



# The WSFA Journal

May 2010

## Inverse Images

Hey, the Syfy version of Riverworld could be the start of a brand new trend – the hero villain swap. By turning heroes into villains and vice-versa, SyFy can reimagine classic SF works in a whole new way (or at least produce something else we can mock.)

**Wizard of Oz** - The magic users of Oz are under attack. Dorothy, who comes from a land without magic is determined to reduce Oz to the same state. And she has a mob of brainless, heartless cowards at her command. Can the Wizard save the magic of Oz or will Dorothy trick the residents of Oz into thinking he's a fraud.

**Foundation** - Although constantly teased for his misshapen body, the musician known as the Mule may be the universe's last hope against the Foundation's plot to make everyone in the universe follow Hari Seldin's plan.

**Superman** - Armed only with his wits, Lex Luthor must confront an alien invader with superstrength, flight, superspeed, laser-eyes, and dozens of other superpowers -- a being so vicious that he constantly deceives even his closest friends.

**Lord of the Rings** - Thousands of years ago Sauron's ring was stolen. When it is found by hobbits, instead of returning it to its rightful owner, they decide to destroy it. While Sauron resorts to more and more efforts to recover his precious jewelry, the thieving hobbits go closer and closer to a volcano that can destroy the ring.

**Ender's Game** - In his lust for battle, the child-general Ender destroys an entire innocent alien race and then writes his memoirs about how it was perfectly justified and all the mistakes in the campaign were someone else's fault.

**Harry Potter and the Half Blood Prince** - The wizard world is dying. The wizard traitor Dumbledore has used his position as head of the wizard school and Supreme Mugwump to dilute the wizards' power by bringing in mudbloods and half-bloods. Five previous attempts by the rightful king Lord Voldemort have been thwarted by Dumbledore and his apprentice, the glory-hound Harry Potter. But this time, Voldemort has an inside man, the courageous Draco Malfoy, who has vowed to kill the headmaster. This year, before the final school bell, one of them will die.

**War of the Worlds** - After terrorists from Venus attack Mars, a transcription error causes the Martians to think that the source of the terror is Terra. So the Martians invade Earth looking for weapons of mass destruction.

**X-Men** - After yet another mutant fight destroys half of New York the government has a solution -





Giant Robo Sentinels. This one is produced as Japanimation.

*Star Wars* - Darth Vader loyally serves the Emperor, who was appointed by the Senate, unaware that his son, jealous of his father's power, has joined the rebels with the intention of forming a Communist Republic.

*The Bible* [contributed by Mark Roth] - An intelligent, sensitive Satan is tossed into an underground prison for millennia, while his Enemy, who somehow fools humans into believing He is "all-good", instigates wars, torture, and genocide...

### Old Enough That Half of It Has Ceased to Be SF

President Judy called the first Friday meeting in April (4/2/2010) to order at 9:16. Sec Sam Lubell summarized the last meeting. VP Sam S. had nothing to report. Sec Sam L. had a new *WSFA Journal*. Paul said after long time, we have now bequeathed a new design for the website, dedicated to the proposition this will make it easier to update. The board will be able to post messages and activities, as soon as board responds to request for password (but only one has). A good dozen pages still are the old style, we will translate them over time and integrate them into new design since it is easier to rewrite from scratch than to fix them. Take a look. Club thanked him. Treasurer not here but emailed. WSFA account has \$ 5,798.44, Capclave \$ 2,953.82, Merchant \$ 2,411.90. Total checking \$ 11,164.16, CDs \$ 11,835.58, PayPal \$ 1022.40, for a total of \$24,022.14. Calls for printing more books. Calls to declare bankruptcy.

Reports of committees. Trustees do not yet have a slate to report. Judy: You better have a slate by the next meeting because the one after that is the election. No chair for Intertivities and no one volunteered. Publications committee: New journals. Ernest confessed himself a slacker with no idea what's happening. Gayle said contract is back from VanderMeer, but no paper on Connie. We did announce the books on the WSFA site, Facebook, and Capclave blog, VanderMeer put the info on his blog. We have seven preorders for Jeff, eight for Connie and four new members for Capclave. Webpage up so members can preorder. We are planning to hit the websites hard, getting the buzz up once we have the covers so people can visualize it. Mark asked about blurb on rassf. Bill asked if the cover Jeff put on his blog is real. Gayle said just a sample. WSFA Press did inventory for taxes and sent numbers to Cathy. 237 pb Future Washingtons, 24 HC. 101 Reincarnations. <Cruella lives again!>. 103 Edges of Things, 30 home by the sea, four Resnicks. So supply of WSFA press is scant. Judy said Pat Cadigan had an autobiographic blurb on NPR about how she and a friend invented fantasy lives, and she grew up to be sf author. Brian asked if we should call them rare books and raise the price. Gayle said we cannot jack up the price as already rare collectables. Judy asked about website. New and beautiful. Judy asked about Facebook. Gayle said stable, posting to it. Doesn't know about more friends. Not many enemies. Cathy: That would be a useful function.



