

Wednesday 17 August

1-1:50 SF Theme Origins and Campbell's Golden Age

"2,000,001: A Theme Odyssey" by Jean Asselin

Seven benchmarks of human evolution are used to develop a framework to classify the literature of Science Fiction (SF). This Human Evolution Framework provides a set of tools by which SF themes are: (1) used to communicate the relevance of SF; (2) organized under a structure that distinguishes SF themes from SF subgenres; (3) applied to categorize SF literature in databases, enabling further quantitative research such as trends analysis or gender issues; and (4) recognized as future speculation on ancient concerns stemming from humanity's evolution as a species.

The framework is evaluated against four other analyses of theme for interdependence, broadness of scope, and rationale. Additionally, this framework provides a justification for implementing Gunn's Metaphor of Change, and organizes SF themes into units based on the human evolutionary benchmarks. Tool Development maps to Machine Intelligence; Exploration of Surroundings to Space Faring; Encountering Others to Extraterrestrials; Imagining of a Spiritual World to Inter-Dimensional Travel; Personal Transcendence to Trans-Human; Formation of Societies to Newtopia, and Modification of Habitat to Devastation.

"Campbell's Astounding 1938-1950" by Michael Page

Michael Page will discuss the major achievements of the Golden Age of science fiction that appeared in John W. Campbell's *Astounding*, from Isaac Asimov's Robots and *Foundation* series, to Heinlein's 'Future History,' and other such pivotal stories as Van Vogt's "Black Destroyer," Moore's "No Woman Born," Leinster's "First Contact," and Merrill's "That Only a Mother."

2-2:50 Neuroethics in SF and the future worlds of Bruna Husky

Neuroethics in Science Fiction: Psycho-Pass as a Case Study by Christopher Ramey

In this presentation, I consider the neuroethical themes of the anime *Psycho-Pass*, as well as its accuracy with respect to research in the cognitive and brain sciences. In *Psycho-Pass*, the world of 2113 is essentially free of crime due to the mysterious Sibyl System's constant scanning and assessment of the likelihood that any citizen will commit a crime, or violate societal norms. Should one's 'crime coefficient' be considered too dangerous, one is apprehended by officers or otherwise eliminated (i.e., vaporized by the Dominator hand weapon). There is order in such a world, but it comes at the price of individuality and personal freedom. The secret of the Sibyl System's success is ultimately in the cold calculations of brains stripped of emotions. *Psycho-Pass* is an outstanding exploration of concerns within the new field of neuroethics. There are ongoing attempts, for example, to use functional magnetic resonance imaging

(fMRI) to measure lie detection beyond traditional polygraph. Although explored in *Minority Report* by way of mutant human beings with precognitive ability, *Psycho-Pass* explores using real (near-future) technology to measure likelihood of future crimes. In fact, several recent studies have suggested that activity in the anterior cingulate cortex of the brain can actually predict criminal recidivism. Also, studies indicate that children who exhibit poor fear conditioning (e.g., associating a neutral tone with something unpleasant) are more likely to be incarcerated later in life. In other words, a cyberpunk series like *Psycho-Pass* is presciently exploring themes that the cognitive and brain sciences are only now beginning to take seriously with an interdisciplinary focus like neuroethics. Like the 'special' status of brain images in human reasoning, some science fiction series may accelerate the education of scientists and laypeople alike in taking stock in the potential threats to humanity of omnipresent surveillance.

Migrants, Androids and Aliens: Present Problems in the Future World of Rosa Montero's Bruna Husky Novels by Kiersty Lemon-Rodgers

Rosa Montero states in an interview that Science Fiction interests her most because the genre provides a metaphorical tool to speak of the human condition in general (131). In her Bruna Husky novels, *Lágrimas en la lluvia* and *El peso del corazón*, Rosa Montero creates a future setting that allows her to examine present problems. In the 22nd Century United States of Earth, humans struggle to coexist with androids and aliens. Bruna, a Philip Marlowe-style android detective, solves crimes in an environment filled with species discrimination, ecological emergencies, and vast economic inequality. In this paper, I examine the issue of immigration, which forms a strong undercurrent in these examples of Montero's work. The immigration issues of today are exponentially compounded by ecological, economic and political problems in Bruna's environment, as well as the complications of interspecies and human/android relations. Bruna encounters alien refugees as well as illegal immigrants from the highly contaminated "Zero Zones", where those who cannot afford clean air and water are forced to live. As Bruna seeks to solve a string of android murder/suicides and the disappearance of a rich man's remains, she helps work for social justice on an individual level among her friends and acquaintances. The migrants represented in Montero's novels can lead us to reflect on how we deal with immigrants and refugees in the present day, the ethics of how we distribute life-critical resources to persons of different economic status or birthplace, and how we can avoid the migration-related catastrophes faced by Bruna and her contemporaries.

3-3:50 Understanding Risk and Uncertainty

John Cmar and Christine Doyle

What does it mean when I say that there is a one in a hundred chance of something happening? What constitutes "good odds" when describing your chances of winning the lottery, or of having a heart attack? How do we understand what the real risk is of contracting Ebola or Zika in an affected country... or in the United States? People take risks every day, but most don't understand what they are or if they should worry about those risks. The presenters will explain ways to improve our thinking about and analyzing risk, and how to use that information to predict and improve outcomes.

4-4:50 The Ethics Behind the Story: Moral Dilemmas In Science Fiction and Fantasy

Jane Ann McLachlan

Moral dilemmas engage readers. Understanding what makes for a gripping ethical dilemma and the different approaches to resolving them can add depth and complexity to your characters and your story. In this presentation you will learn what an ethical dilemma is, how to create one that is complex and difficult to resolve, diverse approaches to resolving a dilemma and how to show your character's attempt to find the most ethical solution to his/her dilemma, one that will ring true for your readers.

Thursday 18 August

9-9:50 Joyful Disruption: Narratology and the SF/F Franchise

Heather Urbanski

Over the past three years, I have been developing a theory of the narratology of franchises such as the Marvel Cinematic Universe and *Hunger Games*, presenting it in pieces among regional, national, and international conferences. My premise is that the interlocking stories that fuel decades (in many franchises) of narrative can be untangled using the three-part narratological model explained by Mieke Bal: text-story-fabula. In this 50-minute individual presentation, I plan to pull the various overlapping threads of my research into a cohesive talk establishing three major areas of the developing theory: disruption among layers of narrative; the role of canon, and other forms of cultural memory; and textual boundaries.

The first thread of analysis inspired my title: franchises disrupt the cohesion within traditional narratives to bring an added layer of entertainment to fan audiences. Using Mieke Bal's three "layers" of narrative (Text, Story, and Fabula), as well as the concepts of canon and seriality, I argue that the current franchises in the genre today create and exploit these tensions to joyous narrative effect. And I use the adjective "joyous" intentionally because fandom, in my experience, is about joy.

And a significant part of that joy, in narratological terms, is created when the three layers of narrative are more independent, more disrupted, in franchise texts than in "standalone" stories because of the extra-textual influence of canon. Finally, the role of canon as information points us beyond traditional textual boundaries toward the notions of paratext, intertext, and even intra-text.

