series with Franklin as a character is J. Gregory Keyes's "Empire of Unreason" series.)

Brennan started by mentioning what is apparently the best known science fiction work from the 18th century, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World* (1666) by Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle.

Marley said another work of the period, a "Utopian story," was Madame d'Aulnoy's *Islands of Felicity*. She said she referred to it as a Utopian story rather than a novel because the term "novel" was not yet defined at the time (I couldn't find a date, but d'Aulnoy lived from 1650 to 1705.). And there was also *Millennium Hall* by Sarah Robinson Scott (1762).

Petit said that Franklin definitely knew of at least two Utopian stories. Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) was written in Latin. Petit said it was not translated into English until the end of the 19th century, but that Franklin had read it. (My notes don't say that he knew Latin, but that is implied. However, John Clute and Peter Nicholl's *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* claims it was translated by Ralph Roynson in 1551.) And of course Plato's *Republic* (4th century BCE) is a very early Utopian story.

In fact, most early "science fiction" seems to have been Utopian stories, which are perhaps questionably categorized as science fiction. Petit addressed this by saying that the "SF" of the panel name referred to "speculative fiction," encompassing science fiction, Utopian fiction, fantasy, and horror. For the period, however, a better term would "non-naturalist fiction." And the use of the term "fantasy" is also confusing, since that was co-opted in the latter part of the 20th century for a commercial category rather than a literary device. (Petit said it is also often interpreted these days to mean erotica.)

Petit said Franklin was also interested in satire, so was undoubtedly aware of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). All in all, Franklin probably found a greater percent of the fiction available to him to be speculative (non-naturalist) fiction than we do. Even fairy tales (marchen) were common in their original forms and "far far grimmer than the Grimms."

Doyle listed several other authors of non-naturalist fiction that pre-dated Franklin: John Bunyan (*Pilgrim's Progress*), Rabelais (*Gargantua and Pantagruel* [1532-1552]), Voltaire (*Candide* [1759] and *Micromegas* [1752]), Samuel Johnson (*Rasselas* [1759]), Dante (*The Divine Comedy* [1304-1321]), and Cyrano de Bergerac (various works [17th century]). Given that Franklin was fluent in French and lived in Paris for several, he certainly had access to all of these.

Petit noted that Franklin would not have been familiar with Roger Bacon's works, on the other hand, because they were lost between the 16th century and the 1840s.

Someone in the audience asked if there were works dealing specifically with the science of the time. Petit said that the works of Franklin's own time dealt with various kinds of knowledge, and one of their main concerns was the conflict between authority and observation, which in turn was the conflict between theology and the scientific method. Brennan said that Cavendish did write poems on scientific topics, but was considered eccentric. (She was known as "Mad Marge" and her big desire was to become a member of the Royal Academy.) Brennan said that her works followed the "pattern of availability and invisibility of women's writing."

Marley noted that Franklin was very interested in the role of women in science and mentored at least one.

Petit said that one reason the authors of Franklin's time did not write as much about science is that this period (the late 18th and early 19th centuries) was when science was just becoming systematized, and that this had to happen before authors could draw upon it. Brennan gave as an example of the systemization of the era *A Midwife's Manual* by Jane Sharpe, which contained some very solid science, but also some wild rumors. Petit noted that the inclusion of unverified rumors in accumulations of data was a tradition going back to Plato, Aristotle, and (most notably, I think) Herodotus.

Audience members suggested other works that were around in the late 18th century: Johannes Kepler's *Somnium* (1634), Louis-Sebastien Mercier's *Memoirs in the Year 2500* (1771), and Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* (1789, 1792). *Baron Munchausen* is from the early 18th century, but it's not clear whether it had been translated from the German by Franklin's time.

Someone asked if we had any idea of what books Franklin did read, either from diaries and letters, or from a personal library. Any list would be incomplete, but Petit said that creating such a list "would occupy a couple of grad students for a couple of decades." ("That's what grad students are for" was one response.)

Doyle pointed out that "science" meant something different in Franklin's time and that the "hot sciences" were politics and military science.

Marley added Tom Duffre's *Kingdom of the Birds* (1706). Petit noted that half of Mozart's work is fantasy, and that it overlaps the period when Franklin was in Paris. Asked whether it was possible that Franklin and Mozart had met, Petit said, "Mozart was not the most highly socialized individual of his time," so if Franklin had met Mozart he would have found it memorable enough to write about.

Petit also noted that with everything Franklin did, he was amazed that Franklin (whom he called "America's Polymath") found time to sleep.

Doyle said another type of non-naturalist literature to be considered would be the Gothic fantasy, such as was written by "Monk" Lewis (actually Matthew Lewis, known as "Monk" from his novel *The Monk*, written in 1796) and Sir Francis Dashwood (1708-1781, though I couldn't find any indication that he had written anything of note).

I asked about mythologies as non-naturalist literature. Petit said that the use of mythology was just another tool for writers and had been used by people such as Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare. It was not really considered as a separate type of literature and we shouldn't project our ideas of fantasy onto the 18th century. Doyle added that the realistic novel was just starting then, and it was the upstart. Petit noted that fiction was not studied as fiction in the universities until the late 19th century.

Doyle pointed out that Shakespeare was just starting to be written in Franklin's time, and Petit added that much of the canon was "in eclipse" in Franklin's time, including John Milton and John Donne.

Marley suggested that a good resource might be <http://www.magicdragon.com/UltimateSF/timeline>, though she said it was "a deeply flawed website . . . because he left [her works] out." (That's a joke.) A great place to start to find older works on-line is <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu>, which has pointers to thousands of works, and hundreds of pointers to other resources.

[I hope everyone appreciates my getting all the names and titles spelled correctly here. It isn't easy when you're taking notes entirely by ear!]

**Thursday, 5:00PM**  
**Lillian Stewart Carl, J. B. Post, Darrell Schweitzer**

Description: "He's in Penguin Classics and even in the Library of America. HPL has clearly crossed over from genre into Literature. An examination of the state of things Lovecraftian, current critical opinion, scholarship, etc., with some consideration of why Lovecraft, unlike his contemporaries, has achieved such exalted status."

Carl began by describing Lovecraft's writing as "antiquity leaking through into the modern day."

Schweitzer was probably the most knowledgeable panelist regarding Lovecraft, being the current editor of *Weird Tales*, the new editor of *Discovering H. P. Lovecraft*, the author of several books on Lovecraft (and the hymns for the Cthulhu Prayer Breakfasts at Necronomicon), and the only person to have rhymed Cthulhu in a limerick:

A cultist, entranced with Cthulhu,  
encountered a slaving ghoulish who  
said, "Old Ones don't need me.  
They won't even feed me,  
and so in a pinch I guess you'll do."

Post suggested that we needed to consider the intrinsic value of Lovecraft versus the extrinsic value. A lot of the popularity in literary circles may be due to hype. Carl thought it was more that Lovecraft's writing ties in with our current feeling of human insignificance. She seemed to agree that it wasn't a literary love of Lovecraft's style, asking, "Have you seen anybody use 'eldritch' seriously in the last forty years?"

Schweitzer said that because of Lovecraft's popularity (or at least acceptance) in literary circles, the critic Edmund Wilson may well be remembered only for the negative things he said about Lovecraft and J. R. R. Tolkien.

Schweitzer compared Lovecraft to Shakespeare in that he felt a lot of writers "have gone into orbit around" Lovecraft much as writers did around Shakespeare and will be remembered that way. He listed (according to my notes) E. T. A. Hoffman, E. Hoffman Price, Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen, and August Derleth. (Hoffman and possibly Dunsany predated Lovecraft, but my notes could be wrong.)

Returning to the notion of hype, Carl said there really wasn't any to speak of, because most people still don't know Lovecraft. Schweitzer pointed out that the literary canon is mutable, not fixed. There are ex-classics-one need only look at the various Modern Library catalogs or listings in the backs of their books from various decades. And we need to admit that literature is an elitist activity.

In Japan, Schweitzer said, Lovecraft's publisher is best known as a publisher of Zen works. In Germany, his publisher also publishes Nietzsche. In the United States, he was promoted by Joyce Carol Oates. And in addition to being in Penguin Classics, he has two poems in the Library of America poetry set.

As to how Lovecraft became accepted (and how the canon mutates in general), Schweitzer observed that old professors die and are replaced by their students. Another fantasy author, James Branch Cabell, followed the reverse path of Lovecraft-he used to be highly considered academically, and now isn't. Carl said that Cabell's ironic tone appealed to her "at that most smart-assy of periods" (college), which makes one wonder how he fell from favor. (I suspect it may be that students automatically distrust what their professors like, especially if it isn't as firmly entrenched by generations of scholars.)

For some people, Lovecraft's popularity provides employment for scholars and academics. Schweitzer said that S. T. Joshi writes a new book on Lovecraft every six months, and Lovecraft is being evaluated by many for his non-fiction and letters, not just for his fiction. Of course, this means that some of Lovecraft's less desirable traits are being revealed. For example, he once wrote a poem with what Schweitzer described as "the N-word in the title and lamentable opinions in the poem." He said that this "shows that even great writers have their very, very off days." (Note also the name of the cat in "Rats in the Walls".)

Post said that Lovecraft and Olaf Stapledon shared the characteristic of having a cosmic view of things. This is similar to Schweitzer's description of Lovecraft as "post-Einsteinian," while Post described Edmond Hamilton and E. E. Smith as "Newtonians." Carl said that Lovecraft dealt with where we came from, though she personally would like to cling to a more optimistic view. Schweitzer quoted someone who was optimistic because "we know about the vast impersonal forces of the universe, and they don't know about us."

The panelists named a few stories which they felt showed definite Lovecraftian influence: "There Are More Things" by Jorge Luis Borges in his *Book of Sand*, one or two by Fritz Leiber, and Michael Chabon's "God of Dark Laughter" in the 9 April 2001 issue of *The New Yorker* (about an ancient cult of killer clowns). (Interestingly, Schweitzer didn't appear to

recognize Chabon's name, even though Chabon wrote the novel *Wonder Boys* and the more recent prize-winning *Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*.)

There are also anthologies of Lovecraft-inspired works, some better than others. Recommended were Jim Turner's *Eternal Lovecraft*, and Stephen Jones's *Cthulhu 2000* and *H. P. Lovecraft and Others: Shadows Over Innsmouth*.

In parodies, Schweitzer strongly recommended *Scream for Jeeves* by "H. P. G. Wodecraft" (the title story is also alternately titled "Cats, Rats, and Bertie Wooster") by Peter Cannon. Asked by someone in the audience how the pastiches and parodies impact Lovecraft's literary image, Schweitzer said there was a clear and obvious parallel to Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories in this regard. He did say that the supposed collaborations between Lovecraft and August Derleth were basically just Derleth, and considering them as true Lovecraft could dilute Lovecraft's credibility in the marketplace. (This is always a problem with sharecropped books.) Luckily, he said, this doesn't seem to be happening with Lovecraft.

**Meet and Greet  
Thursday, 6:00PM**

**Greg Bear, Susan T. Casper, Gardner Dozois, Esther Friesner,  
George H. Scithers, Jamie S. Warren Youll, Stephen Youll**

By the time I got to this and found where it was (the various schedules and signs had conflicting information), there was hardly anyone there. But Gregory Benford showed up and we started talking about something in one of my con reports and ended up talking for quite a while about a wide variety of things, including the decline of science (in schools and in the general public's mind) and the elimination of boundaries. (I am pretty sure the latter was about the blurring between science fiction and fantasy, and so on, but I made the note afterwards and didn't make it as thorough as I should have. I do have another note about how the magazines are publishing more stories that are not science fiction, so this may be referring to a blurring between science fiction and mainstream, as many people have noted with Kate Wilhelm's latest story in *F&SF*.)

**RASFF Party**

I also stopped by the RASFF (rec.arts.sf.fandom) party, where I met a lot of interesting people whose names I did not write down. :-) I donated a bottle of Stone's Green Ginger Wine that I had brought back from Swindon for the proceedings. It was different, but not really gingery enough for me. I stuck with cider and chocolate.

Philadelphia seems to be a city of church bells, which ring at the drop of a hat. Ask not for whom the bell tolls. . . .

**Unorthodox Visions in Penn's Commonwealth (Academic)  
Friday, 9:00AM  
(James Dilbert, J. Gregory Keyes)**

I really liked the idea that there was a 9AM panel for us early birds, and would like to encourage future Worldcons to continue this. Just as the prospective panelists' questionnaires specifically ask who is willing to do late-night panels, they should ask who is willing to do 9AM panels. Then figure out one or two panels that can be put together with these people.