Special committees: Capclave 2009 still waiting for Steve to finalize the money as the records not acceptable, missing stuff. Steve is trying to go through receipts. Make sure the Baen money came in, etc. Some things were not counted when we took money out to buy food and per diems. Bill wants this to be done, as does everyone else. 2010 chair Gayle: We have a few more members, hope we will get more when get book covers. Trying new things to get people to sign up, preorder the book is only for Capclave members. Big push at Balticon. We will have a raffle if enough people (10) buy membership. There will be a prize, a remote controlled Wall-E robot. We also bought two Robbie the Robots; the prize depends on how many sign up. We will do the duck pond, no water. Need new gifts- superhero ducks. Amazon is having a sale. Talk of Duck-con. If people have ideas, send them to her.

011 chair Cathy is visiting hotels with George. Getting full tour.

Montgomery rules about only prepackaged food saved us money last year. We are targeting two weeks in middle of October, but also the last week in September, dancing around NY Comicon. Judy: Better not to move it if we can possibly avoid it. Bob: Or not move it too far. Mark, as someone who ran a large consuite, recommended renting a suite for con suite. This led to a discussion of healthy stuff. Committee to talk SF brought Tom Doyle. He said he would read a story Consensus Building. Old enough that half of it has ceased to be SF. Lit award committee: Paul said we have 59 stories officially, Carolyn said she has four more, so 63 stories. About the same as last year. There is information on standing rules for changing later.

Old business: Paul brought up the change to the standing rules for small press. Want to change the standing rules where rules currently define what constitutes small press; Cathy said why this was good. Sam S. had a small change, saying that the definition will be determined by the committee and be published on the WSFA Small Press Award Rules page. The final language was, "Nominees must be published by a small press, the definition of which will be determined by the committee and be published on the WSFA Small Press Award Rules page. Rule changes will only take effect after the completion of a Small Press Award Cycle." No opposed but there was one abstention (Bill). There was no new business.

First WSFA meeting for Tom Doyle. WSFA welcomed him.

Announcements: Bill said brief break and then let Tom do his reading. Madeleine will do demonstration at Cherry Blossom festival. Ernest: EJ has one week left in uniform; next Friday will be small ceremony, she then goes on three-month leave and expects to work in the office of the Secretary of Defense. Ernest won't be at Third Friday because he'll be in Japan for two-weeks, visiting her brother who is at the Navy base there. She is getting out as a commander. Having a great time buying civilian outfits, none of which are khaki. Brian said VanderMeer has new book Finch. But others said not new. Connie's book has been out three weeks. Unanimously adjourned at 9:56.

Attendance: Drew Bittner, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Ernest Lilley, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Sandra Marshall, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Mark Roth, Judy and Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Gayle Surette, Ivy Yap (continues to haunt WSFA), Madeleine Yeh, and special guest star Tom Doyle as himself.



### Discussion Calendar for the Committee to Talk SF

First Friday in May - The March / April issue of Fantasy and SF

Third Friday in May - April/May Asimovs

First Friday in June - All the Hugo nominees

Third Friday in June - May/June Fantasy & Science Fiction

First Friday in July - All the nominees for the Small Press Award

Third Friday in July - both the June and the July issues of Asimovs

First Friday in August - The July/August issue of F & SF

Third Friday in August - August issue of Asimovs

### Strong Reviews



### The City and the Stars

New American Library\Signet, 1957

Written by Arthur C. Clarke

Reviewed by Lee Strong

I got this book because it's supposed to be a classic of science fiction. I would have liked it more if some character had said "Wow!" once or twice.

A billion years in the future, humanity, or something resembling humanity, goes thru its paces in the perfect city of Diaspar. Effectively nothing

ever changes until one day, a Unique citizen, Alvin, is created. Afflicted with a sense of curiosity, he pokes around the city until he encounters the designated Jester, Khedron, who shows him how to find out the Secrets That Man Was Not Meant To Know (Until The Plot Requires It). Alvin leaves the city for humanity's *other* community, Lys, where he meets telepaths, an alien, and a robot. Diaspar's omnipotent Central Computer easily unlocks the robot's sealed memory and Alvin sets off to learn What Really Happened a billion years ago.

