

WSFA Journal Jan/Feb 2012

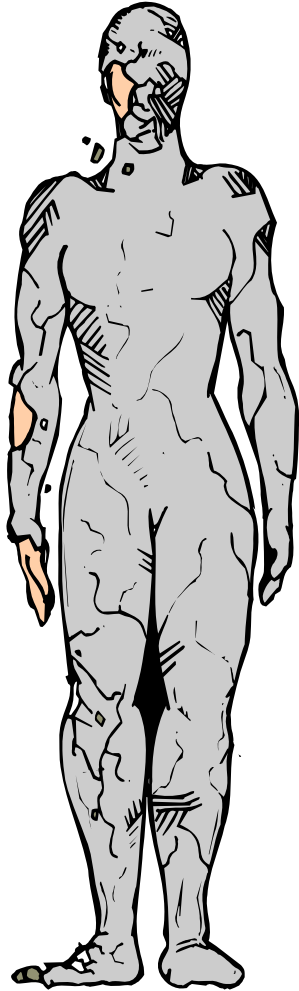


Occupy Reality

The 12/2/11 December First Friday meeting began with ~~the solemn ritual invocation~~ a “Yo, let’s have meeting,” from the chair. It was called to order at 21:15 hours. “We now have 15, we definitely do have a quorum.” Sec Sam summarized the minutes. The treasurer said we had a little money. Candy asked if it was enough for her mortgage. Steve said the amount. “Not quite,” said Candy. <This means their mortgage is made out of chocolate, marshmallows & graham crackers.> Sam S asked if the hotel cashed their check, Steve had no idea. That will be about \$X<number>. Trustees said to think about running. Running very fast said the club. <Insert lame political joke about the real-world candidates.> Someone added that the ones who fall behind are the ones who get nominated.

WSFA Press and website were not here. Cathy said that the books seem to be selling <adjective>. Colleen has weddings and things so is not here. People are posting to Facebook. For Meetup, John reported 101 members. We broke the 100 mark. The club applauded. John wondered aloud how to celebrate. He decided to celebrate by becoming a member of the club. “Has he been to three meetings?” someone asked. “Have you hosted 101 meetings?” was a better question. Candy calculated that there had been 96 meetings at her house. But she was reminded that there were some Fifth Fridays,

so probably close to 100. John was made an honorary member until the new year. After coming for 25 years, he took a break for 10 years until he started dating Candy.



Capclave 2011. "Just about wrapped up," said Cathy, based on calculations, it should be <adjective phrase>.

Capclave 2012, George said his committee will start having meetings in January. Jobs are still available. "Are they good jobs?" George said they're working for me, how could they not be good jobs?

Mike had nothing to report.

Talk SF will discuss Nov/Dec *F&SF*. Bill has issues <What else is new?> Mike said there was one issue that had no periods in it. <But that would be pointless!>

Lit awards had nothing to say.

Old business: Cathy said Fo' Paws said would do a shirt, would run \$22 - \$25. Brian asked about design, Cathy said they would design it if people were interested, you've seen the type of shirts they do. See Cathy if interested.

New business: Treasurer Steve said coming up on end of year. Memberships expire. Instead of waiting until everyone expires <gasp!>, he'll take money early. See him after the meeting. Judy S. said if John is going to join, one of us should quit. The club exploded with laughter. Mike suggested, how about John join and we all quit?

First WSFA meeting. Chis Stacey: "I'm a science fiction fan. But I haven't been to a con in about 20 years." Bill said we can change that. He found out about us through Google. Newly moved back to the area after 30 years.

Third meeting. Ken Byrer. Now eligible to join, pointed to John said, "but that spot is already filled." Mark suggested the influence of the Rosicrucians on science fiction. They ran back cover ads in the 50s and 60s.

Announcements: Mike Walsh reprinted *Pavane* with quotes from various notables. It has artwork by the author.

Someone said that "The 99% who don't read sf, are the Occupy Reality."

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 21:38.

Attendance: Drew Bittner, Cathy Green, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Bob Macintosh, Candy & John Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Barry Newton, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Meagen Voss, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Monique Clark, Chris Stacy, Alisha Brown, and Ken Byrer

Fictional New Year's Resolutions by Samuel Lubell

The Phantom Menace - I will inflict my lameness on a whole new dimension

Superheroes of DC Comics - We resolve to maintain a stable reality without any crises, zero hours, or flashpoint reboots

Wheel of Time - This year we will finish our adventures



and have a real ending

Song of Ice and Fire - What he said, NOT!

Physical bookstores - Somehow we will stay in business. Maybe

E-books - This year we will finish taking over the world!

Worldcon - Hello, is that London calling?

Harry Dresden - I won't let a little thing like being dead stop me (or my books)

Sookie Stackhouse - I've met vampires, weres, witches, and fairies, can I get an Abominable Snowman this far south?

