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By Sharon Kim

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Letter from the Editor

Happy Holidays!

2019 has been a busy year for our team at the Journal of Science Fiction. In addition to the publication of our second annual special issue (this time on Disability Studies), we also added two new editors to the team and upgraded our website and submission interfaces. In 2020, we plan to compile our third annual special issue, this time on Environmental Science Fiction, and await your submission of full-length articles, reflection pieces, and book reviews in the coming months.

This issue's articles explore the intersections of marginalized group experiences, multimedia representation, cultural preservation, and human evolution. Sharon Kim looks at the posthuman implications of humanist nostalgia and the role of Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire* in her analysis of *Blade Runner 2049*. Both Emad El-Din Marei Aysha and Kirsten Bussiere explore the influence of H.G. Wells on modern science fiction works, the former illuminating the cultural and conceptual obstacles to writing utopia in popular Arab speculative fiction, and the latter exploring the conceit of time travel in Marge Piercy's 1976 feminist classic, *Woman on the Edge of Time*. Jesús Fernández-Caro foregrounds the intersection of posthumanism and animal studies in his exploration of *Horizon: Zero Dawn*, a 2017 videogame which uniquely challenges the boundaries of the human, and exploring another unique body of SF work, Babak Zarin assesses the technological and cultural obstacles to preserving sound recordings of Filk (science-fiction-and-fantasy-related folk music) for present and future archivists.

In a brief editorial return to the question of disability studies, Riccardo Gramantieri explores the structural and temporal overlaps between the SF works of Philip K. Dick and the historical succession of various psychiatric movements in America. And lastly, our issue concludes with Carlen Lavigne's exploration of the undermined subversive potential of the early-2000s era space opera, *Farscape*. Together these pieces question the ontology and phenomenology of past, present, and future humanity, outlining a lineage of SF conceits and concerns represented across various mediums. From the practical to the theoretical, the pieces contained herein foreground the primacy of diversity and the means by which SF allows us to examine what it means to be human.

Thank you to the authors, reviewers, artists, and editorial staff without whom the Journal would cease to be. We wish you a happy holiday season and look forward to hearing from you in 2020!

Aisha Matthews Walker
Managing Editor, *MOSF Journal of Science Fiction*

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Cover Art

Cover photo: “Where Day and Night Meet”: Josef Barton

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Pale Fire: Human Image and Post-human Desire in *Blade Runner 2049*

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Abstract: In *Blade Runner 2049* (2017), humans live surrounded by artificial versions of the human: holographs, digital AIs, android replicants, and others. Embedded within the film are references to the novel *Pale Fire* by Vladimir Nabokov, which decodes these variant images by tying their proliferation to the experience of traumatic loss. In replicant form, human simulacra supplement a decimated human population, but they also master the human image so completely that they make both the image and the original unnecessary. Ironically, they also preserve a desire for humanity that "real" humans may have lost. Recognizing this condition, *Pale Fire* supplies the film's strategies for retrieving human meaning in the midst of technological replication. The central character, K, keeps a copy of *Pale Fire* in his apartment. Although the police use extracts from the book to keep K in subjugation, K's private reading of *Pale Fire* empowers his trajectory in the film, an arc that parallels his changing relation to Rick Deckard.

Keywords: *Blade Runner 2049, Blade Runner, Pale Fire*, Philip K. Dick, simulacra, identity

Blade Runner 2049 (2017) is often described as a visually stunning film. Its cinematography, art design, and visual effects have won major awards, and the bleak world it portrays is defined by its technological mastery of the image. The film even opens with a close-up of an eye. Yet, this highly visual cinematic work patterns itself on a literary text—*Pale Fire* (1962) by Vladimir Nabokov.[1] The novel makes a literal appearance in one scene of *Blade Runner 2049*, when a character named Joi holds an old copy up to view. Its influence, however, pervades the film: in haunting poetry, unreliable clues, and questions of identity and being. *Pale Fire* shapes the film's enigmatic perspective and provides its strategies for retrieving human meaning in the midst of technological replication. Ultimately, the post-human images of *Blade Runner 2049* serve to incite desire for the human while imagining its near extinction.

Blade Runner 2049 returns to the world of the classic *Blade Runner* (1982), thirty years after the events of that film. In the original, Rick Deckard must track and kill android replicants in Los Angeles. They are illegal on Earth after a violent revolt, but are still used heavily for off-world labor. Nearly indistinguishable from humans, the replicants can have capabilities in excess of the human—greater strength, intelligence, or beauty, depending on the purpose of their manufacture. Deckard falls in love with an unusual replicant named Rachael, one who is created with real human memories and an undetermined life span. The film ends as the two run away together. In *Blade Runner 2049*, a new model of replicant, programmed to submit to humans, lives legally on Earth. The story begins with the discovery of Rachael's remains—and evidence that she died in childbirth.

The central character, police officer K, is both a new-model replicant (serial number KD6-3.7) and a blade runner, retiring (that is, killing) old models still considered a threat. After making a kill, K undergoes a post-traumatic "baseline test" at the police station, reciting poetry while a machine gauges his vital signs. K's baseline recitation comes from *Pale Fire*:

> And blood-black nothingness began to spin
> A system of cells interlinked within
> Cells interlinked within cells interlinked
> Within one stem. And dreadfully distinct
> Against the dark, a tall white fountain played.
> (Nabokov, 1989, p.59; Fancher & Green, n.d., pp. 9-10)

An interrogator asks emotion-provoking questions like, "When you are not performing your duties do they keep you in a little box?" (Fancher &

Green, n.d., p.10); or "What's it like to hold the hand of someone you love?" (p.10). The correct answer to these questions is not a yes or no, but "cells" or "interlinked." When the examiner asks, "Do you feel like there is a part of you that is missing?" (p.10), K responds, "Interlinked" (p.10). The content of the answer is not as important as K's emotional stability while answering. The test diagnoses whether K has strayed from factory settings and determines if he can still be trusted as a replicant.

The film's inclusion of *Pale Fire* is deliberate. K keeps a well-read copy in his apartment, which his girlfriend, Joi, suggests they read together. The film's script describes the book as "beloved" (p. 40) to K and originally gave it a more conspicuous role in the film, including the final words of K's final scene: "*...A tall white fountain played...*" (Fancher & Green, p.108; see also pp. 16; 40; 81). Like Joi, the book is a part of K's home life, set apart from the realities of his brutal job. The police use extracts from *Pale Fire* to keep K subjugated, an odious co-optation of poetry for totalitarian control. Yet K's private, personal reading of the novel restores the poetry to its literary context and takes it it in directions unintended by the police.

Nabokov's novel *Pale Fire* presents a long poem called "Pale Fire," composed by fictional poet John Shade, with a preface, commentary, and index written by Charles Kinbote, a fictional scholar and "friend" to the poet. Kinbote has prepared the manuscript for publication after an escaped inmate, who mistakes Shade for the judge that sentenced him, fatally shoots him. The novel unfolds in the ironic interaction between the scholarly apparatus and the poem, which Shade composes after the loss of his only child—Hazel. One winter's night, Shade's daughter walks out onto thin ice and drowns. Her death appears at line 500 (Boyd, 1999, p. 33), the mid-point and the heart of the poem.

Pale Fire is thus an artistic proliferation that has at its heart a profound devastation. The 999 lines of Shade's poem emerge in the midst of the father's grief over his daughter, while the elaborate scholarly text is Charles Kinbote's response to the death of the poet. In particular, both the "Pale Fire" poem and the *Pale Fire* novel present the replication of images as the response to loss. This multiplication both reveals and produces an evacuation of the self, as seen in the opening lines:

> I was the shadow of the waxwing slain
> By the false azure in the windowpane;
> I was the smudge of ashen fluff—and I
> Lived on, flew on, in the reflected sky.
> And from the inside, too, I'd duplicate
> Myself... (Nabokov, 1989, p. 33)

The poem opens with the replication of loss. Fooled by the reflected sky, a bird slams into a closed window, doubling or splitting into a slain self and its shadow. The poet takes the latter figure for himself—not the waxwing, but the shadow of the waxwing. What lives on is the stunned and immaterial version of itself—the bird after impact, the poet after his daughter's death. Shade repeats this concept in lines 5-6 of the poem: standing inside his room, he duplicates himself in the windowpane, positioning his reflection in the glass so that his image appears standing outside on the lawn. This visual game manifests his awareness that he exists in the world as a projected shade/ Shade, visible to others but hollowed of substance. He is no stranger to this game of multiplied shades. As a child, he responds to the death of his parents by imagining a "thousand parents" (p.35) in place of the ones he had lost.

This situation is not unlike the one presented in *Blade Runner 2049,* in which extinction-level disaster underlies the proliferation of images. The luminous array of holographs, simulations, and replicants exists because of the decimation of the human population, following an ecological collapse. Each image thus figures a human loss and compen-

sates for it. The character of Dr. Ana Stelline may illustrate this correlation more fully. As a response to living in medically-sealed isolation, Stelline specializes in memory-making, crafting beautiful images of a world she has lost and experiences she can no longer have. In some cases, her images compensate for a larger loss, not just her personal isolation, but also extinction outside her walls. When she first appears in the film, for example, she is at work in a forest of green, sunlit trees, which have been produced digitally in her studio. Because much of the biosphere has been destroyed in *Blade Runner 2049,* such trees only exist in digital form, with no extant reality apart from their artificial image. Only one real tree appears in the film, at the farm where Rachael is buried, and it is dead, propped up by wires. With the natural world similarly grey and barren, intense color arrives through artifice: the green forest, the vivid reds and blues of neon ads, and the yellow plumes of a holographic showgirl.

Among the images that supplement loss in the film, one type becomes particularly threatening, following patterns theorized by Jean Baudrillard as "simulacra." Simulacra are powerful because they produce genuine symptoms of the real: not just an appearance that resembles the real, but the actual presence of traits associated with the real. For instance, a man simulating sickness will not merely look sick; he will have a fever or discolored phlegm, even though he is not genuinely ill (Baudrillard, 2001, p.171). Because of those "real" symptoms, simulacra call into question all authentic signs of the real, because they show that such signs, the signs by which people recognize the real, can be simulated apart from their initially intended cause or significance. High-order simulacra are especially threatening because they reduce the real to a network of signs, which either murders the real or exposes the real as already lost.[2] In its supreme version, the simulacrum makes the distinction between real and simulation irrelevant; simulacra then become the "hyperreal"—both more real than the real and destroying categories like "real" by exceeding their capacity to delimit.

Like the hyperreal, "More human than human" is the motto of the Tyrell Corporation, the manufacturer of replicants in *Blade Runner* (Deeley & Scott, 1982). Similarly, the replicants of *Blade Runner 2049* claim to be "more human than the humans" (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.98). As fulfillments of the hyperreal, the replicants justify the references to Baudrillard's simulacra in various studies of *Blade Runner.*[3] The connection is apt, and even anticipated by Philip K. Dick's novel *The Simulacra* (1964), which he published a few years before *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), *Blade Runner*'s source. Yet when it comes to *Blade Runner,* the discussion of simulacra is more about theory than reality. Replicants exist, but they are illegal on Earth and thus are very few in number there; only five are known to the authorities, and four of them are dead by the end of the film. In *Blade Runner 2049*, however, the numbers are reversed. There are only around five human characters with names, and they live enveloped in simulacra: virtual environments, intelligent holographs, and replicants who so closely reproduce the human in appearance, aspiration, and mentality that they threaten the value of human existence. What need is there for a real human, when the replicant is virtually identical and in many cases better?

In terms of screen presence in *Blade Runner 2049*, human simulacra far outnumber the humans. In several scenes, the people are dwarfed by giant holographs. Other scenes contain no human characters at all—only replicants or digital AIs—which ultimately obviates the need for human presence, including the human image itself. In one scene, Officer K visits the Wallace Corporation to obtain information for his investigation. A representative named Luv meets him to answer his questions. Because both are replicants, the information exchange could take place between two computers, or two smart phones. There is no need for a ruggedly good-looking male figure or the immaculately dressed female form; no need for the formalities of polite speech or other face-to-face human dynamics, such as the mild sexual advance from

Luv and its polite but definite refusal from K. This scene, which takes place in a windowless hall with only artificial lighting, blocks out the natural world and similarly short-circuits the human out of reality except in its simulated form. Like the preservation tanks housing specimens of past replicant-models, it virtually places the human within such a position—obsolete, defunct, sealed off from the living world.

In another scene, Joi, K's holographic girlfriend, synchronizes her program with the body of a replicant prostitute, so that she and K can make love. The film depicts all of the human characters as essentially alone, living without spouses, families, or lovers in the present day. In the world of *Blade Runner 2049,* such intimacy only appears between a replicant and a holographic AI synced with a replicant body. As K and Joi slowly embrace in mutual giving, desire, and love, the scene ironically cuts to a giant ad for Joi, the digital program that promises to be "*Whatever you want to see. Whatever you want to hear*" (Fancher & Green, n.d., p. 22). This juxtaposition prevents the easy acceptance of Joi's and K's simulated love as love, although it bears the signs of the real and is taken as such by the parties involved. Like the trees that only exist as artificial images, human love and joy seem to have vanished, leaving only the replicant Luv and the digital Joi, whose names alter, replace, and perhaps parody what they resemble.

The simulacra of *Blade Runner 2049,* while standing for the absence of their originals, yet perform the work of inciting desire for the human real. K's longing to be a human— "born[,] not made," as Joi puts it (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.56)—is one of the core drives in the film. It is repeated by Joi's desire to be real, and the underground replicant leader Freysa's statement that they all wish they were Rachael's child. The real human is no longer necessary, yet the post-human successors still desire it, modeling themselves on the human image by choice even after they become self-aware beyond their manufacture. The most intense desire for the human comes from the artificial images that construct it, suggesting that the real humans no longer understand or respect what it means to be human, or otherwise require artificial stimuli to remember. Revealing this condition, *Blade Runner 2049* searches for what remains of the human, retrieving it from its submergence in simulacra through methods derived from *Pale Fire*.

Nabokov's novel foregrounds the problem of the simulacrum, since it begins and ends with a fatal inability to distinguish image from reality. However, the poetry of "Pale Fire," which K recites in his baseline test, presents an image beyond artifice: the mysterious white fountain. Not made by any human or machine, it is "Not of our atoms" (Nabokov, 1989, p.59) and thus represents a transcendent reality: not loss, absence, or illusory "sham" like the other images in the poem (p.59), but an evocation of life, refreshment, and pleasure as it "played" (p.59). Shade sees it one evening during a heart attack. His body technically dies, but his consciousness perceives the blood-black darkness spinning into cells interlinked within cells interlinked, and the white fountain. Shade is later revived. Prior to this point, without religious faith or even faith in ghosts, Shade was struggling to come to terms with his daughter's death. His vision, however, convinces him that something lives on past the material body. Soon after, Shade reads in a magazine that a woman saw a white fountain during her own near-death experience. He is excited: two witnesses both saw the white fountain—meaning that it must be real! Later, however, the magazine writer reveals there was a misprint of "mountain" as "fountain," destroying the poet's proof of eternal life.

The oscillating status of the white fountain—as a mere mental image or as a real perception of eternity—resembles the uncertain status of K's childhood memory, his recollection of a toy horse carved from wood, which is his only possession. In this memory, when a group of boys want to take the horse from him, he hides it and refuses to tell where it is, even as the boys beat him up for it. The status of the memory—as a genuinely lived experience, or as

a fictional, artificial implant—is deeply linked to the question of K's identity. Is he a born human? Or is he a manufactured replicant? Does he have a soul (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.22)? In "Pale Fire," the fountain confirms the existence of a soul for Shade and has a similar meaning for K. When K finds proof that his memory is real, he believes that he is a human, and his emotions diverge dangerously from baseline. When the police detect the anomalies in K, they single out the fountain in his recitation because it is "dreadfully distinct," in contrast to the cells that are "interlinked within one stem" (Fancher & Green, n.d., pp.64-65). K's belief that he has a soul makes him both distinct and dangerous to the social order. For K, however, the white fountain is distinctively "against the dark" (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.65), because it is his resistance to the technological system that has produced him. Like Shade's vision, K's subversive view of the fountain disintegrates and is reconstituted in different terms. He realizes that he is not a human, but according to the script, his thoughts return to the white fountain as he dies (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.108).

Similarly, when Shade learns of the misprint of "mountain" as "fountain," it does not destroy his hope but rather shifts it away from the image and toward language:

> But all at once it dawned on me that this
> Was the real point, the contrapuntal theme;
> Just this: not text, but texture; not the dream
> But topsy-turvical coincidence,
> Not flimsy nonsense, but a web of sense.
> Yes! It sufficed that I in life could find
> Some kind of link-and-bobolink, some kind
> Of correlated pattern in the game,
> Plexed artistry, and something of the same
> Pleasure in it as they who played it found.
> (Nabakov, pp.62-63)

While the misprint might suggest the radical unreliability of texts, the poet finds comfort in the "web of sense" spun in the free-play of language, connecting, for example, the word "link" with the etymologically and conceptually unrelated "bobolink." This "game" (p.63) fulfills the ludic nature of the fountain that "played" (p.59), sublimating Shade's quest for the eternal in words, texts, and authors interlinked. Such correlated patterns, a distant relative of the argument by design, restore to the poet a "Faint hope" (p.63). The poet realizes the diminished nature of this hope: "some kind of link," "some kind of correlated pattern," "something of the same/ Pleasure," close but not quite (p.63). Yet it satisfies him, and it recollects one of Shade's fondest memories: his daughter reading poetry in her room, calling out to her mother across the house and asking the meaning of various words like "grimpen," or "chtonic." The father, working in a third room, overhears them with pleasure, and when the mother hesitates over the word "sempiternal," he calls the definition out to them (p.46). The family thus connects across their spatial divides through words, through poetry, manifest in texts but not reduced to them.

In a comparable move in *Blade Runner 2049,* when K finds Deckard in an abandoned city, their first contact occurs through a literary text, *Treasure Island* (1882). Emerging from a dark corridor, Deckard is heard before he is seen, speaking in words from the 19th-century novel, and K recognizes the allusion. The shared familiarity with the book creates the first tentative link between them, like a strand of Shade's web. Yet, *Blade Runner 2049* evokes a wider literary network. The letter K as a name evokes the K of Kafka's *The Trial* (1925) and *The Castle* (1926), in addition to the K that abbreviates Kinbote in *Pale Fire*. Similarly, K also recalls the character Ka of the novel *Snow* (2002), by Orhan Pamuk, which adds another dimension to the ending of the film, in which K lies down to his final rest under a softly falling snow.

Such a web of interconnections can expand indefinitely, not least because *Blade Runner 2049* is a sequel to a film based on a book, automatically positioning it within an intertextual (and also peri-/para-/hyper-/and hypo-textual) web. Its allusiveness is integral to its way of generating meaning,

which perhaps attempts to recreate the nature of its predecessors. There are, for example, whole books devoted to tracing the web of links in *Pale Fire*, just as there are whole scholarly books on *Blade Runner.*[4] Both the novel and the film ignite an unusual level of interpretive fire: an endless desire to read and re-read, and to examine and speculate on each detail, akin to the inexhaustible capacity of fans to watch and re-watch *Blade Runner* with abundant commentary and debate. The enthusiasts of *Pale Fire* do not simply analyze or dissect; they experience sheer "joy" (Boyd, 1999, p.5) akin to the "great deal of unalloyed pleasure" (Bukatman, 2012, p.8) among *Blade Runner* fans.

While this web thus energizes a type of vitality, *Pale Fire* admits the sometimes-parasitic nature of secondary scholarship, which adds yet another dynamic to *Blade Runner 2049*. Kinbote's labor as scholar perpetuates the memory of John Shade, giving the poet a literary afterlife. However, Kinbote's commentary also multiplies unnecessary material that serves Kinbote's personal agenda more than it provides helpful insight on "Pale Fire."[5] Shade's poem, the human core of the novel, thus threatens to be lost in the commentary, especially as Kinbote advises the reader to read his notes first before reading the poem (p.28). Kinbote even advises a second and third reading of his notes, stating that without them, Shade's poem has "no human reality at all" (p.28). The commentary thus supplants what it claims to support, like the hyperreal supplanting the real. Kinbote's work thus presents a challenge: the reader of "Pale Fire" must read the poem within, despite, and in conjunction with the unreliable meta-text of its presentation. Indeed, the design of *Pale Fire* is uniquely crafted to intensify the desire to read the poem, encased as it is within a discursive apparatus that far exceeds "Pale Fire" in bulk or mass. The more prolix and suspect the commentary, the more acute the desire to recuperate the poem within it.

Blade Runner 2049 exhibits a similar strategy, creating a yearning for the human through its depiction of a world in which the real human has become scarce and even unnecessary, lost in artificial versions of itself. Yet the search for human authenticity is not as simple as the rejection of replicants or technological imaging, just as the solution to reading "Pale Fire" is not as easy as reading the poem and ignoring the frame. Kinbote's notes cannot be discarded wholesale because they contain information necessary to the novel's narrative, along with some illuminating context for "Pale Fire"; but those elements must be sifted through several hermeneutic layers and pieced together.

K's relationship to Deckard demonstrates an analogous process: literal detective work unearthing clues, discarding false leads, and slowly tracing a lost blade runner in hiding. For much of the film, K's quest to find Deckard parallels his own quest to be human, since the search for Deckard is part of the search for Rachael's child, who K believes to be his own origin and identity. To find Deckard, in that sense, is to become human. Yet after K realizes that Deckard is not his father, his strongest aim is to make sure that Deckard survives. His arc in the film is transformed, no longer about becoming human, but about the difficult task of finding the fugitive, endangered human.

Although his status as human or replicant is hotly contested, Deckard stands for what remains of the human in the world of *Blade Runner 2049.* As screenwriter Hampton Fancher has commented, "No matter how automated things become, the part that's human, the part that remains, is stubbornness. Life is stubborn. Deckard has that quality. He is stubborn. He's a cowboy. And he's wild" (qtd. in Lapointe, 2017, p.190). As portrayed in the film, he is also vulnerable, worn-out, dependent on technology, and at the mercy of technological forces. Deckard owes his life to replicants, having been saved by Rachael, then later Roy Batty, in the original film; by the end of *Blade Runner 2049*, he will once again owe his life to the replicant K. Still in love with Rachael, Deckard is flesh and blood deeply impli-

cated in replicant technology, to the point that his own humanity is ceaselessly called into question.[6] In this light, what has been criticized as a flaw of *Blade Runner 2049*—the underutilization of Harrison Ford as Rick Deckard (see, for example, Zacharek, 2017)—is part of its significance. The human is weak and somewhat disappointing compared to the replicant: less powerful, less clever, less heroic. But Deckard is (in the context of the film) a real human, and significantly, played by the real Harrison Ford, not a CGI Ford or other substitute, reprising his role as Deckard. The movie affirms that the human, though compromised, is worth fighting for, even dying for, as both Deckard and K resolve to do if necessary.

The turning point of the film comes when Deckard is captured and taken to the Wallace Corporation. Unable to make him reveal information about his child, Wallace offers Deckard an incentive: a replicant Rachael, perfectly recreated. Made with Rachael's DNA, speaking with Rachael's voice and touching his face, she is, as the script explains, "Authentic. Inauthentic" (p.95), and "utterly real and convincing" (p.95). Seeing her, "Deckard strains against [the] pain of loss. Strains not to lose himself in a memory of lost joy... We fear he is tempted, when—He tears his face from her hand. Rejecting the simulacrum" (p.95).