My overall goal is to use the structural concepts of narrative theory to identify what it is about these franchise stories that creates "built-in" loyal audiences in the first place. In other words, my presentation will begin to answer the question, what are the narrative features of these franchises that keep bringing audiences back time and again?

10-10:50 Heinlein: Investigating His Place in History

Heinlein and Campbell: The Collaboration by Marie Guthrie

The publication of *The Virginia Edition* of science fiction author Robert A. Heinlein's complete works and the complete online archives of the Heinlein literary estate allow scholars to finally explore the extensive correspondence between Heinlein and legendary author John W. Campbell. Together, they created modern science fiction. But over the years, their once close friendship faded. What were the editor's primary influences on the author, the author's influence on the editor, and what critical events led to the end of this pivotal collaboration?

Robert A. Heinlein Revisited by Bradford Lyau

Robert A. Heinlein first published story appeared in August 1939, in *Astounding Science Fiction*. Immediately he became a major voice of editor Campbell's "Golden Age." Along with such writers as Wells, Asimov, Clarke, Bradbury, and LeGuin, Heinlein has had voluminous articles and books written about him. So is there anything new to say about him? Perhaps. This presentation will analyze Heinlein with two recent publications in mind: William Patterson's two-volume biography of Heinlein and Jonathan Israel's three-volume major reinterpretation of the 18th century Enlightenment. Often Heinlein has been analyzed and criticized with theories and methods of very recent vintage. By taking the long range view of history, maybe new insights can emerge which would place him in a new light or at least a deeper appreciation of his place in history. This presentation will attempt to reintroduce the Enlightenment as Israel analyzes it and then integrate this background with the new information that Patterson introduces. The results of this investigation will then be discussed with current approaches in literary theory.

11-11:50 The Works of Cixin Liu: Capitalism and the History of Science from a Chinese Perspective

Capitalism Today, Tomorrow, and Forever in the Works of Cixin Liu by Brandon Kempner

For those of us SF critics interested in the role of competition, capitalism, and the end of history, the publication of Liu's work has been a godsend. For the first time, we've gotten a readily accessible Chinese perspective on the capitalism/communism debate. Liu's fiction has been engaging the future of capitalism in truly unique ways.

Specifically, I'll argue that *The Three-Body Problem* and *The Dark Forest* depict a galactic future permeated by capitalist ideas. Liu's work operates both as a critique of late capitalism and a pessimistic acceptance of that capitalist future. What's truly interesting about Liu is that he expands this future from the global to the galaxy-wide, imagining his aliens as fundamentally capitalist/competitive. He does this through the metaphor of the "dark forest," rethinking the galactic scene as a hyper-competitive contest for limited stellar resources. Throw in the ways that Liu addresses the Cultural Revolution, the permeation of technology through all aspects of society, and his concept of futurity, and you've got a fascinating reexamination of the same topics of capitalism that Philip K. Dick, Stanislaw Lem, the Strugatsky brothers, etc., all explored in their works.

I'll spice this up with a few mentions of theory from Frederic Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* and *Archaeologies of the Future*, but my main focus will be to keep this an accessible discussion about how Liu revolutionizes our understanding of capitalism, competition, and the future in SF.

Liu Cixin and Encapsulated History of Science in Chinese Culture (Ancient and Modern) by Janice Bogstad

The paper looks at the references to Ancient Chinese culture placed in the context of the Alien civilizations, and history of Physics. In ancient and 20th century China. Chinese readers will be very familiar with references to Ancient Chinese civilizations and historical figures in Liu's work which are unfamiliar to Western audiences but Liu's other accomplishment is the incorporation of stages in the history of Physics, both East and West, which are introduced in the course of the story, and wrapped around scientific and social issues in the 1960s-90s in China. This paper will both articulate the correspondences in social and scientific contexts for the first two books of the trilogy (translation of third book is not yet available) and explore these articulations with real and imagined recent history (WWII,

Vietnam, Revolution and Cultural Revolution in China). At this point, the paper focuses primarily on history as allegory and comparative history and history of science.

12-12:50 When Robots Rule the Earth

Robin Hanson

Robots may one day rule the world, but what is a robot-ruled Earth like? Robin Hanson applies consensus science from many fields to construct a detailed picture of a future ruled by a certain kind of smart robot. Short for 'brain emulation', an 'Em' results from taking a particular human brain and scanning it to record its particular cell features and connections, and then building a computer model that processes signals the same way. The picture Hanson paints is encyclopedic in scope, including mind speeds, body sizes, labor markets, career paths, friendships, aging, reproduction, conversation, wealth, law, war, and death.

1-1:50 Jungian Mindscapes and Clement's Iceworld

"The Red One" and Enduring Archetypes of Science Fiction's First Golden Age: The Jungian Mindscapes Campbell Inherited from the Writers of the Fin de Siècle by Charles Von Nordheim

Jack London stands as one of the key figures in science fiction's first golden age, the period of late 19th/early 20th century fin de siècle speculation first articulated by Europeans like Verne and Wells whose discourse was then answered by Americans like Charlotte Gilman Perkins and London himself. The short story, "The Red One," merits study since it exemplifies London at the height of his imaginative powers, demonstrating his ability to explicate the principles of Jungian analysis through a sophisticated scenario that mirrors both geographically and dramatically the tripartite model of the conscious versus the personal unconscious versus the collective conscious that stands in opposition to the psychological model that Freud championed. Additionally, the relationship London explores between Bassett, the tale's scientist protagonist, and the red-tinted extraterrestrial artifact he discovers presents a metaphorical simulacrum of the psychoanalytic pairing of analyst and patient in which the main character becomes the one who is read. This paper argues scholars can best appreciate science fiction's second golden age, the one centered on the vision fostered by John W. Campbell and his stable of *Astounding* writers, as an extension and amplification of the first golden age in which Jack London participated. Further, it contends scholars can isolate a heightened interest in so-called soft sciences of sociology and psychology, as seen in Perkins' *Herland* and London's "The Red One," as a specific American contribution to science fiction discourse. Finally, this paper will link London's fin de siècle psychoanalytic masterpiece to Campbellian golden age works of a similar nature, specifically A. E. Van Vogt's *Voyage of the Space Beagle* and Alfred Bester's *The Demolished Man*, and demonstrate how these later works continue the exploration of the psyche "The Red One" began. The work of Carl Jung, Julia Kristeva and Jacques Lacan provide this paper's theoretical underpinning.

The Search for Saar: Looking Back at Hal Clement's Iceworld with 21st-Century Science by William S. Higgins

Hal Clement is particularly known for science fiction stories that spring from chemistry, physics, or astronomy. His 1951 novel */Iceworld/* considers smugglers from Saar, a high-temperature extrasolar planet where sulfur is gaseous, trading wordlessly with inhabitants of a relentlessly frigid world, Earth. Its chief protagonist uses drones to investigate Earth's chemical and physical environment.

This presentation explores some scientific aspects of Clement's story which are notable 65 years after its publication.