Doctor Who - This year, I will force Steven Moffat to make sense and maintain continuity

A Fire Upon the Deep - I resolve not to wait 18 years before the next sequel

Snow White - With two new movies and a TV series, my someday is this year. Who needs a prince to come?

WSFA Croaks

The 12-16-11 minutes are courtesy of Tom Woldering with some expansion by Barry Newton as the Secretary was listening to jazz in New Orleans.

The meeting was croaked to order at 2114 hours (President Barry had a cold). Secretary and treasurer were absent, so no minutes were read. The trustees urge WSFAns to consider running for office in 2012. Barry will take money from anyone wanting to prepay their 2012 dues. (Bob MacIntosh did). (Erica Ginter signed up for Capclave).

Entertivities: Jimmy Rogers was ready to talk about SF podcasts. Q: Are John & Cathy doing a New Years Eve party? A: Assume it's going on unless you hear otherwise.

Publications/Media: None of those responsible were present to report on those, except John Madigan for Meetup. He said we still have 101 members. John joined WSFA at the first Friday meeting to celebrate breaking 100.

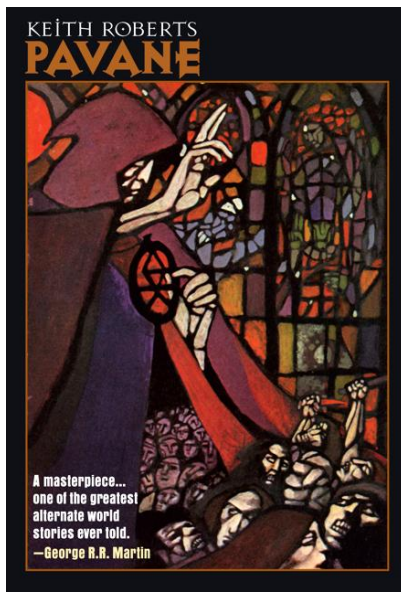
Capclave: Present: No hotel meeting yet. Real soon now.
Future: Nothing.

Small Press Awards: Not present.

Old Business: WSFA T-shirts still pending. Ditto Capclave 2011 T-shirts.

New Business: None.

Announcements: Everyone has a cold. (Is this a sci-fi plot we are in?) John Madigan said that he is now employed--with one of the Ginter Assoc. companies. Fresh mulled cider was available upstairs. Mike Walsh had books for sale including his own reprint of *Pavane*, and also the new Michael Dirda book on Sherlock Holmes. The



contracts have been signed to hold the 2014 World Fantasy convention in Crystal City. Perhaps the dealer table slots should be sold on Ebay. Erica Ginter is flying to Alaska to visit relatives on Dec. 25th. Flying on Christmas Day saves about <cost of sled plus flying reindeer>. Fixings for s'mores were available immediately following the meeting.

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 2133.

Attendance: Carolyn Frank, Erica Ginter, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Bob MacIntosh, Candy Madigan, John Madigan, Walter Miles, Sarah Mitchell, Barry Newton, Shirl Phelps, Evan Phillips, Jimmy Rogers, George Shaner, Laura Somerville, Bill Squire, Michael Walsh, Eva Whitley, Thomas Woldering, Ivy Yap, and Liz Twieg

Remembering Anne McCaffrey (with a Side of Todd)

By Brian Lewis



Several years ago, she was at DragonCon (her last), I remember her doing several panels, especially for “The Worlds of Anne McCaffrey” track. She was in a wheelchair, with wraparound (prescription?) sunglasses and hearing aids. She was a bit ‘selective’ in what she to hear, but was telling some great stories. At times, she almost appeared to be a queen, on her throne, surveying her subjects.

This was where I first heard the story of Todd getting permission from the Chief of the Scottish Clan the McCaffreys’ are a part of to become a McCaffrey in name (His

Father’s surname is/was Johnson.), and what PERN actually stands for (Perfect Earth Resources Negligible).

We didn’t exactly rush her, and Jody Lynn Nye (a family friend, and fellow author, who was serving as her chair pusher/companion/attendant that weekend) out the door, so they left 10 minutes after the panel ended. Ten minutes later (about 10 minutes before the next panel), Todd was coming in the door, as he was on the next panel, and I said to him, “Those were cute baby pictures your mother showed us.”

He stopped, spun around, and took a step toward heading out the door, when I said, “Just kidding.” He turned right around and headed for the panelists’ table.

I never did figure out why Todd ever thought that Anne would bring his baby pictures all the way from Ireland, to Atlanta, and show them to people who, for the most part, were relative strangers, but I always thought that his reaction spoke volumes about both of them (especially after her panel with us).

Extra Day of Membership

The first WSFA meeting of the New Year was called to order at 21:15 hours on 1/6/2012 by President Barry. Sam L said minutes from past meeting. No officer reports. The treasurer said we had a little money.

There are <number> who have paid. Memberships are due and payable. Sam S. asked if we get a discount if the world ends before the end of the year. <Yes, but you have to apply in person.> Steve said we have enough members to have a quorum. Cathy asked who here still needs to pay? List of members read. Bill paid; he said he wanted every minute of last year’s membership. Brian said this is a leap year so get an extra day membership.