Having said that, I now have to report that neither panelist for this showed up. My understanding is that Keyes didn't make it to the convention at all; I don't know whether that was true of Dilbert. But twelve of us in the audience stayed around for the full hour and talked about cosmology, young adult books, and insect genitals.

**Ben Franklin: The Light of Reason and the Light of Alchemy (Academic)  
Friday, 10:00AM  
James Morrow**

This panel was also supposed to have J. Gregory Keyes, but as he didn't make it to the convention, Morrow had to carry



the panel on his own-which he did, and admirably. However, there was less focus than there might have been on Franklin-not an entirely bad thing.

Morrow began by saying he was on this panel because of his novel in progress (*The Last Witchfinder*) about the birth of science and the arrival of enlightenment. He described Isaac Newton and Benjamin Franklin, both characters in his novel, as key points in this. They had almost met in 1725 in our world; in Morrow's book, they do meet. Newton and Franklin occupied two different universes. Franklin was a Deist, who wrote works about his beliefs such as "Articles of Belief and Acts of Religion". Newton was not as we usually know him, according to Morrow. He was deeply religious (his religious writings exceeded his scientific ones in volume), but deprived of tenure at Trinity and the Lucasian Chair because his beliefs tended toward Arianism. Morrow noted that Newton had been born on December 25 and never got over it, seeing himself as "a second source of revelation" (Morrow's words, not Newton's).

He did have a job at the mint which involved tracking down counterfeiters, and in this Morrow described him as a proto-Sherlock-Holmes. (Morrow suggested someone write *Isaac Newton, Consulting Detective*.)

Morrow's book asks, "Why did we start hanging and burning witches? And why did we stop?" He proposes that it was the arrival of science that stopped it. (One can postulate that it was the arrival of proto-science that started it, as a sort of backlash. Witchcraft statutes in England were enacted in 1601 and not repealed until 1726.)

John Maynard Keynes discovered in his researches that Newton was heavily into alchemy. Morrow described alchemy as a proto-science, not a pseudo-science. It broke with vitalism, and as an example of its success, Paracelsus cured syphilis with mercury.

In alchemy, Morrow speculated, Newton may have seen a holistic universe, attraction at a distance, etc., which triggered his ideas of gravity. Gravity certainly seems attuned to sympathy and sympathetic action. And then Newton wrote about the body of Christ as a gravitational model to which people were drawn, and which he referred to as "Aether Christi." Newton's obsession, however, was the question "What if that mechanism behind the law of gravity?"

Morrow does not believe that Franklin was an alchemist in real life, but has him "indulging in alchemical thought" in his novel. Alchemy, he said, "is so beloved of New Agers today because it's so romantic." Anti-alchemical laws remained on the books long after people ceased to believe in alchemy. (Someone in the audience said that Robert Boyle finally lobbied for the repeal of laws prohibiting the multiplication of gold. Someone else said this all sounded like what we would call "an alchemy-free zone.")

Morrow recommended as a great work based on alchemy John Crowley's "Aegypt" quartet, with its main character of John Dee. (Given that alchemy retained a connection to Aristotelian science, perhaps Richard Garfinkle's "Celestial Matters" might be included as another possibility.)

To Newton, and many others of his time, science was a mystical quest. It wasn't even called "science," but was "natural philosophy" and there was no dichotomy between it and religion. Consider the Christian notion of the Second Coming, after which everything will change. Alchemists were seen as the harbingers of change. Their goal was not, as everyone seems to think, merely the material one of transforming lead into gold, but to transform themselves into something better. (Some of this notion of change is in Franklin's self-written epitaph from 1776: "The Body of/B. Franklin, Printer,/Like the Cover of an old Book,/Its Contents torn out,/and stript of its Lettering & Gilding,/Lies here, Food for Worms.-/But the work shall not be lost;/For it will, as he believd, appear once more/In a new and more elegant Edition/Corrected and improved/By the Author.")

I have a note that science is about sharing knowledge and information, and that when it was suggested to Jonas Salk that he patent the polio vaccine, he refused, saying, "That would be like patenting the sun." I'm not sure if Morrow was saying alchemists shared, or contrasted alchemy with science, or what.

Morrow describes his own "persuasion" as a "scientific humanist." But he admits that the French Revolution gave the lie to the idea that you could run a society strictly by rationalism. (He also said we are all "Ontological Platonists.")

Asked whether Aristotle should be considered pseudo-science or proto-science, Morrow seemed to lean on the side of proto-science (and similarly for animal magnetism and mesmerism). His distinction is that pseudo-science has frauds. (Of course, real science does as well, but of a different sort.) Pseudo-science also tends to use current science as jargon or patter. He says the equivalent to alchemy today would be writing a pop science book merging psychology and quantum physics, or psychology and chaos theory. Another distinction is the willingness to demonstrate falsifiability-he says he is waiting for the *New Age Journal of Failed Therapies*.

Also, proto-science becomes pseudo-science over time. So alchemy was proto-science in Newton's time, but is now pseudo-science. He sees an analogue to alchemy in cold fusion.

(In addition to proto-scientific and pseudo-scientific, Morrow said there is also ascientific.)

His novel in progress, Morrow said, is supposedly written by the *Principia Mathematica*. I have no idea how that would work.

### **Punctuated Equilibrium, Hopeful Monsters, and Darwin's Radio: How Evolution Works**

**Friday, 12:00N**

**Stephen Baxter, Greg Bear, Paul McAuley, Samuel Scheiner**

Baxter said he was working on a book on human evolution "a la James Michener." The Galapagos Islands are three million years old, he pointed out, so you can get a feeling for what evolution can do in three million years.

Bear said that when we discuss evolution, we must remember "Darwin never posited the reason for variation." Darwin, according to him, even went into Lamarckism. And evolutionary biology is the last of the sciences not to go through three or four major upheavals since the mid-19th century.

As an example of how some variation occurs, Bear gave color vision, which most animals lost, but we "recovered" it through a transcription error acted on by a viral agent. His claim is that that fossil records support punctuated equilibrium over gradualism. He doesn't see randomness as the force.

Bear said, "Competition is cooperation." In fact, he said, since humans no longer have any predators, we've created our own: criminals.

(Bear noted that he had done quite a bit of research at the Mutter Museum of Medical Anomalies at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School.)

Scheiner said he works on the response of the genome to the environment. He described evolutionary biology as "The New Synthesis," taking into account genetics, paleontology, biology, zoology, and many other fields. The three major people who have brought about this "New Synthesis" were R. A. Fisher, Sewall Wright, and J. B. S. Haldane.

The big mystery in biology today is still speciation. Scheiner quoted Ernst Mayer as saying, "If speciation is going on in my backyard, I want to know what to measure." Scheiner noted that Bear's *Darwin's Radio* postulated that *all* morphological change happens at speciation.

McAuley said he had written *The Secret of Life*, a book about the origin of life which had a pattern of hostility transforming into mutual dependence.

Regarding how change happens, Baxter observed, "Given enough time, the unlikely will occur." (A dozen monkeys, anyone?) For example, though rafting to bring animals from the Old World to the New World is unlikely, given enough time, it would happen. "Random variation with selection over time," in his opinion, is sufficient to explain evolution.

Bear referred to endogenous retro-viruses, noting that New World monkeys have one, but Old World monkeys have thousands. This (according to Bear) is evidence that endogenous retro-viruses are what drive evolution.

Scheiner said that genes retain memory and some genes that are not expressed may get expressed again when needed or desirable. But if the genes are quiescent, there is no natural selection maintaining their order. So if they are re-activated, this should have resulted in multiple new species, not just one. When he said this, Bear exclaimed, "Damn! You've got my next novel!"

The panel then got into several heated debates, which went by too fast for me to take clear notes. One was whether or not we were the same species as Neanderthals. Another was over the use of mitochondrial DNA as a clock to measure evolution.

Someone in the audience said that "random" mutations are not really random, because some spots on the chromosome are weaker or more likely to change than others. McAuley saw an analogy to word processing-spell checkers allow some typos through but catch others. (As proof, I'll note that even though this report has gone through a spell checker *and* manual checking, there will probably be at least one typo of the "wrong word" sort that gets through.)

Talking about "abandoned DNA," Bear said he felt it could be possible to extract a dinosaur from the abandoned DNA found in a chimpanzee. He compared the amount of information stored in all the abandoned DNA to that which could be

found in all the autoexec.bat files left around. When he said this, McAuley exclaimed, "Damn! You've got my next book!"

Referring to the transitions between species that occur at times of mass extinctions, Bear observed, "Those things which eat dead creatures are going to do very well during mass extinctions."

Bear summed up his position by exhorting, "Lose the notion that you control the universe because you have a Western mind and free will." (He referred to this as "Western intentionality.")

### **The Classics of Alternate History**

**Friday, 1:00PM**

**Suzanne Alles Blom, Michael Dobson, Evelyn C. Leeper, Paul J. McAuley, Harry Turtledove**

"The Sidewise Award will be presented at the start of this session. The panel discusses the classics of alternate history and discusses what makes a superior alternate history novel. What are the great novels? How well do they examine the historical turning point? Is getting the history right in an alternate history novel more important than getting the science right in a hard SF novel?"

I began by making my major gaffe of this convention: in reading the nominees for the Sidewise Award, I titled Suzanne Alles Blom's book *Aztec* instead of *Inca*. The winners were Mary Gentle's *The Book of Ash: A Secret History* for Long Form and Ted Chiang's "Seventy-Two Letters" for Short Form.

Having made a complete fool of myself, we proceeded to the panel topic.

There had been some discussion beforehand about whether alternate history was old enough to have any classics. Since the earliest known one is actually from Livy, it does have a long history, and even if one looks only at the stories known to a person reasonably well-read in alternate history, it goes back to 1919 and Murray Leinster's "The Runaway Skyscraper." (He also wrote "Sidewise in Time," for which the Sidewise Awards are named).

As for rules, Dobson said that his favorites all violate the rules in some way. The books and stories he listed included the "Illuminatus" books by Charles Shea and Robert Anton Wilson, some of Michael Moorcock's works (unnamed), Harry Turtledove's *The Guns of the South*, Norman Spinrad's *The Iron Dream*, Alfred Bester's "The Men Who Murdered Mohammed", and Fredric Brown's *What Mad Universe*. (I believe that the "Illuminatus" books are more secret history than alternate history.)

Turtledove mentioned the Livy as the oldest, but said that the earliest most people know are L. Sprague de Camp's *Lest Darkness Fall* and *The Wheels of If*. These are what got him interested in history and alternate history. (In fact, he even wrote a sequel to *The Wheels of If* titled *The Pugnacious Peacemaker*. The two were later issued as a single volume by Tor as Tor Double #20. Apropos of absolutely nothing, at least two other Tor Doubles were alternate history story sequel pairings. Number 18 had *Vintage Season* by C. L. Moore and *In Another Country* by Robert Silverberg: number 33 had *Bwana* and *Bully*, both by Mike Resnick.)

Turtledove also thought that H. Beam Piper's "Lord Kalvan" stories, Poul Anderson's "Time Patrol" stories, and MacKinlay Kantor's *If the South Had Won the Civil War* were classics. (The latter is less well-known now, but was very widely read in its time.)

McAuley added J. C. Squire's 1931 *If It Had Happened Otherwise: Lapses into Imaginary History* as the first anthology of alternate history. (It even contains a story by Winston Churchill!) And he spoke up for the classic British works such as *Pavane* by Keith Roberts and the "Anno Dracula" series by Kim Newman. He also recommended Howard Waldrop's alternate history stories, though with Waldrop it's not also easy to define *what* they are. (For example, some might say "The Ugly Chickens" is alternate history; I would call it secret history.)

Blom said another author whose works may be alternate fiction is R. A. Lafferty, but again, it's not always easy to tell. She also mentioned two other works: Oscar Lewis's "The Lost Years: A Biographical Fantasy" (about Lincoln surviving the assassination attempt) and J. R. Dunn's "Crux Gammata" (about a rock band in Nazi-dominated Europe).

McAuley said there seems to be a split between overt and covert alternate histories, which depends to some extent on whether the author wants to focus on what might have caused the split or on what the split might cause.

Turtledove said that often what authors are trying to do is "to tell the big story through many little stories." This, he said, might be considered the literary equivalent of pointillism.