This book marvelously illustrates the difference between sense of wonder and actual wonder. Clarke describes a number of potentially interesting things but in such a flat, unemotional manner that I found myself plodding thru the work rather than enjoying the universe. None of the characters has much emotional depth. Most of the Diasparians are cowards and most of the Lyssians are snots. Point of View Man stolidly marches thru the pages without breaking a sweat or showing us *why* he's interested in exploring the over engineered but underwritten universe. Multiple plot elements are thrown into the story and then ignored, causing me to wonder why the author brought them up if he wasn't going to use them. And, when I finished the novel, I disliked the pale imitations of humanity more than I did when I started the book.

I rate *The City and the Stars* as 2.0 stars on the 5 star scale because the story that the author chooses to tell is boring. – LS

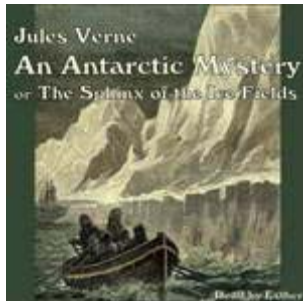
### **An Antarctic Mystery**

#### **Original Title: The Sphinx of the Ice Fields**

Original English Publication by the J.B. Lippincott Company, 1900

Written by Jules Verne

Reviewed by Lee Strong



It seems that even Big Name Authors write fan fiction...!

Jules Verne openly acknowledged his debt to his predecessor Edgar Allen Poe in many forums. In this obscure novel, Verne creates a sequel and answer to Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. Like all good fan fiction, it assumes the truth of the original but then carries the basic story further and in different directions.

Mr. Jeorling the geologist is sitting around waiting for a ship – any ship – to get him out of the justly nicknamed Desolation Islands. What he gets is a vessel captained by the emotionally overwrought William Guy, who insists that Poe's narrative of Antarctic adventure is not fiction as Jeorling supposes but veritable fact! Soon enough, the two men are partners in an attempt to retrace the voyage of Pym and his captain, Guy's brother! But wait! Who are the strange sailors who embarked in the Falkland Islands with hidden agendas of their own? Will the good ship *Halbrane* survive to reach the warm waters cutting thru the Antarctic continent, or will they will destroyed by the crushing ice fields, the hostile natives, and the unexplained mysteries of the Pole and its awesome Sphinx?

I found this sequel to be well laid out but not terribly exciting. Moreover, Verne seems to be conflicted about whether he is building on Poe's story or refuting it. For example, Verne accepts Poe's warm Antarctica despite its inherent implausibility but conveniently sweeps the latter's hostile natives away. Likewise, Verne's captain has the same personnel issues that Poe's captain

did despite the former's supposedly careful study of Pym's cautionary account. As a result, Verne's characters are mostly a collection of clockwork clichés including the Stalwart Scientist, the Men with Hidden Agendas, the Loyal Servant, and the Traitorous Scoundrel. The scientist, the captain and the half breed searching for missing members of Pym's crew are fine fellows but their motivations are telegraphed too far in advance. Even the various life threatening incidents don't seem to arouse great feeling on the part of the author, much less the reader. While I enjoyed Verne's rational exploration better than Poe's emotional excesses, ultimately this book is boring.

I rate *An Antarctic Mystery* as 2.0 stars on the 5 star scale because it's basically second rate fan fiction of interest to the Verne (and Poe) completist. – LS

### **All the World's Problems Can Be Solved Through Science Fiction**

**By Samuel Lubell**

Even though WSFA is one of the oldest science fiction clubs in the country, it is not very well known outside of fandom. But there is a simple solution. We need to embrace our identity as the science fiction club of the nation's capital and speak out on vital issues – providing a science fictional point of view.

Illegal immigration – Who better than SF fans to talk about illegal aliens? From a science fictional point of view it is clear the debate is all wrong. Instead of debating about legal or illegal aliens, we should be talking about good aliens and bad aliens. So ET can go home with us but the aliens from Alien, not. The Arisians are welcome, the Eddorians not. Vulcans yes, Romulans no. See how simple it is?

Global Warming – If things are a bit too much like Hothouse, we can find a nice ice planet like Hoth and import ice from there. Of course, there's always nuclear winter.