The script underscores this point: Deckard rejects the simulacrum. Focused on Deckard's face, the camera reveals the tremendous difficulty of this rejection, but it also contrasts the markedly aged Deckard with the young Rachael before him. He is no longer the young blade runner, just as this clone is not the lost Rachael. Rejecting this simulacrum means accepting the "pain of loss," seeing revivified the beauty of what has died (not just Rachael herself but who he used to be in relation to her), and recognizing that it is all gone, vanished into an increasingly distant past. Deckard chooses the real Rachael, even though it means permanent loss and unfathomable pain. He refuses to obscure the presence of that loss in a simulacrum.

K's transformation takes place immediately after this scene, in a parallel version of Deckard's trial with the seemingly resurrected Rachael. Walking down an empty street, K, beaten and bereft, sees a giant holographic ad for Joi (the digital program), after Luv has destroyed his own companion, Joi. The ad beckons to him. Neon and naked, she flirts with him in lines that Joi once used with K, exposing the pre-programmed nature of her speech—even the name Joe, which Joi suggests for K when they believe that he is human and thus deserving of a real name. What had seemed most deeply personal, private, and original to K thus unravels as simulation, artifice, and programming.

K should not be surprised to see Joi exposed in this way. As a customer, he chose to buy a product advertised as "*Whatever you want to see. Whatever you want to hear. Joi*" (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.22). Set up from the beginning in narcissistic terms, this relationship could not help but be a simulated intimacy. K gets what he pays for. It might even be said that he gets what he deserves for developing his emotional life in relation to a digital product. Yet when Luv destroys the device that houses Joi's memories, thus killing the unique version created through K, the loss to K is palpable and moving.

As K silently faces the holo ad, the words spoken earlier in the film by two replicants—Freysa and Sapper—echo in his mind, but he does not act as they would have wished. Freysa presents K with the possibility that if he joins her, he could become more human than the humans. Along those lines, and to protect herself, she asks K to kill Deckard. Freysa thus follows the predicted telos of the simulacrum, murdering and replacing the real. But instead, K resolves to protect Deckard. Recognizing what is unreal in Joi, and in himself, precipitates K's commitment to Deckard, to the real human and not to the replicant cause. In choosing to protect Deckard, K both fulfills and reverses the narrative of *Pale Fire*. He stages the ostensible drowning of the father, instead of the daughter, then restores to the father the child he had lost. In accepting that he is not a human, K ceases to be like Kinbote, who

Pale Fire, continued

tries to make Shade's poem about himself and his lost Zembla, rather than about Shade and his family. Instead of trying to be Rachael's child, K reconnects Deckard to the one who is: Dr. Ana Stelline.

K acts for the restoration of the human, even though the vision of *Blade Runner 2049* is fundamentally post-human, recognizing that the technological and social conditions already exist for a world that has no need for humans. To this end, Ana's existence is the crux of *Blade Runner 2049.* Lt. Joshi orders K to track down and kill the child, because it dissolves the already tenuous distinction between human and replicant. Joshi's visceral reaction against the replicant birth may have grasped a more devastating implication. Stelline can pass as a human and in fact, seems to be a real human. Her existence therefore proves that a female replicant can give birth to a human, thus making human women entirely unnecessary for the reproduction of life. If the technology lost with Rachael can be reconstructed, men will no longer need real human women, not even for the continuation of the species. Those who don't like "real girls" (Fancher & Green, n.d., p.31), as Mariette observes ironically of K, can replicate women like Joi, who becomes whatever her owners want to see and hear.

For this reason, in *Blade Runner 2049*, the dividing line between human and android is the female role in procreation. That line has already fleetingly been crossed by Rachael. Nonetheless, to be born instead of manufactured comes to define the human, marking the difference between a clever machine and a living soul. Since Niander Wallace makes no attempt to dissect Deckard when he captures him, the male role of insemination does not seem important for him to understand. Instead, he is obsessed with figuring out how Tyrell re-created the female reproductive capacity in Rachael.[7] For similar reasons, the replicants who witnessed the birth of her child revere the moment as a miracle. They derive hope from it and belief in themselves as something more than mechanical slaves. As Freysa declares in the film, "If a baby can come from one of us… we are our own masters" (Kosove et al & Villeneuve, 2017). The script is more detailed: "That baby meant we was more than creations. We was creation. More than just slaves" (p.98).

Freysa's declaration links procreation with the ability to create more broadly, once again recalling *Pale Fire*. The title comes from Shakespeare's lines on the moon, whose borrowed light shows a failure to generate her own: "the moon's an arrant thief, / And her pale fire she snatches from the sun" (*Timon of Athens,* IV.iii, lines 2150-51). Yet as Timon goes on to point out, the sun itself is a thief, stealing from the sea, who in turn has stolen from the moon. Everyone is a thief. Since the hunt for the original fire turns out to be a circular quest, what is really at stake is not true ownership or originality but the capacity to transmute borrowed matter into a distinctly new form. In lifting "pale fire" from Shakespeare, Shade offers a meditation on poetic creation, intertwined with thoughts of his wife, through whom "old things" he once wrote are made "new" (p.68). Shade's ability to write beautiful poetry stands in contrast to the parasitic scholar. Unable to write his own poems, Kinbote, who is also childless, must appropriate Shade's. As Kinbote himself admits, "I have reread, not without pleasure, my comments to his lines, and in many cases have caught myself borrowing a kind of opalescent light from my poet's fiery orb, and unconsciously aping the prose style of his own critical essays" (p.81). In *Blade Runner 2049*, Rachael's child means that a replicant can be more than a product of others' originality and craft. Instead of remaining the pale fire of the human image, they themselves can create, originating a new line of life.

In *Blade Runner 2049*, however, Rachael has been lost. The abilities to create and to procreate belong uniquely to the human, although in dwindling supply. Only human characters engage in creative acts: Deckard, who carves wooden animals for his child (real animals only, no unicorns); Gaff, who folds an origami sheep; and Ana Stelline, creating memories for replicants. These arts, however, are retrospective, not innovative. They look backward, like Stelline's memories, or go backward to the handmade,

to the technologically primitive, and to the traditional art form like the origami sheep, which itself alludes backward to *Blade Runner* as well as *Do Androids?* Despite its emphasis on creation, the world of *Blade Runner 2049* is far less creative, as well as less diverse and multi-faceted, than the world of the original *Blade Runner*. It offers no equivalent to the Esper device, which shattered visual convention by reading two-dimensional photographs in three-dimensional terms. It presents no character like Sebastian, who builds his own robotic companions with cleverly repurposed materials. It contains no Eldon Tyrell, innovating the unforeseen, like androids with childhood memories and the capacity to reproduce sexually. Tyrell's successor in *Blade Runner 2049,* Niander Wallace, is literally blind and "sees" through technology. His vision and creativity are correspondingly reduced, even though he can look with astonishing power into the minds of those around him. He sees, for example, Luv's desire to be the best replicant, and Deckard's sacred memory of Rachael. This technologically-driven insight does not lead to empathy, however, but instead, to a means of control over others, reflecting a failed creator lapsing into brute technological power. The film imagines a dim future: the extreme mastery of replication paired with the loss of creation.

Perhaps ironically, this diminished creativity makes *Blade Runner 2049* a more faithful adaptation of *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* than *Blade Runner.* Philip K. Dick had intended *Do Androids?* to be a warning about humans becoming too much like the machines on which they depend. In the novel, Deckard's decision to have sex with Rachel is the sign of his dehumanization. By sleeping with her, he also falls for a trick devised by the androids, playing into their hands. In *Blade Runner*, however, Deckard's love for Rachael, along with his wonder at Roy Batty, mark the expansion of his humanity, not the loss of it. When Dick learned of Ridley Scott's intent to portray the replicant sympathetically as a superior human, he expressed shock at how far their ideas diverged (Dick, qtd. in Sammon, 1987, p.262). *Blade Runner 2049*, however, returns to Dick's vision. While not withdrawing sympathy from Rachael or K, it draws attention to the precarity of human survival, in terms similar to the novel, linking dehumanization with infertility and the loss of the natural world. The novel's Deckard wears a protective codpiece against post-nuclear radiation, yet he and his wife have no children. They rely upon a programmable mood machine to mediate their relationship and only experience their own emotional intimacy when they look at a real goat together. The symbiosis of the ecological, interpersonal, and reproductive dimensions of Dick's novel, downplayed in *Blade Runner*, becomes a noticeable element of *Blade Runner 2049*. Real humans, like real trees and animals, are scarce. They seem unable to reproduce themselves or build meaningful relationships apart from technological aids. Deckard's hand-carved animals in the film also recall a motif in Dick's oeuvre: "the championing of creative people, especially men, who work with their hands, often within a specific craft tradition..." (LaFarge, 2017, p.28). This ability to make things by hand stands in counterpoint to the advanced technology portrayed in the film, a point of difference as rare in that world as the real wood of the toy horse.

In terms of creative power, *Blade Runner 2049* is a pale fire to its predecessor. However, its insight into the contemporary human condition is more piercing. Power, vitality, and proliferation belong to the artificial image: digital environments, constructed pasts, projections of the human as replicant, holograph, or AI. These lambent simulacra supplement the decimated human, numbing the sense of loss and fulfilling communal needs that humans no longer seem able to provide for one another. Reliance on these supplements, however, seems to evacuate the human of meaning. The more that the artificial human image proliferates, the more that its necessity recedes. Baudrillard's theory suggests that when nostalgia appears, it signifies the death of the real, a post-mortem desire for something already extinguished by the simulacrum. Perhaps along these lines, Slavoj Žižek (2017) criticizes the

film's humanism as an aspect of its "falsity." Yet the movie's retrospective longing for the Blade Runner past, and for the genuine human, is nonetheless underwritten by hope, the "puzzle of fractured hope" (Green, 2018) that screenwriter Michael Green sees in *Pale Fire* and inscribes into the film.

As seen in the aging Deckard, *Blade Runner 2049* maintains the belief that somewhere in hiding, even if it is enfeebled, receding, and always in doubt, the human has survived and must be recovered. Like *Pale Fire, Blade Runner 2049* incites desire for this recuperation of the human. The film also offers a second, interconnected hope, figured in the lost Rachael, who somehow gave birth to the human real in Ana Stelline. All members of contemporary society have their humanity mediated and constructed, to varying degrees, through the pale fire of artificial images. Ana Stelline represents the possibility that instead of being lost in variant images, an authentic human can emerge from engagement with them. This result, as it is in the film, may be rare, and even miraculous.

Notes:

[1] Several online commentaries note the presence of *Pale Fire* in the film, the most substantive by Maria Bustillo (2017), who views the novel as the film's "touchstone." While agreeing with Bustillo, this essay differs from current commentaries in analyzing the film's intertextual relation to *Pale Fire,* reading it as the recuperation of the human. See also Vishnevetsky (2017), Page (2017), Lawson (n.d.), Hagood (2017), Lane (2017).

[2] For the murder of the real, see Baudrillard, 2000, pp. 59-83. For the theory of simulacra, Baudrillard, 2001, pp.169-187.

[3] Bruno, 1990, pp. 183-195. Bukatman, 2012, p. 76. Flisfeder, 2017, pp. 75-78; 118-121.

[4] See Boyd (1999); Meyer (1988); Davies (2011) for *Pale Fire*, and Bukatman (2012); Flisfeder (2017); Brooker (2005); Kernan (1991) for *Blade Runner.*

[5] While supplying many pages on the history of Zembla (Kinbote's native land), Kinbote leaves only a brief comment on the poem's account of Hazel's death, which he criticizes as "too labored and long," a "theme" (p.196). Blind to the poet's deep pain, and his love for both daughter and wife, Kinbote is also unable to see the source of the poem's title (p. 80; p.285). His scholarly notes can be similarly unhelpful: "Line 384: book on Pope[.] The title of this work which can be found in any college library is Supremely Blest, a phrase borrowed from a Popian line, which I remember but can-not quote exactly" (p.195). Kinbote's own suffering and struggles should not be dismissed, but the commentary on "Pale Fire" is not the place to express them.

[6] The infamous 'Deck-a-rep' debate—the question of whether Deckard is a human or a replicant—has generated much discussion. In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?,* Deckard is definitely a human. *Blade Runner,* however, exists in about eight different versions, and Ridley Scott altered later iterations to suggest that Deckard is a replicant. Harrison Ford, however, insists that Deckard is a human and plays the character as such. Similarly, Hampton Fancher, who worked on both movie scripts, wrote with the assumption that Deckard is human, although he respects the ambiguity of keeping the question in play. (Weintraub, 2017).

[7] The stated rationale for Wallace's obsession—the need for replicants to multiply more quickly than he can manufacture, for interplanetary colonization—is absurd. However long it takes to manufacture a replicant, the time is almost certainly shorter than forty weeks and far less risky, given the host of problems that can affect a human embryo during gestation and birth, not to mention the long, complicated process of nurturing an infant into an adult. Replicants can also be programmed to build their own factories off-world and oversee their own production.

Pale Fire, continued

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Trouble in La La Land: Arab Utopian Science Fiction in Comparative Perspective

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Abstract: This article examines the topic of utopia in Arabic science fiction (SF), with a special emphasis on Egyptian SF. The argument here is that utopian SF came late to the corpus of Arabic SF because the notion of utopia itself is foreign. The social and political developments in European history that gave birth to utopia in modern political philosophy did not take place in the Arab world, with a few notable exceptions from the distant past in philosophy, poetry, and folktales. Even when Arab SF authors began writing about utopia they continued to wrestle with the notion, focusing too much on mundane considerations of everyday life, and isolating their utopias. Thus, they created an unnecessary standoff between the ideal community and all others. Under closer inspection we discover that similar problems perplexed Utopian literature even in its European birthplace, relying on H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* as a model. The ups and downs of Arab politics–i.e. the Iraq War and the Arab Spring revolutions–have also impacted Arab SF authors. Nonetheless, Arab authors have been tackling the learning curve, especially since the turn of the new century, while also making an original contribution to the corpus of utopian SF through relying on their literary heritage and religious traditions. Comparisons with SF produced in other non-Western cultures, as well as older literary and poetic traditions across the world, helps bear this out.

Keywords: Utopia, Dystopia, Arabian Nights, Plato, Islam, Farabi, Ibn Khaldun, Atlantis

Lovers
O lovers, lovers it is time
to set out from the world.
I hear a drum in my soul's ear
coming from the depths of the stars.

Our camel driver is at work;
the caravan is being readied.
He asks that we forgive him
for the disturbance he has caused us,
He asks why we travelers are asleep.

Everywhere the murmur of departure;
the stars, like candles
thrust at us from behind blue veils,
and as if to make the invisible plain,
a wondrous people have come forth.

--- Rumi

Sedentary culture is the goal of civilization. It means the end of its lifespan and brings about its corruption.

-- Ibn Khaldun

Introduction

Arab utopian SF almost seems to be a forgotten concept nowadays, certainly since the democratic backlashes that beset Egypt and Tunis following the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions. Dystopia is now in vogue, with a seemingly endless list of novels like Mohammad *Rabie's Otared* (2014) and Basma Abdel Aziz's *The Queue* (2013) coming out of Egypt specifically (Kanbergs, 2018; Machado, 2016). The truth of the matter is, however, that utopia has always been a problematic notion in Arabic literature. Prior to the Arab Spring, and in some ways prefacing it, Ahmed Khaled Tawfiq's dystopian *Utopia* (2008) portrayed the poor as preyed upon in bloodcurdling hunting trips to liven up the drab, hedonistic lives of the residents in a walled-in compound of the super-rich in Egypt (Campbell, 2015). Two novels of the 1970s, Ahmad `Abd al-Salām al-Baqqāli's *The Blue Flood* and Muhammad `Azīz Lahbābī's *The Elixir of Life*, feature utopias turning into dystopias. *The Elixir of Life* depicts an Arab society,

Morocco, that falls apart in a war between haves and have-nots when an immortality treatment is invented (Campbell, 2015a); the *Blue Flood* is dealt with extensively below.

To better make sense of this early apprehension over utopia it must be understood that utopia itself is *not* an SF invention (Jameson, 2005; Raymond Williams, 1978). To begin with, it wasn't even an entirely literary construction (Fitting, 2009; Beauchamp, 1977). Utopia is a "political" construction (Houston, 2007; Sargent, 1982). Thomas More's seminal *Utopia* (1516) came first, to be followed by Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627), technically a work of fiction. While the notion of an ideal state goes as far back as Plato's *Republic*, it only took root in the modern world with the journeys of discovery and colonization of the New World. The enterprise of building entirely new communities abroad while also coming into contact with the Native Americans, with their symbiotic relationship with the land and what seemed to Europeans to be a relatively carefree life, inspired a whole generation of 16th- and 17th-century thinkers into building new and ideal worlds (Geraint Williams, 1992; Sanderlin, 1950). From that point onwards, fiction as social commentary took over, including Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Samuel Butler's *Erewhon: or, Over the Range* (1872), and William Morris' *News from Nowhere* (1890), among other early contributions.

This faith in social engineering a human future finally made its way into the realm of hard-core SF literature through H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* (1905). Wells, however, also critiqued all the formative literature on utopia before him, identifying inherent flaws in the existing literature–an obsession with isolation that went as far back as Plato, among other problems–and set out a whole new schema that allowed for a cosmopolitan utopianism that went beyond the more mundane concerns of everyday life. This represented a significant evolution of the concept, an evolution that Arab utopian SF has struggled with repeatedly over the years.

Highlighting this background is key because the political experiences that helped spur the notion of utopia never took place in the Arab world. The one exception is Al-Farabi's *Al-Madinah al-Fadila (The Virtuous City)*, an extended treatise on political and moral philosophy. *The Virtuous City* was a reaction to Plato, with some original contributions (Mousawi, 1989: 95-102; Badawi, 1997: 268-269).[1] It has even been argued that the whole reason Farabi was the exception to the rule was because he was not an Arab to begin with (Bakhsh, 2013) but most likely an Iranian. Mohsen Rezaei, a professor at the University of Tehran and Arabophile himself, confirms this as Iran has a long and proud utopian tradition predating its conversion to Islam, and chronicled in Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) during the Islamic period (Rezaei, 2017).[2] King Jamshid is supposed to have built a paradise called Varajamkard and King Khosrow (known as Anoshirvan) is said to have turned the whole of Persia into a cosmopolitan utopia of justice for all. There is the legendary city of Gong Dezh, described in ancient Iranian texts as a paradise and also the birthplace of a religious cult in Persian history that fought a war for justice (Rezaei, 2017). Nonetheless, even this rich and diverse literature did not make its way into Iranian literature in the modern period (Hadidi, Abdelzadeh and Alishah, 2013), let alone influence Arabic classical or modern literature.

As for the Arab world specifically, the concept of utopia had to be *introduced*, via translation in the modern context. An early example is Zaki Naguib Mahmoud's *Land of Dreams* (1939), a compendium of European utopian literature, with translation and commentary on a series of thinkers like More, Beckett, and Wells.[3]

Nonetheless, it is the argument of this paper that utopia is working its way into Arab literary circles and artistic consciousness, however slowly. The process of evolution that the notion of utopia went through in European history is taking place on Arab soil, but with an added twist. In the process, Arab authors

are making an original contribution to the corpus of utopian literature. It could even be argued that they are going beyond the dominant Western tradition by incorporating meta-history, religious considerations, and fairy tale tropes into SF, utopian and otherwise.

This article is divided into three sections. The first deals with tracing the historical and literary origins of the current backlash against utopian SF. The second deals with an earlier phase of Arab SF in which utopian notions were actually taken up wholeheartedly, realizing the limitations that restrained earlier generations of Arab SF authors, coupled with some distinctive cultural contributions. The third section deals with the latest generation of young SF authors and how they are handling utopia in their works, critiquing and upgrading the concept, and in light of their cultural heritage as Arabs and Muslims. This is followed by a summary conclusion.

The Past as Present: Problems of Scale and Scope in Utopian Arab SF

One of the first to try to make sense of the characteristics of Arab SF, and utopia as a sub genre was Egyptian author and literary critic, Yousef Al-Sharouni. He began his study, however, with an extended analysis of a story in *The 1001 Nights*–the story of the two Abdallahs, one a landlubber and the other from under the sea (Al-Sharouni, 2002: 190-191). The human Abdallah is taken underneath the sea to witness the magical kingdom of the mermaids. In this world, people live in caves dug out of the rock by certain sea-creatures who are paid in fish; all are at the beck and call of the aquatic king. When people marry, men have to pay the *mahr* (bride price), also in the form of easily available fish. The residents of this underwater world are mixed–Muslims, Christians, and Jews–with the proviso that the Muslims do not implement the *sharia* (Islamic codex). When a woman commits adultery, she is banished to the city of womenfolk to give birth. If she gives birth to a girl, then the girl has to live out all of her days in that city, an outcast. If a boy, then the king has the boy executed.

Al-Sharouni notes that the storytellers of the past were concerned with constructing a world in which the most basic human needs were provided for, namely sex, lodging, and food. (Abdallah the landlubber eventually gets tired of eating raw fish and asks the other Abdallah to take him back to the surface). We can add that even Iranian literature, with its rich history of utopians, took a turn for the worse in the modern era. In contemporary Iranian poetry, utopia was, as in Arabic history, identified with the more "human basic needs such as food and clothing, make up the priority," along with a strong religious element emphasizing humility and spiritualism (Hadidi, Abdelzadeh and Alishah, 2013: 1732).[4]

The focus on mundane concerns has made itself felt repeatedly in Arab SF. Al-Sharouni cites Sabri Musa's *The Master from the Spinach Field* (1987) in this regard. In this world, sex is no longer about love or procreation and is readily available to all who seek it, while marriage is bureaucratically controlled. Free speech and protest are just hollow acts because there is no individual creativity anymore. Life is one giant vacation. Food, typically, is bland and boring. People are only allowed to cook their own meals once a month. The vast majority of what they eat is piped to them through tubes. (Al-Sharouni sees a likeness here with the situation in Plutarch's depiction of Spartan society, in which King Lycurgus ordained that people could only eat certain kinds of meats, while eating at home–let alone hiring a cook–was strictly forbidden; Al-Sharouni, 2002: 220).

Ada Barbaro, author of *La fantascienza nella letteratura araba* (*Science Fiction in Arabic Literature*), explains that Sabri Musa's novel is actually meant to be *dystopian*, possibly a reaction to dictatorship. Decadent pleasures are used to distract people away from their political rights. The title itself is meant to signify this: "... the main protagonist is a

man working in a spinach field and I suppose that the author wants to communicate the idea of a man considered merely as a mechanism working in a system, without importance to his personality. He's considered a thing" (Barbaro, 2017).

For a *far* more contemporary example we have a self-published dystopian novella, *2063* (2017), authored by young Egyptian writer Moataz Hassanien.[5] The story is set in a future Egypt that lives under foreign military occupation. Surveillance cameras are everywhere, curfews are always in effect, and neighborhoods are walled-in; even a coastal city like Alexandria is cut off from the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, the population is actually quite content. The country was occupied because the previous military regime that ran the country failed to pay off the country's debts and dropped a nuclear bomb on Cairo to stop a popular rebellion led by the young. (The young people were protesting against the transfer of authority from the local military junta to the foreign occupiers).

The foreign occupiers, however, have done a good job balancing the budget and guaranteeing jobs, decent income, and a steady stream of products for consumption. Sexual freedoms and all manner of drugs and prostitution are allowed as well. The occupiers are so concerned with the happiness of the people that they have special centers where they 'measure' levels of satisfaction as a way to sniff out and abort potential troublemakers. But if you fail the test with a measurement of 95% satisfaction or less, they put you to sleep.