Regarding what makes an alternate history, I asked the question that Mark (Leeper) asked me: Since we know that Rhett Butler and Scarlett O'Hara did not exist, why don't we consider *Gone with the Wind* alternate history? Turtledove felt that alternate history lies in intent, and would not include "straight" historical fiction. This left stories like Bruce Sterling's "Mozart in Mirrorshades" and John Kessel's *Corrupting Dr. Nice* as questionable as alternate histories (at least if I'm reading my notes correctly). I would add Gore Vidal's *Live from Golgotha* as another example. (One wonders whether Kessel was influenced by Vidal.)

For example, Turtledove denies that his book *The Case of the Toxic Spell Dump* is alternate history. The setting of that is our world, but based in a henotheistic universe. Interestingly, Turtledove thinks Richard Garfinkle's *Celestial Matters* is alternate history; the setting of that is our world, but based in an Aristotelian universe. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately), we did not have time to pursue the distinction.

Turtledove did feel that alternate history also declares itself by using science fiction techniques. In part, he meant the notion that an author will change one thing and see what results. In science fiction, it may be adding aliens; in alternate history, it's who won the Battle of Antietam.

McAuley seemed to think that alternate histories focus on how things could have been better, though accepted that the flip-side (how things could have been worse) is also common.

Dobson mentioned Leah Zeldes Smith's story "A Proud and Lonely Thing" (we were now drifting into general alternate history stuff). Turtledove added Fritz Leiber's *The Big Time*.

One audience member suggested H. G. Wells's *Things to Come* as a classic and another named Ray Cummings's *The Man Who Mastered Time*. First of all, neither are alternate history-both were set in the future, at least the future as of when they were written. And I don't know about calling the Cummings a "classic"-dated seems more like it. You know you're reading an old book when the author can write, apparently without a touch of irony, "Anglo-Saxons with a strain of Latin had settled [here]. They kept to themselves and fought against the pollution of their blood by others; they were descendants of the highest type of Earth civilization." In 1929, people wrote like that. See comments about Lovecraft earlier for more evidence of this. But I digress.

There was some discussion of plausibility. While the panelists agreed that a work could be wildly implausible, the author had to realize it was wildly implausible. (Howard Waldrop was given as the canonical example.) And Turtledove noted that what may seem wildly implausible may in fact be true: in researching the Civil War for *The Guns of the South* he discovered that the regiment he was writing about actually *did* have a woman disguised as a man enlisted in it. In such cases, adding an afterword to this effect may help. However, Turtledove cautioned prospective authors of the big trap of alternate history. You have to do a lot of research, he said, "but don't tell everything you know."

Turtledove noted Robert Sobel's unique work, *For Want of a Nail*. This is a "what if Burgoyne had won the Battle of Saratoga" done as a history book, complete with fake bibliography, copyrights, etc., (It won a Sidewise Special Achievement Award a couple of years ago, and is back in print from Greenhill Press.) One fact little known about it is that Sobel wrote each chapter parodying a different historian's style. Even Turtledove hadn't realized this; I knew it only because when the Sidewise judges met with Sobel in New York to present him with his award shortly before his death, he told us. (No, he didn't say who was parodied in each chapter.)

### **Hidden Lovecraft - Mythos in Popular Culture**

**Friday, 2:00PM**

**Terence Chua, Greg Costikyan, Thomas Harlan, Darrell Schweitzer**

Harlan talked about the Lovecraftian influences in his series, Chua talked about Lovecraftian filk parodies of Abba songs, and Schweitzer talked about Lovecraftian limericks. All this made me wonder what was meant by "popular culture," since these all seem fairly marginalized.

The panel did eventually get to work with a wider audience. Schweitzer again mentioned Michael Chabon's "The Gods of Dark Laughter" in the 9 April 2001 issue of *The New Yorker* and also said that the "Ghostbusters" television series showed Lovecraft's influence. Whether "Tales of the Leather Nun" (number 2), also mentioned by Schweitzer, constitutes popular culture is left as an exercise for the reader.

Harlan said that H. R. Giger's works are full of Lovecraftian images, and that philosophically they are similar as well, in that both Lovecraft and Giger feared the coming changes. Harlan also saw *2001: A Space Odyssey* as Lovecraftian: it has a strange artifact, people go into space and go crazy, and you don't understand the end.

Costikyan said that the "Illuminatus" books by Charles Shea and Robert Anton Wilson showed a lot of influence from Lovecraft. He said the movie *The Sixth Sense* could have been Lovecraftian, but was "too nice." He said that at one point in the movie, the child asks, "What if they don't want help?" and they could have developed this, but didn't. (He thought *The Sixth Sense* was very similar to Ambrose Bierce's "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge".)

Drifting somewhat off-topic, Schweitzer noted that Marvin Kaye says that 1940s movies had two major advantages over current films: censorship and black-and-white. Clive Barker complains that audiences now giggle at gory scenes, but get bored if they don't have one every fifteen minutes. Schweitzer named a couple of more films that were at least partially Lovecraftian: *The Resurrected* and *The Curse*. Chua thought *The Wicker Man* might be another because it covers the daily lore of a weird cult. (This seems like it is reaching, and almost any film with supernatural touches could be called Lovecraftian.)

Someone also said that Japanese anime seems to have Lovecraftian touches.

In response to the characterization of Lovecraft's writings as pessimistic, Schweitzer said that Lovecraft felt that one should respond not with suicidal despair, but with existentialism. That is, the universe is neither good nor evil but just is—it's what you put into it. Lovecraft's own response was one of aesthetics, and his attitude was one of aesthetic conservatism, hence his xenophobia.

Harlan mentioned John Carpenter's *The Thing* and Schweitzer said that the source story, "Who Goes There?", was John W. Campbell, Jr.'s answer to Lovecraft's "At the Mountains of Madness". Various other works were also mentioned.

In the music field, Harlan said that several bands, including Death and Black Metal, seem to have been influenced by Lovecraft, and that "Norwegians love this stuff."

### **Where Has the Future Gone?**

**Friday, 3:00PM**

**Judith Berman, Gardner Dozois, James Patrick Kelly, John J. Kessel, Gordon Van Gelder**

"Increasingly, time travel, historical settings, nostalgia, retro/pastiche futures and revisitations of old sf tropes are filling the magazine and novel pages. A look at Asimov's and F&SF for the year 2000 shows that less than one in four sf stories is set in a freshly imagined future. Why is so much sf at the turn of the new millennium looking backward?"

This panel was based on Berman's article in the May 2001 issue of *The New York Review Science Fiction*, which is very briefly summed up by the description above. I am not going to write a longer summary here, though undoubtedly you will be able to deduce some of it from the panel discussion.

On the other hand, far too much of the time allotted to this panel was spent on humor of which the following exchange is typical:

Kessel (holding up his latest book): "If you want to sell to *Asimov's*, you must read this book."

Dozois: "Read the book or have sex with me." (Kelley grabs madly for the book.)

Audience member: "Which takes less time?"

Dozois: "You can stand anything for a minute."

While fine for a humor panel, this cut down the amount of time for the panel's actual topic, which could have used more time, not less.

Berman began by saying her analysis cover thirteen issues of *Asimov's* (apparently Oct-Nov 1999 through Oct-Nov 2000, though that would be either twelve or fourteen by my count). Of these, she said, a full third were actually set in the past or present, while others were nostalgic, retro, pastoral, primitive, had past-looking elements, or were set in a 1960s future rather than a 1990s future. Only one-quarter were set in what Berman termed "a real future" (or "a fresh future"). While Berman analyzed only *Asimov's*, Van Gelder said that those proportions would also match the science fiction content of *F&SF* (though since that is *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction* it's not clear how one would divide it up, or why).

Dozois answered that he wasn't sure what a "fresh future" is. By his count, forty-six of the sixty-nine stories (67%) took place in the future: twenty-one (30%) more than hundred years in the future, ten more than a thousand years in the future,

and two more than a million years in the future. (What he didn't say was whether these futures looked futuristic, or were they the "retro-futures" that Berman decried. For example, I've read several stories in the past few years that I would categorize as "Sam Spade in the Future.")

Kelly agreed with Berman that authors seem to be turning away from the next 250 years or so. Readers want to see only something they are comfortable visiting and the near future doesn't qualify any more. We *have* lost our unbounded confidence in the future that characterized earlier (American) science fiction. We don't want to think about the near future, so "we've repainted space ships but not rethought them."

Van Gelder said *F&SF* (and *Asimov's*) was publishing mostly nostalgic and backward-looking stories because they were getting mostly nostalgic and backward-looking stories. (Kessel later agreed with this.) He added that both Jack Womack and Kathleen Ann Goonan had told him it was difficult to write about the near future because things catch up too fast. And in what must seem odd to older fans, Van Gelder said that currently Ray Bradbury is the author "waving the flag of futurism."

Kessel said that probably 60% of the people he talked to agree with Berman's analysis. What we're seeing, he said, are "yesterday's futures with new paint jobs." And it is hard to extrapolate a future that is new after decades of extrapolation by other authors. There's also a level of disillusionment: at age thirteen he thought that in 2001 he would have his own rocket belt, but now he knows he never will.

In addition, Kessel said, more authors today have been educated in literature, so this generates more "meta-fiction" (such as *War of the Worlds: Global Dispatches*, an anthology of stories based on H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds*).

Dozois insisted that all of this was "selective perception." Berman gave as an example of what she meant: a future in which a rich man had clones grew out of a trope of fear of clones, but not out of current reality about cloning. "Where is that today in today's science fiction, let alone where is the tomorrow in today's science fiction?"

Maybe that will come with the next movement, and Kelly said that people say they're ready for the next movement, but it still isn't here yet. Dozois said that the last movement (cyberpunk) has Bruce Sterling as its ideologue, and there is no new ideologue yet, though he listed Charles Stross, Richard Wadholm, and David Marusek as authors to watch. Van Gelder said that Sterling might have been an ideologue, but there still had to be something in the movement that struck a nerve.

Dozois finally conceded to some extent that what he was publishing reflected what was being submitted and that if he would get these future stories, he would buy them. On the other hand, I wonder if he isn't already overbooked with Connie Willis, Mike Resnick, and other major authors whose work Berman would classify as not futuristic. The bottom line, of course, is that Dozois needs to satisfy what his readers want. (Short aside: Why is Dozois taking valuable magazine space that should, in my humble opinion, be devoted to short fiction, and using it to serialize a novel by Robert Silverberg? I'm sure the Silverberg is good, but there is a big market for novels and a very small one for short fiction, and this novel is taking up space that could have been filled with half a dozen stories.)

Returning to ideologues, Kessel said, "The problem with these guys [ideologues such as Sterling and Ellison] is that they say so many stupid things." Cyberpunk, he observed, is very despairing of the future. Dozois noted that Sterling started writing "other stuff" when he had children.

Someone asked whether the uncertainty of the future in science fiction is a reflection of the uncertainty of the future in society. From the audience, David Hartwell reported that Paul Kincaid said that this phenomenon Berman is seeing is an American phenomenon and that the British are still writing the far-seeing future stories.

Van Gelder said, "Part of it is what we bring to it and our sense of wonder." Don't forget, he said, "you are living in someone else's future."

Regarding specific stories, someone in the audience said that Eleanor Arnason took exception to her story being categorized as "pastoral or primitive." "If the future doesn't have the big sparkly stuff, will we recognize it as the future?" Someone in the audience said that Disney's Tomorrowland is now steampunk. Kelley added, "EPCOT is looking kind of tired."

Someone asked if authors avoid writing stories in the future because they fear sounding like "Star Trek". Kelley's response was, "We don't want to look like any damn boldly-going adventure." Kessel implied that there was a contradiction between "Star Trek" and realism when he added, "We don't boldly go to the bathroom." (All this echoes the comment earlier that it's harder to write a fresh future after decades of other authors writing futures.)

**Clark Ashton Who? Great Forgotten Fantasy Authors**  
**Friday, 4:00PM**  
**P. C. Hodgell, Marvin Kaye, James D. MacDonald, Darrell Schweitzer**

"The fantasy shelves of today are dominated by a few writers, often writing 700-page-per-volume, multi-volume series. Gone are the days of Lin Carter's great Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series. The panel talks about the great, classic works of fantasy that the audience should comb bookstores (or the Internet) to find."

Well, this sort of panel usually turns into little more than a list of authors and works, and this was no exception. Oddly enough, Clark Ashton Smith was never mentioned. (Neither was Thorne Smith, for that matter.) (If particular works were named, I list them, but often the recommendation was for an author in general.)

There was some introductory material. Schweitzer mentioned that until she was re-discovered by Lin Carter, Evangeline Walton had been completely forgotten. MacDonald is working at putting some public-domain fantasy (such as "Varney the Vampire") up on a web site.

MacDonald named M. R. James, but added that James was not forgotten and was in fact still in print. Another forgotten author was Edward Bulwer-Lytton ("The House and the Brain").