Bob for trustees said to consider running for office. Candy suggested she might run for third Friday host.

Sam L. asked for submissions to the Journal. WSFA press was not here, Ernest has bailed. He is now Emeritus. Mike said the Press is selling books.

For Meetup John said there are 103 including an organization, BSFS (our illegitimate offspring, said Mike, conceived on the back of a bus. Cathy said corporations are people, the Supreme Court has said so <But what about nonprofit organizations?>)

Capclave 2011 is over. It does seem to be in <color> by <dollar amount>. Bill suggested a six pack. Paying members <number>, comps etc. included <bigger number>.

Capclave present said he hopes to live up to those standards. There will be a quasi-meeting after WSFA tonight.

Capclave Future, Mike sent emails to the GOH, but was busy. He hopes to have some committee announcements soon. George was featured in an article in the Onion. Quite amusing.

Bill said, for 2012, there will be in Feb an afternoon programming meeting at his place.

Gayle for WSFA Press came in and said, "We're going to try to have a meeting to discuss what we can do" since the GoHs don't have available material for books.

Talk SF. Cathy suggested since Hugo nominating season is open, might be good to have a discussion. Bill suggested first Friday in March.

Paul for website said they haven't been around. Job, sickness, tired. Things are maintaining. Continuing to sell WSFA Press books. Sam L. asked for instructions of how to edit. Will eventually get to the logo. Not as easy and you would think. Gayle said nominations page for small press is set up. WSFAAns can nominate one story but only one or two a year do. Valente is pushing to get *Silently and Very Fast* for a Hugo. Offered for your consideration. Novella.

Steve asked if new WSFA logo is on anything. Gayle said finally got a transparent version, so now have to mix it with colors and modify the WordPress theme. Steve S. said wants new logo to do new membership cards.

Old business. Sam said, ordered the t-shirt. Cathy said five people expressed interest in Capclave shirt.

New business. Ernest asked if cash is the only option for paying for membership. He wants to do Paypal. Paul said none, but can send email. Made motion, no second. Gayle said we can link it to membership list. Ernest said to make a renewal button on the website. This was seconded. Ernest said not a member so can't move. Brian made the motion. This was seconded again. Two members opposed. One abstained. So it passed.

No people for first, second, or third. John said this is first meeting in a year and a half when no new people.

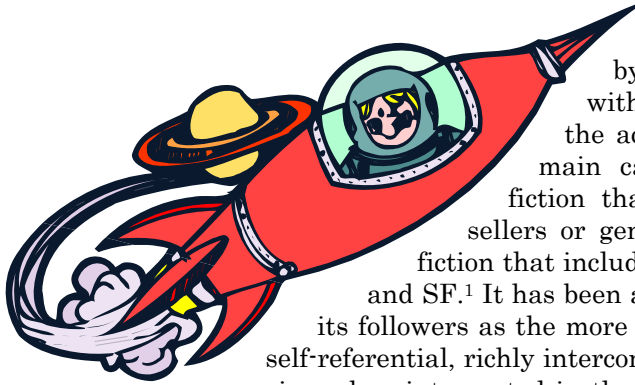
Announcements: Mike had books. Bill missed the new year's party to visit Mike Pederson in Richmond, VA. Candy has new housemate Spartacus Gargantuan, a Chihuahua. Don't know if permanent. Bigger than the bunny but smaller than cat. Paul said they are cleaning out cellar of really bad books, take them. Mark suggested jail. Gayle is on new medication so won't be able to come Third Friday. Drew said he saw Sherlock Season 2 which has Irene Adler. Laura said her publisher has two new books out. Reboots – werewolves and zombies in space. Publisher is doing SailSuccess.com. The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 21.48.

Attendance: Drew Bittner, Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Bill Lawhorn, Brian Lewis, Ernest Lilley, Bob Macintosh, Candy & John Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Barry Newton, Mark Roth, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Laura Somerville, Gayle Surette, Michael Walsh, Ivy Yap, Katrin Wheatley, and H.P. Lovecraft.



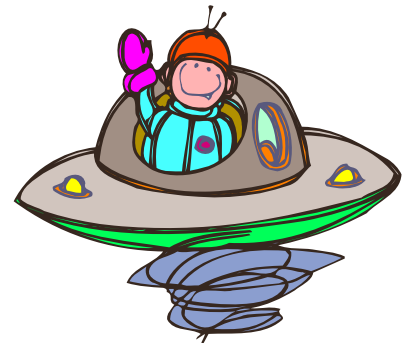
'Every Age Gets the Art It Deserves'- Science Fiction: History, Background and Definitions

By Victor Grech, Consultant Paediatrician (Cardiology) and Associate Professor of Paediatrics, University of Malta; Clare Thake-Vassallo, Senior Lecturer, Translation and Interpreting Studies, University of Malta; and Ivan Callus, Associate Professor and Head, English Language Dept, University of Malta