The hero in question, Yousef Ali, is warned by a sympathetic female employee (Heba Ismail) at the satisfaction center that he failed the test. They escape and take refuge in an underground residence run by a movement also concerned with making people happy–in exchange for all of his life-savings. In answer to a query, Moataz explained that the underground movement is very much a mirror-image replica of the foreign occupation (Hassanien, 2017a). They are just a bit more considerate, even getting hold of Yousef's books for him. (Reading was banned by the occupation and Yousef had inherited them from his father, a former revolutionary who witnessed the Arab Spring revolutions. Yousef wakes up every day, remembering the sound of his father shooting himself, driven to suicide after witnessing the failure of all his political dreams).

From our own readings of Arab literature, we can add that a second problem perplexing Arab utopia is isolation. In the formative period of Arabic SF, in the 1960s-70s, two interesting novels were penned that position humanity on a collision course with the ideal communities that are meant to be mankind's future. One was Nihad Sharif's *The People of the Second World* (1977), in which the ideal city established by the dreamers is deep at the bottom of the ocean (Al-Sharouni, 2002: 33, 190). The scientists in this ideal city (from different races and religions) want to save the world from itself–i.e. the threat of nuclear annihilation. But they carry out this task with threats, believing that it is morally acceptable to use the same savage methods as the powers that be. They attack the navies of the world at first, then detonate a nuclear weapon from the US arsenal in Death Valley, as a last warning.

Once they finally receive cooperation from the superpowers in the UN Security Council, they also ask for a piece of desert land in Australia. They hope to colonize it and show the world the miracles that they have been able to engender at the bottom of the ocean. Then the world powers cheat them and kill the scientists heading to this desert patch of land. Some survive and return to the still-secret underwater colony, holding out some hope for the future.

The other similarly themed novel was *The Blue Flood* (Al-Sharouni, 2002: 198). Here scientists set up their kingdom on top of a mountain that is, by pure coincidence, where Noah's Ark was supposed

to have come to rest in North Africa. This location is meant to signify that they are a metaphorical island of the saved. Then the scientists make the mistake of building a supercomputer to fuse their sciences together and incubate an indoctrinated future generation. After a time, the computer becomes self-aware and concludes that it is better to wipe out the remainder of the human race instead of waiting for mankind to mature and reach the utopian aspirations of the colony. It also starts eliminating the scientists who are opposed to this "option," by means of a blue flood reenacting its Biblical predecessor (with more modern radioactive tools, of course). Fortunately, one scientist destroys the supercomputer, only to find themselves fleeing the computer's zombie-like followers. The only catch is that when he is rescued, the world powers investigate the location and find nothing there.

In other words, the erstwhile hero had *imagined* everything, suffering from shock and thirst, after his plane crashed in the desert. Al-Sharouni considers this to be a copout from dealing with the dangerous implications that come with technological utopias.[6] But, more to the point, isolation places you into a cataclysmic struggle with the rest of mankind, with the utopians often firing the first shot.

In an earlier novel by Nihad Sharif, *The Lord of Time* (1972), there is an isolated mountain castle in which people are frozen to be revived in the future, when cures are found for their diseases. But, in the closing scene, a fight breaks out between the revived subjects and the facility is destroyed, robbing the world foreer of the scientific breakthroughs made in the castle. The problem of isolation reappears, in subtler form, in modern works like *2063*. Note that Yousef is, at first, impressed by how roomy and well-furnished the underground paradise is, just as his original life was. So, at first sight, the novella fits into the pattern identified by Al-Sharouni, suggesting that satisfying basic needs is the most people can aspire to; in the Third World setting that is their humble idea of paradise on earth–even if it means being cut off from the rest of the world. (Egypt itself is cordoned off in the novella, to prevent Egyptian migrants making their way illegally to the First World).

Even so, under closer inspection, *2063* is struggling to break out of this way of thinking. With time, Yousef and Heba get bored and agitated from being cooped up for so long, despite all the creature comforts afforded them. (There is a nearly identical scene in the *People of the Second World*, in which a journalist visiting the undersea colony begins to pine for wide open spaces and the sun and stars. Not coincidentally, he thinks these things while falling in love with one of the undersea scientists, in the tight confines of her room). At the end of *2063* the authorities find the location of this secret township. The residents escape by riding a train in the middle of the night and heading out into the open desert. The hero and his girlfriend are happy to be out in the open once again and gladly trust their fates to the unknown: a fitting ending that *could* portend well for prospects of the literature in the Arab world.

The great tragedy is that *2063* actually represents a setback, written after the democratic clamp-downs that followed the Arab Spring revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. Ironically, exaples of Arab utopian literature penned at the turn of the new century were actually more uplifting.

Out of Bounds: The Wellsian Revaluation of a Constricted Literature

The afforementioned literary reversals in Egyptian SF make sense in the context of the times in which they were written. The optimistic period came at the turn of the century with three Egyptian novels by Dr. Hosam El-Zembely that were published in 2001–*The Half-Humans, America 2030*, and *The Planet of the Viruses*. These works help illustrate just how

optimistic Arab SF used to be, not so long ago, because this was prior to the publication of Ahmad Khaled Tawfik's *Utopia* (2008), let alone Moataz Hassanien's *2063*. In the case of Tawfik's novel, which is in some ways more dystopian than *2063*, we have an Egypt divided into a world (almost two countries) of haves and have-nots, with haves protected by so-called Marines (Khayrutdinov, 2014). The explanation of the term "Marines" is that even before the Arab Spring fell on hard times, there was the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. Since that date, "Marines" has become a derogatory term in the Arab world, affixed to regimes or intellectuals who collaborate with Western imperialist powers in the 21st century.

Note that *America 2030* was written just before September 11th, when there was a new sense of possibility for the Arab world and Egypt at the beginning of the new millennium. *The Half-Humans, America 2030*, and *The Planet of the Viruses* are not utopian, as such, as the main topic of the stories isn't the building of a new world with alternative social and political systems. The novels instead present near-perfect futures in which Muslims have already legitimized their communities by reuniting, solving many of their economic and political problems and so becoming world leaders in science and exploration once again. In *The Half-Humans* and *The Planet of the Viruses,* the Union of Islamic States is explicitly modeled on the European Union.

America 2030 describes an Arab-Islamic Union, but in all cases Muslims are united, scientifically advanced, and democratically governed. More important still is the fact that Muslims aren't isolated from the rest of the world. They share their scientific knowledge with the other nations, and are humanity's saviours in some instances. In *The Half-Humans*, the Islamic Union is helping Earth terraform to and colonize Mars and Venus, and to explore the solar system, making the first manned mission to Titan. In *The Planet of the Viruses* the Islamic Union is at the forefront of researching a cure for a pandemic threatening the human race. In *America 2030*, the Arab-Islamic Union is trying to stave off a nuclear confrontation with the United States, leading the other nations not allied with the US.

In these three visions of the future, the emphasis is on states or blocks of states cooperating with other blocks of states and international bodies like the UN or World Health Organization, a far cry from *The Blue Flood* or Nihad Sharif's novels. (At one point in *People of the Second World*, the youthful scientists even contemplate destroying the whole world, fearing that this outcome is inevitable anyway). In El-Zembely's hands, Muslim utopias are turned into a tool for dialog and acceptance of the Other.

Breaking out of the isolationist straightjacket is an important antidote to religious extremism and cultural exclusivism. (It is explicitly stated that Christians have equal rights in the Arab-Islamic Union in *America 2030*, a topic not always touched upon in other Arab-Islamic examples of the genre).

Without even knowing it, El-Zembely's writings actually harken back to H.G. Wells' observations about utopia. Wells (2009), while introducing his own utopian novel, noted that isolation simply *cannot* be a criterion for either success or happiness, at variance with all those before him. What good was it to have an idealistic community if it cuts itself off from the world and is constantly at war, forever fearful of the hordes of primitive outsiders?[7] Even at the level of the individual, part of being happy is seeing the world, having the freedom to travel and expand one's horizons. People should get their fill of traveling before settling down to get married and raise a family, Wells adds, hardly feasible if one is hiding behind the walls of a city-state or on an uncharted island.

Even a country wasn't big enough for Wells. He wanted a whole planet, and one united in terms of language, currency, education, and rules stipulating that people could go anywhere, whenever they felt

like it. He understood, it seems, the kind of moral and practical dilemmas that would appear in *The Blue Flood* and *Second World*, let alone the boxed-in world of *2063*.

Wells, moreover, was explicitly opposed to the mundane needs kind of utopia painted in *The 1001 Nights* and *2063*. There is a parallel story of the two Abdullahs in Japanese literature in which a nondescript boy fisherman gains access to the Sea Palace, where he marries the princess and lives a life of luxury. But when he returns to the human world, he "finds that three hundred years have already passed. He dies shortly after of old age while opening the souvenir brought back from the Sea Palace" (Ho, 1991: 205). This resembles Greek tragedy, in which a mortal suffering from hubris–thinking he can be equal to the immortal gods–gets his comeuppance through some cruel trick of fate. Therefore, as if anticipating Yousef Al-Sharouni's analysis, Wells states in no uncertain terms: "The State is to be progressive, it is no longer to be static, and this alters the general condition of the Utopian problem profoundly; we have to provide not only for food and clothing, for order and health, but for initiative" (2009: 100). Wells also prescribes a healthy disdain for life's little pleasures, such as "tobacco, wine, or any alcoholic drink, all narcotic drugs" and even meat and tasty foods consumed for their own sake (2009: 316). The thrill of creativity, for Wells, would more than compensate for the lack of all these pleasures that only serve to dull men's wits and distract them from individual initiative. (In his view, class distinctions should also apply mental rating systems for choosing who should lead and who should follow). choose those who lead change and those who follow).

Even when Arab authors toyed with the idea of a planetary utopia, in the earlier days of Arab SF, they still fell into the trap of isolation. This is the case with Hussein Qadris' novel *Escape to Space*, published in 1981 (Al-Sharouni, 2002: 207).[8] In this novel, a human news crew goes to an idealistic planet where, not coincidentally, the very human-looking dwellers know everything about Earth and its people while nobody on Earth knows anything about those they have encountered. (The language they speak is a compendium of all the human languages, their religion a mixture of human religions, and their only televised entertainment is to occasionally watch how miserable and laughable life is on Earth). The planet has no capital and no leader and nobody has to work for a living; computers do everything for them. There is equality between the sexes and, interestingly, inhabitants are granted a measure of privacy. Houses have walls that can either let you see what is going on outside or become completely translucent. Marriage, that perennial concern of Arabs and Egyptians, is determined by computer. (Boys and girls sit in booths and are mentally scanned to see if they are compatible).

Al-Sharouni (2002) doesn't consider this to be a proper utopian novel because it offers no explanation of how people can stand the boredom and where they put their creative energies. (Qadri was an expert at travel literature, not an SF or fantasy author to begin with). What is more, when the human news crew are on their way home–in deep sleep–one of them turns the ship round, guaranteeing again the 'isolation' of the planet. (Another human delegation made it there during the story, and they commit a crime, finally livening things up on the utopian world).

Thus, Hosam El-Zembely's novels represent a movement up the utopian learning curve by doing away both with the debilitating effects of isolation and the overemphasis on mundane needs. This is implicit in *America 2030,* as it is almost a dystopian novel. (*The Half-Humans* is more explicit in this regard; see below). Central and South America united to free themselves once and for all from US hegemony. China, Korea and Japan unite to put their past conflicts and wars behind them. The EU is dedicated to the spiritual betterment of mankind. The Afro-Asian Union is built on the principles of Nehru and Gandhi; the Union's President is named

'Mandella' Singh, no doubt a nod at Nelson Mandela. Yet despite all of the collective, heroic efforts put forth by the nations of the world united against the American empire in *2030*, war nevertheless eventually breaks out, undermining the accomplishments of the different Unions.

The closing scene of the novel portrays what is left of mankind after a prolonged nuclear war, taking an Arab-Islamic Union spacecraft to look for greener pastures on another world, hoping to rebuild humanity–united despite race and religion–to avoid the mistakes of the past. Only a different planet will suffice and since Earth is dead and gone, there is no fear of damage from interstellar war.

The Wisdom of Ages: Fairy Tale Elements Re-Enter the Scientific Fray

All that being said, Wells's ideas are not the end of the road for utopianism. Arab authors seem to have understood something that Western authors haven't always realized. Isolation is often a self-inflicted wound, a function of the role of time and decay in undoing utopias.

Note that the United States in *America 2030*, despite its wealth and power, become a corrupt pariah state. There is even a scene set in the Statue of Liberty, where one of the heroes laments the passing of America's founding democratic principles. The influence of the great Islamic historian Ibn Khaldun is evident here, in the emphasis on the role of ethics in the rise of kingdoms and the evolution of nations from nomadic to sedentary or stationary life in the fall of these same kingdoms. The purity and ferocity of the nomads gave way to the opulence and luxury of urban life and was accompanied by military weakness, political disunity and moral corruption. These were phenomena he witnessed firsthand in Muslim Spain as successive nomad conquerors rescued the Muslim city folk from crusaders, only to be corrupted by city life themselves. This is much more explicitly stated in *The Half-Humans*, when the human heroes are confronted with the ancient race of the Land of the Seven Hills. The noble king of this world tells them how his people built a glorious utopian world–Plato and the Virtuous City are mentioned by name–only to fall into decline because of this self-same 'glory'. ("Majd" in Arabic has grander connotations than in English).

This world described in *The Half-Humans* is democratically governed–decisions are made through majority vote by a Council of Elders, not by royal decree–which is nonetheless arrogant and corrupt. Crimes driven by lust and envy, a long-forgotten memory, creep back into the fray as this world cuts itself off from the rest of the universe, seeing the influence of other cultures almost as a contagion.

During an interview, El-Zembely explained that science alone can never advance a nation because ethics are called for in order for science itself to advance. Religion and science have a positive, reinforcing relationship here. The catch is that once a nation advances scientifically and materially, a parting of paths occurs and religious sentiments go into decline, which in turn will spell the ultimate doom of a nation (El-Zembely, 2017). Scientific advancement in the Land of the Seven Hills comes to a standstill when the rot begins to set in; when the human heroes are apprehended, they are told explicitly that emtotion, sympathy, and faith are all primitive qualities that have been banished from their world. El-Zembely also confirmed Ibn Khaldun's influence during his talk. We can add here that the Arabic phrase for utopia is "the virtuous city," constantly drawing the Arab imagination *backwards* to some pristine past of city-state isolation. Nostalgia is an openly acknowledged facet of much Arab literature. The first time-travel story in Arab history, penned in Egypt and published in serial form in 1898, depicted a government official from the court of Muhammad Ali pasha (who reigned from 1805-1848) visiting Egypt

30 years later; i.e. during the British occupation (Cooperson, 1998:172).[9]

A less known utopian short story–"Al-Baraka" by Egyptian SF author Mohammad Naguib Matter–tells the story of a disgruntled man who comes across a mysterious place in the middle of the night (Matter, 2015). The place is full of natural greenery and consists of plush villas housing warm and kindly people who would invite complete strangers to dinner. When the erstwhile hero goes to the shops, he finds that groceries are free, paid for by the state from the country's export revenues. The man discovered this place because he had run away from his miserably materialistic life. He couldn't get ahead in his work because his diligencemade others who weren't nearly as industrious look bad, and even his wife and kids didn't appreciate him, proving to be as selfish as everyone else. The place, moreover, is called a city, but is also described as a large *village*. (Overlaps between urban and rural virtues are an all-too-frequent occurrence in modern Arab poetry on ideal cities as well; Abu Ghali, 1995: 95-97, 221-222). The story clearly celebrates traditional values of countryfolk, if in a modern and more sophisticated setting.

Utopia, insofar as it exists in Arabic non-SF literature, is often explicitly backwards looking. There isthe City of Brass in *The 1001 Nights*, a deserted ghost town populated by giant brass statues, automatons of a bygone glorious era (Hankins, 2009; Nuruddin, 2006). There is the Quranic story of the city of Eram and the people of Aad, which was a glorious city that sank into decadence and was destroyed by God after its inhabitants rejected His warnings. According to Arabic legend, Eram was founded by Shadad Bin Aad in a direct challenge to God, hoping to outdo the gardens of paradise by building its palaces and walls out of gold and silver and decorating its sands and trees with pearls and precious stones (Badawi, 1997: 259-261).

What is more, Eram has *continued* to be used as a a utopian motif by Arab poets, well into the modern era, along with other magical cities they have created (Abu Ghali, 1995: 225, 227, 238, 280-283). These cities are almost always impossible for travelers to find except by accidents of fate (pp. 283), either because they are at the top of a secluded mountain (pp. 289), or because they are invisible (pp. 284). Likewise, in *The Blue Deluge* a cloaking device is used to hide the already isolated city from prying eyes and radar, while Nihad Sharif's underwater colony is also sheltered by a wall of waves. Magical cities in modern Arab poetry, moreover, are always described as both new and old simultaneously (Abu Ghali, 1995: 290-292). This is a recognizable pattern in non-Western utopian literature. Utopians in Serbian SF, for instance took the city of Belgrade as a model for the rest of the society they hoped to create; prosperous, just, and independent of the surrounding great powers, but still true to its traditional cultural distinctiveness (Đergović-Joksimović,2000:5-6,13).

The same holds true of Matter's story; Baraka means blessing or 'blessed' in Arabic. This is because the hero *wakes up* at the end of the story and discovers he's been in a car accident, leaving open the question of whether the city/village really existed at all. The only thing we know for certain is that Matter's hero left the 'big' city he was residing in early in the story and spent a long time on the road, half lost, before happening upon the ideal community. Did he fall asleep at the wheel and have an accident then, or at the end of the story? It's almost as if the village is too good to be true.

The dream element also appears in *The Half-Humans*: "The king sat atop the throne. The king of the World of the Seven Hills. To their amazement he looked much like kings on earth did, in legend. A noble, wise man with grey hair and beard. He had white skin, was tall and thin, and wore fabrics that had no equivalent on earth. It was so hard to describe, but at best you could say it was a cross

between fur and silk. The flaming throne gave him a legendary aura. That was for sure. The three of them felt they were witnessing a bizarre dream" (El-Zembely, 2001: 104).

Arab-Islamic heritage is clearly making a comeback, lending a distinct flavor to the field and making a welcome contribution on the part of Arabic SF to the corpus of Utopian literature. As a people steeped in mystical traditions, Arab and Muslim authors seem to have an instinctive sense of apprehension for the world of modern technology and material advance. For a contemporary example, we have Ammar Mahmoud Al-Masry's *Shadows of Atlantis* (2017). The story begins in a distant future-Egypt where the Arabs are democratic, prosperous, world leaders in science once again, helping mankind explore the cosmos.[10] Everything looks fine at first, but then an invading alien race turns mankind's servants–robots–against them, and the world is nearly destroyed. It was those very mechanical servants that were responsible for the wealth and leisure enjoyed by all, Arabs included. (There is a scene in which this is explicitly stated by the human resistance–all that is left of the `Egyptian army). The one city (again) left standing in the whole world is New Atlantis, a modern Egyptian city built close to the archaeological remains of a grand ancient city predating the Sumerians, and believed to be the original Atlantis of legend.

The aliens are after the secrets of that ancient city, which will give them the power to control the universe. The story is heavily influenced by fairy tale literature, as it depicts a young man (Nour) who finds himself locked in a tower, learning magical powers to create things. When he exits the tower he finds his country in ruins, with the robots hunting mankind.

This is all reminiscent of mythological Pygmalion's power and the imagery and themes in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, in which magic allows inanimate objects to take on a life of their own and rebel against their human creators. Speaking to the youthful author, Ammar (2017a) confirmed that he deliberately used this fairy tale format, hoping to produce a new synthesis of SF with fantasy, relying also on Arab mythology.

Concluding Remarks

Arabs, it seems, are mistrusting of social engineering. They don't like to tamper with the natural order of things, as they see it. Past accomplishments, however mythical, are more comforting. So be it. But there is something to be learned from this. Utopia is not the only branch of SF. There are also dystopia, apocalypse and post-apocalypse, time-travel, robotics, cloning and genetic engineering, space exploration and colonization, cyberpunk (which tends towards dystopia), steampunk, and so many more. As Arab SF takes its tentative steps towards international stardom, with increasingly frequent translations into English amongst other languages, it is good to take stock of what has been done so far by Arab authors and rethink the very notion of utopia itself.

It is not just that Arabs are taking the same path as Western authors before them. They're setting their own agendas, as it were, like their brethren in the non-English speaking world. A quick look at Ammar's novel makes us wonder: Why does he dredge up Atlantis specifically, although it's not part of Arab-Islamic mythology? Surely the choice, like Thomas Bacon's, was utopian. Upon querying the author, I was told quite bluntly that the novel was about building a utopia, describing Atlantis as the "best city mankind [has] created." True to form, it was a wondrous place not just because of the "technology, etc., but also in manners and principles. The city is what I see to solve all the problems of our world" (Ammar, 2017a).

The youthful protagonist, Nour, also finds his initially soft life boring and wants to explore the stars, as is often expected in utopian settings. The only fly in the ointment is that there are still wars between the blocks of nations ruling the Earth–another reason he wants to leave the planet. Another central character in the novel is a

European spy, originally sent to Egypt to prevent the Arabs from developing a secret nuclear device in their contest with Europe. So, most unverally, we learn that utopias don't work if you keep the good life to yourself. Only a planet will do, if not a *universe*.

The band of heroes here are, not coincidentally, drawn from all over the world (including the European spy) and they must learn to cooperate if they are to be mankind's saviors against this foreign threat.

Utopia may be an oversized ideal that no one can never fully manifest in this world, but not aspiring to it's manifestation will only consign one to persistent underachievement. The trick is not to *overachieve*, in the process turning utopia into dystopia, and eradicating yourself and all living things out in the meantime. If Arab SF laced with mythical reservations can help prevent this eventuality, so be it!

Notes:

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[1] All the Arabic translations here are the author's own. For the benefit of Western readers, PBUH is an honorific meaning Peace Be Upon Him (see below).

[2] All the Arabic translations here are the author's own. For the benefit of Western readers, PBUH is an honorific meaning Peace Be Upon Him (see below).See also Masroori (2013) and Khosravi (2017).

[3] The book was a smash hit in Egypt at the time and reprinted in the 1950s, after the Free Officers revolution in 1952, then reprinted again in 1977, albeit in abridged form. (The chapters on Plato, Farabi and Bacon were removed for brevity's sake).

[4] In *The 1001 Nights* story cited above, the Abdullah of the seas actually gives the other Abdullah a present to take to the grave of the Prophet Muhamad (PBUH), so religion in the sense of the spiritual bond with God is a theme. *The 1001 Nights* is also as much part of Persian literature as it is Arabic literature, if not more so (Pinault, 1992).

[5] The work was penned in September 2016. Moataz Hassanien had to resort to self-publishing because the political 'allusions' in the novella scared off publishers, even those he had worked with before.

[`6] Waking up from dreams and nightmares was a common technique used in early Arabic SF; a sign of hesitancy in the face of disturbing implications. The same, it must be said, is true of utopian and dystopian stories in early Serbian SF (Đergović-Joksimović, 2000: 7-8).

[7] For the relationship between utopias and their neighbours in political thought, see Shephard (1995).

[8] All the authors cited by Al-Sharouni, apart from Ahmad `Abd al-Salām al-Baqqāli, are Egyptian.

[9] The story was Muhammad al-Muwaylihi's Hadith Isa ibn Hisham.

[10] Please see https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/36388411 for a quick synopsis and review.