Kaye recommended E. F. Benson ("The Room in the Tower" and "How Fear Departed from the Long Gallery"), Robert Hugh Benson, Lord Dunsany, William Sleator, Paula Volsky (*Grand Ellipse*), John Myers Myers (*Silverlock*), Alan Garner (*The Weirdstone of Brisingamen*), E. R. Eddison (*The Worm Ouroboros*), Fredric Brown, Ray Russell (*Sardonicus*, *Sagittarius*, and *The Case Against Satan*), Bertrand Russell (*Satan in the Suburbs* and *Fact and Fiction*, though the former is his biography and the latter isn't fiction either), James Gould Cozzens (*Castaway*), John Collier, Leo Perutz, and Mervyn Wall. Kaye seemed to have a special fondness for Wall, and recommended *The Unfortunate Fursey* and *The Return of Fursey*, both set in 8th century Ireland.

Hodgell recommended Robert W. Chambers (*The King in Yellow*), William Hope Hodgson (*The Boats of Glen Carig* and *The House on the Borderland*).

Schweitzer suggested Robert Stearns Davis (*The Saint of the Dragon's Dale* [1903]) and Francis Stevens (*Heads of Cerberus* [1919]). Someone in the audience pointed out that "Francis Stevens" was a pseudonym for Gertrude Barrows Bennett.

I noticed that people stayed mostly with English-language authors and didn't, for example, talk about Isaac Bashevis Singer or other Yiddish writers, or Latin American authors.

**Retro Hugo Awards**  
**Friday, 8:30PM**  
**Esther Friesner**

"The Retro Hugo Awards honor 'the best' of 1950"

First, the list of winners:

- | Novel: *Farmer in the Sky* by Robert A. Heinlein
- | Novella: "The Man Who Sold the Moon" by Robert A. Heinlein
- | Novelette: "The Little Black Bag" by C. M. Kornbluth
- | Short Story: "Coming Attraction" by Fritz Leiber
- | Dramatic Presentation: *Destination Moon*
- | Professional Editor: John W. Campbell, Jr.
- | Professional Artist: Frank Kelly Freas
- | Fanzine: *Science Fiction Newsletter*
- | Fan Writer: Bob Silverberg
- | Fan Artist: Jack Gaughan

And now the comments:

Esther Friesner was okay as mistress of ceremonies, though some of the humor went on a bit long for my tastes. (I find this true of many masters and mistresses of ceremonies, so it's not just Esther.) Her opening remarks were reminiscing about 1950, though more the 1950s in general. (As she said, "I remember when comics were a dime and Batman was cheerful." I think a dime is later than 1950.)

Of the winners, many clearly were chosen as lifetime achievement awards or even name recognition awards. Of the nominated fan artists, for example, Jack Gaughan had the most name recognition, but the other may well have done better fan art in 1950. In professional art, I certainly felt that Freas was the weakest of the five for that year, but his was the name on the ballot that most voters recognized. (How many voters either remember the art from 1950 or researched the various artists and works? My guess is very few.)

Silverberg addressed this in his usual elegant manner. He said that his winning of the fan writer award was a "miscarriage of justice," but that he had been nominated for the Hugo for professional writing many times since then and there had been "considerable miscarriages of justice," so he felt this helped even it out, and accepted this Hugo for "the best novel of 1991." At least that's what I, and others, heard. But he must have said "1981," since that was the year that *Lord Valentine's Castle* was nominated, and Silverberg didn't have a novel nominated in 1991. As for the "considerable miscarriages of justice," Silverberg was referring to the fact that he has been nominated twenty-eight times, but won only five Hugos. Silverberg also claimed that this Hugo made him the only person to win Hugos for work in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and the 2000s (which he called the "ooze"). This I don't understand because his Hugos are as follows:

1956 Most Promising New Author  
1969 Novella: "Nightwings"  
1987 Novella: "Gilgamesh In The Outback"  
1990 Novelette: "Enter a Soldier. Later: Enter Another"  
1950 Fan Writer (awarded in 2001)

He was nominated like mad in the 1970s, but didn't actually win a Hugo in that decade.

But I will save my strongest objection to all this for the awarding of the Retro Hugo for Dramatic Hugo for *Destination Moon* to Robert A. Heinlein. What about George Pal, Irving Pichel, Alford ("Rip") Van Ronkel, and James O'Hanlon? What are they, chopped liver?

There has been some debate recently over exactly who should get the Hugo for Dramatic Presentation. But up until now, the question seemed to be whether it should go to the producer or the director, and whether the writer(s) should also be included. This year's administrators (since I assume it was their decision) apparently decided that only one of the three co-writers, and neither of the producer and director, was deserving even of mention for this award. Bleh.

### **Greg Bear's Guest of Honor Talk Friday, 9:30PM**

Well, actually it started about 10PM, since after the Retro-Hugos, they had a fairly long break. This is, in my opinion, a bit late to start what should be a high point of the convention, but I'm not really a night person to begin with.

Though Bear he would be summing up 2001, his talk was far more rambling than that, and a large part of it was devoted to remembering Poul Anderson (his father-in-law).

"Very few fans are cool; Robert Silverberg is cool, but I've seen him be uncool."

"We are not frightened of our saints; we are not frightened of our gods and our mentors."

"*The Broken Sword* and *Tau Zero* demonstrate the range you could have in one human being."

"[Science fiction is] the most important literary movement in Western culture since the Romantics."

"This is worse than Marxism. The Communists are gone, but fandom lives on." ("Say that in China" was someone's response.)

"It was said that [Poul Anderson] didn't suffer fools gladly, but he suffered a lot of fools. He suffered me."

"Some people live a long time; Poul not long enough. I Blame the Norns."



"We have won an incredible cultural war to tell people the future is important."

"*Brain Wave* is a Jimmy Stewart movie."

"We have a cosmic mind. What do we do now?"

Explaining why fandom was more successful at converting people than the Catholic Church: "Our dreams were bright dreams. Our hells were avoidable."

Quoting John Barth: "Science fiction writers, they are not like you and I- they have more fun." To which Greg Bear gave the response, "Thank God for that."

"Write about what you love or what scares you [and the style will follow]."

More advice to writers: "Only read people who are better writers than you."

(There was actually a lot about how important and influential fans and writers are. Many in the audience liked it, but it struck me as a bit too self-congratulatory.)

**Where Did Tom Swift Go? Why Are Most YA Writers Writing Fantasy, Not SF?**  
**Saturday, 10:00AM**  
**Hal Clement, Debra Doyle, Howard V. Hendrix, Betsy Mitchell, Charles Sheffield**

While attempting to get the sound system working, the panelists suggested the following alternate panel titles: *Tom Swift and His Microphone*, *Tom Swift and His Electronic Microphone*, *Tom Swift and His Amazing Voice Amplifier*.

Doyle has actually written a couple of the newer Tom Swift books: *Tom Swift: Aquatech Warriors* and *Tom Swift: Monster Machine* (both co-authored with James D. MacDonald).

Hendrix said that it was worth noting that while hard science fiction used to be just physics, mathematics, and chemistry, now it includes biology as well.

Sheffield said he worked on a new young adult series for Tor (the "Jupiter" series). But it was not marketed as "young adult", was published in hardcover and was published only annually. One result was that they were reviewed as adult books and then dismissed as "too simple." Sheffield said that to be successful, a young adult series has to be marketed as "young adult," published in paperback, and published monthly.

Sheffield said there are three reasons that there are so few young adult science fiction books:

1. Science is hard.
2. Science doesn't intersect with real world needs, so there is less interest than there used to be. (He admitted that fantasy doesn't intersect. However, because we are surrounded by the results of science but don't need to know the science, reason 1 kicks in.)
3. Tom Swift had no competition from the movies, television, computer games, etc. (Someone later suggested that television's "Junkyard Wars" and "Battlebots" are really the continuation of the Tom Swift genre.)

Someone in the audience pointed out that, strictly speaking, Tom Swift is not science, it's engineering.

Doyle decried the fact that today's young adult science fiction is "too full of creeping worthiness and high intentions." Hendrix complained that Lois Lowry's *The Giver* had no scientific explanations for anything in it.

Mitchell said that people seem to think that getting onto reading lists would help, but "teachers stick very carefully to a core reading list." (In large part, this is to avoid adding books that someone might object to, and for any book there's someone who will object to it.)

Someone in the audience suggested that the technology companies might sponsor engineering fiction, like oscilloscope companies sponsoring *Tom Swift and His Color Oscilloscope* (hi, Bill!). (Mark later suggested I might like *Tom Swift and His Clearcase License*, and *Tom Swift and Microsoft Office* might be a big seller-though many might classify the latter as horror rather than science fiction.)

Hendrix said that another factor working against this sort of book is Clarke's Law: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. And what we have now is, for the most part, sufficiently advanced. In Tom Swift and that sort of books, the main characters all had uncles who were tinkerers. But "when science becomes quantum, you can't tinker with it."

Clement described this a different way. When science was Newtonian, it was visible; now it's Einsteinian, and invisible. Forty years ago, you could dismantle the clock, but now you can't dismantle the digital watch. (Well, you can, but you won't find anything meaningful.)

You could something like Heinlein juveniles, where the youngsters are not directly involved in the science or technology, but taking out the reader's involvement in the tinkering out takes out the fun.

Sheffield said that we live in a very unsettling century (referring to the twentieth). In Newton's time, calculus was as bizarre and frightening as the new sciences are today. But creating a computer network is today's equivalent to tinkering with a car.

Doyle felt that something authors should keep in mind is that young adult science fiction shouldn't try to teach science, but should rather convey the feel of doing science. Sheffield said that science and engineering are not the glamorous, high-end occupations, and so are under-represented in the media already.

Mitchell said that Tor was giving the young adult market another try, this time with a series imprint called "Starscape." It was going to be paperback, digest-sized (to match the other popular series being marketed, and sell for \$5.99. The first few would be reprints (Orson Scott Card's *Ender's Game* and Steven Gould's *Jumper*), but would eventually have new works. (One suggestion I would add is to indicate a reading or age level on the copyright page so that those of us who can't judge for ourselves can still figure out what to buy nieces, nephews, and godchildren.

Someone in the audience noted that the Scholastic Book Company, which pretty much has a lot on school book sales, doesn't buy very many third-party books, and the mall stores are gone, and the independent distribution that put science fiction in drugstores and such is gone, so getting these books in front of their audience is going to be a problem.

Someone else said that children like series, with the same main characters in each book, so they won't be as attracted to a "series" that is really unconnected books under a single imprint.

Another person said that children mature faster now, and want sex and romance in their books earlier. Clement re-iterated that he doesn't write sex, because he thinks science fiction is about ideas, but he didn't seem to realize that he was just saying that he is part of (what the young readers perceive as) the problem.

And one more audience member said that children used to feel a lot more empowered and less restricted. There was a feeling that they could go to the junkyard and get the parts to build a robot submarine, whereas now they can't even go to the corner store without an adult escort. The reason that fantasy is popular is that it is about average children who get pulled into situations regardless of the real-life restrictions on them, while science fiction tends to be about geniuses with whom most readers can't identify.

I wonder if Tom Swift was more just a reaction to the fact that the "lost race" and exploration novels had become outmoded because all those blank areas on the map had finally been filled in. If so, Tom Swift should not be seen as something that was created because of a need for science, but rather to fill a gap, and it will eventually become outmoded and be replaced.

(During this panel, Mark was sitting in the audience reading a Tom Swift novel on his palmtop.)

**Science Fiction on the Screen (Academic)**  
**Saturday, 12:00N**  
**Michael Cassutt, John L. Flynn, Daniel Kimmel**

This panel seemed to be about teaching a course in science fiction film, though a description would have been nice. (You'd think for the academic panels at least they would have them.)

Flynn said that he would begin by distinguishing between "sci-fi" and "science fiction." "Science fiction" has the speculative element as an integral part of the film (or story), and the special effects support the story. "Sci-fi" violates scientific laws, has stock characters, and/or features the special effects. The example Flynn gave from this summer was

that *Planet of the Apes* was sci-fi; *A.I.* was science fiction. A more classic example was *Star Wars* (sci-fi) versus *2001: A Space Odyssey* (science fiction).

The panelists discussed what films they would use in a course on science fiction film, which would also be a list of what films the "well-watched" science fiction fan should have seen. (Is there any good parallel to "well-read"?) Kimmel said the course he taught on "The American Science Fiction Film" (which also included some horror) was:

- | *Phantom of the Opera* (1925)
- | *Freaks*
- | *Bride of Frankenstein*
- | *The Day the Earth Stood Still*
- | *Forbidden Planet*
- | *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956)
- | *Sleeper*
- | *Bladerunner*
- | *The Fly* (1986)
- | *Gattaca*

(He said for *The Fly* that he had to "talk them through the goo.")