Obama's birth certificate – The conspiracy theorists say if Obama doesn't produce his birth certificate it must mean that he was born outside the country. But the SF fan can think of lots of other options for a man without a birth certificate – robot/android, time traveler, inter-dimensional traveler, clone, alien from a distant planet, Highlander-style immortal, God slumming it down here with the mortals, etc. See, the birthers lack imagination.

The economy – Star Trek's Federation doesn't use money and it seems fine (through one wonders why all the redshirts risk their lives beaming down with Captain Kirk if they aren't getting hazard pay). The only one in Star Wars who seems concerned with money is Han Solo (well and Jabba the Hut). And the overwhelming majority of fantasy novels seem to pay no attention to any laws of economics. So that's the solution, ignore money problems and magic will solve everything.

War – War is probably more common in science fiction/fantasy than in real life. So, few solutions for how to get rid of it. We can suggest faking an alien attack, destroy half of New York, and then organize humanity against this common enemy.

Hunger – Soylent Green is people!

Nuclear waste (from Mike Bartman) – Put it on the moon...no wait...that didn't work out so well back in 1999...

Prison overcrowding (from Mike Bartman) – Simple...shrink the prisoners until there's enough room. Or send them to a prison planet. Or lock them in a virtual reality where they are victimized constantly until

they decide to obey the law. Or mind-wipe them. Or just execute them via medical disassembly so we can reduce the organ donor deficiency.

Crime (from Barry Newton) – I really kind of admired the Neal Stephenson approach to criminal justice: inject the accused with explosive nanobots. Upon conviction, direct the criminal through the door which takes him out of the field which was suppressing the nanobots.

Anyone else have any other science fictional solutions? Send them to me and the Journal will print them.

### **I Can Create A Three Sided Hugo Says Special Guest Chris Barkley**

April 16<sup>th</sup> third Friday was called to order at 9:19 by President Judy Newton. Calls to adjourn were ignored. Judy said, "I hope everyone has paid their taxes." Bob replied, "Or have a contingency plan to get out of the country. Sam read the minutes, the good parts version. Brian made motion to accept. Passed.

Officers' reports: WSFA Journal is online. Secretary Steve read numbers very slowly. Bank accounts: WSFA: \$ 5,798.44 ; Capclave: \$ 2,953.82 ; Merchant: \$ 2,406.90 ; Bank total: \$11,159.16 . CDs: M&T \$ 5,835.58; BB&T \$ 6,000.00; CD Total: \$11,835.58 . PayPal: \$1,041.52. Grand total: \$24,036.26 . As of the Third Friday meeting in April, we have taken in 38 members. 123. Calls for parties and Capclave.

Report of committees: Trustees have not produced a slate. George Shaner said he is up for Capclave chair. Judy running for president, Sam S for vice, Steve for Treasurer, and Sam L for Secretary. But question of trustees. Long debate over whether can be Capclave chair and officer as well. No interivities committee. Gayle said all approval from Connie Willis is supposed to be done, but she hasn't seen the contract. Moving on that. Next big push with Jeff Vander Meer will be after the covers are done. Artist is working on the covers. Elspeth asked about putting info up on WSFA Press page. Paul said working for last info and will get it up this weekend. He didn't think it a good idea to put it up without images of the cover but don't want to put it off anymore. He did not want to guess at numbers from memory but will send. <I have not received this> He guessed that there were about 10 preorders for each book. But there was a small bug in the ordering section that allowed someone ordered one of each book and then a bundle of all three. Paul emailed and he said this was what we wanted to do. We have a couple extras so not critical.



Barry called Colleen for slate. Current officers. Elspeth, Bob Macintosh and Barry for trustees. Short story judges candidates Colleen and Paul. And George Shaner for Capclave 2012. Election next month. Judy, asked for assurances that at least one trustee will be there? Barry and George said will be there.

WSFA website and other electronic media. Paul: nothing to report. Someone found a bad link to the Journal, which showed how much use it gets. Another person reported a problem with calendar. Judy: Discussion in forum about social media sites.

Special committees. Capclave 2009. Bill said Steve promised we will close the books on 09 before the election. Trying to run away. During the course of transfer of books from Tina to Steve, some items don't add up. Steve: not a matter of money going missing, but a whole pile of numbers that are not connected. Preliminary numbers are easily within \$100 of previous estimates. Bill said this might be a little higher due to cash spent that was not accounted for. We need to report cash

spent, but we have the receipts. This is recording. Bob: "Making sure it is all there." Steve said, "Right expenses and right income to right accounts. There is some stuff there I have no clue if WSFA Capclave or WSFA Press. Just numbers. Old time dungeon master, I have lots of dice." Discussion of 20-sided fuzzy dice.