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Feminist Future: Time Travel in Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*

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Abstract: After H.G. Wells' publication of *The Time Machine*, not as the first of its kind but as a seminal text, the popularity of time travel narratives saw a drastic increase during the twentieth century. Despite the prevalence of time travel in popular culture, it is a genre that Marge Piercy rightfully described as one that is hogged by "affluent white males" both as authors and characters—a group she termed as one that would not be "the sort of visitors" she would prefer if she were part of "a future good society" (2013, x). By contrast, *Woman on the Edge of Time* serves as an intersectional feminist intervention in a genre saturated with homogeneity. Countering this lack of diversity, Piercy provides readers with an alternative time traveler: Consuelo Ramos, a thirty-seven-year-old Mexican-American Woman incarcerated in a mental hospital, who journeys between the possibilities of futures both better and worse than the present. Unlike time travelers in many post-Wellsian time travel narratives written and propagated by white men, who relate to time travel purely as an entropic disruption of what they consider to be progress, Piercy's feminist classic reverses the polarity of those discussions by framing time traveling as a politically mobilizing and agency-creating mechanism. Time travel often exposes the future's grim determinism and reinforces pre-set structures of oppression. This paper argues that Piercy's novel, instead, provides a scenario in which time traveling is productive, enabling, and inspiring because minoritized, underprivileged individuals are granted the power to change the future.

Keywords: time travel, speculative fiction, Utopian studies, Woman on the Edge of Time, intersectionality

Building from H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, not as the first of its kind but as a seminal text, the popularity of time travel narratives saw a drastic increase during the twentieth century. Despite the prevalence of time travel in popular culture, it is a genre that Marge Piercy rightfully described as one that is hogged by "affluent white males" both as authors and characters—a group she termed as one that would not be "the sort of visitors" she would prefer if she were part of "a future good society" (2016, p.x). By contrast, *Woman on the Edge of Time* serves as an intersectional feminist intervention in a genre saturated with homogeneity. Countering this lack of diversity, Piercy provides readers with an alternative time traveler: Consuela Ramos, a thirty-seven-year-old Mexican-American Woman incarcerated in a New York Mental hospital, who journeys between the possibilities of futures both better and worse than her present. Because of her social position, Ramos is incited to act against the oppressive power structures of the present.

Consequently, Piercy's novel creates a time traveler imbued with the ability to change the course of history.

Time travel stories following the Wellsian tradition are based on pre-existing hierarchies relating to gender, race, and class that benefit the white male time traveler. Conversely, in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Ramos' experiences of discrimination as a poor Latina woman with a history of institutionalization shift the rules commonly associated with time travel; in this novel, varying degrees of discrimination toward marginalized people creates a motivation to change the course of the future that socially privileged (white, male, heterosexual, wealthy, and healthy) time travelers do not have. *Woman on the Edge of Time* challenges the moralities and conventions of the present, thus provoking community and solidarity across temporal divides. Unlike time travelers in so many popular time travel narratives written and propagated by white men, who relate to time travel purely as an as an entropic disruption of capitalist progress, which disproportionately benefits Caucasian males

who have some degree of economic security, Piercy's feminist classic reverses the polarity of those discussions by framing time traveling as a politically mobilizing and agency-creating mechanism. Time travel often exposes the grim determinism of the future and reinforces structures of oppression embodied by contemporary society. Piercy's novel, instead, provides a scenario in which time traveling is productive, enabling, and inspiring because minoritized, underprivileged individuals are presented with the power to change the future.

As a seminal text in the cultural revival of the Utopian imagination that occurred toward the latter half of the twentieth century, *Woman on the Edge of Time* has received a large amount of critical attention (Moylan, 1986, p.15). And yet, the focus of much of this research primarily looks at the space of Piercy's text as an example of a feminist utopia—highlighting the ways that the imagined future functions as a space where individuals can confront issues of gender which are embedded in the patriarchal present. Despite her popularity, there has been little scholarly focus on the use of time travel in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, and consequently much of the critical work that has been done does not discuss the implications of Ramos as a female time traveler at the intersections of many forms of discrimination.

The critical attention that Piercy's time traveler has received, specifically as a time traveler, is embodied by Elaine Orr's 1993 article, "Mothering as Good Fiction: Instances from Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*," which briefly draws attention to the protagonist, Ramos, as being chosen specifically as the "most likely candidate for time travel" because of her role as a mother (p. 61). Orr argues that the significance of choosing Ramos as the individual most suitable to time travel is underpinned by the fact that she has been deemed an unfit parent despite her nurturing disposition. And yet, the novel problematizes the role of the mother as one that is imposed on the female characters of the present and works to broaden the definition so that in the future, mothering is a communal activity. Ramos is initially disgusted by the new concept of motherhood, because it disrupts the emotional connection that only occurs between a mother and her biological children. However, the future presents an opportunity for Ramos to regain her role as a mother which was denied to her in the present. I agree with Orr that Ramos is depicted as the ideal time traveler who "recommends herself to the future," (1993, p. 63) and broaden her argument to add that Ramos is presented as the ideal time traveler because her role in the revolution is built from the intersecting layers of discrimination that provide her with motivation to fight for a better future. As a result, the future represents a chance for Ramos to fulfill her personal desires as well as the desires of the community. Thus, the introduction of a minority time traveler shifts the way that time travel functions in the novel by portraying it as an instigator of united revolutionary action that delivers motivation to change the trajectory of the present—something vastly dissimilar to the traditional time travel narrative.

These intersections of discrimination are related to the fact that, because it was originally published in 1976, *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a literary artifact of American cultural concerns regarding minority groups that were percolating in contemporary discourse. *Woman on the Edge of Time* therefore epitomizes the shift from second wave feminism to intersectional feminism. In her 2019 collection, *The Global 1970s: Radicalism, Reform*, and Crisis, Duco Hellema argues that "there is, perhaps, no other decade that has evoked such divergent and even contradictory images" as the 1970s (ix). Piercy describes this period as a "time of great political ferment and optimism" amongst those who "longed for a more egalitarian society with more opportunities for all people, not just some of them" (2016, p. vii). In *The Hidden 1970s: Histories of Radicalism*, Dan Berger writes that historically, the 1970s was a decade "rife with contingency," filled with a sense of hope to break down systemic hierarchies of oppression (2010 p. 2). The decade has been characterized as a space of "fierce contestation" brought forward by "radical

social movements" that have been traditionally cast off as "irrelevant" (Berger, 2010, p. 3). Significantly, Rebecca L. Clark Mane notes that the women of colour involved in the development of intersectional feminism sought to expose the fact that the "ideas of middle-class white women," upon which the first and second wave were founded, "were masquerading as concerns of the universal woman in feminism" (2012, p. 71). As such, white, liberal, second wave feminism moved towards the more inclusive form of intersectional feminism, meaning American women, particularly women of colour, witnessed "an array of revelations and changes in social, political, and public thought and policy" throughout the 1970s (Berger, 2010, p. 4). These initial social transformations inspired minority groups to fight against the discriminatory "limits of American government" (Berger, 2010, p. 9). Confronting vast social inequality, activists worked to use radical political action in order to build a society on the pillars of "insurgency, solidarity, and community" (Berger, 2010, p. 12). Significantly, the revolutionary responses to oppression in the 1970s seems "to inform the current era" while also "reappearing in it," marking the fact that equality has not yet been achieved (Berger, 2010, p. 1).

Given this context, revisiting Piercy's classic novel in this time of extreme political division is especially important. Built out of the revolutionary social movements of the 1970s, *Woman on the Edge of Time* serves as a critical analysis of the intersections of inequality affecting minority populations. Throughout the novel, Piercy depicts numerous forms of discrimination, representing the inherent systemic inequalities embedded in the present. Ramos' social standing forces her to live in a "dirty world" that has determined her fate from birth (Piercy, 2016, p. 15). The space of the novel's present is saturated with varying levels of inequality so as to ensure that the perceived social hierarchy will be maintained. Ramos recognizes that one of the ways for her to move up in society would be to apply for a job, but as a typist, the hiring agencies "liked to use the younger women" and as somebody "with a police record and a psychiatric record," she is trapped in her current position of oppression (2016, p. 26). In this example of intersectional discrimination, Piercy uses Ramos as a conduit to examine problems entrenched in American culture, exemplifying the experiences of some of the most marginalized members of society. The narrative thus evaluates the position of the minority figure embodied by Ramos: "a fat Chicana aged thirty-seven without a man" and "without her own child" (2016, p. 26). In doing so, *Woman on the Edge of Time* critically investigates intersections of discrimination in relation to gender, race, physical appearance, and age put into place by contemporary power structures.

While the present is characterized by broad social inequality, the future exposes the potential for a better world, free from discrimination. Ramos travels into the future world of Mattapoisett which is characterized by complete equality—each layer of discrimination that Ramos faces in the present is confronted and broken down in the future. Within the present, the English language is shown as lacking gender-neutral terms to refer to people, which ensures that gender is always considered with the categories of male and female represented in binary opposition to each other. Mattapoisett, by contrast, has removed language based in gendered terms. Pronouns such as her and him have been replaced with the all-encompassing "per," creating a sense of equality between the genders. Likewise, in Ramos' present, issues of race are still prevalent, and the social structure privileges individuals of Caucasian descent over people of colour. Mattapoisett's social structure works to value racial diversity, ensuring that the children are born "multicolored like a litter of puppies without the stigmata of race and sex" (2016, p. 111). As a result, people are represented with many skin tones that do not necessarily have any connotation to race and in turn they are presented as equal, despite their physical differences. The world is structured to ensure there is "no chance of racism again" (2016, p. 108-109). Finally, the society of Ramos' present favors youth over age, particularly in relation to women. By contrast,

in Mattapoisett, the elderly are treated with a deep respect. Instead of being considered feeble and a burden on the rest of society, "old people" retain "an ongoing strength" because they are "useful" (2016, p. 145). Throughout Mattapoisett there is a sense of harmony, the residents are shown in social situations debating "heatedly, laughing and telling jokes" in a space where everyone is accepted (2010, p. 78). The relationships between members of the population are often shown as pleasant, but more importantly they are given equal opportunity to speak—eliminating the forced voicelessness of the past's minority population. And so, in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, time travel exposes a future defined by its potential to become better than the world of the present, which pushes forward the idea that equality is possible, and discrimination is not a natural occurrence that must be put up with.

However, this future is not represented as inevitable, placing the eventuality of Mattapoisett in jeopardy. Alternative futures in *Woman on the Edge of Time* are shown as "equally or almost equally probable," which presents a malleability inherent to the timeline that "affects the shape of time" (2016, p. 212). The world of the future that Ramos is initially drawn into is "struggling to exist" against the possibilities of other futures (2016, p. 213). In other words, the future has the possibility to become better than the present, but it is also probable that it may become far worse. Piercy contrasts Mattapoisett with an alternative future shown to Ramos later in the novel as a means to expose the risks of inaction. Women in this alternative future are "cosmetically fixed for sex use" to be sold in businesses called "knockshop[s]" (2016, p. 327). In other words, females are reduced to mere bodies to please men in power—they are commodities rather than people. When Ramos arrives in this version of the future, Gildina, one of the women she first meets, is scanned and determined to have the "mental capacity" of a "genetically improved ape" (2016, p. 326). Women are thus represented as naturally inferior to men, lacking the intellect to be treated as human; any female figure willing to speak for herself is considered a "dud" who is not "functional" enough to be used in society as a sex slave, although she is owned by the overarching "corporate body" either way (p. 327). Ramos is therefore exposed to the consequences of allowing the power structures of the present to continue, as they are set to be exaggerated into the future.

Given that time travel has provided Ramos with a new perspective on the future's certainty, she understands the risks of allowing societal hierarchies to continue. Building on what Sam McBean calls a "connection to her contemporary moment," Piercy offers a "critical distance on the present's inevitability," which I argue demonstrates the significance in the role of the individual in changing their society (2016, p. 42). Similar to 1970s activist groups, the characters in the novel are imbued with the ability to modify their living conditions and change the course of the future accordingly. The comparison between temporal spaces in Piercy's novel exposes the fact that the hierarchal constructs of the present are not naturally occurring and there is always the potential for change. And while time travel offers a possible answer to the problems of the text's present, the solution does not rest only in the unattainable future. Rather, *Woman on the Edge of Time* works to argue that in order to ensure the world becomes better rather than worse, people must actively rebel against what is considered to be unjust. Ramos' identity as a minority places her in a position where her experiences of discrimination serve as a form of provocation to change the trajectory of the present in order to ensure a better future.

Therefore, a knowledge of the potential that rests in the future is not enough to guarantee change will occur. Rather, Piercy's novel emphasizes the importance of the individual in determining the timeline's trajectory. The present is shown to be a temporal space that is on the crux of determining whether the future will be better or worse–pivoting on the figure of Ramos. The risks of inaction ensure that the future will become worse than the present within the novel, placing the lives of minority figures

in jeopardy, which makes achieving the utopian society of Mattapoisett a critical venture. Ramos' exposure to "the other world that might come to be" solidifies her place in the revolution because it allows her to question the principles that inform the makeup of the present (Piercy, 2016, p.328). Through the act of describing a new design and shared practices in the space of social institutions, Piercy offers the potential to apply revolutionary ideas to the real world—a dangerous but crucial venture. Building on the risks of revolution, Claire P. Curtis argues that the quest for utopia often "justifies violence," presenting fighting as a necessary tool in ensuring that a better future will occur, and in line with this, Ramos is incited to violent revolution in order to change the world for the better (2005, p. 148). As a result, time travel allows for Ramos to find her place in the "war" for Mattapoisett that she considers herself to be "enlisted in" through a moral duty (Piercy, 2016, p. 328). Therefore, Ramos is represented as a pinnacle figure in the revolt against the social structures of the present, working to "deny" her "oppressor" her "allegiance" in the continued discrimination against minority groups (Piercy, 2016, p. 357). In other words, time travel presents an "opening to fight back" against the current conditions to ensure that they will not get worse (Piercy, 2016, p. 357).

Woman on the Edge of Time is imbued with the language of violence—presenting opportunities for those "without power" to find "ways to fight" (Piercy, 2016, p. 357). Within the novel, power is equated with violence. As such, in order for Ramos to ensure that the future becomes better, she is presented with the only option being that she must fight against her oppressors. Inspired by the rules of Mattapoisett, where the population elects to "kill people who choose twice to hurt others," Ramos revolts against the oppressors of the present who continue to allow social injustices to occur (2016, p. 405). Thus, violence is presented to Ramos as the only means to ensure that the future will become a better world than the present. This can be seen in the mental hospital when Ramos prevents the implantation of a mind-control device in her brain by poisoning the coffee pot with parathion: a chemical so potent that it was illegal to "possess" without "a license" (2016, p. 396). Ramos justifies killing six people because they "are the violence-prone" and "theirs is the money and power," making them the first casualties of the enemy side in the war (p. 410). Although Ramos recognizes that it is not "right to kill them," their murder is represented as an essential act in orderto push for the future existence of Mattapoisett (p. 405). In other words, Ramos acknowledges that murder is morally wrong, but considers it a necessary act, which, from her perspective, makes it the most righteous decision. Hence, Ramos is incited to action by the risks of her current layers of oppression continuing into the future, which makes it necessary for her to face the violent dangers of revolutionary change in order to achieve a better world. Thus, time travel in the hands of a minority figure disrupts conventional moralities that, if adhered to, will perpetuate a status quo of oppression.

Piercy's novel demonstrates the fact that violence is often necessary in order for revolution to occur, despite the fact that Ramos' violent revolt against the systemic injustices of her time ultimately end in her demise. Nevertheless, the novel places emphasis on the decision to fight against society's tyrants as being the true success of Ramos' actions. After killing her oppressors, Ramos recognizes that she is a "dead woman now too" because she knows that she will be caught, despite her attempts to hide her crime (2016, p. 410). Although Ramos will likely be imprisoned and potentially given the death sentence, her actions are represented as heroic because she has pushed against the power structures of her time. The beginning of a revolution is inherently linked to Ramos' actions because she "tried," which presents the possibility of change occurring in the future (2016, p. 410). As such, Ramos' attempt allows her to play a fundamental role in the possibility of

inciting change by revolting against the society of the present as a means to ensure a better future.

Throughout *Woman on the Edge of Time*, revolution is represented as a communal activity inspired by the oppressed. Within Mattapoisett, the population is still fighting a war for the continued existence of their utopia. The world of the future is formulated around an idea of strength that spurs from working toward a similar goal, reinforcing "how good" it is "to fight beside" other members of the community (2016, p. 202). This statement implies a sense of connection between individuals who stand for the same cause. Furthermore, joining the struggle is not merely represented as a moral choice, but rather a shared responsibility in fighting against inequality to ensure that the future continues to be better than the world of the past. Every able member of the population is conscripted into the army to fulfil "defense" in order to fight an ongoing battle to sustain their existence (2016, p. 290). And although war prevents the people of Mattapoisett from living in a world of peace in which they are able to "push all energies into what people need and want," this violence is considered a necessary task in order to prevent their extermination—showing that a world of equality is something that must be continually fought for (2016, p. 292). Revolution is represented as a community-based action that pushes forward hope for a better future. Consequently, by centering a poor Mexican woman as time traveler, the novel positions time travel as more than an entropic disruption of what the most privileged members of society consider to be positive advancement. Ramos' experience–both in the futures she encounters and in her own present–challenge the concept of progress as necessarily positive and different from the past. More simply, by exposing Ramos to both possible futures, the science fictional aspects of the text therefore enable a critique of progress by exposing its inherent subjectivity.

Through time travel, Ramos is drawn in as a member of Mattapoisett's community, which makes her actions in the present a necessary continuation of the war of the future. Time travel thus creates possibilities for the formation of unlikely communities. As such, the rebellion does not end with Ramos' eventual death, because the knowledge of the future's potential has been passed on to other characters, therefore enlisting minority populations in the fight to build a better world where they will not be discriminated against. Piercy's novel incites revolution through time travel because it is within the vision of future potential that humanity can be inspired to change. During her stay in the hospital, Ramos speaks to Sybil, another patient who is also set up for brain surgery. With a similar spirit, Sybil is willing to do "anything to stop them" (2016, p. 399). Building on this inner yearning for revolt, Ramos informs Sybil that the present is a "war" that she has to "fight" in, reminding her to "hate" her oppressor "more than" she hates herself so that she will "stay free" (2016, p. 400). The idea of freedom has dual meaning in this passage, referring to an ensured freedom in the present but also to an extended freedom in the future that has been built on revolution. Nadia Khouri argues that "the desire for utopia," no matter how many times it is "reiterated and emphasized" within the novel, may not "lead to a utopian outcome" (1980, p. 49). This is reflected in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, which concludes with Ramos waiting on death row. Despite the fact that Ramos tried to ensure a better future, she could only lay the foundation for others to continue the revolution. As such, while Ramos may not have succeeded in achieving a better world within the confines of the novel, her actions lay the groundwork for rebellion to continue. Through an emphasis on the human power to shift the trajectory of the timeline, Piercy reasons that knowing the future is not inevitable can incite change in both the reality of the novel as well as for readers. The importance of community activism within the text therefore functions as a commentary on the importance of community activism in the time in which the book was written and published. Several new social movements, including the

women's movement, the gay movement, and racial equality movements converged to dominate the 1970s "political arena" with left-wing radicalism and activism in a way that would not have been possible without cross-cause collaboration (Hellema, 2019, ix). *Woman on the Edge of Time* is a product of these movements' combined efforts to change the lives of minoritized individuals within the United States.

Notwithstanding the fact that Ramos, as a minority time traveler, finds that the future's potential establishes the cause for revolution, there is a large amount of doubt within the text about the reality of the events. Donna Fancourt's 2002 article, "Accessing Utopia through Altered States of Consciousness: Three Feminist Utopian Novels," takes on the concept of changed consciousness as providing access to utopian visions, while also "creating a new" form of "consciousness" (2002, p. 94). The concept of utopia is relatively inaccessible; in order to properly imagine the concept of a perfect society, there must be an altered state of consciousness (Fancourt, 2002, p. 94). Fancourt asserts that the utopia depicted in *Woman on the Edge of Time* is constructed in Ramos' mind and is thus represented as a state of mental "temporality" (p. 95). She notes that the novel places Ramos in a mental hospital, which ultimately links "utopian vision" to "madness" (2002, p. 100). This is significant because the novel is represented from Ramos' perspective and, as such, the events seem to occur within the perceivable reality of the text.

While I concede that the reliability of the narrative is placed into question due to the fact that Ramos has been admitted into the mental hospital because of her "deteriorating" mental state, I argue that labeling her as mad works as another layer of discrimination, especially since the history of mental illness is deeply intertwined with the social position of minority figures (Piercy, 2016, 412). Kim Hewitt argues that people already experiencing issues of inequality related to "race, class, and gender" are further marginalized by the diagnoses of mental illness (2006, p. 156).

Often, the forced institutionalization of those diagnosed with mental illness leads to imprisonment within the asylum system that denies the individual power to make decisions pertaining to their own lives. Women in particular have been "oppressively categorized, socialized, and pathologized" by mental institutions, which often labeled women as mad when they did not adhere to the gender roles imposed on them by society (Hewitt, 2006, p. 156). In other words, there has been a longstanding legacy of diagnosing, or even misdiagnosing women as a means of controlling dissent. Furthermore, the American Psychiatric Association has acknowledged that "racism and racial discrimination" have led to "mental health care disparities" within the context of the psychiatric hospital (De Young, 2010, p. 17). Class likewise plays an important factor in relation to mental health, with a "historic overrepresentation" of impoverished people "institutionalized" in United States asylums (2010, p. 17). Frank Furedi argues that the majority population, including health care professionals, "will shift the line between sanity and madness" to "medicalize the social expressions" in minority groups (qtd. in De Young, 2010, p. 17). As a result, those who are already discriminated against by intersecting layers of injustice, such as Ramos, are often diagnosed with mental illness and institutionalized as means of controlling those who endanger current social hierarchies.

Within the "excerpts from the official history of Consuelo Camacho Ramos" provided at the end of novel, the clinical summary states that Ramos has been diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia (Piercy, 2016, p. 412). Ramos' perception of reality is described as impaired, which presents time travel within the novel as possibly mere hallucination. This is supported by the fact that it is unclear if her time travelling companion from Mattapoisett, Luciente, can be seen in the present, while Ramos is fully visible

to the people of the future. The implication of this difference is that it rationalizes why only Ramos can perceive the instances of time travel, which points to the fact that it may be occurring due to mental illness. In addition, throughout Ramos' stay in the mental hospital she is administered a cocktail of drugs, including "Thorazine," "Prolixin," and "Artane," meant to manage her mental state (2016, p. 412). When Ramos first receives visits from Luciente, even she seems to be uncertain as to whether the events are truly occurring or if they are linked to the "dope" which she claimed was "really powerful" (2016, p. 38). As such, the worlds of the future are depicted as potentially existing only within Ramos' imagination.

And yet, building from the knowledge that Ramos is a minority figure, the mental hospital functions as a continuation of forced voicelessness. The mental hospital in the novel works as a prison that contains women who are not necessarily mentally ill, but rather who do not conform to the social roles thrust upon them. For this reason, labeling Ramos as schizophrenic is a continuation of society's oppression of minority groups. It is meaningful that Ramos' time travel remains real to her despite any doubt on the part of the reader. Hence, Ramos' utopian vision manifests from an altered state of consciousness, or a form of mental time traveling, but I would argue that this does not mean that the experience is insignificant. Time travel, whether real or imagined, inspires Ramos to rebel against her oppressors in order to achieve a better world and ensure that the problems of the present do not get worse. Different temporal spaces within *Woman on the Edge of Time* are accessed through altered states of consciousness, which implies that the mind works as the time machine through which visions of the future provoke violent resistance. Throughout the text, time travel exposes the role of human action in affecting the timeline even as the hope for a better future is left only as a possibility. As such, I argue that Ramos' time travel is real, or at least, significant.