Cassutt recommended also *2001: A Space Odyssey* and the George Pal films (*War of the Worlds* and *The Time Machine* particularly).

Flynn said that when he had used *Dark City* he found that because the students didn't know anything about German Expressionism, they didn't appreciate it as much, so he would include *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Metropolis*. He would also add *Destination Moon* as historically important, even if not necessarily good. Other films he named were *War of the Worlds*, *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers*, *Planet of the Apes* (1968), *The Stepford Wives*, and *Young Frankenstein*. (Kimmel described *Young Frankenstein* as "Mel Brooks's subtlest comedy." But how much is that saying? Actually, *Twelve Chairs* might be subtler.)

Kimmel asked what the panelists would recommend post-*Star Wars*, and suggested *The Truman Show*, *Pleasantville*, *The Iron Giant*, and *Being John Malkovich*. (Of the latter, he said he hadn't seen such a strange film since Luis Bunuel died.)

Cassutt listed *12 Monkeys*, *Gattaca*, and *Galaxy Quest*. Flynn named *Dark City*, *Gattaca*, *Bladerunner*, *Aliens*, *Escape from New York*, and *The Thing* (1982). (I should mention that on last year "Best SF Films of the 1990s" *Gattaca* was named the best SF film of the decade.)

Flynn said that some of those films were what spawned the cyberpunk movement. Kimmel, commenting on *Aliens*, said, "James Cameron cannot make a boring movie. You may not like it, but it won't be boring."

Flynn admitted to a preference for films with a literary basis, such as *Contact* and even *Battlefield Earth*. (Yes, he really said that.)

Audience members started suggesting other films, such as *Brazil* and *Until the End of the World*. Kimmel at this point cited the distinction Andrew Sarris made between "The Pantheon" and "The Far Side of Paradise." And a good thing, too—I hate when the "Ten Best" list for something grows to thirty, and when people start naming merely good films as masterpieces. Other suggestions were *Ghost in the Shell*, *The City of Lost Children*, *Shrek*, *Groundhog Day*, *The Fifth Element*, *The 5000 Fingers of Dr. T*, *Rollerball*, *Brainstorm*, and *Akira*. Kimmel pointed out that his list was strictly American (because it was a course on "The American SF Film"), but that for a general course, "Akira" was the only Japanese anime he would consider. The Japanese, he said, have a different style of story-telling that is difficult for those unfamiliar with it. (Maybe a convention should have a panel on "How to Watch a Japanese Films: Different Story-Telling Styles.")

Regarding foreign films, Flynn added *Alphaville*, though Kimmel and Flynn both agreed it was hard to teach either *Alphaville* or *Solaris* (another major film). Flynn thought "La Jetee" was better than *12 Monkeys*, but definitely another non-traditional film.

Someone suggested *Dr. Strangelove*, but Kimmel said that when he teaches it to college students, he has to explain all the sexual puns in it. (Lord, that's depressing!)

A librarian asked about using science fiction as a motivation in other areas and disciplines, but the panelists preferred to

focus as teaching film for its own sake.

**Greg Egan, Vernor Vinge, Stephen Baxter, and the Rebirth of Hard SF**  
**Saturday, 1:00PM**  
**Stephen Baxter, Jim Frenkel, Charles Oberndorf, Robert J. Sawyer**

(Frenkel complained that he had no bathroom break between his previous panel and this one, leading Sawyer to quip to him that he should moderate, "because you're the only one full of shit right now.")

Sawyer described Baxter as "the three Bs": balding, British, and bespectacled.

Frenkel said that there is in fact plenty of hard science fiction out there. As an example, he said, "Baxter's is crunchier than Sawyer's." Sawyer agreed with another metaphor: "Baxter is the Viagra of science fiction." Frenkel said that someone had described Baxter as a reincarnation of Arthur C. Clarke, which he said was interesting, because Clarke isn't dead yet.

Looking at the field in general, Sawyer said that the exemplars of hard science fiction would be people such as Larry Niven, James White, and James P. Hogan. He felt that we needed to look at hard science fiction as science fiction that is "rigorous," rather than science fiction in specific fields. Baxter characterized this as, "What is the meaning of the new science, whatever it is?" He gave as an example Poul Anderson's *Tau Zero*, which shows us what the equations mean.

Baxter also said, "In a few years we'll understand quantum gravity in the way we understand matter transporters and replicators now." (I interpret that to mean that it will appear in science fiction without needing elaborate explanations.)

Oberndorf disagreed somewhat, saying that hard science fiction is science fiction you feel could actually happen. He said David Hartwell said that hard science fiction feels like there is a paper behind it, to which he added that these days there is and Egan posts his on his website.

Frenkel asked the panelists for more recommendations.

Sawyer recommended Jack McDevitt and Frederik Pohl. He noted that his one complaint about *Tau Zero* was that it had no memorable characters, and said that the "new face of hard SF" is "character-oriented stuff which is still rooted in rock-hard science." He also said that Julie Czerneda uses a hard science infrastructure under her stories.

Baxter named Egan, Paul McAuley, and Vernor Vinge. Egan, he said, takes ideas to their absolute limit. Oberndorf said he preferred the Clarke-Heinlein type, hard science fiction but still "reader-friendly." He suggested Geoff Landis.

Frenkel gave a long list: Larry Niven, Gregory Benford, Greg Bear, Jack Williamson, Neal Stephenson, Robert Reed, Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, and Charles Sheffield.

Baxter pointed out that "hard science fiction" is not a movement, leading Frenkel to respond, "I'm sure that Norman Spinrad is sure that this is a movement-and that it must be stopped." Frenkel later pointed out that some cyberpunk is in fact also hard science fiction.

Sawyer observed that the last ten years have seen a rise in the public's interest in popular science writing, so less explanation is needed in fiction.

An audience member reminded us that many hard science fiction writers are hard science scientists. Someone else was surprised that Hal Clement wasn't mentioned (but I'd hardly call him the "new face of hard SF"). A third person cited Richard Garfinkle's *Celestial Matters* as a rather unusual hard science fiction, but one nonetheless. (It postulates that Aristotelian science is correct. I think I've now mentioned it in three different contexts!)

Sawyer addressed one problem with hard science fiction that had been mentioned on an earlier panel: one doesn't want events to outstrip the fiction. (He described this as wanting to avoid the "Russian Spring" problem, referring to Norman Spinrad's book of that name.) This is less likely with short fiction, which has a lead time of about six months, while books are a year or two.

Someone asked if there had been a hard science fiction ecology book, and Sawyer cited Frank Herbert's *Dune*. Another unusual science would be psychohistory and mathematics, used in Donald Kingsbury's upcoming *Psychohistorical Crisis*. Linguistics appears in Samuel Delany's *Babel-17*, Jack Vance's *The Languages of Pao*, and the works of Suzette Haden Elgin.

From the audience, David Hartwell observed that established hard science fiction authors published virtually no short works in the 1990s, while new authors had lots.

Someone asked about nanotech people, to which Sawyer replied, "They're all small-minded." Baxter said he was skeptical of the science. There is a lot not dealt with, he said, so he was skeptical of its use in science fiction as well.

Sawyer closed by saying that a market has opened up for hard science fiction for people who want what they came into science fiction for (or with).

**Gone the Way of the Dinosaurs: Is the "Paperback Original" Dead?**  
**Saturday, 2:00PM**  
**Moshe Feder, Sean P. Fodera, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Shelly Shapiro**

Feder began by defining "paperback original" as a book which is published in mass market paperback as its first publication in book form. (Previous serialization in magazines does not affect this.) What was left unsaid was that this panel was about American books only, although that may be implied by the name. Technically, mass market books are "returned" by bookstores to the publisher by having their covers stripped off and returned with the rest of the book destroyed. This is a phenomenon found only in the United States and Canada. (Trade paperbacks and hardbacks are "whole copy returns"-the entire book must be returned for credit. But since people think in terms of trim sizes, anyone publishing a book the size of a mass market paperback is going to find bookstores stripping them, and if they refuse to honor these, they probably will find the bookstore stops buying from them altogether.)

Later, someone noted that mass market had its own definition, but that it's hard to think of anything with a print run of less than 20,000 as "mass" market.

Fodera said that DAW for years was a [the?] major publisher of paperback originals, and has now scaled back to one per month. (I think that when they started in 1970 or so as a paperback original house, they were doing four a month.) Now they are publishing hardbacks as well.

Nielsen Hayden said that if the paperback original is a dinosaur, the "problem" is that most books that might have been paperback originals now start as hardbacks. Authors may not see this as a real problem.

Shapiro spoke more for the readers when she said, "I like paperbacks. They're light." But also, she said, people are more likely to lend them to friends and hence generate word-of-mouth. Hardbacks are for the audiences that won't wait. This usually mean those who won't wait for the next book by their favorite established author-it wouldn't seem to apply to first novels by new authors. Most of the paperbacks originals that Bantam does now are media tie-ins.

Nielsen Hayden said that books are not that price-sensitive, Feder said that many people who bought paperback originals have stuck with the habit of buying paperbacks rather than hardbacks. Nielsen Hayden suggested, "Well, they already built their bookshelves." Ellen Asher (in the audience) disputed Nielsen Hayden comment, saying that pricing does matter, and Shapiro said that people think \$7.99 is a lot for a paperback original.

Nielsen Hayden gave some interesting background for the decline of paperback originals. Twenty-five years ago, a paperback original in genre would have a print run of 60,000-100,000, be priced at \$1.95, and have over half of its distribution through independent distributors to drugstores, grocery stores, and other non-bookstores. It was not unknown for authors to bribe the drivers of the trucks to get better distribution and placement. The entire system was responsive, not to consumers, but to the logistical needs of the distributors.

Now, print runs for paperback originals (or even reprints) in genre are 20,000-60,000, priced at \$6.99, with 90% in bookstores. Independent distributors have all but disappeared, and with them, Nielsen Hayden points out, most of the markets that used to reach children and teenagers from non-reading families.

Nielsen Hayden said that one side effect was more books in a larger trim size, because bookstores prefer them.

Nielsen Hayden also talked about the practice of "buying to net." Now that sales are tracked much better than before, bookstores will buy only as many of an author's next book as they sold of her last book. So they order 5,000 of an author's first book and sell 4,000, they will order only 4,000 of her next book. Since there are always some copies unsold, this means steadily decreasing sales. (There must be some exceptions to this, since not all authors seem to be in this "death spiral.")

Fodera said that you can launch a new writer in hardback, but new authors are likely to sell better in paperback. Some series start in paperback and stay there, while others shift to hardcover (Bujold and Pratchett come to mind). Shapiro said the question these days is often hardback versus trade paperback for a book rather than mass market paperback.

Nielsen Hayden said that Tor's hardback publishing was helped by St. Martin's existing printing structure, so the unit cost could be kept low enough even with a print run of only 4000. Shapiro said that Bantam would do 20,000-copy print runs of mass market paperbacks, while their parent company wants something like 100,000 copies.

Some authors skew any statistics. For example, while most authors sell in a six-to-one paperback/hardback ratio, a few (such as Robert Jordan) sell a much higher percentage of their books as hardbacks.

Hardbacks are also popular because basically all institutional sales are hardback. For example, McNaughton buys 500-2000 of selected books and immediately processes them for libraries-meaning, among other things, no returns. The whole returns system, especially for paperbacks, was questioned, but Nielsen Hayden pointed out that any sign of cooperation by various publishers was considered restraint of trade, and no publisher could go it alone.

According to Nielsen Hayden, independent bookstores account a lot less than half of the books sold in the trade bookstore market. (If non-bookstore outlets are 10%, then I guess this means that chains account for 65-70%.)

In case you didn't already know this, bestseller lists are bogus. Even *Locus* asks stores only for the rankings of books, not quantities sold, so coming in first by selling five copies in a small store counts for more than coming in second by selling a hundred copies at a larger one.

Feder asked if e-books could be the "paperback originals" of the future. Fodera said that vanity publishing and self-publishing could drive down e-books in a way that didn't happen with mass market paperbacks, although he noted that one e-book publisher actually accepts returns.

Whether or not they are paperback originals, there are new books out there. Nielsen Hayden said that Tor/Orb publishes over two hundred a year.

**Why Things Bite Back: Technology and Unintended Consequences**  
**Saturday, 4:00PM**  
**Edward Tenner**

"The author of *Why Things Bite Back* discusses technology change and the unintended effects it can have."