It would be logical to commence this essay by attempting to identify the approximate locus of SF within the general corpus of literature as perceived by the academy. Fiction might here be seen as having four main categories: canonical fiction (the classics), serious fiction that strives to become canonical, plain fiction (best sellers or general works) and junk fiction: popular and gauche fiction that includes mysteries, thrillers, westerns, romances, fantasy, and SF.¹ It has been argued that so-called junk fiction is as rewarding for its followers as the more serious genres, as junk fiction too can be complexly self-referential, richly interconnected and intertextual,² taking on great depth and meaning when interpreted in the light of a much larger arrangement of interrelated stories, with all of the associated conventions and clichés, transcending a simplicity that is apparent only to the inexperienced. We SF readers 'do not listen for that melody. We listen for the variations'.³ And conversely, '[m]ost of what seems inexcusably unintelligible in popular fiction is crystal clear to those who have learned how to read it'.⁴

SF was initially named thus in 1851 by William Wilson. He suggested a new form of fiction that he called 'science-fiction', a literature that would interweave the revealed truths of science with fiction, prefiguring Gernsback's perceived role of SF as a science teaching approach that will be discussed later.⁵ Actually defining SF is an endlessly challenging and disputatious task, one that has been deemed impossible since SF 'is the literature of change, it changes even as one tries to define it'.⁶ Thus the slogan on the masthead of the first issue of *Amazing Stories*, one of the earliest SF magazines: 'Extravagant Fiction Today, Cold Fact Tomorrow'.⁷



Any determined attempt at defining this genre is problematised as any definition may instantly invite contention from critics. A reasonable and widely accepted definition of SF from the multitude available is that of Darko Suvin wherein he posits that SF is 'the literature of cognitive estrangement',⁸ a literature with a wide 'spectrum or spread of literary subject-matter, running from the ideal extreme of exact recreation of the author's empirical environment to exclusive interest in a strange newness, a novum'.⁹ Suvin elaborates further, stating that 'SF takes off from a fictional

¹ Thomas J. Roberts, *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990).

² Interestingly, it has been demonstrated that the SF genre reached a number of stories sufficient to achieve intertextuality by the early 1870s. See Darko Suvin, *Victorian Science Fiction in the UK: The Discourses of Knowledge and of Power* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983), p. 389.

³ Roberts, *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990).p. 166.

⁴ Ibid., p. 60.

⁵ William Wilson, *A Little Earnest Book upon a Great Old Subject* (London: Darton, 1851), pp. 137-8.

⁶ Tom Shippey at the World SF Meeting, Dublin 1979, quoted in Fred Pohl, 'The Study of Science Fiction: A Modest Proposal', *Science Fiction Studies*, 24 (1997), 11-16 (p. 11).

⁷ Hugo Gernsback, 'A New Sort of Magazine', *Amazing Stories*, April 1926, p. 3.

⁸ Darko Suvin, 'On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre', *College English*, 34 (1972), 372-382 (p. 372).

⁹ Ibid., 373.

(“literary”) hypothesis and develops it with extrapolating and totalizing (“scientific”) rigor.¹⁰ Suvin ably sums up his argument that ‘SF is, then a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author’s empirical environment’.¹¹

Suvin’s novum is derived from Bloch’s critical history of utopia, *The Principle of Hope* (1986), wherein Bloch, in one of the great works of the human spirit, contends that a philosophy of hope must stand on the front of the world process, a front that is related to newness, to the new and to the novum.¹² Jameson’s influential *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005) further avers that SF proposes a ‘minimal formulation of Utopian demands which might somehow retain effective universality’.¹³ The utopian and communal aspect of SF has been additionally elaborated in Molyan’s, *Demand the Impossible* (1986), who elegantly states that ‘in the fragmented openness enabled by the science fiction narrative, the possibilities of the social revolution are symbolically explored and reiterated’.¹⁴

In brief, then, SF is a genre that is characterized by the postulation of a *novum*, and details the logical consequences of such a novum, allowing readers to conceptualize a set of utopian or dystopian circumstances wherein the real and postulated realities are consistent, but where the borders of actuality have been transgressed.¹⁵ Moreover, SF is Hegelian, in Hegel’s terms, believing that the rational alone is real, and the real is rational, as it is SF’s overriding goal to attempt to be logical, with outcomes expressed in solely rational categories,¹⁶ while partaking of Campbell’s monomyth, wherein a protagonist sallies forth into a ‘region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won’.¹⁷

SF constitutes a contemporary type of myth as the conventional ‘myth is diametrically opposed to the cognitive approach since it conceives human relations as fixed, and supernaturally determined’, unlike quotidian life which definitely is not.¹⁸ The mimesis of reality is therefore an important component of SF, a modern-day myth¹⁹ that allows readers to identify with the characters and the story, with a scientific premise ‘which, according to Aristotle, must be plausible rather than necessarily true’.²⁰

If we were to define by example, typical central elements in SF narratives would include protagonists who have been lifted out of their quotidian life to another locus in space and/or time, or who have been imbued with special attributes such as being scientists (not necessarily sane) or possessing special powers. Technological objects or devices may also feature and these may be useful, or conversely, threatening to the protagonist, or to society/humanity or possibly even to the entire universe. An exotic setting may also be depicted, and this may have been reached through space transportation or through time travel, conceivably even by the ready expedient of cryogenic suspension or some other similar plot device.²¹ An exotic encounter with an unusual being may also be introduced, and this may be a special human, alien, android, robot, cyborg or artificial intelligence or any combination of the above, with SF, as it were, acting as a crucible for the reader’s reflexive

¹⁰ Ibid., 374.