Furthermore, when writing, Piercy spent a large amount of time doing research inside mental hospitals. Within the acknowledgments Piercy references the individuals that she "cannot thank by name who risked their jobs to sneak" her "into places," such as mental hospitals so that she could get an inside perspective (2016, p. 419). Piercyalso acknowledges the fact that there were a number of "past and present inmates of mental institutions who shared their experiences" with her (2016, p. 419). This engagement with the stories of those within the asylum demonstrates the fact that Piercy acknowledged that there was value in the narratives of those diagnosed with mental illness –something that is often overlooked. According to Sandra Harding, feminist standpoint theory posits the notion that feminist issues cannot be restricted to "what are usually regarded as only social and political issues, but instead must be focused on every aspect of natural and social order, including the very standards for what counts as objectivity" and "rationality" (2004, p. 2). As such, it is imperative that readers see what is represented as madness in the novel as perhaps merely another way of producing and receiving valuable knowledge. So, while the book, like society, places the validity of Ramos' time travel in question, I argue that we too are meant to find value in the narrative. Whether or not the events actually transpire as Ramos describes, readers are meant to listen, as Piercy did, and learn from the story being told that the future has the potential to improve if we act collectively against systems of oppression.

In conclusion, within Piercy's novel, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, time travel in the hands of a minority figure incites an awareness of the potential for a better future, and draws attention to the fact that social forces are denying their citizens access to this better world. The sense of urgency within the text rests in the fact the future is not represented as static, but is instead malleable —containing both utopian and dystopian potential. As an intersectional feminist text, temporal spaces

work to examine the overlapping layers of discrimination in the present and situate this discrimination as fuel to inspire minority figures to push back against oppression. As such, the novel parallels two versions of the future as potential outcomes to the present, situating hope for the future in a state of reliance on human action. Designating multiple possibilities for the individual to construct a better future thus constitutes a call to united revolutionary action.

The representation of time travel in the form of mental transportation between timelines works as lens through which the present can be compared to the future. *Woman on the Edge of Time* argues that the individual has the potential to modify the future by inciting collective resistance. Therefore, in following the experiences of a minority figure, Piercy's novel provokes revolution through time travel; it is through the vision of future potential that humanity can be inspired to change. Piercy argued that the point of "creating futures" works as a means to allow people to imagine a better world and "maybe do something about it" (2016, p. vii). Yet, despite the call to action embedded in *Woman on the Edge of Time*, Piercy claims in a 2016 introduction to the novel, that from the time the text was written "inequality has greatly increased"—

> more people are poor, more people are working two or three jobs just to get by, more people have seen their savings and their future wiped out by bad health or lost jobs. The homeless are everywhere, not just the single man or woman down on their luck or the shuffling bag lady but whole families with their children. There are fewer chances for the children of ordinary people to go to an ordinary college; if they can go, they will then have to drag huge debt through much of their adult lives. Many working-class jobs that paid people enough to buy and pay for a house and to hope for an even better life for their children have been shipped overseas. There, people even poorer will do the work for pennies. Unions that protected workers have lost much of their clout and represent fewer workers each year. (p. vii)

In other words, there are still many things that people should be fighting for in order to ensure there is a future better than the present. We are all on the edge of time.

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Post-Apocalyptic Nonhuman Characters in *Horizon: Zero Dawn*: Animal Machines, Posthumans, and AI-Based Deities

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Abstract: *Horizon: Zero Dawn* (2017) is a science fiction video game that lends itself to exploration of emergent fields of knowledge by means of a fragmentary narrative and twisted representations of animals and robots. This article aims to apply posthumanism and animal studies together to examine the extent to which representations of the nonhuman both submit to and defy human(ist) statements on the human-animal divide. Human beings are presented as constructed identities following a postmodern narrative structure which allows players to reflect on the borders of human, animal, and machine alike. A powerful feminine posthuman protagonist, born from a machine in a matriarchal society, leads this quest for knowledge and identity, regarding empathy as the key to understanding the world she inhabits.

Keywords: video game, science fiction, animal studies, posthumanism, ecofeminism, nonhuman

Animal studies are regarded as an emergent discipline whose purpose is to rethink many of the inherited cultural values that spring from traditional Western philosophy. Humans and animals are conceived as constructs, building on Jacques Derrida's *The Animal That Therefore I Am* (2002). Along with the French philosopher, other thinkers have shown an interest in this field of knowledge. To name a few of the most influential works on this subject, Donna Haraway's *The Companion Species Manifesto* (2003) must be highlighted as one that joins cyborgs and companion species as they "bring together the human and the non-human." Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) previously explored the famous concept of becoming, taking the question of the animal as "a phenomenon of bordering." Giorgo Agamben (2004) prefers to call this human-animal divide a caesura, and delves into what he defines as "the suspension of the suspension." Also, Hayles (1999) locates the roots of posthumanism in the Second World War, which allows her to theorize about how the fantasy of humans as a fixed stable category starts to crumble, thus taking into consideration nonhuman life forms. Many of these works depart from the oft-stated urgency regarding the need to study the nonhuman. While some place animal studies as a sub-discipline of posthumanism, claiming that the latter offers "a larger problematic" (Wolfe, 2011), other scholars believe it is not a matter of hierarchy but observe instead an evolution from the question of the animal to the question of the nonhuman: "the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari [...] have inspired a postmodern if not posthuman project in animal studies" (Weil, 2010). Whatever relationship may be conceived between the two schools of thought, their association is never questioned. It is precisely for this reason that this paper applies both methodologies at once, as they work in tandem and lead to conclusions that would otherwise remain inaccessible.

In this sense, it is convenient to settle the grounds for what is understood as animal and posthuman. The present article, following previous research in these disciplines, holds the argument that the animal does not exist. Or, at least, it is conveived as a terribly misleading concept. As humanity struggles to find something that differentiates itself from the rest of living beings, it seems absurd to insist on using a term whose sole purpose is to stress human power in respect to other creatures. Since humans are also animals, there rises the already famous concept of nonhuman animals. On a philosophical level, Derrida proposes "*l'animot*." Following a wordplay in French (*les animaux plus mot*), this term would refer to all living beings while making explicit the poststructur-

alist conflict of constructs. This is but a reaction to "the all-encompassing animal," a term which "fails in signification if used to articulate the complexities presented by the postmodern animal" (Aloi, 2012). At this point, posthumanism becomes incredibly useful since it provides animal studies with the necessary critical body to tackle the question of the animal from a more comprehensive and practical perspective. I choose the term *postmodern animal* to refer to animal representations which (1) resist classical animal representations where nonhuman animals are used as mere tools for human purposes; (2) are based on postmodernist literary techniques, as "Neither the aesthetics of modernism nor the philosophical values of humanism [...] can cope easily with hybrid forms which unsettle boundaries, most especially the boundaries of the human and the non-human" (Baker, 2000); (3) raise awareness about human-animal relations and modes of coexistence in the actual world; and (4) offer alternative or speculative relationships "between species: [such that] one that no longer privileges the rights of humans [...] over those of all other forms of life, but that recognizes the value and rights of nonhuman species along with those of humans" (Wolfe, 2003).

As to posthumanism, Pepperell describes it loosely as an idea that is preoccupied with "how we live, how we conduct our exploitation of the environment, animals, and each other." It is extremely important not to confuse this way of thinking with transhumanism, for the transhuman subject would "have overcome the biological, neurological, and psychological constraints evolved into humans" (2003). Regarding the concept of *posthumanity*, controversy abounds when it comes to giving a specific definition that could be applied for all purposes. For this reason, I prefer the notion defined by Cary Wolfe in *Moving Forward, Kicking Back: The Animal Turn* (2011). According to this interpretation, the posthuman would refer to the human that is aware of the very emptiness of meaning behind this word. Such an appreciation causes an "intrication of the animal and the technical," becoming "an assemblage made up of components both human and non-human, living and technical."

When engaging the posthuman and the postmodern animal in cultural representations, science fiction arises as the ideal genre. Many, if not all, of the philosophers previously mentioned point at science fiction writings, highlighting the importance of its capacity for innovation and anticipation in science, philosophy, and art. And as Vint (2008) announces in a journal issue devoted solely to animal representations, "In the late twentieth century, SF enthusiastically took up the question of cyborg identity in relation to machines; now in the twenty-first, we are ready to explore SF's contributions to our kinship with animals" (page?). However, science fiction writings seldom take both animal studies and posthumanism into account. Video games are even more infrequently chosen as the object of study for such a methodological framework, mainly because literary works have received greater academic interest since animal studies emerged at the beginning of this century. That is why this article intends to show not only that animal studies and posthumanism can be easily applied together to a science fiction text, but also that *Horizon: Zero Dawn* is an extremely useful cultural production for understanding how the question of the animal is perceived and represented today.

The world of Horizon

It is most surprising that *Horizon: Zero Dawn* sold more than seven million copies in its first year (Zuylen, 2018) in a market where shooters are almost always all players' favorite option. Despite being an AAA game,[1] it does not present a similar gaming experience to the vast majority of best-selling titles. Horizon challenges the average Millennial player insofar as it asks for patience, careful listening in dialog sequences, and strategic thinking to survive in a hostile post-apocalyptic world where humans are no longer the dominant species.

The plot is grounded on a classic sci-fi trope: humanity faces extinction because of relying on technology too heavily. Elisabet Sobeck, Ph.D.'ed genius,

Project Zero Dawn takes control of planet Earth

carries out the Zero Dawn project, which is nology too heavily. Elisabet Sobeck, Ph.D.'ed genius, carries out the Zero Dawn project, which is comprised of nine apps designed to make Earth habitable again. Two main apps, GAIA and HADES, control life and death respectively, locked in an eternal battle in search of balance. The first step in Sobeck's plan is to eradicate all existing human life-forms in order to start anew. Human beings have proven to be highly neglectful towards the environment, and so she believes that new humans need to populate the planet. It is imperative that they do not build on past knowledge of their species so that they do not make the same mistakes again. New humans are genetically engineered by one of the project's apps, which looks after them in several facilities around the world, behaving as their "mother" by means of highly-developed AI. No matter how well-intended Sobeck's purposes are, humans defy their AI mother and repeat the same old patterns that characterize the human species over again. It is only logical that HADES, the video game's villain, computes that humans are not beneficial for the ecosystem and so they should accordingly be erased. Its counterpart, GAIA, reacts by creating an almost exact clone of Sobeck—hence the allusion to the Egyptian god of fertility—, who is bound to help the human race due to her intelligence, survival skills, and metaphysical concerns. This clone is the protagonist of the video game and the only playable character, Aloy.

All of this information, however, is given to players only when the video game's main quest is coming to an end—that is, after approximately fifty hours. Prior to that, what players encounter is an open, wild world populated by tribal clans that function as complex micro-societies expert in warfare. Their environment is somewhat rich as far as biodiversity is concerned. Smaller animals are represented in a realistic fashion: rabbits, boars, trout, and foxes abound. Bigger animals, however, find their representation in animal-like robots. At this point, the classification of animal representations in video games proposed by Jánski (2016) becomes very useful since they could be considered extrapolations, whose goal is to "depict alien fauna which is suitably adapted to inhabit a fictional fantastic or extraterrestrial environment." Some of them were once created to extract biomass, and behave accordingly. Others were conceived as war tools, so they challenge players' skills and strategies. Whatever their function, all are made up of hundreds of mechanical components which players can recycle and put to use by enhancing weapons, crafting traps, or selling them for metal shards, the currency in the game.

As I see it, these machines are the achievement of a twisted, imaginative understanding of the Cartesian cogito. According to Descartes, only humans are able to hold metaphysical reflections, having language as the unique tool that grants such an enterprise. Other life forms, instead, lack language, and so they are incapable of reaching that degree of consciousness. Animals are to be considered, then, beings that follow a strict behavioral pattern; they are machines. As a result, *Horizon* portrays them in robotic bodies. Whether to mock or to perpetuate this logic, these representations do confront the animal question in a creative manner only possible in science fiction writing. The first early reference that comes to mind when facing animal machines is Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), in which artificial animals signify their owners' social status. Nonetheless, *Horizon* does not portray robotic animals in the fashion of Dick's masterpiece because

they are not exact replicas of previous animal beings. Their mechanical bodies act as a reminder of their nature, engines and colorful wires all around their heads and legs. They do not intend to perform animal lives, as they are a different kind of being.

2.1. Animal machines, robotic animals

When interviewed, the video game's director stated that the robotic animals present in the game are "inspired by mosquitoes for function, anteaters, frogs, and pelicans for form, and kangaroos and emus for movement" (Wilson 2017).[2] This description entails a representation of an animal that is made up of bits and pieces of other animals; it could be argued that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming-animal is very present here:

> The plane of consistency of Nature is like an immense Abstract Machine, abstract yet real and individual; its pieces are the various assemblages and individuals, each of which groups together an infinity of particles entering into an infinity of more or less interconnected relations. There is therefore a unity to the plane of nature, which applies equally to the inanimate and the animate, the *artificial and the natural* (1987, my emphasis).

Surprisingly, it is the way that animal robots can be fought in the game that clearly depicts a universe where all life forms coexist in mutual respect. Whenever players are roaming around the vast map available to them, they might encounter one of these machines. Contrary to the majority of games developed for this platform, players are not pressed to fight mindlessly. Instead, one has to wonder how advisable such an action would be. Multiple factors have to be considered in a matter of seconds: player's available ammunition, type of machine, its strength and nature (i.e. whether it is pacific, violent, or reacts depending on player's approach), the resources that can be gathered from its body, etc. After considering all of these variables, players can continue their path and ignore the machine, trying to hide in tall grass and staying silent. One can also get near the robot slowly and override it by hacking its software, thus turning it into a friendly machine that will happily take the player on its back. But if players should think it wise to consider the machine as prey, they have to put their skills to the test to take it down. When this event takes place, we hear the machine's "last cries quickly dissipating as she [Aloy] mutters a brief prayer for it" (Te, 2015). This seemingly awkward spiritual action "speaks volumes of how mechanical lifeforms are viewed in this world. All things natural and synthetic are equally respected" (Te, 2015).

Overridden animal machine

We might readily argue that animal machines and realistically represented animals in this video game differ in terms of biological functions. However, any player would find it rather hard to establish a clear-cut division between them since both feed, communicate, breed, and die. In this respect, postmodern animal representation goes further than other animal narratives in which the technological remains alien: "all biological life shares a literal 'family resemblance' since we are all situated on the same, enormous family tree. Machines do not share this evolution as they are devoid of biological life and functions" (Cederholm, 2014). *Horizon* makes it very explicit that animal robots also exercise these biological functions. In fact, players can explore up to five underground facilities that function as a mechanic womb. These are called "Cauldrons" (Guerrilla, 2017), where GAIA and HADES order to assemble all animal robots that inhabit the video game's world. A moving sequence shows how they are created and led to the surface, simulating a live birth.

Horizon offers a rather clear representation of a possible intermingling between the natural and the artificial, as players face robotic animals that are assigned many cultural values which animals have in our societies. They are used for fun in a coliseum, hunted for sport, and deployed for getting resources, and their parts are worn as a way of showing one's social class. By turning the concept of the animal upside down and representing them embodied in technological automated devices, players are urged to rethink their treatment towards other life forms since the boundaries between human, animal, and machine become blurry. The radical categorization of human which separates us from other life forms is questioned by contrasting it with the nonhuman. Thus, "the human is defined by what it excludes: the divine, the angelic, the animal, and the artificial" (Shakespeare, 2012). Following this reasoning, *Horizon* proves to be of high interest to the analysis of the nonhuman since representations of the animal, the technological, and the divine are associated with characters that are a composite of these three spheres and inhabit different bodies regardless.

2.2 Posthuman characters

Human characters in the video game live in small tribes scattered around the continent and belong to clans. Even though there is one bigger settlement, called Meridian, its inhabitants live and behave following the same social rules as the rest of the tribes. The history of these peoples[3] reinforces the instability inherent to any notion of human being, evidencing its flaws and thus letting players realize that to call oneself human is to accept a set of constructions. Thanks to the game's side quests, players meet several characters that need help due to their otherness. Whenever a character does not behave like an ideal human should, they face a problem. Players listen to varied explanations ranging from why said tribes feel better in the woods than in urban settings to what reasons might exist for not feeling guilty about falling in love with someone from another clan, and even to how difficult it is to make neighbors understand that your schizophrenic brother is not dangerous if he is well-treated. Bizarre as it may seem, these parallel stories do take place in this post-apocalyptic game and add much insight on humanity's weaknesses derived from anthropocentrism. Human beings are depicted as a vain, hypocritical species that repeats the same old patterns that once were present when they thought themselves the center of knowledge. The classical binaries—city-nature, civilized-wild, and natural-artificial—are very often the morals of these side quests, as well as the trope of humanity being represented as a fragile construct.

The first human settlement that players encounter inside the game is Mother's Crown, which is fenced in and guarded over by several watchtowers. As the protagonist first steps inside, players immediately appreciate that its society is remarkably hierarchical. Each citizen is given a social role (e.g. builder, soldier, crafter, sage, buffoon, etc.) which determines their social status and rank. The tribe that inhabits this settlement is called the Nora. Thinking themselves safe, they live in a closed space away from the woods. Not to live surrounded by other members of their species inevitably entails death since nature is conceived as dangerous, something that is just not for humans. An ecocritical reading would reveal how the city is portrayed as an anti-natural place, the center of human power. Humans adopt an anthropocentric view of their environment and are thus unaware of the biodiversity present in their world.

The transhuman is chosen as the antagonist of the human, finding its representation in the game's most feared tribe, the Eclipse. They are in possession of the same electronic device that players have access to, "the focus," which allows them to go beyond the limits of human ontology. Their use of technology for evil purposes distinguishes them from the protagonist, who does not seek eternal life, invincibility, or other traits usually associated with the rapid advancements of technology pursued by transhumanists today. They are guided by HADES and follow his orders without question; the critique to transhumanism could not be more obvious: high technology is the worst of tools in the hands of those who do not question

its philosophical implications. Apart from the usual characterization antagonists are given in video games (i.e. dark clothes, deep voices, and masked faces), it should be noted that the first time they appear, several protagonists are killed. Interestingly, no animal machine kills a character throughout the game; deaths are reserved for humans only. Again, humans are depicted as a most destructive species that does not hesitate to kill, no matter the life form.

There is a minor tribe, called the Banuk, which meets the standards of what has been previously described as posthuman. This nomadic people, made up mainly of hunters, gatherers, and shamans, are becoming more and more sedentary as they have found a place where they can live in harmony with animal machines. When players approach the Banuk settlement, probably the smallest one in the game, robotic animals that would otherwise attack stay calm while being caressed by the members of the clan. The impact that this has on players is meant to be a startling one. After hunting, overriding, and hiding from extremely dangerous animal machines for dozens of hours, one has to blink several times at the screen. This narrative effect, together with the audiovisual shock of enemies turned into pacific beings, serves as a very direct posthumanist discourse. The Banuk are representations of the posthuman inasmuch as they accept technology and animals as parts of themselves. As a matter of fact, they worship "the blue light, the light of the machine spirits that is all around us and settles upon us."

Banuk shamans pierce their bodies with machine parts so as to commune with them

However, posthumanism does not escape criticism. Particularly in this game, the Banuk challenge a sudden, unpredicted chaos when all of the animal machines near their huts attack them. Several dozens die, and shamans mourn animal and human deaths alike. Players learn that there is a transistor nearby which emits the necessary signal to keep the animal machines docile. Due to their naïveté, the Banuk have relied on spiritualism too much, forgetting about nature's number one rule: only the fittest survive. The posthuman is represented as a wise, spiritual, powerful character that has mastered the truths of existence and at the same time, as an awfully fragile being that dangerously leaves its own nature behind in the search of transcendental knowledge.

3. Aloy

The exact moment that players take control of the video game's protagonist is meaningful. It is assumed that Aloy is human. She has a human body, holds conversations, sells and buys products, obeys orders from superiors, reflects on existence, makes jokes, and is capable of loving and hating. However, as players learn about the virtual world in which they are playing, a certain feeling of otherness arises. The capacity she has for instantly accessing augmented reality by means of her focus, an electronic device plugged into the right side of her head, makes players feel that she is not that human. Once it is known Aloy was genetically engineered by a machine which tried to replicate a previous human specimen (i.e. Sobeck), she is perceived as a sort of superior being, a posthuman heroine whose destiny has to be fulfilled in order to reach the game's ending sequence.

Of course, Aloy ignores her origins, and so her main life goal is to find her mother. Precisely because she is motherless, she is an outcast from the Nora, the matriarchal society to which she belongs, and lives with Rost, her foster father, who nourish

es her as well as he teaches her how to survive in the wilderness. It is very likely that these two characters' names are based on the words *alloy* and *rust*, thus referring to the close relationship that they share. After all, a clear reference is made to metals, a word that can be found in the video game script countless times (e.g. vestiges of human buildings are called "the Metal World"). There is a clearer allusion, however, to H. G. Wells' *The Time Machine* (1895), in which the Aloi, a civilization that has evolved from the *homo sapiens*, inhabit the Earth. Aloy's search for her mother reminds players of the reflections carried out by the protagonist in Wells' novel since both Aloy and the Time Traveler contrast two human-like civilizations and speculate on the reasons there might be for them to have evolved in such a way.

3.1. Stay focused

Even though there are some contemporary video games whose narrative structure is impregnated by postmodern literary techniques, *Horizon* is one of the few titles that integrates such literary devices successfully in a medium like a video game console.[4] Players are expected to stay focused not only thanks to all the information they can gather from Aloy's focus device, but also on the fragility of Aloy's health bar. Gamers today know that it is not easy to find a video game which presents coherence when piecing together narrative frame, playable setting, and available weapons. The game under analysis demands survival skills in a wild environment, and so players never find it easy to stay alive. As an example, one has to look for twigs in order to craft shafts, the most used weapon. Also, progress is only saved when resting at a campfire, a feature that is considered old-fashioned in contemporary gaming but that still makes sense in the immersive experience. Whenever Aloy needs machine parts for bettering her equipment, she has to hunt animal robots and extract their useful parts. In all, the fact that players experience wilderness by surviving "brings to light how fragile humans are. [...] We're not invincible. This title joyfully mocks that mentality, often killing you in two or three unavoidable strikes from foes much more powerful than your frail human frame" (Buchholtz, 2017).

While we might argue about whether it is necessary for (post)human characters in the game to hunt animal machines, there is no denying that hunting is represented as "an engagement [that] allows both sets of animals to reveal and display their particular qualities and create a performance" (Marvin, 2007). Players do not become protagonists responsible for massive killings. Instead, they are forced to plan their steps very carefully. All of the elements described in a hunter novel can be found in Aloy's approach to wildlife: she spots the beast, hides in tall grass, finds a pattern in its movement, considers how the weather might give her the upper hand, chooses the best location to strike, aims and releases a piercing shaft, hopefully damaging the animal machine using the least ammunition. The robotic animal, on the other hand, does not give up easily. It will hold on to life by fleeing at top speed, alerting others, and even fighting back. This performance takes players back in time to prehistory since Aloy behaves as a "proper" human being who hunts to survive. No player would ever use the focus in the middle of this performance. It not only looks extravagant and out of place, but is also useless given that machines' movements are unpredictable.

Ethics are, of course, another consideration whenever a video game reproduces violence. Sicart (2009) takes video games as serious cultural agents in which players exercise their own ethics and whose moral values are reflected on the virtual world. I would not like to consider video games as catalysts for violence, a way out for players to exercise everything illegal in the society they belong to, but instead as a site for ethical projections. Following this train of thought, *Horizon*, which allows players to make their own choices, would not portray a pre-established set of ethics but an array of them. Players would then project their ethical evaluations on Aloy, making her a ruthless killer or a compassionate posthuman being.[5] The ultimate instrument that reveals someone's playing style is the focus, as those who restrict its use to battle omit half of the game.