Gayle for Capclave 2010 said, "There will be a meeting at Peggy Rae's on 24<sup>th</sup>. We still need a military liaison. Going forward. Programming committee is starting. Tentative list of people to invite and people who want to be on programming but need answers back. We have a table at Balticon. If we get 20 memberships we will raffle out Wall-E. Only members of Capclave can preorder the new books. At Ravencon, we sold one membership." Sam asked for people to take cards to bookstores and cons.

Capclave 2011. We are still looking at hotels, but hope to have something to take to the board next meeting.

Other committees. The Committee to talk SF announced its new schedule, reprinted in this issue. For the Small Press Award, Carolyn said nominations for stories are closed. 63 stories were nominated. Members are reading them now. Some of them are long, but within the word length. There were some novelettes. Mike Walsh said that everyone has different taste. Carolyn called the nominees "Basically okay stories. A lot heavier on the fantasy than the SF." Paul pointed out this is true of the shelves of bookstores. It is hard to find SF as the genre has become slanted to fantasy. Cathy said that a lot of SF semi-prozines closed. Carolyn: We are worldwide. Even one from Australia.

Old business: None

New business: John Madigan said, "I have been tasked with doing research on Meetup. I



told results last month, when said \$72 dollars for six months people just said move on, this is real money. Meet up is different from social networking. Not about talking via computer but about setting up social networking, going to places, being with people. I think it would be a good way to attract people to WSFA. We are an old farts club that doesn't attract new people. There is no way to getting this group out there. The web is a way to do that. It is like holding up a big neon sign saying come to our

group. Anyone who sees it on the web can come." Brian asked if only people who pay will see it. John said that anyone can join for free, only have to pay if organize a group. Elspeth asked about demographics. John didn't know. List of 200 people in the local area. Bob suggested doing it when can get people for Capclave. Sam L. asked if John willing to be administrator of it. He was. Erica said, "Yes, it is true we're getting old. Considering we have \$22,000, I think investing \$75 for six months to see if it does any good is well worth it. If get results can pay another \$75. Every six months we can say if want to renew. So I say do it and see what happens."

Brian agreed on finances, but asked, "What metrics for seeing if it works? What criteria?" John replied, "How many new people have come through the door in last six months." Brian asked, "Is one a sufficient metric?" Someone said, "We need exposure, so let's try it." Cathy said, "People use this to see what events. We ask new people how they heard about us. So even if decide not to join, we will know they came from meet up. I think it is reasonable to do this for six months and then look at the data." Erica said, "I only came because Eva made me. I was used to

organizations unwelcome of new members. A person who shows up once, could be president a few years later. A seed could be planted." Cathy said, "And we need to be friendly." Walter said, "Events would be meeting and our con, possibly library of congress. I hope there would be careful planning. We need to put effort in this."

A motion was made, "WSFA will set up a service with meetup.com for six months to attract new members and allocate the money. John will administrate and report back in six months." John said, "One part of this is getting a description of WSFA. What I'm intending to do is post the flyer in there. I will put the website address in." The vote was unanimous but with two abstentions.

Sam L. proposed correcting the flyer and producing copies for Balticon. Sam L proposed social media committee. Elspeth interested. Sam L and webmasters. Cathy has opinions so she is on it.

Chris Barkley is here from Cincinnati. Just visiting. He'll answer any question. No Hugos for web conferencing. No comment of KFC sandwich. Can he create three sided die? I can create a three-sided Hugo. I created three Hugos in the last decade. Back in the 80s attended Balticon on a regular basis and I've attended Disclave on occasion. I attended Capclave under threat of death. 2008. Check didn't bounce. Happy to be here. All we do at the Cincinnati Fantasy Group is chit chat. But you guys actually do something. You make jokes. I used to be talk show host, so I can dish it out.

John said, "There's a hole in my ceiling. <No!> The carpenter fell through while putting stairs in. He's currently healing and should be able to get back to work in three weeks."

Madeleine said the cherry blossom demonstrations went well. Silver Spring is friendly. Eva said Dave Chalker is doing podcast on dungeonmastering. PBS Newshour has timeline of Doctor Whos.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 10:21.

Attendance: Carolyn Frank, Erica Ginter, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Elspeth Kovar, Brian Lewis, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy and John Madigan, Walter Miles, Sarah Mitchell, Barry and Judy Newton, George Shaner, Gayle Surette, Michael Walsh, Eva Whitley, Madeleine Yeh, Ivy Yap as the Invisible Girl, and special appearance by Chris M. Barkley as himself.