¹¹ Ibid., 375.

¹² Bloch Ernst, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. by N. Plaice and others, 3 vols (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), I, p. 18.

¹³ Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 172.

¹⁴ Tom Molyan, *Demand the Impossible* (New York: Methuen, 1986), p. 75.

¹⁵ This concept is amplified in Darko Suvin, ‘On What Is and Is Not an SF Narration; With a List of 101 Victorian Books That Should Be Excluded From SF Bibliographies’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 5 (1978), 45-57.

¹⁶ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, trans. by J. Sibree (London: George Bell & Sons, 1881).

¹⁷ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 30.

¹⁸ Suvin, ‘On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre’, p. 375.

¹⁹ For a depiction of SF as the modern mythology, see Patricia S. Warrick and others (eds.), *Science Fiction: Contemporary Mythology, The Sfw-sfra Anthology* (London: Harpercollins, 1978).

²⁰ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 90.

²¹ Many of these discrete tropes have been individually engaged in critical works. See, for example George Slusser and others, eds. *Worlds Enough and Time: Explorations of Time in Science Fiction and Fantasy* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002).

wish fulfilment. An overt or covert Faustian thirst for knowledge and power is also often integrated and stories are frequently a bravura, comprised of a pastiche of borrowed elements from pulp, gothic, detective, horror, school, sport, romance, adventure, myth, legend and fantasy²². In these ways, SF clearly fits into Todorov's definition of a unique genre in that

[g]enre represents, precisely, a structure, a configuration of literary properties, an inventory of options [...] It merely permits us to establish the existence of a certain rule by which the work in question – and many others as well – are governed.²³

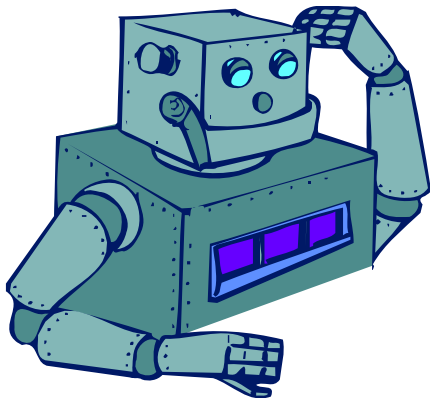
SF was born in the pulps, that ingenious medium invented by Munsey in 1896.²⁴ Gernsback, inventor and SF pulp magazine pioneer fervently believed that stories of superscience should primarily teach, prophesy and illuminate the public with upcoming scientific advances, while simultaneously fostering interest in the sciences. He is popularly known as the founding father of American SF, having created and edited the world's first SF magazine and is also 'ritually vilified' for his overdramatization of the genre.²⁵

Hence, Gernsback's *Wonder Stories: The Magazine of Prophetic Fiction* predicted television, tape recording, microfilm, solar energy, atomic weapons, fluorescent lighting, plastics, synthetic fabrics, stainless steel, hydroponics, juke boxes and many others in one of his own stories in 1911, along with various gadget stories.²⁶ This is not to say that all SF predictions become true, as while hindsight is always 20/20, prediction is invariably myopic, as admonished by Hegel:

[e]very individual is a child of his time; so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thoughts. It is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age.²⁷

Hegel exaggerates by claiming that 'a philosophy' such as SF can never prefigure the future, as the single example given above to which we have deliberately limited ourselves clearly shows.

It was by way of these cheap pulps that SF began to emerge as a self-conscious genre, despite the repeatedly recycled clichéd stories,²⁸ and



[i]mplicit in many stories is the "manifest destiny" of the human race [...] mankind is justified in subjugating lesser [...] breeds [...] if science fiction is to be considered [...] a means of opening mankind to the wonders of the universe.²⁹

This foregrounds perhaps the most important function of SF, a point that will be raised in more detail later, that 'is to neutralize the future, to remove the natural fear that humanity feels for the unknown', to dispel our trepidations with regard to the future and to

²² It is worth pointing out that SF 'is characteristically cast in the Gothic or post-Gothic mould', a fact noted by several critics. Brian Aldiss, *Billion Year Spree: The True History of Science Fiction* (London: Corgi, 1975), p. 8.

²³ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A structural approach to a literary genre*, trans. by Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 141.