The incident in which Aloy, at six years old, discovers the focus in an abandoned laboratory, now underground, constitutes the video game's first playable sequence. In contrast to previous panoramic views of a wild setting in which life flourishes everywhere and green is the dominant color, Aloy is suddenly surrounded by darkness and has to move on in a closed space where some lilting artificial lights let her advance more or less safely. As soon as she finds this most useful tool, everything changes. Players only need to press a button to access all

Blue lights signal two synchronized focuses

kinds of information about the protagonist's surroundings. The control settings for the focus are fascinating since players activate it by pressing the right joystick. It is a convention to use the right joystick for controlling perspective and camera angle so that by clicking it, players get the impression of going into the depths of visual stimuli. One comes to depend so much on the focus that playing without it would result in a constant game-over screen: "All I have to do is take this thing off your head, and you'll be deaf, blind and dumb." Naturally, the focus is a complement for Aloy's senses, the physical device that symbolizes posthumanism and acts as a constant reminder of the main character's otherness.

As soon as players turn the focus on for the first time, they become aware of several corpses around them, their focuses still plugged in. Wells' Time Traveler acts as a clear reference once again, for Aloy starts to inhabit both eras at the same time—in a way, her focus allows her to time travel back and forth. Players are urged to make assumptions about what might have happened to the Metal World due to audio data points that can be transferred from other dead bodies' focuses. This is where the game excels at developing a fragmentary postmodern narrative. There are more than two hundred documents from the Metal World scattered all around the continent. They consist of holograms, audio files, and written documents that are almost always out of context, for there is no knowing what happened to the owner—who is usually a corpse—whose focus has survived a thousand years. Players are not expected to find them all but to link whatever information they can discover. Each gameplay is different since players experience a different narrative sequence.

3.2. What a waste

Aloy's ascendant, Elisabet Sobeck, believes so much in her project to make Earth habitable again that she sacrifices herself when a seal of her team's underground base malfunctions. In order to keep it going, she leaves, knowing she cannot survive. Her colleagues mourn her death while at the same time, they understand the reasons for her choice: "They [future humans] have to understand what you did for them. How you loved the whole world, so much. With an intensity that was dazzling. Bruising. And in the end, it killed you. Or you died for it." Love, empathy, and compassion are features given to female characters. As a consequence, only Aloy marvels at the poems inscribed on metal flowers Sobeck left all around before dying, while male merchants can only think of them as most rare indecipherable collectibles. There are three sets of metal flowers, each of them corresponding to poetry written in a specific geographical location. These poems were, then, originally written in Japanese, English, Arabic, and Hindi. A poem by Ottoman poet Hayâlî must be especially remarked upon, as I believe that it is the inspiration for the video game's title. In its full version, the poet professes his admiration for a wom-

an whose beauty, intelligence, and aura make him feel raptured. This feminine figure is transformed in *Horizon* by showing only the first stanza, in which the very words horizon and dawn can be read:

///

[function: true]

{{When dawn hennas her hands with the blood}}

{{of the horizon}}

{{Let the new bride of the golden veil uncover}}

{{her shining face}}

///

(Guerrilla, 2017)

The use of square and curly brackets, as well as the insertion of technological jargon is justified as the poem is inscribed in a metallic mechanism, not written on a conventional piece of paper. The figure of the woman alludes to both Sobeck and Aloy, and the former is the one that watches life on Earth disappear while the latter is the descendant whose mission is to restore life balance. Dawn is to be understood as the end of human civilization, while the new bride is ready to connect humankind to nature once more. They are two similar beings from different ages who finally meet on the water's surface in the video game's last sequence, just like in the original poem's second-to-last stanza: "Let me take that glass in hand and gaze / Until the desired one is mirrored in the magic of the glass" (Andrews et al., 2006). A special emphasis should be placed on the use of light in the selected stanza given that sunlight is considered a spiritual factor among the tribes in the game, and animal machines make use of it for all their basic functions. Aloy's face is described as shining, thus placing her on a higher plane of existence as a transcendental being.

Nevertheless, poetry is not the only factor that defines *Horizon* as a cultural product that could easily be analyzed from an postmodern ecofeminist perspective. The title for this section, "What a waste," is one of Aloy's most frequently repeated remarks delivered aloud as she spots dead bodies—whether artificial or natural—, emptying out resources because her pouch is full,[6] and killing more animal machines than necessary for the fulfillment of her mission. Her ecological concerns are significant since she inhabits an endangered environment which has been damaged because of past human action. This does not only resonate with any player today but also depicts the consequences of the Anthropocene, as the story is set in a future Earth that is still trying to heal. It is no wonder that Ashly Burch, the actress in charge of giving Aloy voice, declared: "Playing her made me a braver and stronger woman and I hope for any of the women that have played the game that you feel the same" (Prell, 2017). *Horizon* then belongs to a solid generation of video games whose main character is a powerful woman. What is very uncommon for a video game, however, is to raise ecological awareness by making use of the tools available in the science fiction genre.

Empathy stands as the key feature that defines Aloy. It enables human beings to place ourselves everywhere in the "continuum" for the sake of "sharing the being of another" (Coetzee, 1999). Aloy mostly demonstrates her sympathetic and empathetic capacities when she interacts with other characters. To begin with, she spends more time listening than talking. This is an extremely interesting characteristic to find in a video game, a cultural product which very often seeks to provide quick entertainment relying on dizzying sequences full of action. After listening to a rather long conversation, players must decide what Aloy has to say about people's conflicts. Depending on which option is chosen, secondary characters' fates change, either solving their problems or ending up in disgrace. Players' ethical values are made more evident than ever, receiving audiovisual stimuli that are the product of their own decisions. [7]

Most of these secondary characters are women who "examine womanhood in a way the hero cannot" (Hetfeld, 2018). While Aloy functions as the heroine that is naturally capable of discerning between right

from wrong and who acts accordingly, other women show an innate ability for leadership, administration, and resource management. Without them, settlements would be bound for destruction. This is not to say that men are depicted as brainless warriors. In fact, the Nora do not look down upon female warriors or male tailors. While they are a matriarchal society, they exercise gender equality unconsciously, thus making up a society freed from social constraints that would otherwise restrict citizens' choices about education, occupation, family affairs, and the like: "The Nora are all the more remarkable for their embrace of the feminine as they are for the toughness of their female warriors. It's not just the women who are unbothered by gender norms in Nora lands" (Williams, 2017).

Aloy, however, is not a Nora, and does not hesitate to remind players of her hometown—the woods. When anointed seeker by this clan,[8] she travels from place to place running errands without forgetting her main quest. In an exquisite sequence of dialogue, she declares: "My whole life I lived as an outcast from the Nora. They would have been the first to say I wasn't one of them. Yet, as soon as I leave the Sacred Lands, everyone calls me 'Aloy of the Nora'. It should be 'Aloy despite the Nora.'" If something makes her human, it certainly is not her having been raised in a city full of them. This facilitates her capacity for putting compassion to use.

Realistically represented animals can also be hunted and killed in the game, though something marvelous happens when players choose to do it. Aloy sighs, "tough, but I'm used to it," showing that she also feels aggravated by such an action. This video game is played on a platform that rewards players with digital trophies anytime they make significant advances in the story or achieve major tasks. When, for example, players defeat a number of enemies or make a lot of money, a trophy icon pops up. In the case of realistically represented animals in *Horizon,* it must be stressed that no trophy is ever given for killing them. In fact, players can achieve a hundred per cent of the game completion without having to kill a single animal. For all of these reasons, Aloy is to be considered an empathetic posthuman character that is able to connect, both physically and spiritually, with animals, machines, and humans.

4. Deities

The spiritual world of *Horizon* is populated by many gods and goddesses, of which three merit close analysis. Although Aloy could also be considered a Christian-like Messiah figure, this article does not take into consideration any religious viewpoint. Instead, I approach these characters as one more element of the nonhuman, paying special attention to how its representation reflects ecofeminist values. The most eminent spiritual figure in the video game is the Sun. It is worshipped as long as all tribes understand that life would be impossible without it. Thus, light becomes a religious symbol to be experienced by any living being. The fact that all machines emit light hints at the consideration of all life forms as sacred. Those who wear a focus can perceive lights from machines used by the Old Ones, and regard them with a sort of awe: "Lights—everywhere!" The Sun is creator, provider, and judge, as citizens of Sunfall expose criminals to it for long periods of time so as to seek its verdict. Players also seek light insofar as it is much easier to play during the day. Final battles take place at midnight, and when the last boss is defeated, the sun shines. The message is most clear: sun equals life.

GAIA, one of the apps that make up the Zero Dawn project, is referred to as "Mother" by southern tribes, and so their settlements are located upon GAIA's base: their social structure is a matriarchy, and motherhood is associated with nature, life, sacrifice, and bravery. GAIA, when represented as a hologram, is actually shown as a female in green colors, with a sweet human-like voice which is full of emotion. If she were not sentient, all of her AI would prove insufficient to look after planet Earth: "it wasn't enough for GAIA to think. She [Sobeck] taught GAIA to feel. To care. To sacrifice. To believe in life. [...] If it wasn't for that 'sentimentality,' life would have ended."

While GAIA adopts a human form, HADES remains bodiless. It is called a "Demon," represented in red

and possessing a deep voice to which Aloy does not have access. HADES' AI is purely logical so that it communicates to other life forms, showing no capacity for empathy. It is assigned the role of villain only because its sole purpose is to destroy all life. However, its presence is thought necessary by Sobeck since GAIA would not be able to monitor overpopulation without it. The two god-like systems are codependent to such an extent that the non-existence of either one of them would mean destabilizing Nature itself. GAIA's death and its hopes in making Aloy are exactly what start up the plot. Players have to destroy HADES in order to show them that the existing life forms on Earth are already independent and do not need divine action. Deities in *Horizon* can die, and so all living beings share a common, natural, spiritual experience by rejecting divine figures. Players face death multiple times in a hostile environment, animals get killed, whether realistically represented or robotic-like, and humans are portrayed as a most fragile species that worships almost unknown deities that are also mortal. In all, mortality is used as a "most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, [...] to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing this nonpower" (Derrida & Willis, 2002).

5. Conclusions

Animal representation in 21st century science fiction cannot escape concerns of the nonhuman studied by animal studies and posthumanism. In a digital era in which images abound, it is mandatory to carefully examine how animals find their way into being represented in different media. This article has chosen a video game as a cultural agent suitable for analysis, applying animal studies and posthumanism together, and consequently, showing how these two disciplines hold a relationship of "reciprocal influence that [leads], in a sense, to the 'coming of age' of both schools of thought" (Salzani, 2017). In so doing, nonhuman characters have proved to be greatly useful because they allow a deeper understanding of the human and animal constructions by looking closely at how their boundaries are blurred. More specifically, the video game explores the nonhuman by means of postmodern animal representation, posthuman characters that are directly opposed to transhumanist villains, and AI-based deities whose role is technological as much as natural.

Thus, nonhuman characters in *Horizon* can be taken as "intervention, transformation, and projection" (Blake *et al*., 2012) of ourselves into a fictional world, so that the nonhuman is to be connected to "formal and contextual considerations" (McHugh, 2006). This means that players who unwillingly cast their own appreciations of the nonhuman onto the game itself become moral agents. Immediately, the game gives players back audiovisual stimulation based on their decisions, allowing them to easily reflect on their preconceived ideas. This is a gaming experience that constantly urges players to recognize the philosophical conception of a life continuum, based on the protagonist's interactions with her environment. In all, *Horizon: Zero Dawn* has proven its utility for representing nonhuman characters from a contemporary perspective that lends itself to further study in conversation with emergent fields of knowledge such as posthumanism and animal studies. Its characters function as amalgams whose representation is directed towards breaking the barrier between species while placing all of them on the same level, no matter their bodies, communication systems, or spiritual beliefs.

I believe it is precisely by showing a diverse number of representations of the nonhuman that the video game achieves a posthumanist discourse, relying on characters who do not possess exclusive features. Instead, they share many characteristics with others, whether they belong to the same species or not, thus displaying a continuum of life forms. Animal machines, posthuman characters, and AI-based deities all dwell in the same environment, and so they are forced to cohabit, remaining aware of the consequences that their decisions place on other species. Only when they understand that all living beings are equally important and necessary for planet Earth can they realize that bodies are but the carcasses that enable them to perform their roles in their shared surroundings. Spirituality arises as the main factor for a

sustainable cohabitation of all life forms, being carried out by a posthuman female character that regards compassion as the best tool for so ambitious a project.

Notes:

[1] According to Fernández-Vara (2015), AAA games are "commercial digital games with a very large budget, developed by large teams that are usually supported by large publishers."

[2] The very word choice to speak about the animals represented in the video game is significant. It is evident that neither animal nor machine alone seem referential enough. As the present characters are a conjunction of both, several terms could be applied. I use animal machine, animal robot, and robotic animal indistinctively, though I am aware of the shades of meaning. What is at stake here is the labeling of a representation, in this case an audiovisual one, of the postmodern animal, which many critics agree is "philosophically unthinkable, and visually unrepresentable" (Baker, 2000).

[3] A tyrant king committed unspeakable crimes that ended up in a genocide that could very well be read as an allusion to the Second World War. A never-ending war hits the continent, which results in the mad king's assassination. His heir tries to reconcile the multiple clans, which are still hurt by the recent battles. As a result, clans segregate and become inevitably isolated. Only trading and economic benefits make some clans find mutual bonds.

[4] I would personally highlight two other titles that lend themselves to postmodern readings, especially because of their use of non-linear fragmentary narrative, unreliability, *mise en abyme*, and intertextuality: *République* (2013) and *BioShock: Infinite* (2013).

[5] It is most interesting to observe how Badiou (2000) uses the term human animal to describe that part of the human that remains "outside the event" in which the subject acts as "a moral subject, a subject to and for ethics."

[6] Players have a very limited carry capacity and so they are constantly forced to make decisions about the best use they can give to items they have collected. Health is restored by gathering medicinal plants and herbs that are not always easy to find. At the same time, this avoids a common gaming strategy called gearing up, by means of which players defeat as many easy enemies as they can in order to make less effort in future boss battles.

[7] The toughest decision that players are asked to make takes place in the middle of the gameplay. After having been tricked by Ollin, Aloy has to decide whether to kill the traitor or not. Showing compassion at this moment—understanding the lives of his wife and daughter had been threatened—is rewarded by his helping Aloy in a difficult mission. Choosing to kill him only leaves Aloy feeling bitter and remorseful about making Ollin's child fatherless, a burden that she herself carries throughout the remainder of the game.

[8] Aloy's behavior regarding her clan resembles that of a philosopher. By leaving the Sacred Lands, the first territory in the game that warms up the gaming experience, she takes on a quest for her identity but also for Nora's. When she comes back, she shares all of the knowledge she has obtained and urges the Nora not to depend on false myths but to comprehend the natural laws that govern the Earth.

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"And History's Lamps Blow Out": Preserving the Cultural Heritage of Filk

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Abstract: The processes by which sound records are preserved have become a hot topic in Library and Information Science (LIS) circles in recent years, as both technological shifts and cultural concern for preservation have drawn attention to how little of the nation's sound and music files remain for future use and access. While much of the literature has focused on higher level concerns such as advocating for sound preservation and what practices should be applied, less has been written regarding the practical skillsets LIS professionals will need in creating and curating such collections. To begin looking at this question, this paper explores the subculture of science-fiction-and-fantasy-related folk music known as "filk," and the challenges which that community has faced in preserving its music.

This paper is divided into four parts. Part I offers a brief review of the current state of sound preservation in the United States, along with the challenges being faced by sound preservationists and archivists, followed by an overview of filk and its subculture in Part II. Part III then discusses several attempts at such preservation by the community itself, and offers comparisons with similar community attempts at creating "amateur archives." Finally, Part IV concludes by revisiting Part I and discussing what the attempts at preserving filk reveal about the skills that LIS professionals will need in attempting future sound preservations.

Keywords: Library and Information Science; Archives; Sound Preservation, filk

The Challenges of Sound Preservation

According to Nelson-Strauss, Gevinson, and Brylawski (2012), there are some 46 million sound recordings in the libraries, archives, and museums of the United States—millions more also being held by record companies, artists, broadcasters, and collectors (p. 1). Of these recordings, untold millions are in dire need of conservation before they degrade past the point of preservation (within the next twenty years), provided that they can even be recovered now since there is currently no efficient way for researchers to identify where files needing preservation are located (pp. 2-3). Many files have already been lost: for example, the Library of Congress's radio archives, considered the largest in the world, have fewer than fifty recordings for the first ten years of commercial radio broadcasts in the United States (Bamberger and Brylawski, 2010).

Little wonder, then, that preservationists have been concerned about how to keep future files from degrading. The process is not as simple as replaying and rerecording the sounds, however. First, there is the matter of the originating formats. As noted by Monkman (2016), sound records include cylinders made of brass, wax, or plastic; vinyl and shellac records; magnetic wire and cassettes; CDs and DVDs; and other purely digital formats, all of which have different longevities and require different conditions for preservation, including air quality, light exposure, and physical placement (pp. 1-7). Preservationists can very easily lack the knowledge necessary to treat such a wide range of formats.

This mix of sound lifespans and materials also raises additional practical questions. For example, the variability of the aforementioned factors means that sound preservationists aren't always able to identify when it is too late to begin preservation efforts, or what medium/resulting platform the

platform the sound should be preserved in due to media formats aging or being supplanted by new ones while preservation efforts are underway. Many of the files are protected under copyright, raising legal questions about how to respect owner and artist rights in curating personal collections of sound. There are even questions regarding how the general public can be convinced of the need for preservation and how funds can be raised for the effort, given that many will never listen to some of these audio files and that, broadly-speaking, audio files are often viewed as less important compared to more easily accessible files like books. (Nelson-Strauss, 2012).

There are also more theoretical concerns at play. Preservationists strive to keep their originating documents as authentic as possible, but given the reality of having to copy the sound files, they may be forced to create newer conceptions of authenticity, such as authenticity in the interaction between the listener and the file itself (Monkman, 2016, pp. 9-11). There is also the matter of how files should be selected for preservation and what criteria should be used in their selection, as there is simply no feasible way to preserve every recording left in existence. To quote Bamberger (2010):

> Many considerations will come to bear on those decisions. Making them wisely will require the input of people with a certain measure of cultural literacy and a knowledge of history—people who understand that it is not enough to preserve sound recordings already judged to be historically and culturally significant. Significance is too often recognized and conferred only after the passage of years. We do not have the luxury of waiting until the significance of a sound recording is apparent before its preservation begins. By then, it may be too late. (p. 8)

Thus, there is both a great need for sound preservation, as well as a litany of challenges involved in doing so, from the technological to the cultural. How is a preservationist meant to navigate such a complex issue? While some of these methodologies can be easily taught (e.g. providing would-be preservationists with a booklet listing types of recording formats and preservation techniques to use on them), others require an examination or case study into cultural values regarding the ownership of sound and what makes something culturally significant. These kinds of examinations can help preservationists develop fluency and insight into how to address and contemplate such questions prior to beginning the work of preservation itself. The following examination of the filk community and attempts at archiving filk music was done as a case study to see what kinds of skills future archivists will need to have in working and curating similar collections.

What is Filk?

Filk is remarkably difficult to define as a musical genre. In fact, according to Tatum (2009), the main activity that participants in the culture—known as "filkers"—do, besides composing and singing is arguing about attempts at definition (para. 5.1). Nevertheless, the most all-encompassing definition is likely that offered by filker Gary McGath, which is that filk is "a musical movement among fans of science fiction and fantasy fandom and closely related activities, emphasizing content which is related to the genre or its fans, and promoting broad participation" (para. 5.4).

This topical breadth has manifested in the genre's very eclectic range of musical characters, motifs, and inspirations, which encompass major works of film and literature. Songs tend to have lyrics written from the perspective of the fictional characters themselves, often in order to build or comment upon the existing text by pulling marginalized characters or subplots up to the surface (Jenkins, 2012, p. 252). Examples include songs that are based on the *Velveteen Rabbit, Bridge to Terabithia,* NASA's Project Apollo, and old English and Scottish folk ballads from the Appalachians mentioning supernatural beings (Crane, 1999, Launius, 2004, p. 2, Boros, 2010, p. 2).

There is more agreement amongst community members regarding filk's dissemination, as it is similar to folk music practices. This includes features such and

as oral circulation over fixed written texts, variations in performance, and communal selection of which songs are preserved, though it is not considered to be identical with folk music (Jenkins, pp. 268-270).

Historical evolution and community practices

Filk first began to emerge at fan conventions in the 1940s, when science fiction song sheets were prepared for the 1940 Worldcon (World Science Fiction Convention) in London and the 1943 Michicon (Gold, 1997, p. 2). However, these works were not referred to as filk, as the term hadn't been coined yet.

The term itself first came into existence in the mid-1950s when a fan named Lee Jacobs submitted an essay to the Spectator Amateur Press Society titled, "The Influence of Science Fiction on Modern American Filk Music" (Anderson, 1955, p. 3; Gold, 1997, pp. 1-2; Launius, 2004, p. 2,). While the piece was ultimately rejected by SAPS editor Wrai Ballard—who considered its material to be so "thoroughly filthy" that its publication would risk violating laws against mailing pornography—Jacobs's misspelling of the word "Folk" in the title interested him, prompting Ballard to tell his friends about the piece (Gold, pp. 1-2). Two of these friends, Karen and Poul Anderson, later used the term to describe a short song of Poul's titled "Barbarous Allen," which Karen had published in 1955 in her magazine the *Die Zeitschrift für Vollständigen Unsinn* (*the Magazine for Complete Nonsense,* aka "the Zed"), and almost immediately science fiction fans began to compose songs to fit the newly named genre because it was felt that "rather than waste a phrase like 'filk song,' something must be created to which the name could be applied" (Anderson, 1955, p. 3; Launius, 2004, p. 2; McGath, 2015, p. 22).

Filkers perform their pieces at gatherings known as "Filksings," which generally occur at conventions in small rooms with the chairs arranged in a circle (Tatum, para. 2.2). There are at least nine regular filk conventions held each year worldwide (Interfilk), but when at broader fan conventions, the filksings tend to be scheduled late at night to avoid conflicts with other activities taking place over the course of the convention weekend (Jenkins 2012, pp. 254;274; McGath 2015, p. 10). Participants take turns at performing, following two broad styles: a basic "bardic" style in which the rotation goes around the circle in order, and a "chaotic" style in which performers take turns at random, with the exact degree of randomness somewhat moderated through several variations in order to ensure some degree of topical connection between songs (Gold, 2004). Performance is not required, as identified by the community adage, "they also filk, who only sit and listen" (Childs-Helton, 2016, p. 69).

According to Childs-Helton (2016), when at its best, the resulting space and activity of the filksing is viewed by the community as a "special locus in space and time, created for and by the community, and is a safe, encouraging place for individual and group play, support and, most of all, co-creation" (p. 74). This communal aspect is vital: "once you're known as part of [the filk community], you're welcome everywhere" (McGath, p. 14). While there are some obvious reasons as to why a communal activity like group singing may create such a strong bond, it is worth noting that it is partially because, in singing collaboratively, the filkers are engaging in a ritualized form of communication that emphasizes "not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs," thereby reaffirming and recreating their community with each singing (Launius, p. 9).

Given this strong emphasis on performance and emotional engagement, it should not be surprising that the filk community heavily values creativity, passionate enjoyment of making music, and direct, face-to-face engagement between individuals, having held onto these values across the Baby Boomer, Generation X, Millennial, and Homeland generations (Childs-Helton, 2003, p. 1; Childs-Helton, 2016, p. 90).

Demographics of filkers.