Tenner began by giving the short explanation to why things bite back: "The area of the unexpected is so much larger than the world of the expected." He also quoted Kierkegaard's saying that life must be lived forward but can only be understood backward.

Tenner spoke of Jules Verne and Albert Robida as futurists. He said that Verne's *Paris in the Twentieth Century* was rejected by Verne's publisher as being too far-fetched, but was more accurate than many of Verne's other works. Robida was much better at prediction, according to Tenner, but was also a technophobe rather than a technophile.

Tenner claimed that if we compare the time period from 1776 to 1900 to that from 1900 to 2001, we see more fundamental change in the earlier range. This is somewhat contrary to what most people perceive. But Tenner said, for example, that amazon.com is fundamentally the same phenomenon that the Sears catalog was in its day, and has fundamentally the same appeal.

Electricity was a major change, Tenner said, claiming that "people in the days before electric light seemed to have much richer dreams." (They also had different sleep cycles.)

Tenner defined what he called "revenge effects" as being when something that is supposed to have one effect actually ends up having exactly the reverse effect, or as he put it, "the result of technologies that seems to cancel out your reason for adopting them." An example of this would be an anti-cancer drug that is discovered to cause cancer. It would *not* be an anti-cancer drug that makes your hair fall out. (I think there was something like this in sweeteners, where cyclamates were replaced by saccharin because the former were thought to cause cancer, but then it turned out that saccharin was worse in that regard.)

Another example given was low-level flush toilets, designed to use 30% less water-except people have to flush them twice

to get them completely flushed, thereby using 40% *more* water. And SUVs were the result of standards for fuel economy which exempted trucks: "There, literally, was a law you could drive a truck through." (The law exempted anything built on a truck chassis from standards for passenger vehicles. Of course, those of us against SUVs have our revenge when the price of gas shoots way up.)

"As our ability to use new materials and techniques increases geometrically, our ability to test them increases arithmetically." In Princeton, the newer leaded windows are not as good as the older ones, because the newer lead is too pure, and hence too soft.

Also, it's harder to test things over a long period of time as the rate of change increases. Older materials were tested over generations, but newer ones are rushed into production after a year or two. As a result, "the Smithsonian is having a really hard time conserving their vintage Tupperware." Another example: in 1913, the Woolworth Building was covered with terra cotta, but needed to have these pieces replaced when they exploded because of pressure buildup from moisture.

Talking about Legionella (a.k.a. Legionnaire's Disease), Tenner said of ventilation systems, "If you build it to the right temperature, they will come." Of course, this just leads to more problems. Anti-bacterial agents added to ventilation systems had tin in them which in turn caused IBM tape drive failures.

"You can't make it foolproof because fools are too ingenious." Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl would be examples of this. One problem is that safety "improvements" lull us into a false sense of security. For example, safety helmets result in people taking risks on motorcycles and bicycles that they wouldn't take without them, and similarly with anti-lock brakes in cars.

Another reason things bite back is deviant ingenuity: the ability to "refunction ordinary things for anti-social purposes." The example Tenner gave was the "ninja rock," a piece of shattered ceramic that will in turn easily shatter a car window.

Not all such ingenuity is negative, of course. Apparently fishermen are using discarded handsets to catch tilapia. This might be considered the creative side of unintended consequences.

Other "creative" changes are the push pin (originally designed to hold drying photographs but now used for a lot more), and the lounge chair (originally designed as a health chair).

(In a nice ironic touch, the slide show jammed part way through this talk.)

### **Masquerade Saturday, 8:00PM**

There is no much point to my describing the masquerade when you can see pictures from it in lots of other con reports, but I will say that I completely agree with the winner: "Fridays at 10", a tribute to the original "Twilight Zone" series. Done in black, white, and gray, the presentation featured tableaux from "To Serve Man", "The Invaders", "It's a Good Life", "Eye of the Beholder", "Time Enough at Last", and "The Living Doll". (The picture in *Locus* doesn't do it justice, because it was the arrangement on stage that really captured the essence of it.)

### **The Resnick/Malzberg Dialogues: A Live Rendition Sunday, 11:00AM Barry N. Malzberg, Mike Resnick**

Resnick began by stating what the two panelists had in common: "We both think he [Barry Malzberg] is a pretty good writer. We both think I am a pretty good writer. And we both think Sophia Loren is one of God's most exquisite creations."

This dialogue apparently grew out of a similar dialogue on-line on the SFWA site, and Resnick seemed surprised that the vast majority of the audience knew nothing about that and still showed up.

The first topic was electronic publishing and electronic rights. With "Galaxy On-Line" paying fifteen cents a word, and "scifi.com" twenty cents, this is a non-trivial issue. According to Resnick, "Fictionwise.com" began with reprints and paid high rates "up front," and is still in business, so the issue isn't likely to go away soon. But all the New York publishers have non-negotiable rights to electronic rights in their contracts now, which makes them considerably less lucrative for the

authors. (The question of how these rights affect authors' personal web pages has not been addressed.)

Malzberg disagreed somewhat, saying that based on his experience with Scott Meredith, "If there is a profit path, it has not yet been found." However, the current lawsuit between Bertelsmann and Rosetta Books over electronic rights indicates that Bertelsmann thinks it is worthwhile to fight even after a preliminary injunction against them.

Resnick said that one fact is that the circulation of the traditional print magazines is falling. *Asimov's* has dropped from 110,000 to 30,000, *F&SF* from 60,000 to 28,000, and *Analog* from 125,000 to 47,000. In addition, *Science Fiction Age*, *Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine*, and *Aboriginal* have all ceased publication over the last year. Resnick suggested that e-publications may step in to fill the gap for short fiction. (I would note that short fiction is easier to read electronically.) Resnick predicted, "I can't see anything but maybe *Analog* around in four or five years and I find that infinitely depressing." Because e-publications have no printing, binding, or warehousing costs, he could conceive in ten years that e-rights would be worth more than paper rights. This, he feels, will make it a seller's (e.g., an author's) market.

Print on-demand is another factor to be considered. Currently contracts have a reversion clause: after five years, an author can demand that a book be brought back into print or have the rights revert to him or her. But with print-on-demand, the book is *always* "in print." Resnick predicted that there may be a switch to a "term-of-lease" agreement, probably for seven years, after which time the rights revert to the author automatically, but can be renewed.

Resnick said he feels the same outrage at being the wrong age to take advantage of all these changes as he did at being the wrong age for the "Summer of Love."

Malzberg again repeated that he didn't see the "coming glory of e-rights" and is not convinced. He pointed out that Random House is withdrawing from the e-market. *The New York Times* of the previous week, he said, is "full of articles on how the e-books revolution which seemed imminent is anything but imminent."

Resnick pointed out the numbers: 200,000,000 people on the Internet, and a average press run of 18,000 for a mass-market paperback.

Another topic was the use of pseudonyms. Resnick said on one writers' listserv "one of the professional marketing ploys they consider most useful and profitable is the pseudonym." This is connected to the practice of "buying to net." (This was described above in the panel on the paperback original. Briefly, this is the practice of buying only as many of an author's next book as they sold of her last book. Since there are always some copies unsold, this means steadily decreasing sales.) Even without this practice, when an author changes genres, the publisher is liable to decrease the print run, which will make the author's sale figures look worse than they should.

Malzberg said that his experience at Scott Meredith led him to state, "A writer should publish under her own name unless there are the most pressing reasons imaginable." (Yes, my notes say that he said "her.") But he agreed that the computer era has made it easier to have a demonstrable history of failure, and also that pseudonyms made sense when changing genres. What about open pseudonyms? Is H. N. Turteltaub *really* a pseudonym in the traditional sense? Resnick said that "'Turteltaub' is Malzbergian rather than Resnickian," meaning (I think) that it is closer to Turtledove's own name than to a pseudonym in the classical sense.

Resnick said that if an agent says, "I can't sell you under your own name," the author should go with the pseudonym. The classic example given is Megan Lindholm, whose first two books did not sell well, so the publisher would not take a third. She changed her by-line to Robin Hobb and her books under that name took off. (She also changed publishers.) The other time an author should use a pseudonym is for work he doesn't want to be associated with (e.g., "adult" fiction).

Resnick said that the changes in publishing have caused some of these attitudes. His first novel, *Redbeard*, had 175,000 copies printed, and sold them all. Now the average is to print 18,000, and sell 9,000. "All writers are egomaniacs. Most writers are insecure egomaniacs," he said, and his name is all he has in the field.

Malzberg felt the "buying to net" wasn't as iron-clad as it is usually expressed. "You can feed off [an early] successful book for a while," he claimed. Resnick agreed, saying, "I believe the computer my distributor owns is not a monolith. I believe someone interprets the data." (I'd like to believe that true, but I suspect the smart money bets otherwise.)

Speaking of current trends in science fiction, Malzberg said, "In the 1960s I asked 'Why doesn't Sam Moskowitz understand what I'm doing?' Now I'm Sam Moskowitz." In fact, he added, "In a full life, everyone becomes Sam Moskowitz." However, he said that he can recognize that there is a high degree of technical excellence.

Resnick agreed, saying that "the level of mediocrity has risen" as well: "Nothing embarrassingly bad is coming out in the major magazines any more." Unfortunately, he said, you could count the good science fiction movies in the fingers of one mangled hand. Malzberg named *2001: A Space Odyssey* and *Bladerunner*. Resnick said almost all the big science fiction



films were bad: *The Matrix*, *E.T.: The Extraterrestrial*, *Godzilla 2000*, and *Armageddon*, among others. Malzberg noted, "The science fiction film audience is not the SF print audience. The science fiction print audience can't sustain the science fiction film." (A blockbuster film is one that sells on the order of 20,000,000 tickets. Selling 200,000 copies, or just 1% of that, would probably make a science fiction book wildly successful.) One reason for needing a wider audience, Resnick said, is that science fiction movies cost more than \$400,000 (this must be just for the script), while science fiction books cost about \$4000 (again, just for the text). And Resnick reminded us that movies are not books. "Writers' tools are words; Hollywood's tools are images," he said. "Writing is about ideas; movies are about emotions." As an example of how ingrained the former dichotomy is, he quoted from *City of Angels* (the play, not the movie): "Don't cling to the words to which you gave birth; remember how many a picture is worth."

But the real reason science fiction movies tend to be bad, according to Resnick, is "I don't think you can produce art by committee."

### Mathematical SF

Sunday, 12:00N

Michael F. Flynn, Richard Garfinkle, Donald Kingsbury, Mark R. Leeper

Kingsbury, who taught math at McGill University described himself as a "dilettante mathematician." He has a mathematics-based novel coming out soon: *Psychohistorical Crisis*. He described this as "What would happen if a group of mathematicians who could predict the future were running the galaxy?" (to which Flynn's response was, "Yes!"). Flynn is a statistician who does the very popular "Statistics Roadshow" at conventions, and said he had once published a paper on something so obscure it was "never used in anything except one story [he] wrote." Garfinkle introduced himself by saying, "For the first twenty-one years of my life, I was convinced I was a mathematician. Then I discovered I was wrong, so I went into a far less lucrative profession." Leeper had his first work published in the field almost thirty years ago ("An Odd Solution to the Functional Equation  $P(x+1)/2 = \exp(P(x))$ ").

Kingsbury noted that mathematicians used to feel a need to keep mathematics secret. "Egyptian priests," he claimed, "knew more than we thought they knew." (Well, certainly the Pythagoreans were so distressed by the notion of irrational numbers that they decreed death for anyone revealing it.)

Leeper asked the basic question: why isn't there more mathematics in science fiction? (Leeper has a bibliography of the mathematical science fiction he could find at [http://www.geocities.com/markleeper/math\\_sf.htm](http://www.geocities.com/markleeper/math_sf.htm).)

Kingsbury claimed that Kathryn Cramer and David Hartwell did an anthology of mathematical science fiction (but I've never heard of it). But it is a hard subject, he said, and unlike other with hard sciences, writers don't know enough even to bluff. (As proof that is really is hard, Flynn noted later that physicist Geoffrey Landis had to have the end of one of Greg Egan's mathematics stories explained to him-and he still didn't understand it.)

However, Kingsbury also pointed out that it is fundamental to civilizations, and civilizations that don't have mathematicians collapse very fast. Therefore, in some sense it is implicit in science fiction as it is in society.

Garfinkle said another difficulty was that in most cases, the progression from mathematics to something you can write about is at least two steps, so writers start with the engineering or physics (the second step). "People have the idea that math exists in formulas," he said, so computer programmers, architects, accountants, and so on are not considered mathematicians; mathematicians are only the most abstract.