²⁴ Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn eds., 'Foreword', *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. xvi.

²⁵ Roger Luckhurst, 'The Many Deaths of Science Fiction: A Polemic', *Science Fiction Studies*, 21 (1994), 35-50 (p. 40).

²⁶ Hugo Gernsback, 'Ralph 124C 41+', *Modern Electrics*, April 1911-March 1912.

²⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, 'Preface', *Philosophy of Right*, trans. by T. M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952).

²⁸ For a comprehensive review of this period, see Everett Franklin Bleiler and Richard Bleiler, *Science-Fiction: The Gernsback Years* (Ashland: Kent State University Press, 1998).

²⁹ Ibid., 'Introduction', p. xv.

replace it with upbeat utopian visions,³⁰ where the utopian ‘contemporary triad of race, class and gender replaces Moore’s old triad of greed, pride and hierarchy’.³¹ In this way, SF’s potential for the prediction of future developments and what they might mean for humanity alleviates the fear of what changes the future will inevitably impose on our species.

Magazine editors change, and John W. Campbell’s paradigmatic editorship of *Astounding Science Fiction* can be said to represent a golden age of SF, an era which ‘valorizes a particular sort of writing: ‘Hard SF’, linear narratives, heroes solving problems or countering threats in a space-opera or technological-adventure idiom.’³² Campbell reigned supreme from the banner year 1938 until his death in 1960, with the majority of the best-known writers in the genre debuting here. This, and later other pulp magazines emphasized heroic action, romance, exotic worlds and creatures, and fantastic adventures, with almost invariably buoyant and optimistic endings, the modern successors of fairytales.³³ While the magazine’s SF content changed, Campbell retained Gernsback’s popular magazine format, including chatty editorials, advertisements for radio kits, razors and body-building regimens, scientific publications, correspondence courses, and fan mail. The latter was the second most important magazine component, the genesis of critical theory devoted specifically to the genre and incidentally providing useful feedback to the magazine editors. For example, in 1926, G. Peyton Wertenbaker (who later went on to write SF) wrote pointing out that the value of ‘scientifiction’ lay not only in the imparting of technical information and scientific knowledge sugar coated by a story, but in its ability to rouse emotion by gothically portraying ‘things vast, things cataclysmic, and things unfathomably strange’.³⁴

It was thus under Campbell’s tenure that *Astounding* rose to the level of the premier SF magazine worldwide, arguably through his insistence on stories based on plausible and reasonable science. His ‘ideal reader was an engineer, who would bat around ideas in stories with other engineers [...] in their search for real solutions’.³⁵ And it was here that Robert Heinlein, Campbell’s greatest discovery, was unleashed. Heinlein was arguably the author who invented modern SF, who introduced the *modus operandi* of

[d]escription by indirection — the art of describing his future worlds not through lumps of exposition but by presenting it through the eyes of his characters, subtly leading the reader to fill in by deduction large swathes of background that a lesser author would have drawn in detail.³⁶

Heinlein and others who debuted through *Astounding*, such as Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Poul Anderson, Hal Clement, included many scientists and engineers, and it was these men of science who would dominate SF for the next fifty years, shaping it and directing it. Campbell preached his type of SF through his magazine’s editorials, wrote stories and taught others to write in his manner, and other magazines copied. Campbell paid more as his publisher (Street and Smith) was very successful, and under Campbell’s influence, writing styles improved, stories were toned down, the science became more plausible and reasonable, such that it could be logically and

³⁰ James Gunn, *Inside Science Fiction: Essays on Fantastic Literature* (San Bernardino: The Borgo Press, 1992), p. 152.

³¹ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*, p. 13.

³² Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 195.

³³ Campbell’s autobiographical narrative extols the virtues of SF’s golden years in John W. Campbell, *Wonder’s Child: My Life in Science Fiction* (New York: Bluejay Books, 1984).

³⁴ G. Peyton Wertenbaker, *Amazing Stories*, July 1926, p. 297. Even earlier and more illustrious SF criticism is available, including, for example, Walter Scott, ‘Remarks on Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus: A Novel’, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, March 1818.

³⁵ Edward James, ‘Before the Novum: The Prehistory of Science Fiction Criticism’, in Parrinder, *Learning From Other Worlds*, pp. 19-36 (p. 23).