In a level of detail unusual for SF of its time, */Iceworld /*explores methods of exploring a planet with remotely-operated spacecraft. Even such a nuance as the prevention of outgassing in vacuum is imagined. The novel can be seen as anticipating the ways real planetary science was conducted as the Space Age unfolded.

A major difference between the astronomy of 1951 and today's is that at the time of */Iceworld/s* publication, not one exoplanet was known. Clement would live to see an era when the list of confirmed planets circling distant stars was growing rapidly. Furthermore, among the thousands of exoplanets discovered recently, it is possible to search for worlds Clement's sulfur-breathing characters might potentially inhabit comfortably. Although discourse about exoplanets often refers to a quest for Earth-like planets, NASA's planet-hunting Kepler space telescope has identified at least one planet, Kepler 42c, where conditions approximate those of the imaginary world Saar

2-2:50 His Fordship in the Capitol and Big Brother in the Districts: How The Hunger Games' World of Tomorrow Builds on SF's Classic Past

Amy Sturgis

The Hunger Games trilogy by Suzanne Collins rests on firm foundations, one of which clearly is dystopian science fiction. The modern tradition of this subgenre may be traced to Yevgeny Zamyatin's pathbreaking *We* (1924), a work which finds rich echoes in *The Hunger Games*. This presentation will paint a portrait of *The Hunger Games* as a product of, homage to, and participant in the conversation of modern dystopian science fiction – including a work eligible (and likely a finalist for) this year's 1941 Retro Hugo Awards, Karin Boye's *Kallockain* (1940).

In particular, this presentation will consider how Collins uses *The Hunger Games* books to pay specific tribute to two of the most famous dystopian works of the twentieth century, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). Critics routinely emphasize the contradictory fears explicit Huxley's and Orwell's classic novels. For example, in *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Neil Postman notes, "Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy."

Who, then, ultimately was more accurate in his dire prediction: Aldous Huxley or George Orwell? One of the most innovative contributions of *The Hunger Games* is its answer to this often-posed question. In

telling her tale of Panem, Collins carefully balances a Huxleyan nightmare in the Capitol against an Orwellian horror in the Districts. Thus she incorporates both classic dystopian visions (as well as others) into a new and highly successful one, demonstrating how each set of concerns – and the larger subgenre itself – resonates with audiences today.

3-3:50 How SF Writers become SF Writers

Btwn Science & Society: Exploring how Science Fiction Authors Conceptualize their Role in the Scientific Endeavor by Douglas Van Belle

As part of an extended study of science, science fiction and society, 24 elite science fiction authors were interviewed during the second half of 2015. Those interviews focused on how authors conceptualized their role linking science to society, and how they expressed that role through authorial intent. Preliminary presented in this paper suggest that there are some significant differences and dissonances between academic understandings derived from analysis of texts, and authorial intent in producing those texts. Authors interviewed for this study include: Kevin J. Anderson, Steven Barnes, Greg Bear, Gregory Benford, Ben Bova, David Brin, Brenda Cooper, Stephan R. Donaldson, Eric Flint, David Gerrold, Joe Haldeman, Ian Irvine, Nancy Kress, Jack McDevitt, Rebecca Moesta, Simon Morden, Larry Niven, Robert J. Sawyer, Karl Schroeder, Melinda Snodgrass, S.M. Stirling, Charles Stross, Vernor Vinge, Connie Willis.

The Child is Father of the Man (and Woman): SF Writers Discuss How Their Past has Led to their Future Worlds by Barbara Bengels

Ian Watson's first articles, published in national magazines at the age of fourteen no less, were on cacti, notably the peyotl cactus ("which I had but [hadn't] eaten yet"). Sheila Finch's early education was constantly interrupted by the bombing of her schools. The Africans who lived near Nancy Farmer decided that she'd been possessed by a *shave*, an ancestral spirit, when out of boredom she suddenly decided to become a storyteller. And so it goes: SF writers who have dazzled us with their creative imagination often have fascinating—and sometimes poignant—personal stories to tell of the past that has inspired their own creation of the future. Approximately ten years ago, inspired by SF writers interviewing one another at James Gunn's Intensive Institute in the Teaching of Science Fiction, I decided to conduct by own interviews focusing on authors' childhood memories of their relationships with their parents, teachers, and mentors, as well as their advice to parents of the next generation of writers. Three of these compilations have appeared over the years in *The New York Review of Science Fiction*. This is a continuation of that study.

4-4:50 Deadline: John W. Campbell in World War II

Alec Nevala-Lee

John W. Campbell first heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor in a phone call from Robert A. Heinlein, who quickly signed up for service—along with Isaac Asimov and L. Sprague de Camp—at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Campbell himself declined to join, preferring to informally source defense ideas from his authors and route them through unofficial channels. Later, he led a team of science fiction writers

at the Empire State Building that cranked out manuals on sonar for the University of California Division of War Research, and he took part in the think tank that Heinlein organized to brainstorm strategies for combating kamikaze attacks, which included de Camp, Theodore Sturgeon, and L. Ron Hubbard.

Yet he remained on the outside looking in, and when the writer Cleve Cartmill pitched a story idea about the construction of an atomic bomb, Campbell jumped at the chance, feeding him detailed technical specifications about how such a weapon would work. The result, "Deadline," appeared in the March 1944 issue of *Astounding*, and according to Edward Teller, it inspired "astonishment" at Los Alamos. It raised the possibility of a leak at once, and Campbell and Cartmill were interrogated by the Counterintelligence Corps. (Campbell later said that he was relieved that the investigator failed to notice the map in his office with pins marking the addresses of his subscribers—including a suspicious clustering around a post office box in New Mexico.)

But the story had exactly the effect he wanted. He had sent out a probe, and when the government came down hard, he knew that he had correctly sensed what was in the air. Hiroshima was the moment for which he had long prepared—a vindication of science fiction as a literature of prediction—but in its aftermath, Campbell became convinced that only science could save mankind from its destructive tendencies, and that the answers would hinge on an exploration of the mind. As he wrote in a letter to Hubbard: "Science fiction better get stepping if it wants to lead the world!"

5-6:15 SIG: Classical Antiquity and Science Fiction

Elements of Greek and Roman antiquity have been part of science fiction since Mary Shelley's *Prometheus; or, the Modern Prometheus*, and science fictional elements are easily traced back to antiquity in the works of Lucian and Homer. Recent scholarship in the field of Classical Reception has found science fiction a rich and vibrant venue for a new appreciation about the multiple intersections of past, present, and future in modern culture.

We are looking to form a Special Interest Group for anyone interested in science fiction and classical Greece and Rome. We hope to create a network of interested folk and discuss ideas for collaborative projects. We will explore social media venues for creating a space to build a community. We are interested in hearing from academics, fans, and anyone who enjoys talking about ancient Greeks and Romans in space!