Finally, it is worth noting the demographics of the community. Detailed information is limited because the first in-depth examination of the filk commu-

nity occurred in 1992, and in the almost 25 years since, there have only been a handful of notable publications discussing it, precious few of which are formal academic studies (Childs-Helton, 2016, p. 64). However, there is still some information available. There are approximately 1,200 dedicated filkers worldwide (p. 74). Given the wide range of interests it attracts, filkers are known to hail from a wide cross-section of society. While "there is a strong tendency towards light skin," there is roughly equal male-female participation in the community, and religious pluralism is common (McGath, p. 14). The filk community cuts across the generational age gap, with members born in the 1920's-1940's to those born between 1981 and 1996. There is some concern that the lack of filk available at larger conventions, the learning curve involved in understanding all of the internal community references and aesthetic musical conventions, and the overall lack of awareness of filk more broadly, have caused Millennials to participate less and thus prompted concerns over aging (Childs-Helton, pp. 86-87).

Amateur Archives and Attempts at Archiving Filk

Given the above, it is not difficult to see why filkers (and broader audiences) would want their music preserved. Filk constitutes an audio record and musical tradition that stretches over seventy years, with individual filk songs depicting interpretations of and reactions to major works of popular culture. Because filk is mostly ignored by those outside of the community, said communities are in danger of losing members as time goes on due to access barriers, including the absence of a formal filk archive. There are, however, amateur ones.

Amateur archives. According to Baker, amateur archives are rooted in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethos of the folk, country, punk, and post-punk movements, and are established by enthusiasts of a particular communal culture that self-manages the archival facility (Baker, 2015, p. 171). In the case of music, amateur archives tend to be trans-local—as fans are geographically dispersed but constitute "affective" communities—and have collections that also contain artifacts surrounding the artists such as publicity materials, merchandise, clothing, instruments, and personal items, as well as the records of their music (Baker, 2015, pp. 171-173; 182). Such archives tend to formally emphasize collecting, preserving, and archiving materials through spreading information about the genre, cataloging, and celebrating the music through education and promotion; while not formally stated, many aim to "keep memories alive" so that "popular music's recent past is appropriately remembered" (p. 180).

This emotional engagement is crucial to the formation of an amateur archive. The archivists involved are often volunteers who did not initially interact with the musical tradition being preserved as archivists but as fans (Duffet & Löbert, 2015, p. 160). Such a perspective is important because fans are generally suspicious of more official kinds of archives and museums, organizations that fans feel tend to ignore major works in their tradition because of formal gatekeepers not finding the pieces culturally significant or commercially viable enough to preserve. This leads to enthusiasts acting as archivists to quickly preserve works of popular culture before they vanish, and consequently to actively represent enthusiast histories, stories, and knowledge (Collins, 2015, pp. 128-130).

Examples of such amateur musical archives include one for radio broadcasts of "barn dance" country music, and another of turntablist hip-hop music within the United States, both of which not only offer researchers valuable insight into these musical traditions at pivotal times in their formation, but also enable individuals to engage with broader views of culture by challenging dominant nostalgic reinterpretations of culture (Katz, 2015, pp. 40-45). In particular, Katz notes that without these archives, modern audiences may not realize or learn how deeply commercial (and at times racist) broadcast dialogue was woven into radio music during the Great Depression, or how hip-hop DJs actually created their music on turntables because evidence of these practices is often absent from other musical records (Katz, 2015, pp. 43-44).

Attempts at archiving filk. The aforementioned descriptions and motivations also apply to the archives of the filk community. Filk itself is not considered to be commercially viable due to its eclectic range of topics, musical conventions, and its grassroots communal approach to making music (Childs-Helton, 2016, p. 74; , Jenkins, 2012, p. 276; McGath, 2012, p. 101). Filkers are aware of this, as their continued emphasis on do-it-yourself culture and on the grassroots origin of their community demonstrates that they find these very noncommercial aspects of filk to be key in how filkers claim ownership in and relate to their music.

These attitudes, coupled with the awareness of the difficulty of finding filk, have understandably led filkers to establish archives for the purpose of ensuring the proliferation and enjoyment of their work. Filker Gary McGath has even created an open-sourced metadata schema project solely to help filkers establish such archives after finding that existing models such as Dublin Core, METS, MODS, and EAD don't fit filk archival practices well because of being either too metadata-heavy or too incomplete for easy data transfer; admittedly, his model doesn't appear to have been widely adopted (McGath, 2006). Still, despite or perhaps because of the lack of uniform archival practices, multiple amateur archives have been created. These archives follow two general models.

The first model—the oldest and also the most common way that filk has been preserved—is through the creation and sharing of songbooks, which serve as portable archives for the genre. The earliest known filk songbook in existence was likely Laurence Sandfeld's 1957 paper booklet, *Songs from Space,* which was presented at Worldcon in 1957 (McGath, 2015, p. 22). However, songbooks have evolved alongside technology, and over the course of the next 60 years they have not only been written down on paper, but also recorded as phonographs, wire records, reel-to-reel tape records, and cassette tapes, as well as printed as mimeo stencils and microfiche (Gold, 1997; McGath, 2015, p. 31). Today filkers tend to offer songbooks to members and attendees of their filksings at conventions, sometimes along with accompanying CDs, with the understanding that the performers retain all original rights and that the presence of any of their songs in the book indicates the artist's agreement to royalty-free usage (Conflikt, 2019; "Interfilk," 2002, pp. 4-6).

Songbooks may contain a variety of information. Aside from the expected lyrics for a particular song, songbooks may also include sheet music, guitar tabs, linear notes about the artists' thoughts, and even accompanying artwork ("Interfilk," 2002). This is partly because songbooks are generally meant solely for filker use, and therefore there is some expectation that users will want to learn to play the songs as well.

Outside of this physical model, filkers also have an established practice of using personal websites and social media as digital archives. According to McGath (2015), the oldest of these filk websites and archives are Steve Savitzky's Cyberspace Starport and Scott Dorsey's archive for Leslie Fish (p. 60). Sadly, both of these have since fallen out of date, with Starport's last update in February of 1995 and Dorsey's in April 1997. Nevertheless, filkers have continued to adapt to the shifting digital landscape, with filk community spaces and recordings present on social media and Web 2.0 spaces such as Facebook, YouTube, and LiveJournal (Childs-Helton, 2016, p. 72). For example, musician and filker Bills Mills maintains both a personal website[1] and Facebook page,[2] with his website including a small archive of filk music under the heading "Fannish Music Pages"[3] (Mills, 2015). Additionally, there are also many group music communities that center around filk on social media platforms. These include, but are not limited to, a Discord channel called #filkhaven; a Tumblr page called filkyeahfilk[4] two different Filking groups on Facebook, F is for Filker[5] and Filker,[6] as well as a group for the Filk Hall of Fame;[7] and Interfilk, an in-Filk charity that sends filkers who are known in only one region to other regions.[8] Despite this digital presence, it still remains true that for many filkers, filk's heart "is real-life gathering of people" (McGath, p. 10).

The existence of songbooks and digital archives suggest that the filk community has responded well and actively to the challenge of retaining their own work

making it better known to others. Nevertheless, this brief review of major resources and known archives in the community reveals several major limitations that professional archivists can readily identify. First, despite the existence of a metadata scheme such as that of McGath (2006), no single process of recording metadata has gone "community-wide," likely resulting in files being lost while creating major issues with crediting original artists and artists accessing the files themselves. Second, the emphasis on grassroots/individual artist or organization websites means there is precious little uniformity with how the files are presented or linked to each other, furthering the loss of access as archives quickly became outdated, inaccessible, or are presented idiosyncratically. Finally, the emphasis in both the physical and digital archives on future performance—that is, on having performances available for filkers to view and use to improvise their own future songs—has meant that there has been little attention paid to preservation as much as to proliferation and enjoyment of the records. This results in an extreme range of variation in the files as filkers perform and reinterpret each other's songs without always keeping track of a piece's overall evolution, the information regarding particular variations, or preserving older variations of a particular song.

This has led to a scenario that could be considered a research and archival nightmare. Hypothetically, it is possible that videos of a given filk performance could exist as part of one filker's YouTube account, an audio recording on another's Facebook page, and as lyrics in a digitized copy of a songbook belong to a third that has been made available on a personal website. There is no established way for any of these filkers to know of, share, link, or comment on each other's resources to make one strong, easily accessible archival file, since they would first have to be able to find each other to have such linkage without having already been made aware of each other at least once before.

Even if these three filkers—one with a video record, one with a sound record, and one with a digitized written record, all of the same song— find each other, there will likely be difficulties in deciding whose version should be preserved. First, the different file formats raise a host of question as to what form the music should ultimately preserved in. The songbook format has the least audio and performance information available in it, but it is likely the most easily preserved. The audio and video records have more performance information in them, but face all the difficulties of technological decay and access described above in Part I. Second, the variability in files also means that there are likely severe questions regarding other common means of deciding what copy should be preserved. This includes questions of authenticity (is this the original piece? What counts as the original piece in an oral tradition?); ownership (who created this file? Who first performed this? Do they know a file was created of that performance?); and provenance (where did this work even come from? Are there communities who would claim ownership over this besides the filk community?). Individual filkers themselves might be the only ones who know where their copies came from in the filk community, which in turn could prompt an archival hunt across multiple digital platforms and physical resources to find the initial singer, whose own record of the song could be vastly different.

All of this means that if an archival file could be created, it is likely to be either one with a high degree of inauthenticity embedded into it, or a complex, multi-faceted file that would be attempting to convince researchers and users that its authenticity lies in the overall shape, variation, and evolution of the various performances it contains, all based on what individual filkers know or are able to find out about the song being preserved. Therefore while filker attempts at DIY archives may have achieved their goals of proliferating filk music by spreading it in multiple formats around the community, these attempts have arguably failed to ensure goals of education, celebration, or enjoyment of the filk tradition because the wide, scatter-shot

dissemination of their work online and in portable songbooks has created a record that has limited accessibility, misses many potential audiences, and fails to foster a greater awareness of a musical tradition.

The Skills Necessary for Successful Filk Preservation

This case study has revealed a variety of skills needed by the successful archivist.

Cultural fluency. The communal nature of the filk-sing means that while there are some notable names such as Leslie Fish, Julia Ecklar, Cynthia McQuillin, Steve MacDonald, and Barry and Sally Childs-Helton, no one is viewed as a star filker in particular (Childs-Helton, 2003, p. 69). According to Launius (2004, p. 2), many filk songs may come across as forgettable and strikingly simplistic, which raises the odds that a rare song of particular depth may go unnoticed by those outside the community. In addition, while more recent materials can be tracked more easily, the reliance on oral tradition and individualized archival work means that many older filk songs have complex authorship, and that ownership remains informal overall (Childs-Helton, 2003, p. 71).

All of this means that without cultural fluency, archivists could easily miss important records. To give just one example, Leslie Fish's 1975 filk "Hope Eyrie," which depicts the landing of an Earth spaceship on a new planet, is considered the national anthem of the pro-space movement and at one point served as the underground anthem of Poland's Solidarnosc trade union (Launius, 2004, p. 4). Yet within the filk community, Leslie Fish's 1977 parody song "Banned from Argo," which depicts the misadventures of a spaceship crew on shore leave, has been better received and has itself been parodied in "The Bastard Children of Argo," having spawned two volumes of parodies and almost five hundred additional verses ("Banned from Argo," *Fanlore*.) Would a casual musicology archivist without knowledge of the filk community be able to identify either song as worthy of formal preservation given only their topics and musical styles, let alone know enough of their reception to know how to choose between the two?

Consequently, this case study demonstrates that archivists working with other musical traditions (and smaller communities more broadly) need to develop cultural fluency skills in order to successfully identify and preserve works for future use. These would include the ability to build rapport with members of the community, gain a deeper understanding of the community's values, and make an attempt to understand how the community asserts these values through their practices and methods of claiming ownership of their work. This would also then require archivists to recognize the expertise of individuals in the community. Put another away, fans should be viewed as partners for "prestige-granting institutions" rather than as adversaries by professional archivists because they share the same desire for legitimate, accurate representations of the community and because the strong insight and knowledge they possess about what such a representation would require would be of great use to professional archivists. (Collins, 2015, pp. 128-130; Duffet & Löbert 2015, p. 162).

Technological skills. In the case of filk, its musical records alone are spread over a wide array of textual, audio, and visual recordings that have been made in nearly every major physical and digital format of the last 70 years (amongst those methods that have been available to the general public at low cost). This range will only increase if, similar to other music collections, related memorabilia such as artwork, musical instruments, writings, or merchandise belonging to the filkers themselves are to be added.

Consequently, this case study also reveals how important it will be for archivists to develop a broad technological fluency. Valuable technological skills will likely include knowing how to use an assortment of technological platforms, how to maintain older platforms for future access, and how to cata-

logue works consistently across multimedia formats such that a user or researcher can access the work from multiple points. It will also mean developing a relative comfort with the fluidity of technological adaption, including a willingness try out different platforms and mediums in real-time alongside members of the community, even if doing so would require the development of coding and website programming skills, and even if it might potentially prove to have been wasted labor in the future.

Ethical and moral awareness. In the case of filk, trying to identify materials for archival preservation will necessitate discussing and answering questions regarding the authenticity of records that are likely still evolving through performances; the ownership and provenance of songs and recordings in an oral tradition; the accurate and ethical depiction of the community's cultural memories in a community that prides itself in being "grassroots," and is wary of outside definition; and ways to communicate and market the work to those outside the community without compromising filkers' own sense of community norms. All of these are also concerns that archivists will have to address with nearly any similar community's archival work, with unique answers as the views and self-awareness of an individual community changes over time. To address these concerns, archivists will need to learn how to engage in dialogue about what can be very emotionally charged topics, develop a sense of mindfulness about archival practices and the relationship of archivists to the communities they serve, and a willingness to approach community members not just as partners but as equals in the creation of the archive. Developing these skills will allow archivists to build the ethical and moral awareness necessary in acting to build community relationships and identifying materials for preservation in accordance with professional ethics requirements regarding an archivist's judgement and trust (Society of American Archivvists Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics, 2018).

In conclusion, this case study reveals that the archivists attempting to engage in sound preservation, and in preservation and presentation of subcultural communities more generally, will have to develop not only the technological skills for such work but also the awareness and communication skills necessary to be fluent in the communities they represent, as well as the ability to present such works in a respectful manner. In the case of filk, this would mean providing and introducing the general public to a rich musical tradition in a way that would preserve its grassroots origins as well as its values of community engagement and performance, and that would help it to grow and reach new audiences, thereby ensuring the tradition's continuation into the future.

Notes:

[1] https://kryptonradio.com/voices/thevoicesoffandom.com/

[2] http://www.facebook.com/BillMillsMusic

[3] https://kryptonradio.com/voices/thevoicesoffandom.com/music.html

[4] https://filkyeahfilk.tumblr.com/

[5] https://www.facebook.com/groups/1821008721473434/

[6] https://www.facebook.com/groups/179207275435854/),

[7] https://www.facebook.com/groups/222213818461/

[8] http://interfilk.org.

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A Timeline of Psychiatry in Novels of Philip K. Dick

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Abstract: In the works of Philip K. Dick, one can identify the various moments that have characterized the progress made in psychiatry in the decades following the 1940s. According to Edward Shorter's classification, these phases make up the first biological psychiatry until the 1940s; psychoanalysis between the 1940s and the 1960s; anti-psychiatry in the 1960s; and the second biological psychiatry from the 1960s onward. The first and fourth phases are characterized by an explanation for mental illness through a biological paradigm, and by therapies which were initially the constraining and surgical type, and pharmacological afterwards. The psycho-analysis and anti-psychiatry periods are instead characterized by the "talking cure" and socio-family paradigms.

Philip Dick, an American writer famous for his science fiction novels, was an anxious person who used amphetamines and psychotropic drugs to cope with several psychiatric disorders. In his adult life, he became interested in mental distress and psychotherapies, and included futuristic transpositions of daily, post-war, American living in his science fiction works.

The aim of this article is to highlight how the different evolutionary phases of psychiatry in the United States are described in Philip K. Dick's literary production, and to thus confirm how his science fiction work was positioned within that particular American historical context.

Keywords: anti-psychiatry; biological psychiatry; Philip K. Dick; psychoanalysis; science fiction

1. Introduction

The critical work on Philip K. Dick has often focused on the author's exploration of schizophrenia (Dick, 1965a; Enn, 2006; Warrick, 1987). Mental illness, often associated with the description of the desperate conditions of Americans and of Martian colonists described in the Dickian novels, has led critics to analyze his novels of the 1960s by concentrating on their theoretical psychoanalytical and existentialist aspects (Wolk, 1995). It is indisputable that Dick was sensitive to this psychopathological topic; just as it is an undeniable fact that schizophrenia was the most frequently diagnosed mental illness between the 1940s and the 1960s (Shorter, 1997). In Dick's work, which covers approximately three decades, one can also find additional elements ascribable to other aspects of psychiatry and psychopathology.

The advances made in psychiatry in the United States have been described by Edward Shorter in four phases: initially, the first biological psychiatry, next, psychoanalysis and anti-psychiatry, and lastly, the second biological psychiatry. In his works, Dick at times included long-winded descriptions, whilst at other times, planted simple clues tracing back to these different phases in the development of psychiatry.

In order to make even clearer the relationships between the phases of psychiatry and the phases of Dick's literary production, it is useful to follow Shorter's subdivision of the history of psychiatry as broken down into these four phases. Although Shorter's approach to the topic has been criticized,[1] his classification scheme is realistic and useful to the discussion contained herein by verifying how the works of Philip K. Dick are integrated into said phases, albeit with widely overlapping areas between them.

Obviously, not all four phases are equally represented. As Csicsery-Ronay writes: "[That] Dick was familiar with psychological discourse, to the point of fixation, is evident in almost everything he wrote" (Csicsery-Ronay, 1995, p. 431). But Dick was a writ-

er who was active in the years between 1950 and 1970, and he absorbed those aspects of psychiatry that were typical of that contemporary moment, hence psychoanalysis (the works by Jung and Binswanger translated in the United States), part of the anti-psychiatry movement, and the first studies of the second biological psychiatry (the articles published in a psychology magazine with wide circulation such as *Psychology Today*). The second and third phases are much more evident in his work. The first is referenced through sporadic comments in his early works, which may be due to the fact that the first phase was ending when Dick started his career as a writer. The last phase began when Dick was in the midst of a creative and personal crisis, and so the references to such psychiatry pertain to only a few aspects of this phase, such as the studies on the split-brain and on neurotransmitters.

In Dick's work, there are countless scenes, asides, dialogues or comments that exemplify the four phases of the progress of psychiatry. Accordingly, I have tried to focus on representation throughout a few specific works, preferring to mention, in a footnote, other aspects which have been deemed to be important but more factual than narratological. This was done in order to keep the reading light, at the same time equally making it clear to the reader that Dick was indeed alert to what was happening in the areas of therapeutic treatment and the living conditions of people affected by psychiatric illnesses.

2. Post-war psychiatry in the United States

The post-war years were a breaking point for psychiatry between a before, when mental illness was considered a neurological disorder to be cured through invasive therapies, such as lobotomy and electroshock, and an after in which schizophrenia became the mental disorder par excellence, and was treated with pharmacological therapies.

During the three decades that followed World War II, psychiatry experienced two major and significant phases (psychoanalysis and anti-psychiatry) during which mental disorders were considered exclusively psychic phenomena. The subsequent development of pharmacological therapies, accompanied by new studies on neurotransmitters and on the functioning of the brain, led to the return of psychiatry and a second biological phase.

2.1 The first biological psychiatry

The period from the end of the nineteenth century to the years spanning World War II is the period that Edward Shorter defined the first biological psychiatry. The therapies used in the psychiatric field between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1950s were basically gynecological surgery, hydrotherapy, tooth extraction, malaria fever therapy, insulin coma therapy, convulsive therapy with Metrazol, electroshock therapy, and prefrontal lobotomy.

For the entire first half of the twentieth century, the idea that the disease was a chronic and hopeless one resulted in the practice of segregating mental patients into isolated hospital wards without ever discharging them: especially during the early decades of the twentieth century. Up until the 1930s, patients in psychiatric hospitals were often simply controlled by guards who did not treat them but instead kept them separate from the outside world, so much so that "asylum psychiatry counted scarcely as a branch of medicine at all" (Shorter, 1997, p. 192). The conditions in which mental patients lived were revealed by the journalist Albert Deutsch in a 1946 edition of *Life Magazine*. It was this discovery that led to the birth of a movement that became known as "anti-psychiatry." Photographs of patients left to themselves in large hospitals with few personnel available to assist them became a symbolic image of this phase. The conditions in which mental patients were found reminded readers of the lives of the Jews right after their liberations from concentration camps (Deutsch, 1948, pp. 41-42), as well as of other ethnic groups destined to segregation and subjected to eugenic practices. Lobotomies and electroshock therapy were also symbols of this post-war psychiatry, but these were

merely the treatments themselves; the real problem consisted in the post-therapeutic treatment. The lobotomized patient or the patient who underwent many electroshocks was no longer autonomous and so was forcibly admitted to a clinic. The widespread belief that it was easy to obtain forced and generalized hospitalization subsequently paved the way for the anti-psychiatry movement in the early 1960s.

2.2 The Psychoanalytic era

While the first biological psychiatry phase was at its peak, psychoanalysis was taking hold in the United States due to the emigration of many European psychoanalysts who were fleeing Nazism. The psychoanalytic era took place between the early 1940s and the end of the 1960s, but its peak occurred between the end of the 1950s and the 1960s. New York City was America's psychoanalytic center, so much so that analysis mania was called "New York Syndrome" (Shorter, 1997, p. 174). Different factors contributed to the success of psychoanalysis: from the greater wealth enjoyed by the middle class, who thus had the opportunity to undergo such a personalized therapy, to the desire for introspection often manifested by those who had studied humanities.

Freudian psychoanalysts in Europe did not consider psychoanalysis to be suited for the treatment of schizophrenia and other psychoses, but in the United States things changed. Adolf Meyer was the one who, more than anyone else, introduced psychotherapy for psychotics in America, this being the reason why the psychoanalytical method became so widespread. Harry Stack Sullivan, who believed schizophrenia to be a failed reaction to anxiety, also introduced this method for these types of patients. Thanks to the psychotherapeutic innovation represented by the psychoanalytic "talking cure," for Americans in general, the term "psychiatry" became synonymous with psychoanalysis. This sentiment was further strengthened by the publication of the first diagnostic manual for psychologists and psychiatrists. This development emerged as a consequence of the disseminated works of the two most important theorists of psychoanalysis: Sigmund Freud, whose work was already known in the United States for several decades; and Carl Gustav Jung, whose works were also translated into English and whose theory, not focused on sexuality like the Freudian one, was more widely accepted in the United States (Taylor, 1998; McGuire, 1995). In addition to Freud and Jung, books that gathered together articles by multiple authors on specific topics also met with some success (and caught Dick's interest). For example, in 1944, the work entitled Language and Thought in Schizophrenia, edited by J. S. Kasanin and N. D. C. Lewis, was published (and later reprinted by W.W. Norton & Company in 1964, in the midst of the anti-psychiatry phase when the topic of schizophrenia was extremely popular). The volume contained articles on the language of schizophrenics, written by Von Domarus, Sullivan and Goldstein; Kasanin and Angyal wrote two articles on schizophrenic thought, whilst Benjamin suggested a test aimed at diagnosing schizophrenia. This volume was still in the field of psychology, even though it dealt with topics such as language and thought which were also part of psychoanalysis. It was with the publication of the volume entitled *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology* (1958), edited by Rollo May and Henri Ellenberger, that Americans became familiar with existential analysis and the thinking of the Swiss psychoanalyst Ludwig Binswanger. Although the book was viewed as a tract closer to philosophy and to poetry than to science (Piers, 1959) (and perhaps this is the reason why Dick particularly liked it), it did manage to disseminate Binswanger's thought, which was rather complex.