³⁶ Heinlein regarded Kipling highly and it was Kipling who was responsible for the technique of exposition by indirection, as in his 1912 story *With The Night Mail*. See Eric S. Raymond, ‘A Political History of SF’, Libertarian Futurist Society (newsletter), 2007 <<http://www.catb.org/esr/writings/sf-history.html>> [accessed 30 June 2011].

reasonably extrapolated from contemporary scientific advances.³⁷ Thus, ironically, SF was made to face its own 'reality test' since stories were forced to be convincingly credible. This approach is not new, and was prefigured by Aristotle who stated that 'we ought to postulate any ideal conditions, but nothing impossible'.³⁸

Hence, Campbell influenced the career and thinking of virtually every major SF writer of the time, 'not back-peddalling on Gernsback's grandiose vision for science fiction: he was extending it'.³⁹ SF readers and writers continued to interact strongly in the magazines, developing ideas, conventions and images. They were sheltered from the rest of the field of literature and from this hothouse, under 'conditions of marginality and insularity that produced an extraordinary cohesion',⁴⁰ SF matured and entered its golden age. Truly, Campbell

changed the direction of science fiction writing. He refused [...] the tired old BEM space operas [...] he wanted hard, logical science, presented in the context of real, believable characters. He encouraged [...] social and political themes; he urged [writers] to dream clearly [...] to examine the world that was and to extrapolate what it might be.⁴¹

Astounding held sway for decades and it was not until 1950 that additional pulps appeared, such as *Galaxy* and *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* (F&SF), along with paperback novels and short story collections. *Astounding*, now known as *Analog Science Fiction and Fact* remains the longest-running SF magazine of all time, and although it is still the leader in the field, its circulation has fallen drastically, from a high of 115,000 monthly sales in 1983, to 28,319 in 2006, a phenomenon experienced by all other SF and fantasy magazines.⁴² Interestingly, virtually all pulps have disappeared bar the SF magazine, perhaps due to a rise in the popularity of books, with readers eschewing cheaper magazines.⁴³

It was evident by the middle of the 1950s, even if not widely acknowledged, that a significant proportion of SF was becoming fact, and



[t]he writers of pulp-magazine science fiction, [...] after the explosion over Hiroshima of the first atomic bomb [...] were acknowledged as prophets proven right by the course of events [...] On the other hand, having in their fiction developed and controlled nuclear energy long before the Army got around to it, [...] writers were both disappointed in and fearful of the ways in which the government proposed to handle its "ultimate weapon," ways very different from those the writers would have chosen, or even expected.⁴⁴

Almost as if in response, SF gave birth to a 'New Wave' in the 1960s. This consisted for the most part of narratives that were stylistically more sophisticated, and in a schism with the Campbellian aesthetic, an outright 'refusal of the shiny promise of technological modernity',⁴⁵

³⁷ Isaac Asimov, *I Asimov: A Memoir* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), p. 73.

³⁸ Aristotle, *Politics* Books I and II, 32 [1265a17 18].

³⁹ James, 'Before the Novum: The Prehistory of Science Fiction Criticism', in in Patrick Parrinder, *Learning From Other Worlds* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), p. 23.

⁴⁰ Roger Luckhurst, *Science Fiction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 46.

⁴¹ See R. Scott Latham, 'Foreword', in *A Treasury of Science Fiction*, ed. by Groff Conklin (New York: Bonanza Books, 1980), p. vii.

⁴² John Barnes, '2006: The Year in Review', *Locus*, February 2007.

⁴³ Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn eds., 'Foreword', *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003), xvii.

⁴⁴ Albert I. Berger, 'The Triumph of Prophecy: Science Fiction and Nuclear Power in the Post-Hiroshima', *Science Fiction Studies*, 3 (1976), 143-150 (p. 143).

⁴⁵ Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, p. 143.

dealing with ordinary people living ordinary lives. There was a greater emphasis on sex and violence than with science, as evinced by novels such as Ballard's *Crash* (1973) which deals explicitly with symphorophilia (car-crash sexual fetishism), with protagonists becoming sexually aroused by deliberately staging and personally participating in real car-crashes.⁴⁶

SF continued to develop and boom in the 20th and 21st centuries, as the deep penetration of science and inventions into society created an interest in a literature that deliberately explored technology's influence on people and society. Critics have argued that this fiction epitomized and encouraged Edisonian American ingenuity, with the elevation of the inventor to the 'level of cultural hero',⁴⁷ 'atomjocks'⁴⁸ paving the way to an Americanized utopian vision of an ideal future. Other critics have lauded this approach as SF is seen as 'a positive response to the post-industrial world, not always in its content (there is plenty of nostalgia for the past and dislike of change in science fiction) but in its very assumptions, its very form.'⁴⁹

In review, briefly, in terms of medium or format, since the 1930s, SF has undergone three successive iterations when the success of Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* was followed by other pulp-magazine publishers and SF remained magazine based, with novels initially serialized including early after the Second World War, a period of 'pulp regressions'.⁵⁰ After the 1950s, the paperback format expanded very rapidly and the magazine faded away. Luckhurst has argued that this period was profitable for SF, in that it 'gained advantage from being a genre, a minor literature that could prosper precisely because it was considered marginal.'⁵¹ The transition from magazines to books was accompanied by the replacement of the short story and novella with the full-length novel, which was in turn supplanted by television and cinema media.⁵²

The tropes and aspirations of SF, have also mutated over the decades. 'The history of science fiction can be divided into four eras: 1. 1815-1926, 2. 1926-1938, 3. 1938-1945, and 4. 1945- present', and these eras were respectively the 'primitive', adventure-dominant (e.g. Wells and Burroughs), 1938-50 science-dominant (e.g. Campbell and *Astounding*), 1950-65 sociology-dominant (e.g. Wyndham and Bradbury) and 1966-present being style-dominant, narratives with deliberately enhanced literariness along with the development of sub-genres within SF itself.⁵³

SF now provides a popular narrative with which readers and audiences can identify, exploring 'the outer limits of the current Western paradigm, science; its playground is all that we know about the universe, and what we imagine we might eventually know.'⁵⁴ Thus, from its inception three generations ago, SF has metamorphosed from pulp magazine to respected genre.