Flynn agreed with the "two-step remove," saying, "Mathematicians are too far from the action." Stories that bring mathematics to the fore (e.g., this year's Retro-Hugo nominee, "A Subway Named Moebius") tend to be cutesy. Flynn mentioned a couple of mathematically based items not on Leeper's list, H. Nearing's *The Sinister Researches of C. P. Ransom* and his own "The Washer and the Ford." Summing up the difficulties, he said, "It's hard to write a story about a partial differential equation." Garfinkle observed, "Modern mathematics has become increasingly algebraicized. It's easier if you are dealing with a geometric interpretation." Leeper thought that there were more "demonstrable" aspects of mathematics, and gave fractals as an example, but Flynn said that increasingly we are seeing the victory of the algebraicists. (Now there's an idea for a novel-a society ruled by mathematicians engaged in a civil war between the geometricians and the algebraicists.)

Leeper thought that in some sense mathematics was related to fantasy in that a Klein bottle is "magic." But Garfinkle thought that a black hole was similar to a Klein bottle in many respects.

Leeper asked the panelists if, when mathematics *is* used in science fiction, they were satisfied with how it is used. Garfinkle felt that "mathematics in science fiction tends to get used for its cutesy effects, but then, so does science."

Kingsbury said, "[Sometimes] you get into the 'mathematical life' as well, when writing about mathematicians." Relating to his book, he said that the consequences of mistakes in mathematics are much greater when running the galaxy than now.

This led Leeper to ask how believable Kingsbury found psychohistory. Kingsbury said he thought of it as providing a map of the territory: it doesn't include all the details, but it tries to include the important ones. We do it now, he said, with economics, though not always very well. Chaos theory also works into psychohistory, but Kingsbury thought that "our ability to predict is certainly going to improve over what we have today."

Flynn here described himself as a general topologist, which he said involved doing statistics without a lot of numbers. He proposed George Hardy's toast: "Here's to pure mathematics-may she never be applied." Mathematics is really more like a religion than a science, he suggested, in that it has assumptions and then proves itself. Garfinkle disagreed, saying that most religions don't define themselves; the only ones that do are those touched by philosophers. He certainly found a sense of wonder in mathematics: "I love the fact that we don't know if  $C$  equals Aleph-1."

Leeper decried the "new uncertainty in mathematics," complaining, "There's already enough uncertainty in my life." Flynn said he sees this all the time: a "kind of 1 plus something like 1 is sort of like 2" definition of statistics.

As for computers and related fields, Garfinkle said that our computers are not yet good enough to make models of our own space-time, let alone create new ones as some people (Greg Egan, I suppose) suggest.

As for mathematics in films, Leeper said he liked *Pi* until it moved "into the realm of H. P. Lovecraft." *Cube* is considered mathematical, but didn't have a lot of math, just the puzzle. (Well, it also had a Rubik's Cube aspect to it.) Garfinkle said that the made-for-television movie *Longitude* had a fair amount of mathematics.

Unfortunately, at this point the panel degenerated in a discussion of how to measure the day (dawn to dusk, noon to noon, sundown to sundown, ...) and whether units of measure were based on astronomical/physics measures (Kingsbury) or human measures (Flynn). For example, Kingsbury insisted, "The Roman foot is six-fifths of the sidereal second pendulum length," rather than the length of someone's foot (as Flynn suggested). Garfinkle attempted to mediate, saying that defining an acre as the amount of ground that can be plowed in a day is more useful than a strictly geometric definition.

Someone in the audience closed with the conundrum, "You can write about rocketships without building one, but can you write about a theorem without proving it?"

**Do They Keep Kosher on Mars: Judaism in SF**  
**Sunday, 1:00PM**  
**Michael A. Burstein, Janice Gelb, Daniel Kimmel, William Tenn**

No description was given for this, but Gelb made it clear from the outset that the topic was Judaism in science fiction, not Judaism in fandom or Judaism in general. When Gelb asked the audience who was Jewish, the majority of the audience was Jewish, though there were a few non-Jews there (about a dozen out of two hundred people in the audience). Tenn noted that although Gelb had asked who was not Jewish, she hadn't asked why. (For the benefit of the non-Jews reading this, I will try to translate Jewish terms.)

Gelb said she was on the panel because she was one of the most observant Jews in the con-running community. Tenn explained why he wrote Jewish science fiction: "I'm Jewish and this is how I think." But he also said that when he was writing most of this Jewish science fiction, he never would have imagined a panel like this.

Burstein said he makes a point of incorporating Jewish themes and ideas in his stories, and Gelb noted that it is now much easier to do stories with ethnicity in them than in earlier times. Burstein agreed, saying he was never hassled about the "Jewish stuff" in his stories. He was tired of seeing Jewish characters on television who were there *because* they were Jewish, and decided he wanted to write characters who *happen* to be Jewish. He writes mostly for *Analog* and said that Stan Schmidt is a good first non-Jewish audience.

Kimmel mentioned he was there because I was Jewish and wrote and taught about science fiction, adding that he had just learned how to lead the weekday morning service. Tenn then distinguished between Judaism and Jewishness, saying "Judaism is davening Shacharit. Jewishness is watching someone daven Shacharit and trying to keep up," demonstrated by flipping the pages of his program book. ["Davening" is praying, and "Shacharit" is the morning prayer service.] Kimmel then said to him, "Far be it from me to correct my elders, but you were turning the pages the wrong way." [Hebrew is read right-to-left, and the books are similarly reversed, with what in English is the back cover as the front cover, and so on.]

Kimmel also said that when he gave his synagogue's ritual director a copy of Tenn's "On Venus, Have We Got a Rabbi," and the director said that Tenn got the details right. He also noted that it has been ruled that you *can* daven via the Internet if there is real-time audio to a real physical minyan. [A minyan is the ten-person quorum required for conducting a prayer service.]

Burstein said that this was typical of Jewish responsiveness to technological developments. Another example is a ruling that a surrogate child is considered the child of the womb mother.

Tenn, attempting to distinguish among the various branches of Judaism, gave the following examples: "At an Orthodox wedding, the mother of the bride is pregnant. At a Conservative wedding, the bride is pregnant. At a Reform wedding, the rabbi is pregnant." [Sorry, any explanation of this is way too long for here.]

Tenn also talked about Ward Moore, who was a descendent of Judah P. Benjamin, converted back and became an Orthodox Jew. Before his conversion, Moore was a vegetarian, but he felt he needed to do something to observe the laws of kashrut. So he declared that some vegetables were "meat" and some were "dairy"! ["Kashrut" is the noun form of "kosher," and Jewish dietary laws require the separation of meat and dairy products.]

Someone in the audience mentioned the classic anthologies edited by Jack Dann, *Wandering Stars* and *More Wandering Stars*. Burstein said that he has proposed a new one, *A Light unto the Universe*. Tenn pointed out that *Wandering Stars* was mostly original stories, not reprints.

Tenn asked whether ethnicity was either on the one hand disappearing or on the other taking the place of religion. Kimmel thought in the future as in the past there would be Jewish ethnic subgroups: "You're such a Martian Jew!"

Tenn said that the first Jewish science fiction story was Horace Gold's "Trouble with Water" (1939). It was a comic story, the only possibility for a Jewish science fiction story at the time. (Tenn also claimed he couldn't even use his own name [Philip Klass] until then, but Stanley Weinbaum was writing under his own name as early as 1934.)

Someone in the audience asked how Judaism will change in a "space diasporah." "What about an all-Jewish planet?" Kimmel suggested that Dan Simmons's *Hyperion* gives one possibility. He said that as far as details, he thought that the various time-based mitzvot would be converted to local time on other planets. ["Mitzvot" are commandments, and an example of a time-based commandment would be to say morning prayers at a certain time, or light candles before sundown.] Burstein mentioned John Varley's "Eight Worlds" as another example, mentioning "Temple L'vana Israel." "But how do you deal with a lunar calendar on the moon?" he asked Kimmel, who replied, "On the moon *every* day is Rosh Chodesh." ["Rosh Chodesh" is the first day of the lunar month.]

Someone in the audience mentioned a "bad Jew" in a recent story ("Kaddish for the Last Survivor" in *Analog* November 2000), and asked whether most Jewish characters were observant. Burstein didn't think so. He reminded people that when someone asked Isaac Asimov if Asimov had ever written Jewish characters, Asimov thought a moment and then said, "They all are." The panel was also puzzled because *most* of the Jews in *Wandering Stars* were secular (i.e., non-observant). Someone else then complained that in too many stories, the Jews are all secular Jews chasing after non-Jewish women. (What about the female Jewish characters?)

The content was a bit diffuse, but still interesting. I realize this may sound odd, but I would suggest doing this subject again, perhaps a bit more structured or specific. (Okay, I'll make a couple of suggestions: "Jewish Time-Based Mitzvot in a Lunar Colony" or "Your Favorite Jewish Character in Science Fiction".)

### **Modernism and SF Sunday, 2:00PM**

**Jim Frenkel, Kathleen Ann Goonan, John J. Kessel, Terry A. McGarry, Michael Swanwick**

Kessel began by giving some of the basics about modernism: how it started in the 1920s as a way of experimenting and breaking away from established literary techniques and traditions. It was influenced by the rise of psychoanalysis and used various techniques of language to express loss, disillusionment, and despair. Arising after the chaos and tragedy of World War I, it saw the world as fragmented and art as a potential organizer. Among its techniques were a use of myth, symbolism, and allusion.

Goonan said that modernism also distinguished between low art and high art (and presumably science fiction would be considered low art). McGarry asked if science fiction was a conscious reaction against modernism. (This was the question that got everyone so excited at Bucconeer, but here the discussion was much more restrained.) Frenkel thought that possibly Clifford Simak and Theodore Sturgeon were consciously reacting against modernism, but most of the science

fiction authors writing at the time of the modernists were hacks. However, everyone was in some sense reacting to the fragmentation of reality that was perceived at the time. And Frenkel pointed out that there are many science fiction authors who are modernists themselves: Robert Silverberg, John Brunner, J. G. Ballard, and Michael Moorcock, for example. (Frenkel later mentioned that Robert Sheckley is another science fiction author who uses modernist techniques.)

Kessel agreed and added, "Michael Swanwick exemplifies everything modernist in science fiction." Swanwick talked about the "anxiety of influence," but said when he asked someone to explain that phrase, he was given himself as an example!

In response to McGarry's original question, Kessel said that David Hartwell thinks many of the authors of the 1930s and 1940s were consciously writing against modernist writing. Kessel said that he thought that, yes, the authors were writing against modernist writing, but that they were doing it unconsciously. Frenkel said, "Lester Del Rey thought that the best response to chaos in the world was the science fiction response: trashy but positive."

Goonan said that the Moderns, such as D. H. Lawrence, were appalled at industrialization. They perceived a fragmentation of time and space from trains, telephones, etc. But the science fiction writers *embraced* all this rather than rejecting it. Frenkel thought that this implied that the roots of modernism were laid in the 19th century with industrialization. And he also thought that because the United States has less history, we were more used to change.

Swanwick pointed out that there are technophobic science fiction stories. For example, he said, "The Twonky" is "very dark about technology," as is "There Will Come Soft Rains". "Modernists are concerned about the corruption of the human spirit," he said, while science fiction writers are concerned about more mundane things, like dying.

Kessel thought that modernism also had an element of class in it. Only the upper class get to worry about the corruption of the spirit, because only they were educated, had three square meals a day, and so on. Swanwick noted that most science fiction writers of the 1930s and 1940s never went to college, and Kessel added that they also had to work within the framework of popular fiction. Science fiction stories are longer than "literary" ones, and they have more scenes. Goonan agreed, noting that modernism (and post-modernism) are hailed, but traditional stories are what sell.

Swanwick thought that science fiction be preserved intact as an isolated form of literature, to which Kessel responded, "Science fiction, the Australia of literature." (They did not address how or why this is different from mysteries or other genre literature.) Kessel noted that William Gibson once compared science fiction to the mainstream by saying, "At least we can still plot." And now post-modernism is going back to narrative technique.

Frenkel said, however, that science fiction *did* have fragmentation of narrative, psychological studies of characters, and so on. This is part, he said, of why science fiction stories are longer. (He also added, "Sometimes, though, a writer just doesn't know when to stop.")