7:00 Campbell and Sturgeon Awards

Friday 19 August

9-9:50 Science of Disease Dynamics: Tapping Writer Creativity for New Solutions

David Schneider (workshop)

Speculative fiction examines the leading edge of science and can be used to introduce ideas into the classroom and hopefully back into the laboratory. For example, most students are already familiar with the fictional infectious diseases responsible for vampire and zombie outbreaks. The disease dynamics of these imaginary ailments follow the same rules we see for real diseases and can be used to remind students that they already understand the basic rules of disease ecology and immunology. I will start by introducing the ideas behind disease dynamics that uses graphics that make the process easy to

understand. I plan to show the following: how existing diseases work, how fictional diseases work and where are some unexplored spaces that might produce interesting stories. My hope is that by engaging writers in an effort to solve problems in immunology we may be able to perform a directed evolution experiment where we follow the evolution of plots rather than genetic traits. I'm hoping to use creative writers to help solve some difficult infectious disease problems.

10-10:50 Utopia and World-Building in *The Dispossessed* and "Stations of the Tide"

Le Guin's The Dispossessed: Ecology, Utopia, Dystopia by David Farnell

Ever since Thomas More set his *Utopia* on a fertile island, the societies described by utopian narratives have been shaped by their environment. Usually physically isolated and blessed with abundant resources, many utopias carry the implication that they could not have come about without such good fortune in placement, echoing ideas of geographic determinism.

But one classic work of science fiction and utopian literature is the runner-up for the 1974 Campbell Award and winner of the Hugo, Nebula, and Locus Awards, Ursula Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*. Subtitled *An Ambiguous Utopia*, it explores themes of anarchy versus capitalism and individual versus collective agency and responsibility, and the effects of environment on both play a large role in the ambiguous nature of the novel. A study in contrasts, it is set on two worlds, the fertile planet Urras and its arid moon Anarres, both of which shape and are shaped by their inhabitants.

But while the worlds are contrasts, they are both intimately connected to the utopian society described in the story. Dry, marginally habitable Anarres is the home of the followers of the anarcho-syndicalist philosophy of Odo. But Odo herself was a native of wet, abundant Urras and never set foot on Anarres in her lifetime. Le Guin's primary character, Shevek, considers how the abundance of their species' homeworld allowed Odo to form her philosophy, but the novel asks whether the Odonian society could ever have thrived in such abundance, suggesting that it is Anarres' paucity of resources that forces the anarchists to pull together for their very survival, making it the key to their ambiguous utopia, a utopia that can only exist because of the dystopian poverty of its setting.

A Series of Agile Distractions: Anti-Fantasy & World-Building in Swanwick's Stations of the Tide by Jake Casella

Michael Swanwick's novel *Stations of the Tide* is, on the surface, a detective story in science-fictional garb. However, the novel consciously plays with genre and framing devices to complicate the reading experience, and functions as an anti-fantasy by continuously critiquing its own apparent rules.

After a brief elaboration on "anti-fantasy", this paper uses *Stations of the Tide* to examine the relationship between world-building and narrative in SF, particularly the difference between diegetic and paradigmatic world-building: how a novel constructs a fictional world, versus how a novel indicates it should be read. The narrative theories of Roland Barthes and Peter Brooks are used to explore the ways that world-building works both in service of and in tension with the actual plot, a dynamic that is especially intriguing and problematic in fantastic, non-mimetic texts.

Furthermore, when an SF text achieves cognitive estrangement, which *Stations* accomplishes on a few distinct levels, that effect can be understood as a move towards Barthes' writerly (as opposed to readerly) approach, fundamentally changing the reader's engagement from a passive to an active one. Swanwick's novel can thus be used to explore the way that science-fictional signifiers, tropes, and reader strategies can reinforce each other, engendering both the "amazement" and "questioning" senses of wonder.

11-11:50 Teaching Speculative Fiction Tomorrow: SF and 21st Century General Education

Nora Derrington, Israel Wasserstein, Robert Lipscomb

“Creativity is a way of living life, no matter our vocation or how we earn our living. Creativity is not limited to the arts, or having some kind of important career.”

— Madeleine L'Engle, *Walking on Water*

“Teaching Speculative Fiction Tomorrow: SF and 21st Century General Education” will be a 50-minute roundtable discussion addressing teaching entry-level speculative fiction courses to students who want to channel their interest in speculative fiction into general education credit. We see the value of exposing students from a variety of backgrounds to the delights and fascinations of speculative fiction, but how do we communicate that value in our current educational climate, which includes mounting concern about demonstrating each course’s value (whether monetary, assessable, or inherent) as well as frequent arguments surrounding the value(s) of humanities studies?

The panel will consist of college instructors who teach speculative works in literature, film, and creative writing courses, and will also engage the audience in the discussion. Our goal is that all participants in the discussion will share strategies for engaging students and articulating to administration the value of the study of speculative fiction, and will come away with additional strategies to implement.

12-12:50 Stony Mayhall and James Tiptree: Anti-Zombie Zombies and the Apocalyptic

Teaching Stony Mayhall: The Anti-Zombie Zombie Narrative by Robert Lipscomb

In one form or another, zombies reflect popular culture. Though they occasionally represented complex themes as seen in Jacques Tourneur’s *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943), they were also historically objects of fear in voodoo-inflected radio and movie thrillers mostly notable now for their extraordinary racism. The zombie would be reinvented in 1968 in George Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* as a vehicle for critiquing issues like race relations in the United States and the ongoing military engagement in Vietnam. But what is the current state of the zombie narrative? From *The Walking Dead* comic series to the subsequent television adaption to films like *Zombieland* (2009) and *World War Z* (2013), the zombie frequently appears to be an excuse to brutally kill “the other.” While it is true that non-American productions like the television series *In the Flesh* (2013) and *The Returned* (2012) consider nuanced complications associated with people rising from the dead, the more successful offerings focus heavily on certain destructive aspects of the human psyche. Often, the zombie reflects our monstrous capacity. True, theorists from René Descartes to Jacques Lacan to Michel Foucault to Giorgio Agamben provide tools for unpacking this trend in popular culture. Yet, such tools can be difficult to deploy in an undergraduate classroom, especially in a Science Fiction course that tends to attract students from a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. In this paper, I will demonstrate how Daryl Gregory’s *Raising Stony Mayhall* addresses the complexities of both the zombie and the society that encounters them. I will analyze how Gregory covers this troubled terrain by inverting the prevailing assumptions about and

cultural engagements with “the undead” in his anti-zombie zombie novel by focusing primarily on a very human post-human in a way that students find informative, accessible, and relatable.

The Personal and the Apocalyptic in James Tiptree Jr.'s Short Fiction by Arnab Chakraborty

The tension between the individual and the collective seems to be ironically immanent in most science fiction, especially when its themes claim to stand for humanity as a collective by focusing on individual motivation and agency. This finds its fullest expression in the short fiction of James Tiptree Jr. Tiptree’s abiding theme in science fiction, in hindsight, seems to have been death, but could often be interpreted within the thematic context of her work as a synonym for life. She translated death within a science fictional context into the larger theme of the apocalypse, but her protagonists are often selfish in their actions and the nature of their agency, thus subverting the trope of the paradigm shift that occurs in most science fiction in both shorter and longer forms. My paper seeks to analyze this very tension existing between the personal and the apocalyptic in four of Tiptree’s short stories: ‘The Last Flight of Doctor Ain’, ‘The Screwfly Solution’, ‘The Man Who Walked Home’ and ‘Her Smoke Rose Up Forever’, and the pressure it exerts on the narratives. In doing so, I will also try to examine whether something approaching a uniquely science fictional mode of storytelling emerges in the process.