Today's SF is fortunate in that burgeoning popularity and heavy sales have translated into the realization of the potential for all types of SF to be marketed, and the expectations for the genre are those of 'continued growth and proliferation of mass media technology'.⁵⁵ Where popularity is low or unsupported by publishing houses, authors are now free to publish their stories online, with no costs. 'Nowadays, everyone knows of SF and thinks he or she knows what it is. Not everyone reads, not everyone approves. But every age gets the art it deserves',⁵⁶ thanks to modern technology, particularly the Internet.

⁴⁶ J. G. Ballard, *Crash* (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 1973).

⁴⁷ Berger, 'The Triumph of Prophecy', p. 51.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 94.

⁴⁹ Joanna Russ, 'Towards an Aesthetic of Science Fiction', *Science Fiction Studies*, 2 (1975), 112-9 (p. 117).

⁵⁰ Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, p. 122.

⁵¹ Luckhurst, *Science Fiction*, pp. 114-115.

⁵² Brian Stableford, 'The Third Generation of Genre Science Fiction', *Science Fiction Studies*, 23 (1996), 321-330.

⁵³ Isaac Asimov, 'Social Science Fiction,' in Reginald Bretnor, *Modern Science Fiction: Its Meaning and Its Future* (New York: Coward- McCann, Inc., 1953), pp. 157-196 (p. 168).

⁵⁴ Greg Bear, 'Introduction: On Losing the Taint of Being a Cannibal', in *Bear's Fantasies* (Newark, New Jersey: The Wildside Press, 1992), p. 1.

⁵⁵ Brian Aldiss, *Trillion Year Spree* (New York: Paladin Grafton Books, 1988), p. 568.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 14.

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The Unicorn & Baseball Politics Story

The 1-20-12 Third Friday started with no quorum and no president. Treasurer Steve ran the meeting. Minutes were waived. The President and vice absent. In response to Sam's announcement about the Journal accepting articles that were not current American politics or sports scores. Cathy volunteered to write unicorn and baseball politics story. <I'm still waiting for it.>

Steve gave treasurer's report. He was supposed to look up Capclave finances but didn't. Trustees had nothing to report. There will be an election in May. Give your name to trustees if you want to run. They need slate by April. Someone asked for a list of open positions. Brian will make a list. There was a discussion as to how many openings on small press committee.



Capclave Past. Cathy said it has closed. Last time she looked we were in the <color> by \$<number>. Capclave Present was not here, but Cathy said things are moving on. They are working on rack cards and bookmarks. Tables at conventions. Worldcon in Chicago. We were only East Coast con at Reno. Most people go to local conventions or if a GOH they like, so makes sense to go to conventions involving Scalzi, like Boskone. We gave some flyers to Filthy Pierre.

We need volunteers to print flyers. <Contact George to see if want a flyer> Tom offered continuing support for logo.

Capclave 2013. Mike Walsh is looking for hotels.

Publications: Sam L. promised a Journal next month <☑>. For Small Press Award, Cathy said any WSFan can nominate story for small press award. Qualifications are at wsfasmallpress.org. Briefly, the story can't be published in a magazine tied to big company, nor self published. Steve asked about Subterranean. The magazine is small enough to qualify. Discussion about a story first published to an author's blog. WSFA Press – Last we heard books are selling <adjective>.

Meetup – John said last check 104. And John joined the club.

Talk SF will discuss best of 2011 podcast stories.

Entertivities. Nothing. Ice Capades. Chicon 7 hotel reservations open.

Old business: Sam said shirts on their way.

New business: None

First meeting: Spartacus Gargantuan. Four months old. Can walk on a leash. Not housebroken, small dogs take a while. Rabbit is housebroken.

Michael Acata is here for second meeting.

Announcements: Candy will be at Sugarloaf craft show. It is juried. Erica is back from Alaska. She had fun with her mother. Wearing earrings made from walrus whiskers. Just missed the epic storm. Brian said the Laurel center mall, Macy's is closing so on sale.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 9:39 pm. Sam said we don't have enough people to vote so can never adjourn.

Attendance: Erica Ginter, Cathy Green, Brian Lewis, Sam Lubell, Candy & John Madigan, Barry & Judy Newton, Shirl Phelps, Evan Phillips, Jimmy Rogers, Steve Smith, Laura Somerville, Bill Squire, Thomas Woldering, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Michael Ikeda, and Samuel Clemens.