

on a themed anthology of original stories. I want stories that are reprinted from elsewhere.

What I think is happening is that somebody gets the idea that people would buy an anthology of alternate history Elvis Presley

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stories goes out and commissions a bunch of such stories. Once the editor has requested such a story he or she needs darn good cause to reject it. After all, if it does not make it to the anthology that author really cannot sell it any place else. First, there just was a whole anthology of stories written about alternate history Presley stories so the public who would be interested in the subject is probably glutted with them, and also it is relatively obvious that this story was commissioned for the anthology and rejected or why else was the author writing on the subject. So it would not pay authors to write for theme anthologies unless it is pretty darn sure the stories will be accepted regardless of quality.

In addition, it is a lot easier to write a story on an idea of your own choosing. An author may be full of interesting ideas but may have only the most mediocre and dull ideas on a concept as uninspiring as alternate histories of Elvis Presley. Nevertheless, that is where the money is and the story is unlikely to be rejected because it is just not very entertaining. So an Elvis Presley alternate history is what is written. The result is that we get a lot of what I find to be dull anthologies. I find when I read these anthologies, more often than not I have checked at some point what is the final page number of the story and increasingly I am aware how many pages off that is. When I get there what I feel is more relief that I got there than excitement about what was in the story. It is, in fact, very difficult for me to imagine what could be exciting about an Elvis Presley alternate history and reading such an anthology generally does not answer that question.

Evelyn can seemingly read no end of stories as long as they are on a certain set of topics that she finds exciting, such a alternate history, Sherlock Holmes, etc. I probably have a list of topics like that, but I find that I have a very narrow band of stories that I will unconditionally read based on subject matter. And

certainly most of the theme anthologies that are coming out now are nowhere near my narrow band. Now if someone would do an anthology of interesting mathematical ideas, maybe something like the old FANTASIA MATHEMATICA, that would interest me. But I can't see that happening. The field of mathematical stories has been left to Rudy Rucker and an increasingly limited set of authors. I have an advanced reading copy of a set of stories set during the invasion from WAR OF THE WORLDS and I may give that a try and get back to you. I do like the Wells novel. But thinking about that led me to also think about why I was so reluctant to start a book that fifteen years ago would have excited my interest. I will get back to you. Now I guess I have committed myself to reading the book.
[-mrl]

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