1-1:50 Using SF to Teach Ethics: E.M. Forster's "The Machine Stops"

Judy Goldsmith, Emanuelle Burton, Nicholas Mattei

We (briefly) present:

- Overview of the major schools of ethical thought and reasoning;
- Description of our “Science fiction and computer ethics” course;
- Justification for using fiction to teach ethics;
- Overview of E. M. Forster’s 1905 short story, “The Machine Stops”.

We will then moderate a discussion on ethical issues in the story, and the different models of ethical thought that it employs. We will use ethics as a lens on the conflict between the two central characters, Vashti and her son Kuno. We will ask participants to consider the ethical implications of a world in which people live out their lives in isolation, connected only through screens and speaking tubes, completely detached from nature, in which society expects individuals to be constantly available and connected -- and the ethics of expertise in a world where virtual experience has almost entirely replaced direct encounter.

This story is very much aligned with the theme of this year’s WorldCon; we can take time to appreciate, through the discussion, how much Forster anticipated the internet; the culture that Sherry Turkle describes as having communication devices “always on, always on you” (Turkle, 2006); even TED talks.

We expect a lively discussion. All three proposers are skilled and popular teachers; it is likely that Burton and/or Goldsmith will lead this particular discussion. We refer you to our recent workshop papers about the course (Burton et al. 2015) and about using this story in the course (Burton et al. 2016).

The goals of the workshop are to (a) equip the participants with frameworks they can use to think about ethical issues in other works of SF, and (b) to promote the use of SF in ethics classes, and (c) to have a lively conversation about this prescient and fascinating story.

2-2:50 SF Predicts the Future the Way a Shotgun Kills a Duck Panel

Charles Gannon, Gregory Benford, Greg Bear, David Brin

“SF Predicts the Future the Way a Shotgun Kills a Duck” draws its title from a wonderfully explicative quip by former SFWA President Steven Gould during a Sigma presentation to a Beltway Three (well, Five-) Letter Agency as he explained how SF did—and did NOT—work in a predictive fashion.

The purpose of the discussion is to both tease out and explore the proleptic possibilities and limitations inherent in SF, and how different uses of (and frustrations with them) can be composited to create a more nuanced view of the intersection of SF and “future-think.” This is frequently not a linear or even intuitively natural template: often, the more rigorous SF is, the poorer the job it does as a predictive device. There is also the matter of how SF “shapes” rather than “predicts” the future by stimulating engineering imaginations in the pursuit of devices that are first given tangible ideational shape in narratives (my own book looked at this fairly extensively).

3-3:50 Preserving the History of the Future: SF and Fantasy Collections in Libraries and Archives

Jeremy Brett, Elspeth Healey, Lynne M. Thomas

There are several institutions throughout the world (including KU!) that hold collections dedicated to documenting and preserving the history of the science fiction and fantasy genres. This history is expressed through the published and broadcast works themselves, the secondary literature devoted to them, the primary materials (i.e. authors’ manuscripts) that are their building blocks, and the products lovingly created by fans in response to those works. Together these types of materials chart the birth, development, and evolution of the SF&F genres, and without them, researchers and scholars, as well as fans, will be unable to get a sense of where the genres came from and where they might be headed in the future. Several SF&F librarians and archivists will discuss their collections (with images of some of the more important or interesting materials), the uses to which they are or can be put, and the importance placed upon SF&F creators to preserve their work for future scholars.

4-4:50 “The Real Martians” Panel

Marianne Dyson, Richard Stoddart, Nick Kanas, Les Johnson, Geoffrey Landis

Want to go to Mars in fact or fiction? Scientists and writers who have researched this topic will share their knowledge of the dangers and adventures awaiting you on the Martian frontier.

5-5:50 Terraforming Mars—Could We? Should We?

Marianne Dyson, Richard Stoddart, Nick Kanas,

In the future we could develop the technology to terraform mars and make it more hospitable towards human life. In brief we will discuss how that might happen, And what the social and moral obligations that should be considered.

Saturday 20 August

9:30-10:45 Campbell Conference Roundtable: "The World of Tomorrow is Today: John W. Campbell, Astounding, the Futurians, and the Legacy of the Golden Age

James Gunn, Gregory Benford, Elizabeth Bear, John Kessel, Robert Silverberg, Sheila Finch, Elizabeth Anne Hull, Joe Haldeman

This year's Campbell Conference roundtable discussion, as part of the MidAmeriCon II academic programming, will consider how the Golden Age of the 1930s and 1940s shaped the world of science fiction (including this convention) and contributed to the shaping of the present world at large. We will discuss how the legacy of the Golden Age (especially the legacy of the namesake of this conference) continues to provide inspiration, discussion, and criticism among the writers, scholars, and fans within the field; and how contemporary science fiction extends from (and sometimes diverges from) that legacy. We will also consider in what ways the World of Tomorrow envisioned by the Golden Age writers exists in the World of Today.

11-11:50 Terraforming Mars: Could We? Should We?

Richard Stoddart, Nick Kanas

In the future we could develop the technology to terraform mars and make it more hospitable towards human life. In brief we will discuss how that might happen, And what the social and moral obligations that should be considered.

12-12:50 The Biology of Immortality: Is a Lazarus Long Really Possible?

H.G. Stratmann

The desire for immortality or to at least live far longer than the longest natural human lifetime is found in both ancient legends such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and modern science fiction. Characters in the latter may, due to natural mutations, eugenics, genetic engineering, advanced nanotechnology or other medical methods, etc., routinely live for centuries or longer. But despite great improvements in average lifespan over the past century, the longest a person has ever been documented to live is a little over 121 years. Natural aging is associated with increased susceptibility to infection, injury, and disease as well as deterioration of all organ systems. To be worthwhile, prolongation of maximum human lifespan must also be accompanied by preservation of quality of life, particularly brain function. However, the complexity of

the human body and the difficulties involved with slowing or reversing age-related damage to its cells present tremendous challenges to creating healthy individuals hundreds of years old. This presentation will describe the scope of these challenges and what will need to be done to address them before someone might, like Heinlein's Lazarus Long, live for millennia

1~1:50 Arabic and French Imaginings in SF

Aliens Overseas: Introduction to Arabic Science Fiction by Ayah Wakkad

Science Fiction is a cross-cultural genre that informs different literatures and increasingly commands the attention of writers around the world, stressing that as humans we share the same worries and concerns about the changes in the world we are living and the one to come. It thus blurs the boundaries between the East and the West as the SF writers in both worlds share the same understanding of its value which is as James Gunn puts it the "ability to foresee tomorrow's crises, to dramatize their human implications and consequences, and to act out alternatives" (29). This paper aims to introduce Arabic Science Fiction and the shaping factors that led to its emergence around the mid twentieth century. It explores the degree of influence English Science Fiction had/has on its Arabic counterpart through investigating the thematic correspondences traceable in selected novels. The significance of this paper emanates from the scarcity of scholarship on this topic. To achieve its purpose, the paper is based on Claudio Guillen's concept of influence and the definition of comparative literature as elucidated by three comparatists: François Jost, Henry Remak, and Alfred Aldridge.