Kessel mentioned the New Wave, and Swanwick said that the New Wave was really just the last flowering of modernism. Damien Broderick has listed Brian Aldiss, Gene Wolfe, Roger Zelazny, and Thomas Disch as modernists. Frenkel added Jack Dann and Gardner Dozois, and said that in mystery fiction, P. D. James was doing modernism. Swanwick felt that mysteries were something a serious modernist writer could write on the side, so this kept them from having to force modernism into mysteries. Goonan thought that because in general mysteries have to be heavily plotted, they resist modernism, though Kessel named Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler, James Cain, and John Le Carre as modernist mystery writers.

Kessel said that modernists often became very conservative religiously, but "post-modernists don't have much in the way of beliefs at all."

Frenkel suggested that a lot of modernism becomes magical realism, and said we should think of "The Twilight Zone" as "the original American magical realism series." Kessel supported this link somewhat, saying that modernism is not just an English-language phenomenon.

Frenkel closed by pointing out that although modernism was certainly a major movement, it doesn't dominate literature by any means.

**Hugo Awards  
Sunday, 8:00PM**

**Greg Bear, Gardner Dozois, Esther Friesner, George H. Scithers, Stephen Youll**

- | Novella: "The Ultimate Earth" by Jack Williamson
- | Novelette: "Millennium Babies" by Kristine Kathryn Rusch
- | Short Story: "Different Kinds of Darkness" by David Langford
- | Related Book: *Greetings from Earth: The Art of Bob Eggleton* by Bob Eggleton, Nigel Suckling (Paper Tiger)
- | Dramatic Presentation: *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*
- | Professional Editor: Gardner Dozois
- | Professional Artist: Bob Eggleton
- | Semiprozine: *Locus*
- | Fanzine: *File 770* edited by Mike Glyer
- | Fan Writer: Dave Langford
- | Fan Artist: Teddy Harvia
- | John W. Campbell Award: Kristine Smith

You can see a picture of me in my tuxedo on page 81 of the November 2001 *Locus*.

There was a lot of discussion about whether the Rowling should have won the Hugo, the two main complaints being it was fantasy rather than science fiction, and it was "outside" the field. As for the first, I didn't hear nearly as much fuss about the George R. R. Martin's *Storm of Swords* (which ultimately placed second). And as for the first, in Dramatic Presentation, the Hugo pretty much *always* goes "outside" the field. If they want to change the name of the award to "Best Novel That Is Science Fiction or Fantasy But Not *Really* Popular," that's another story.

Everything went reasonably smoothly, though the promised elevators to carry the nominees from the ceremony to the nominees' party afterwards were also someone's fantasy.

Apparently the Hugos for fiction this year had just the title on them, and not the author's name.

**Making Recommendations or Thoughtful Analysis? A Look at SF Criticism**  
**Monday, 11:00AM**  
**David G. Hartwell, Evelyn C. Leeper, Kevin Maroney**

"What distinguishes criticism from book reviewing? How does criticism manage objectivity in a field in which so many of the practitioners know one another?"

(This is likely to be a pretty poor write-up, as 1) I was on the panel and so couldn't take extensive notes, and 2) it's now been over two months since the panel.)

Hartwell said that when reviewing, one needs to "summon up all the objectivity, or at least fairness, one can."

Asked for favorite reviewers, Maroney (who works for Hartwell on *The New York Review of Science Fiction*) said he likes the reviewers in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, and particularly mentioned Brian Stableford. He also thought David Langford was "useful and illustrative rather than just savage." (This was probably a reference to "Thog's Masterclass.") Hartwell liked Joanna Russ, Damon Knight, Samuel R. Delany, Gary Wolfe, Russell Letson, Paul McAuley, and Michael Durda (Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist of *The Washington Post*), who he said had no prejudices about science fiction. He said what he looks for is breadth of background, clarity, and aesthetic principles.

Mainstream literature reviewing, Hartwell said, talks about what is good, true, and beautiful, and Hartwell seemed to be looking for something similar in science fiction reviewing. On the other hand, Gregory Feeley has said, "The modern book review serves as a surrogate for the book." Hartwell recommended *The London Review of Books* as the best source of reviews, saying it was "beautifully written." "Objectivity is not the question," he averred, "engagement is."

Hartwell said that 1950 to 1975 was the "Golden Age of Science Fiction Book Reviewing." Reviewers were passionate and articulate, even when their views in retrospect might seem odd. Judith Merrill thought *Dune* was the worst of its year. And Algis Budrys said of Thomas Disch's *The Genocides* that it represented a "pernicious trend of creeping Ballardism."

On the other hand, Hartwell now sees a trend in SFWA of writers not criticizing one another, and many writers have stopped writing reviews altogether. Maroney noted that *The New York Review of Science Fiction* reviews only good books, or perhaps more accurately, prints only favorable reviews. Hartwell disagreed with this, saying that they will also publish reviews of "ambitious failures." (I did feel like an outsider a bit at this point. But this gives me yet another idea for a panel, or number of panels: "An Inside Look at [X]", where X might be a magazine, a publisher, the Science Fiction

Book Club, or whatever, and the panelists all from that entity.) [Interestingly, the day after I posted this, I opened the November 2001 issue of *The New York Review of Science Fiction* to page 9 and what did I see but an unfavorable review of something clearly not considered an ambitious failure.]

What seems to have been the dividing point between these two ends ("The Golden Age of Science Fiction Book Reviewing" and "Speak No Evil"), at least as I interpret what Hartwell was saying, was the advent of Spider Robinson and the review as entertainment. (Of course, some of the most entertaining reviews are the negative ones; read Damon Knight's *In Search of Wonder* for evidence of this.)

The following three panel descriptions are by Mark R. Leeper. (Even I can't be in two places at once.)

**What's New With Dinosaurs (write-up by Mark Leeper)**  
**Josh Smith (almost a doctor, big find in Egypt),**  
**William A. S. Sarjeant (Professor, University of Saskatchewan),**  
**Michael K. Brett-Surman (co-editor of "The Complete Dinosaur"),**  
**Bob Walters (dinosaur artist)**

Information from the panel:

- | There is a science of footprints. They made what is an amazing find. Footprints of twenty-three hadrosaurs walking abreast in a line. They turned a corner, fanning around. Three fell out of line when one missed his footing and knocked the other two. They got back into line. The only other species known to walk abreast is humans. But a predator would think twice about attacking a line of hadrosaurs. (This is the most intelligent thing I have ever heard of dinosaurs doing. The implications to me seem amazing.)
- | The computer has completely changed paleontology. They use computers to model dinosaurs based on bones and tracks. They can find out what are and are not likely modes of movement.
- | Feathered dinosaurs are found only in water they fell into and found like fossil fish. They are found compressed into two dimensions by layers of sediment. Feathers are always found in a single plane so we cannot tell how they covered the body.
- | 95% of paleontologists think birds evolved from theropods, but proof is not there.
- | Australia is having some amazing discoveries including fossils of carnivorous kangaroos. (We talk about this in our Australia log.)
- | The final narration of "Walking with Dinosaurs" was not passed by scientists. The scripts were written after discussions with scientists, but there was no way to check the final text and it has a lot of misinformation. The final wording was terrible. It was made in Britain and narrated again for the American version, cutting length for commercials. The American version has some of bad stuff cut out for commercials so is a little more accurate than the British version. Watch it with the sound off. Never trust "Nova" either
- | "Walking with Beasts" will be about Ice Age animals, especially megafauna.
- | Not much information is coming from Russia, science is broken. Scientists there are taking jobs as waiters.
- | <http://www.prehistorictimes.com> and the magazine *Prehistoric Times* is quite good and affordable.
- | Stephen Jay Gould's book *Wonderful Life* goes overboard at the end because he needed a climax.

**How to Review (write-up by Mark Leeper)**  
**Lisa DuMond (<http://www.hikeeba.com/>),**  
**Robert Devney (editor of *Devniad*),**  
**Daniel Kimmel (*Quantum News, Worcester Telegram and Gazette*),**  
**Janice Eisen (*Apparatchik*)**

Information gleaned from the panel:

- | When reviewing keep in mind who your audience is. What should be explained to them? One writer said "I put in expository lumps."
- | How does a reviewer get beyond "I liked it"? Did the author or filmmaker accomplish what he intended? It does not have to be a great purpose, but was the purpose accomplished? How subtle is the content? How mind-stretching? Think critically about your opinions. Ask why are you, the author or filmmaker, telling me this story?
- | The reviewer should change the format of a review. Don't write by formula.
- | What do you do with a bad review? Some publications say they will not give time and space to something bad;

there are enough good works to tell the reader about. Others want to warn readers. Science fiction is a small world, and it is dangerous to do negative reviews. You may run into the author.

**H. G. Wells (write-up by Mark Leeper)  
Craig Engler (Sci-Fi channel),  
Art Widner (taught classes on Wells),  
James Cambias (new writer)**

Some of the points of discussion:

- | There are several current or recent projects of dramatizing Wells including a new version of *The Time Machine*, and the Hallmark Channel just ran a six-hour miniseries "The Infinite Worlds of H. G. Wells."
- | What is needed is a new *The War of the Worlds* done as a period piece and faithful to the Wells style.
- | There is a strong anarchistic streak in Wells; many of his works show frustration with humanity. Wells wanted people to be sensible and felt they simply were not.
- | In "The Country of the Blind" he saw himself as the one person who saw dragged down by the rest of society.
- | In 1914 Wells described an "atomic bomb" that could destroy a whole city. He saw this as something the pilot would carry in his lap and drop over the side. (In 1914 planes were open bi-planes. Wells saw an atomic bomb as being more like a fountain of destruction. Rather than exploding in an instant it would actually be exploding over a long period of time. That makes it actually worse than our nuclear weapons.)
- | The discussion said that Wells was talking about gene-splicing in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. (I would disagree.) Moreau was Wells's version of Frankenstein. It has religious overtones in that science is punished.
- | Wells is thought of as being anti-religious. Why does he give God the credit for defeating the Martians in *The War of the Worlds*? It is a figure of speech. Why did he write the book *God the Invisible King*? Wells went through periods of trying to conform and fit in and then rebelling. When he was conforming, he would profess to be a believer and even wrote religious literature. More often he would attack those same points of view.

### Miscellaneous

Various items were passed at the Business Meeting. The amendment to split the Dramatic Presentation into two awards, long- and short-form, passed its first vote. It must pass again at ConJose to take effect. A process was set in place to allow for extending eligibility for works not published in the United States during their first year of publication passed. A resolution was passed to "remind" every Worldcon that names on badges should be in at least 24-point type. (Many people thought this unnecessarily picayune, but given that this Worldcon managed to get it wrong, even after all these years of discussion, indicates that \*something\* is needed.) And an amendment was passed and takes effect requiring that postal mail always be an option for Hugo nominating and voting, and for site selection. (This seemed a bit over the top-I saw no indication that anyone is thinking of eliminating this for exclusively on-line voting. Now, after the anthrax scare, I am seeing various places switching to accepting only email submissions: NPR's Sunday morning puzzle, for example.)

The programming on the whole was acceptable, though less exciting than many other Worldcons. Monday's programming, though, was very light. This would actually have made more sense on the West Coast than on the East, since if you're flying from Philadelphia back to California, you can leave a lot later in the day than flying the other way.

I was really annoyed that the committee made such a big thing about the Reading Terminal Market being a great place nearby to eat, without mentioning it was not open for dinner at all, and it was closed all day Sunday and Monday. So it was basically available for six meals out of a possible twelve. (Yes, I know Chinatown was not far away, but the emphasis on the Market and its proximity made that sound very appealing.)

A more general complaint is that cons are now theme parks rather than convenings. Of all the recent Worldcons, only Aussiecon Three seemed to be the sort of convention where there were events that almost everyone attended together. Most seem to have the gaming track, and the media track, and so on, such that there is no real convening anymore.

Quote from the tail end of a panel on future cities in science fiction I didn't attend: "There's terrible urban planning in science fiction novels, but there's terrible urban planning in reality too." (Walter Jon Williams)

Suggestion for panels at future conventions:

- | "National Politics and Fandom"
- | "Franz Kafka" (maybe in the UK where more Europeans will be attending)
- | "Isaac Newton, Alchemist and Mystic" (again, maybe the UK is the place for this)
- | "How to Watch a Japanese Films: Different Story-Telling Styles"
- | "Jewish Time-Based Mitzvoth in a Lunar Colony"
- | "Your Favorite Jewish Character in Science Fiction"
- | "An Inside Look at [X]", where X might be a magazine, a publisher, the Science Fiction Book Club, or whatever, and the panelists all from that entity

Boston won the bid for 2004.

Next year at ConJose!

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Evelyn C. Leeper may be reached via [e-mail](#) or you may visit her [Homepage](#).

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