Move Over Verne: How J.H. Rosny the Elder Imagined the (French) SF of Tomorrow by Christina Lord

Although French works appear in the overall history of speculative fiction, attention to French-language SF largely dissipated after Jules Verne. Belgian author J.H. Rosny the Elder (1856-1940) was an innovative writer and scientist for his time and a precursor to what would become hard SF. One of three national awards for French SF is even named after Rosny. Despite this, he has been unjustly eclipsed by H.G. Wells, his contemporary, and, of course, Verne, his predecessor – both in general readership and academic scholarship. The last ten years, though, have seen renewed interest in his work with authors and scholars like Brian Stableford and George Slusser publishing translations of stories previously unavailable to an English-speaking readership.

While his work was inspired by contemporary evolutionary debates and emerging sciences, he went beyond the discoveries of his day, imagining the SF of tomorrow: the multiverse, deep ecology, and even the posthuman. I will briefly explore these three topics in Rosny's novellas, *The Navigators of Infinity* (1925) and *The Death of the Earth* (1910). The former takes place on Mars, where astronauts witness various species in the midst of an evolutionary shift; how they intervene as well as the unique love story that transpires between a human and Martian transcends most alien-human contact stories from Rosny's time. *The Death of the Earth* portrays an exploited Earth without water, where humanity is slowly becoming extinct; this tale is concerned with climate change and the bleak anticipation of humanity's extinction. However, Rosny also saw this as part of a larger scheme of evolutionary existence, including the development of either posthumans or different lifeforms. With this, he envisioned the future of modern SF storytelling. Such stories would hopefully encourage scholars and fans to rethink their understanding of classic French SF as more than Verne's *anticipation* literature.

2~2:50 How Can Space Technology Solve Energy and Environmental Problems on Earth?

Les Johnson

Humanity is at an environmental crossroads and whether our legacy is one of prosperous abundance or mere subsistence will depend upon the choices we make in this generation. With an ever-increasing share of the human population making the transition to the “developed” world will come increasing stress on the Earth’s environment, natural resources, and her ability to produce enough food. A future in which the environmental movement embraces space exploration, space resource utilization, and eventually space settlement will not only preserve humanity, but potentially all the life forms and habitats that make the Earth our home – and the only place in the known universe that supports life. I will describe how space development might transform our world civilization and ultimately allow us to ‘re-green’ the Earth.

3-3:50 Defiance and The Golden Compass: Feminist Critiques

Women of Tomorrow on Defiance: Defiantly Different? by Lisa Macklem

Barbara Creed’s *Monstrous Feminine* begins by stating that “The horror film is populated by female monsters, many of which seem to have evolved from images that haunted the dreams, myths and artistic practices of our forebears many centuries ago.” Donna J Haraway describes women as “boundary creatures..., literally, monsters.” What happens then when women are transplanted to the future and situated at the centre of the story? *Defiance* examines the role of women from the perspective of the alien monster by taking the story into the near future and introducing not one but seven distinct alien races. Within each of these races, women are treated differently. The series ran three seasons and began promisingly with three strong humans; Amanda Rosewater, Kenya Rosewater, and Nicky Riordon (the season one villain); a Castithan, Stahma Tarr; an Irathient, Irisa Nyira; and an Indogene, Doc Yewll. Technically, as a manufactured species, Doc Yewll is closer to a cyborg, however. Amanda becomes the town of *Defiance*’s champion in the first season. Kenya, her sister, runs the local Need/Want – a brothel – but the profession is given more respect than in our own society. Irisa has been adopted by human Joshua Nolan and struggles to find her own identity and place in the world. Stahma Tarr is perhaps the most interesting as Castithan society is particularly patriarchal, yet it becomes clear that she is in many ways the Lady Macbeth to her crime lord husband, Datak. The promise of the first season in showcasing women in strong roles falters somewhat in season two but becomes more satisfying again in the last season. This paper will examine the potential for women to break out of the role of monster in science fiction as demonstrated by this series.

Tomorrow isn't Now yet, at least not for Women: a Feminist Critique of Philip Pullman's The Golden Compass by Venni Uotila

In my presentation I will tackle the topic of Feminism in speculative fiction with special attention to the way in which women are portrayed. First, I will give a brief overview of feminist critiques of science fiction and fantasy literature with attention to major developments in the history of the genre. Then I will conduct a close analysis of Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* from the point of view of a feminist critique. I will also use some examples from other fantasy novels to create a broader view of the norms often

associated with women in fantasy literature. In the end I hope to show that while there are glimpses of hope for women beyond submissive roles in Pullman's text, nonetheless, much of *The Golden Compass* still works to reinforce the patriarchal status quo.

4-4:50 ...And Yesterday was Already Tomorrow: Ancient Greece and Rome in Science Fiction

Zelazny's Ancient Greek Myth of Our Future Now by Robert Cape

Fifty years ago, Zelazny's *...And Call Me Conrad* shared the 1966 Hugo for Best Novel and the WorldCon audience gave him a "standing ovation... which went on and on and on", according to Delany: "astonishing" for such a new writer. This paper examines how Zelazny employed Greek myth in a new, intense, psychological mode that resonated with fans, set the stage for a wave of SF stories based on Greek myth (Delany, Ellison, Lafferty, Morris, Wolfe), and aligned with a revival of Greek literature in the 1960s that spoke to new audiences of the counterculture.

The Tragedy of G'Kar and Londo by Connie Rodriguez

I draw upon Aristotle's *Poetics* to analyze the complex plot and tragic relationship of G'Kar (the Narn ambassador) and Londo (the Centauri ambassador)—bitter enemies whose lives are closely intertwined—in *Babylon 5*. As the story unfolds, each character experiences reversal, recognition, and terrible suffering. Aristotle's observations on complexity and the importance of *hamartia* ("mistake") in plot construction both elucidate ancient tragedy and can be usefully applied to poignant tragedy of tomorrow's 23rd century, which is our tragedy today.

Finding Rome in the Radch by Timothy J. Phin

The Roman Empire has long served as the premier model for SF imperial societies. Such is Ann Leckie's *Radch*, a massive, military space empire in her award-winning *Ancillary* series. In this paper, I examine how Leckie adapts Rome's historical successes and failures for *Radch*. *Ancillary Justice* and its sequels depart from the traditional emphasis on decadence as the source of the empire's destruction. The psychologically shattered Lord of the Radch struggles to control herself and her empire, revealing a close connection to the historical end of Rome, as the purposes of empire (past, present, and future) and the sustainability of conquest are questioned.

5-5:50 The Economics of Resource Scarcity and Cold War Rhetoric

Fear, Faith, and Logic: Cold-War Rhetoric in Earth vs. the Flying Saucers, The War of the Worlds, and The Day the Earth Stood Still by Jim Davis

In the depths of the Cold War, with America under constant fear of Soviet attack, the first film of the 1950s to portray an incursion onto Earth by extraterrestrial forces was, appropriately enough, a plea for reason and peace, and a direct indictment of the militarism, fear-mongering, and hysteria of the times. Robert Wise's *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951) set the standard for quality writing, direction, and production in science fiction films, which in that decade were rarely given budgets nearly as large as the average

western or detective story. Unfortunately, neither the quality of the film, nor its anti-war message was repeated very often as the decade progressed. The first of the films of the period to show a military invasion of the entire earth, *The War of the Worlds* (George Pal, 1953), did match the earlier film in production quality, but carried a far different statement about America's path in the Cold War. The second and final worldwide alien military invasion film, *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (Fred F. Sears, 1956), cannot match the earlier films in production values or depth and quality of script. Most importantly, however, *Saucers* appears to be intentionally contradicting and even ridiculing the anti-war message of the *War of the Worlds* film. There are so many points of similarity between the two films that *Saucers* appears to have been skewing elements of *War of the Worlds* in order to parody the pacifist message and promote its own reactionary and militaristic approach. An examination of the iconography, the people, and the Cold-War concerns portrayed in the three movies will reveal how stridently militaristic the Sears film really is.

Not long before the end? SF and the economics of resource scarcity by Jesper Stage

A few years ago, oil prices were spiking and there were confident predictions of Peak Oil. Oil prices have fallen by more than half since then. Predictions of looming, devastating scarcity of some key natural resource are ever popular, in the media and in science fiction... but don't seem to come true very often. What are the economic forces that ensure that spells of resource scarcity usually don't last? What are plausible reasons why those forces might stop working? How convincing have authors describing future scarcity Earths been in coming up with such reasons?

Sunday 21 August

10-10:50 Reading SF elements in Graphic Novels: *Ed the Happy Clown* and *Homestuck*

Science Fiction Elements in Chester Brown's Ed the Happy Clown by Dominick Grace

Chester Brown's graphic novel *Ed the Happy Clown* has clear roots in horror comics and is often described as surreal. However, it has equally important roots in SF tropes and even characters. Frankenstein's monster is the most obvious figure in the latter category, though he has little narrative function (somewhat more in the later issues of *Yummy Fur* included in the definitive collected edition of the story—also revealed in these later issues but absent from the definitive version is that Ed's friend Christian is an alien). More central is the conceit of the parallel world, as the graphic novel posits the existence of an alternate Earth, significantly smaller than the Earth inhabited by Ed but in many other ways an image of it (e.g. both Earths have as American President a man named Ronald Reagan). Professor Jones, a scientist from the miniature world, is the typical SF type, the scientist single-mindedly in pursuit of knowledge. In *Ed the Happy Clown*, however, knowledge is practically impossible to find. Brown parodies the very idea of scientific certainty early in the book in the Adventures in Science sequences, which mock not merely science-oriented programming for television but the very idea of science. The tropes of SF are used in *Ed the Happy Clown* to undermine the very notion of

epistemological certainty. The graphic novel unfolds in a universe governed not by the rules of science but instead by unfathomable forces that impose opaque moral judgements on the characters. We begin with a parodic vision of science and end with a horrifying vision of hell. This paper will explore how Brown uses SF tropes and expectations to undermine rational certainty in *Ed the Happy Clown*.

The Reader as the Author of the Future in Andrew Hussie's Homestuck" by Meagan Kane

Digital and interactive media reshape old conversations about the relationship between readers and authors, especially as new interactive media explore ways to give the reader (or player or viewer) agency in the story. If, as Barthes says, "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author," how does the author function within narratives that position the reader as part of the storytelling process? This paper discusses the question of how to navigate the post-authorial landscape using Andrew Hussie's webcomic *Homestuck* as a map. *Homestuck* is, in the simplest terms, a story about some kids who play a video game that starts the apocalypse. Utilizing elements from a number of different types of media -- including text-based computer games, webcomics, music, and animation -- the comic, instead of assuring readers of their agency, challenges and confronts the limitations of the audience. *Homestuck* frames the conversation between author and reader as both an antagonistic and a collaborative one. Similarly, many of the antagonists actively vie for control of the narrative in ways that affect not only the narrative itself, but also the forms the narrative takes. After the (literal) death of the author, the story becomes about negotiating the struggle between the reader and the text, without the mediating (or, in this case, often disruptive) figure of the author. Through examining the polyphonous nature of *Homestuck's* narrative, we can explore the future of truly collaborative storytelling.

11-11:50 The Future is Awesome! The Future is Horrible!: Exploring Hopes and Fears for a Future Among the Stars

The Meaning of Life Among the Stars: Nolan's Interstellar, Robinson's Aurora, and Butler's Earthseed by Ethan Mills

Through the idea of interstellar colonization, SF encourages thinking about the meaning of life for humanity as a species. Will we survive into the future among the stars? Would we want to? Drawing on Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*, Kim Stanley Robinson's *Aurora*, and Octavia Butler's *Earthseed*, I argue that our survival in the cosmos would not necessarily enrich the meaning of life for humanity, but taking interstellar travel as a goal could encourage moral evolution.

Cave Men with Laser Guns: Past Civilizations as Future Builders in Science Fiction by Josh Zimmerman

Whether buried on Earth or hidden on Mars, sci-fi books, movies, and games routinely employ the trope of the remnants of highly advanced alien civilizations launching humanity into an era of interstellar exploration. Taking examples primarily from sci-fi computer games, I argue that the trope of the ancient, yet advanced, civilization operates as a *topoi*, or common place, from which science fiction interrogates common anxieties about the pace (both slow AND fast) of technological advancement and humanity's future.

12-12:50 SF designs cities and builds communities: Futurescapes and Fanzines

FutureScapes: How Civic Innovators Utilize Science Fiction to Build the Cities of the Future by Luke Peterson

“Life imitates art far more than art imitates life.”

-Oscar Wilde

Looking at his words from across a century, we might as well declare Mr. Wilde a prophet. Since his time our lives have been fundamentally changed by a long sequence of technologies that were first envisioned in fiction. We can thank (at least in part) Star Trek for our [mobile phones](#), [tablets](#), and, yes, even [transparent aluminum](#). We should tip our hat to H.G. Wells for his part in the invention of liquid-fueled rockets, lasers, and myriad other inventions (sadly, no time machine yet with which to thank him in person).

Yes, fiction has paved the way for the life we now know, but it has also, likely, prevented us from suffering through futures we'd rather not experience.

If that sounds implausible, listen to the news. Listen for the sound of a news pundit asking her guest, “Tell me, professor, should we be worried? Are we headed towards 1984?” When they ask that question they're not wondering whether Walter Mondale will run for president again. They're highlighting a cultural touchstone we all share thanks to the genius of George Orwell. We even named these specters of possible dystopia after him, these Orwellian Futures.

What if, rather than passively allowing speculative fiction to guide us toward desirable futures and away from undesirable alternatives, we could actively use fiction to dramatically accelerate the development of solutions to big problems like crime, terrorism, homelessness, and air pollution?

This is the goal of FutureScapes: a civic innovation program born of a partnership between Boston, Philadelphia, and twenty cities throughout Utah. This presentation will explore the challenges inherent to such an endeavor, including the tension between art and social purpose, and of building the city of tomorrow on a foundation of fiction.

Fanzines as Social Media: Historical Antecedents for Digital Fandom by Paul Booth

For over fifty years, science fiction fans have been creating original fiction and art. For this paper, I examine original fanzines from the past 50 years to draw connections between historical moments—to see the context between past customs and contemporary fan practices. In an era before the Internet and social media, these homemade 'zine creations served as social nexus and record of an ever-changing subculture community. This project will open up research into these amateur fan magazines to develop a better understanding of both the historical trajectory of fan production as well as its relation to contemporary fandom on social media.

Fan studies as a discipline is barely three decades old, but in that time it has produced an enormous amount of literature and interest from the scholarly community. My proposed research project places the 'zine within an historical context; that is, I examine the fanzine as a specific and deliberate antecedent to the types of social work occurring on online sites like Tumblr. I've previously written about how fandom can be a space for individuals to learn critical thinking outside of a formal system:

one's fandom may be one of the only places where one is encouraged to think critically, to write, to discuss deeply, and to make thoughtful and critical judgments about hegemonic culture. One's fan identity might be the catalyst of critical intellectual shifts.

I believe that studying fanzines from the past five decades will reveal how these “critical intellectual shifts” have been manifest within fan communities for many years.

1-1:50 Hackers & Science Fiction

John McNabb

This presentation will discuss the interaction between hackers, computing, and science fiction within the feedback loop of technology and science fiction. Science fiction does not predict the future, it shapes it. Technology inspires science fiction writers. Science fiction as a whole then creates an awareness and desire in society to improve the technological climate. A story may also inspire a technologist or hacker to pursue innovation. This improved technology inspires other writers and the feedback loop keeps turning. There also have been a few examples of ideas in science fiction stories documented to have inspired an actual improvement in computing technology.

Science fiction has produced many stories about computers, but unfortunately – before cyberpunk – only a few which imagined the personal computers and the internet. The talk will discuss the history of computing in science fiction, focusing on two of those exceptions – “A Logic Named Joe” (1946), and The Shockwave Rider (1975) and several key cyberpunk stories including Snow Crash, True Names, and Neuromancer. Cyberpunk stories usually feature a hacker as the hero/heroine who successfully battles an oppressive government and/or corporation, and is therefore very popular with hackers who can identify with the protagonist.

There has always been a close relationship between hackers and science fiction. There is an overlap between hacker culture, cyberpunk culture, and science fiction culture. Hackers are avid readers of science fiction. One of the first uses (unsanctioned) of the proto-internet, the ARPANET, was to discuss science fiction. Hackers use science fiction to inform their software design and inspire their computing innovations. The original definition of the word “hacker” is someone almost obsessively interested in technology and who finds unintended uses for devices to improve their function. In that way, hackers played a key role in the development of computing and as inspiration for science fiction writers.

2~2:50 Superman and Nnedi Okorafor

Toorow is Now: The Evolution of Women’s Rights in Nnedi Okorafor’s Short Fiction by Sandra Lindow

In an article in *Locus*, Gary K. Wolfe writes that “Okorafor’s genius has been to find the iconic images and traditions of African culture ... and tweak them just enough to become a seamless part of her vocabulary of fantastika” (17). This vocabulary of icons then recurs throughout her fiction to demonstrate how the culture changes but remains consistent through time. Many of these icons such as dada hair, palm wine, red stew, and alligator pepper are closely connected to women’s freedoms. For instance one of her recurring feminist trickster heroes is a woman called “The Palm Tree Bandit” (*Kabu-Kabu*, 252). The Palm Tree Bandit, a lively woman named YaYa (Think yes, yes), becomes a cultural hero because she is able to flaunt the social more that women must not climb palm trees to tap the palm wine because men might see their underwear. After Palm Tree Bandit’s successful thefts, women are allowed to climb palm trees if they offer sacrifices to her first (255). In “Binti”, a high school student is able to use her initiative to outwit the aliens who murdered her friends. This paper will discuss Okorafor’s approach to evolving women’s freedom and agency.

The Studio that Produced the Man of Tomorrow: Joe Shuster, Jerry Siegel and the Creation of Superman Comics by N.C. Christopher Couch

When Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster created the Superman comic feature in the mid-1930s, their original proposal was to create a science fiction comic strip to appear in newspaper comic sections. Their first set of strips was adapted to the form of a comic book short story for the first appearance of Superman in the comic book *Action* no. 1 in 1938, and subsequent issues of this and the subsequent eponymous comic book continued to appear in the short story format.

As the character became more successful, Siegel and Shuster began to assistants. Eventually they organized a studio in their hometown of Cleveland, Ohio. It has often been noted that the success of Superman in comic books led to the realization of Siegel and Shuster's dream of having a comic strip about their character. The Siegel and Shuster studio was modeled on the comic book shops of the 1930s in New York, like the Eisner and Iger Studio, but it was the only studio dedicated to producing comics about a single character until Eisner created *The Spirit*. It was also the only studio that produced both comic book stories and a comic strip. These two comic media have very different narrative structures. The long continuities of the comic strip, extending over months and broken into daily segments, is remarkably different from the short stories of the comic book format. No comparison of the work of this group of artists and writers in these two different but related media has been made.

As the artist of the team, Shuster was key in setting up the organization of the studio, following the Eisner model of breaking the work into separate specializations in order to meet deadlines. The publishing and deadline structure of these two media is also quite different. The newspaper comic strips allowed the studio artists and writers not only to create longer science fiction and action narratives featuring giant robots and later World War II stories, but to include more quotidian elements, humor, and family relationships, which also fit the strip to its journalistic context. The book and strip were also part of a larger media universe of Superman fiction in the 1930s and 1940s, including radio shows and serials, and elements from all these venues became part of the canon. After Siegel and Shuster lost their case to reclaim the rights to the character, they continued to work in comics through the 1960s, and Shuster continued to employ a variety of artist to create stories to sell to publishers like Charlton comics, working more in the mode of the studio than as a freelancer like most comic book workers.

3-3:50 The Science Fiction Now: How Today's Technology and Society Reflect Speculative Concepts

Isaac Bell and Amanda Hemmingsen

This panel will examine the ways in which the possibilities and challenges of the modern resemble questions and ideas from science fiction stories. We will look at two major aspects of this topic; the first dealing with technological and scientific advancements that have implications for posthumanist philosophy, and the second studying recent changes in the social dimension of dystopia as seen through contemporary attitudes toward various inequalities in our society. Isaac Bell, MA Rhetoric from the University of Kansas, will focus on the posthumanist/transhumanist implications of medical advancements, human modification, and the rise of artificial intelligences. Bell's presentation will also show how many contemporary science fiction stories are negotiating the real-world changes we are witnessing. Amanda Hemmingsen, MA Literature from the University of Kansas, will look at how dystopic settings and structures in many science fiction works shape, reflect, and respond to social inequalities. Just as *1984* has become a cultural shorthand for fascist government, contemporary stories mark the limits of group understanding of its capacity to reflect and redirect its political will. We hope to spur a

discussion that will improve our ability to educate audiences about these questions through the vehicle of imaginative storytelling.