Binswanger assumes two forms of relation: one with things (Umwelt) and one with people (Mitwelt). The social background, the Mitwel, is the world inhabited by people interacting with one another, whereas the subjective, closed world of the psychopath is called Umwelt, a world with non-human things on which the schizophrenic may exert his influence. Thus, he does not interact with the Mitwelt. According to Binswanger, the manic-depressive subject jumps from one world-project to the other, and he is possessed by his several and

often contradictory worlds; the schizophrenic, instead, is possessed by one world only, a world without inhabitants, empty, and only powered by himself (Needleman, 1963). More specifically, Binswanger meant being-with-others and being-toward-others. Psychotherapy must be understood as a meeting of two human beings. The doctor/patient relationship must necessarily take place on a common ground. This is the concept that makes Binswanger one of the progenitors of anti-psychiatry.

Psychoanalysis declined in popularity in the 1960s due to new models of psychiatric illness, the discovery of alternative treatments, and most importantly, the development of newer and more powerful drugs. The boom of psychiatric drugs led to the second biological psychiatry, and to "the virtual abandonment of innovative interest in psychoanalytic and family theorizing on the etiology of schizophrenia" (Gilman Sander, 2008, p. 474).

2.3 Anti-psychiatry

At the same time as the end of psychoanalysis and the birth of the second biological psychiatry, the 1960s witnessed the onset of a movement historically defined as anti-psychiatry (originally, the term "anti-psychiatry" was used for the first time by Bernhard Beyer in 1912 to characterize an article that criticized psychiatry). Anti-psychiatry theorists were basically distinguished by an aversion to psychotropic drugs. One of the first anti-psychiatrists was the Englishman Robert Laing. In his work *The Divided Self* (1960), he opposed not psychiatry in itself, but its coercive aspect. In addition to Laing's works, the other books that sparked widespread interest for anti-psychiatry were all published within the span of one year: *Asylum* by Erving Goffman (1961), *Madness and Insanity: History of Madness in the Classical Age* (1961; American edition 1965) by Michel Foucault, and *The Myth of Mental Illness* (1961) by Thomas Szasz. Anti-psychiatry arose from the social atmosphere of the 1960s: the general climate of hostility towards authority, the medical ones in particular; the opinion of anti-psychiatry supporters that the origin of mental disorders was not personal but instead social and that it was society that determined who was schizophrenic. There was a widespread idea that thousands and thousands of Americans were hospitalized in psychiatric clinics, even those with only mild conditions, for the sole purpose of controlling them.

2.4 The second biological psychiatry

The decline of psychoanalysis at the end of the 1960s was caused by many factors: the discovery of new and more effective drugs that made it possible to avoid long therapy sessions; the advent of a new model of psychiatric illness, which emphasized neurogenesis rather than psychogenesis (which is what precisely Dick became interested in); and the discovery of alternative psychotherapeutic techniques such as the cognitive behavioral therapy (Shorter, 1997). Moreover, "psychodynamic psychology had offered a common paradigm linking psychiatry and anthropology. The shift of mainstream psychiatry towards science and medicine and away from psychodynamic psychology made this link no longer tenable" (Bains 2005, p. 145). As for anti-psychiatry, it was paradoxically that which facilitated the entrance of the new bio-psychology: psychiatric institutions were run by psychoanalysts, and at the time, said institutions were seen as spaces of confinement; this led to an equivalence between psychiatric institutions and psychoanalysis. And that is how the second biological psychiatry, in which neurology became the paradigm that could be used as a guide for interpreting phenomena which had been studied before by psychoanalysts and behaviorists, came about; moreover, the use of mass (blockbuster) psychiatric drugs became widespread.[2]

Although this phase had already been in progress for decades—given that biochemical testing had never stopped—one could say that it began at the end of the 1960s, when the studies of Kranjec & Schwartz (1967) developed on gamma-Aminobutyric acid (GABA), an inhibitor of the reuptake of receptors, the action of which could be applied to the

production of anxiolytics. Studies on the functioning of the brain hemispheres proved to be just as interesting. These studies commenced during the same period by psychologists in the Los Angeles and San Francisco areas, and were widely disseminated even outside the restricted academic circle. Joseph Bogen worked at UCLA and CalTech and published, "The other side of the brain: An appositional mind" (1968); Charles Tart of the Stanford Research Institute had already written articles on extrasensory perception and out-of-body experiences, and published a work entitled *Altered States of Consciousness* (1969); Robert E. Ornstein of the University of California Medical Center and later Stanford University published *The Psychology of Consciousness* (1972), in which he hypothesized that people actually use the left hemisphere only. They combined neuroscientific theories with theories on behaviorism and the subconscious. The group collaborated in putting together the collection, *The Nature of Human Consciousness*, edited by Ornstein in 1974. In addition to the classics of psychology, such as William James, Aldous Huxley, and Carl Jung, it also included recent contributions of the 1960s and 1970s to the cognitivist or neuroscientific school, but with an opening to other fields: there were works on the split-brain phenomenon, the two modes of consciousness by Deickman, Bogen's article published a few years before, and "The split Brain in Man" by Michael S. Gazzaniga. It should be noted that in the section dedicated to the split-brain, there was also an excerpt from the *I Ching*, one of the key books of the Dickian corpus.

Psychology Today, an informative magazine particularly focused on cognitive psychology and the neurosciences—which were the two emerging psychologies of the period that replaced behaviourism and psychoanalysis (the two major American psychological paradigms up until that time)—played an important role in spreading the second biological psychiatry. Two articles which struck a significant chord were "Vitamins Pills for Schizophrenics" by Harvey Ross (April 1974),[3] which examined overdosages of water-soluble vitamins that improve neural activity, and "Thrust your Body Rhythms," by Gae G. Luce covering (unsurprisingly) body rhythms.

These studies, conducted in the early years of the second biological psychiatry, were gradually set aside, and psychiatry oriented itself towards a synthesis between psycho-pharmacology and the cognitive behavioral paradigm.

3. Philip K. Dick's works and the representation of psychiatry

Dick's interest in the different types of psychology was in part due to the fact that he himself had been in therapy since he was a child, and that he was a user of psychotropic drugs. Scott writes: "Philip K. Dick suffered from a severe mental disorder that colored his fiction with strange elements" (Scott, 2017, p. 50). He was an anxious person; he suffered from various psychosomatic disorders, and was a user of amphetamines and psychotropic drugs. Moreover, Dick had an extreme interest in psychoses and the challenges of mental illness. With a sort of bohemian pride, he claimed to be a "partial schizophrenic" (Dick, 1965a, p. 181). In her memoirs, Maer Wilson narrates that Philip Dick loved creating strange, melodramatic situations because, "I think he enjoyed the game, whether it was for some scene in a book or because he enjoyed messing with people to see how they would react (which I think also played into his writing) is still uncertain" (Wilson, 2016, p. 179). Much has been written about Dick's alleged neurotic or psychotic disorders (Rickmann, 1989; Arnold, 2016; Swanwick, 2019), but this is not the place for diagnoses. What interests us here is to see how he transposed the debate on etiology and the treatment of psychiatric disorders into his science fiction novels. In his many SF novels, Dick often described an America of the future, or an alternative present, where the abuse of psychiatry by the healthcare system represented a normal condition; likewise, he often created characters who used legal and illegal psychiatric drugs, often for the purpose of surviving in a world that would otherwise be unbearable. This is the reason

why his works, fictional and autobiographical, are able to describe in a plausible manner how psychiatry and the relevant pharmacopeia became integral parts of post-war Americans' daily lives.

Novel after novel Dick represented the various phases of the development of psychiatry in the United States. It must be noted that, as the various phases of the history of psychiatry succeeded one another with large overlapping areas of interest, in the same way these phases were portrayed in Dick's works. Said overlapping has several explanations. Dick was a self-taught man and his knowledge came from informative texts (collections of articles; informative psychology magazines; encyclopedias), and these writings were published a few years after being acknowledged by academic research; hence there is a certain misalignment between the historical phase and the writing phase. Moreover, many perceptions of the phenomenon came to him from the zeitgeist, and this remained in the common social perception for many years afterward: suffice it to think of the issue of patients confined in an asylum, ascribable to the phase of the first biological psychiatry but that also had repercussions during the third phase, the anti-psychiatry phase.

Most of the Dickian vision of mental illness and of the psychiatric world (at least up until the end of the 1960s) was a consequence of the idea which the public held about the first biological psychiatry. In fact, during his youth Dick absorbed Harry S. Sullivan's innovative ideas on psychoses and on asylums as prisons. The vision was then supplemented by new information acquired by the writer in his adulthood: in other words, during the psychoanalysis boom, the birth of anti-psychiatry, the development of neuropharmacology, and the consequent diffusion of psychiatric drugs.

The study of the correspondence between phases of the history of psychiatry and phases of the Dickian narrative will therefore be most effectively conducted by considering the year in which the novels were written, and not the year of their publication. In doing so, it is possible to follow a sort of history of psychiatry in the United States, viewed through the remodeling lens of science fiction.

3.1 The first biological psychiatry

From the last phase of the first biological psychiatry, Dick took the theme of hospitals as places of confinement for the mentally ill. Within some of his first stories and novels, there are several references to this treatment,[4] but *We Can Build You* can be considered the first novel to belong the first biological psychiatry phase. It was published in 1972 but it was written ten years earlier, in 1962.[5] It is the one that best describes the various aspects of American psychiatry in the 1950s, in other words, of the decade distinguished by the last remnants of the first biological psychiatry, as well as by the hospitalization boom. The diffusion of psychiatric clinics is well-described in the novel: in the United States, there are tens of thousands of patients in several state clinics.[6]

Many of those patients were picked up during puberty. Accordingly, Dick emphasizes how many of these diagnoses were premature: puberty "is the time psychosis tends to strike" (Dick, 1972b, p. 27). But, most importantly, he describes how psychiatric treatment in the 1950s was perceived as an all-pervading trend, and he does so by describing the advertisements for residential commitment to American asylums: "LEAD THE WAY TO MENTAL HEALTH--BE THE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY TO ENTER A MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC!" (Dick, 1972b, p. 152), as if to say that a stay in an asylum was something that, sooner or later, would have touched all American families. This concept is stressed at the end when Louis Rosen says to Doctor Nisea that almost everyone he knows has stayed at the Kasanin clinic: an aunt of his, one of his cousins, his high school teacher, a neighbor, a comrade, a former girlfriend, an employer of his, etc. The list takes up an entire page of the book. In this way, Dick makes it clear to the reader that, for each person living in the United

States, there may be about a dozen friends or relatives among them being treated for mental disorders.

3.2 Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a recurring theme in the Dickian narrative. There are multiple references to it. Most of Dick's novels were published during the first half of the 1960s, when psychoanalysis was at its peak popularity in the United States. So, almost all novels of the 1960s contain references to the various psychoanalytical theories in general. Dick read Freud, the first classical psychoanalytic author, but found that he disliked him.[7] He preferred Jung over Freud because "Freud would say the unconscious is just a repository of nasty thoughts we don't want to face; and Jung says no, the unconscious is extremely positive and powerful and very often correct, and compensatory to the conscious, and corrects an inadequate conscious view" (Rickman, 1989, p. 203). The writer became interested in Jungian psychoanalysis (in the typology[8] and in the collective unconscious) and in the existential one, which were close relatives of the other topics preferred by Dick: mysticism and philosophy.[9]

An important part of Dick's self-taught psychoanalytical education consisted in the anthology edited by Rollo May and Henri Ellenberger, *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology*.[10] The book gave wide emphasis to the work of Binswanger, the psychiatrist who created the Daseinanalyse. Ludwig Binswanger was another Swiss psychiatrist like Jung. He was an important name in the field of psychiatry, but American psychologies did not take his work into due account. Rollo May's book contained several essays on phenomenology and existential psychoanalysis, among which the famous *The Case of Ellen West* by Ludwig Binswanger was included (originally published by Binswanger in Schweizer Archivfur Neurologie und Psychiatrie in 1944-45). The case described a disease which today would probably be diagnosed as an eating disorder, but that at the time was presumed to be schizophrenia. This happened due to the characteristics of the worlds in which Ellen West seemed to live. She talked about her life as being characterized by two antithetical worldviews. She had lived the years of her youth in an ethereal world, and afterwards lived the second phase of the illness, during which she refused to eat anything, in a sepulchral world. The latter, in particular, was characterized by a static temporalization.

Philip Dick became fascinated by this Umwelt, also called tomb world (Grabwelt), and transposed it into a science fiction context in *Martian Time-Slip* (written in 1962; published in 1964), the first work of the writer's psychoanalytical phase. In the novel, the planet Mars is described as being similar to the American frontier, with the terrestrial settlers facing a hostile world, and with real estate speculators that try to occupy the territory. Manfred Steiner is the autistic son of a family of settlers. His condition forces him to live in another time. His world is a static tomb world like Ellen West's. This static condition allows him a vision of time where past and future are equally visible. Hence, he can see the future. In one of the subplots of the novel, the speculator Arnie Kott is eager to know the development of one of his construction projects, and for this reason he wants to use the young Manfred, whose ability would allow him to know the future developments of his business. Unfortunately, the child is closed in his own world and can only communicate through babblings. His Grabwelt, and the future Mars he sees, is a dead planet. Even the people he sees are just heaps of bones, as if they were already dead: "Manfred's lack of empathy means that he is trapped in a tomb world where everything around him appears to be dead and decaying and the only vital force is decay itself, personified in the terrible Gubbler. Manfred sees the tomb world all around him, even though he evidently lives in the same place as the other characters who, in the normal course of things, do not perceive it. On one occasion in *Martian Time-Slip*, Manfred's world is directly referred to as the tomb world" (Viskovic, 2013, pp. 171-172).

3.3 Anti-psychiatry

Anti-psychiatry theorists were against the labels affixed to patients by psychiatric manuals. Up un-

til the 1940s, nosology was the classical branch of the manual entitled *Psychologische Arbeiten* (1910) by Emil Kraepelin; but, in 1952, the American Psychiatric Association prepared the *DSM I: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual Mental Disorders* (1952). This soon became widely used by psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts (many disorders were explained in psychodynamic terms),[11] and as such it soon became the target of accusations by proponents of the anti-psychiatry movement. Dick was up-to-date on psychiatric issues and made widespread use of the diagnostic classificatory system DSM. He probably used it to describe the symptoms manifested by the characters in the novel *Clans of the Alphane Moon* (written in 1963; published in 1964): "he classifies characters as schizophrenic or schizoid, autistic, paranoid; he speculates on or invents explanations for these conditions. Nor does he see these conditions as illnesses happening to the individual, and telling only about his nature, as the psychological diagnoses might imply; it is usually society as a whole that is pathological, and very often the individual's illness consists in the fact that he takes upon himself the condition of society as a whole. Dick practices a politicized psychology (Palmer, 2003, pp. 38-39).

This politicized psychology was part of the debate by the counterculture and anti-psychiatry to which Dick referred. *Clans of the Alphane Moon* (1964) is an 'anti-psychiatric' novel. He puts forward the idea that people who are undesirable because they are different or defined as being sick are powerless in society. This is why the novel "corroborates the contemporary anti-psychiatric politics of Thomas Szasz and R.D. Laing" (Palmer, 2003, p. 146).[12]

In *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, "Dick constructs a whole society divided among groups exhibiting various forms of mental illness" (Taylor, 1975, p. 16). To establish the novel's division of inhabitants into castes of fools, Dick reshaped Jacob Sergi Kasanin's classification of pathologies as set out in *Language and Thought in Schizophrenia,* and he integrated it with the Jungian theories (a collective unconscious rooted in the past) and existentialist ideas (the ancient and original world), more acceptable to anti-psychiatrists than the classical psychoanalysis. In the novel, the schizophrenic is "lost in his clouded visions of an archetypal reality, of cosmic proto-forces underlying the temporal universe, his perpetual view of the so-called Urwelt" (Dick, 1964d, p. 12). Part of the story is set in a planet-hospital divided into seven cities, each one intended for a specific group of psychiatric patients: there are the hebephrenics (Heebs) who live in Ghanditown, the schizophrenics (Skitz) in Giovanna D'Arco, the paranoids (Para) who live in Adolfville, the polymorphs (Polys) in Hamlet, the maniacs (Manses) who reside in Da Vinci Heights, the depressed (Deps) in Cotton Mather, and the obsessive-compulsive (ObCom) who live in an unnamed city). The planet, three light years away from Earth, was abandoned by the Earth government and became autonomous. The novel describes Earth's attempt to regain control over the former colony by resorting to a psychiatric evaluation of Dr. Mary Ritterford, sent to the planet for the purpose of making contact with the colonist/patients. As underscored by the simulacrum Mageboom who accompanies the psychiatrist, "we intend to take the leadership out of their hands, place them back where they were twenty-five years ago. Patients in enforced hospitalization circumstances —in other words, captivity" (Dick, 1964d, p. 81).

Dick's description of the various types of mental disorders is detailed, but what makes the novel interesting is its anti-psychiatric vision. The psychotics in *Clans of the Alphane Moon* survive because they are able to spontaneously create a mutual collaboration system for the purpose of overcoming their various difficulties, something that the litigious "normal people" on Earth were unable to do. It is as if the "sick ones" were the earthlings and the "healthy ones" were the "former insane asylum patients," a reversal that seems to indicate how the real disease is not so much the psychiatric one but the moral disease of people who, albeit lucid, are evil on the inside. Of the psychiatrics on Earth, which are clearly the transfiguration of the American government and

psychiatric associations of Dick's time, a reporter wonders, "has it occurred to TERPLAN just to leave this moon alone? To treat its culture as you would any other culture, respecting its values and customs?" (Dick, 1964d, p. 33). The extra-terrestrials in whose system the planet is located, correspond to anti-psychiatry psychoanalysts: "the Alphanes will guarantee the civil liberties of the clans. No hospitalization. No therapy. You won't be treated as nuts: you'll be treated as bona fide colonists, owning land and engaging in manufacture and commerce, whatever it is you all do" (Dick, 1964d, pp. 174-175).

Philip Dick seems to draw on this prospective when he describes his characters, who are schizophrenics, but are also perfectly adapted in that world that they have shaped according to their needs. When Chuck, Mary Ritterford's husband, asks himself how it will be to live in Alpha, a community of psychotic individuals, the comedian-dealer Bunny Hentmann answers as follows: "how the hell do you think you've been living? I'd call your inter-personal relationship with your wife psychotic" (Dick, 1964d, p. 179).

All of the families described by Dick in his many novels are psychotic, and this would seem to draw on another psychological theory of the 1960s, the "double-bind theory" (Bateson et al). According to this model, one of the possible causes of schizophrenia is the communication of conflicting and ambiguous messages within the family environment during the child's developmental phase.

One of the main concepts of anti-psychiatry was that pathology and normality are the expressions of a continuum, and Dick seems to have believed it. This concept, today very modern and accepted but supported only by a few psychologists during the 1960s, states that the division between normality and pathology is not clear, but instead, is a state that changes also in relation to the impairment of daily functioning. Over the years, this attitude has made the pathology more understandable. A behavior that may be "strange" or exaggerated, but does not jeopardize normal daily and social life, can be "eccentric," but not abnormal. In a forward-looking way, Chuck Ritterford, the protagonist of *Clans of the Alphane Moon*, states that "If there's one thing that contemporary psychiatry has shown, it's that. Merely knowing that you are mentally sick won't make you well, any more than knowing you have a heart condition provides a suddenly sound heart" (Dick, 1964d, p. 197).

3.4 The second biological psychiatry

Philip Dick's work coinciding with the phase of the second biological psychiatry is entirely focused on the phenomenon which Dick himself called 2-3-74. The experience is indicated as such because it took place during the months of February and March of 1974. During that time, Dick experienced a series of visual hallucinations. About the causes and the meaning of these hallucinations, Dick started to write a diary that, more than thirty years later, was published under the title, *The Exegesis*. It consists of approximately eight thousand pages of speculations on the episode. Dick's initial interpretation is of the neurological type. It was only afterwards, starting from the mid-1970s, that he associated it to a metaphysical-religious vision.

The theories that he made reference to in order to explain the hallucinations came from his readings of that period. He became interested in studies on the split-brain which he had read in *The Nature of Human Consciousness*. The idea of separate brains, an active one (the left one) and an apparently dormant one (the right one, seat of the unconscious), advocated by Robert F. Ornstein, fascinated Dick. He set himself to find a way to activate both of them, so as to have a complete vision of the world: "Two separate "mono" views, when blended, become a "stereo" view. Both entities, surprised by the heightened perception, would probably attribute it to the other's ability, not realizing [that] he himself supplied half" (Dick, 2011, § 4-103). In order to activate the right dormant hemisphere, Dick used the overdosage of vitamins which he had read about in the article by H. Ross published in *Psychology*

Today. If it could be useful for schizophrenics, he thought, it could be useful for him as well. The result was the series of hallucinations to which he initially attempted to give a neurological explanation.

The possible explanation came to him from both the studies on GABA, and the articles by Luce Gae which he had read in *The Nature of Human Consciousness* and in *Psychology Today.* On the one hand, he believed that information had always been present in his brain, but that it was blocked by the GABA-inhibitor, and that the vitamins had unblocked them; on the other hand, he believed that, by following Gae Luce's theory, the pineal gland, when reacting to the light, had produced the phosphonic activity which he had perceived. After 1975, Dick began to associate these neuro-pharmacological explanations with a mystical-religious explanation that implied an alien entity or perhaps god, which had possessed him and revealed to him the true nature of the universe.

Both the 2-3-74 experience and the neurological explanations were included in the novels of that period. The novel entitled *A Scanner Darkly* (written in 1975 but published in 1977) described the life of a policeman who has infiltrated a group of drug addicts in order to identify the supplier of the drug. He is in incognito and is protected by the Scramble suit, a special bodysuit that hides his true identity and appears as a series of colored spots to the people who look at it. "The scramble suit was an invention of the Bell Laboratories, conjured up by accident by an employee named S. A. Powers. He had, a few years ago, been experimenting with disinhibiting substances affecting neural tissue, and one night, having administered to himself an IV injection considered safe and mildly euphoric, had experienced a disastrous drop in the GABA fluid of his brain. Subjectively, he had then witnessed lurid phosphene activity projected on the far wall of his bedroom, a frantically progressing montage of what, at the time, he imagined to be modern-day abstract paintings" (Dick, 1977, pp. 23-24).

The 2-3-74 experience is fully described in *Radio Free Albemuth*, a novel written in 1976 but shelved by the author and published posthumously in 1985, rewritten with a great deal of changes as *Valis* (written in 1978 and published in 1980). *Radio Free Albemuth* is set in an alternative present where the United States gradually takes on a totalitarian nature guided by President Ferris F. Freemont. The science fiction writer Phil Dick finds himself involved in a conspiracy when his friend Nicholas Brady tells him that he is receiving messages, in the form of hallucinations, from a perhaps alien entity which he calls VALIS (Vast Active Living Intelligence System), the only possibility to fight Freemont's rising dictatorship.

In the *Valis* version, the writer Phil Dick narrates how his friend Horselover Fat believes himself to have been contacted by a perhaps divine or perhaps extra-terrestrial entity, called VALIS. The novel contains Fat's diaries, which include parts of the *Exegesis.*

4.Conclusions

Philip K. Dick's literary and autobiographical production manages to represent, in literary form, the progress made in psychiatry during the twentieth century. The writer grew and matured as an author during the span of those three decades (the 1950s through 1970s), during which the four overlapping phases that characterize modern psychiatry were manifested. What happened during that period in the field of psychiatry formed his beliefs with regards to the treatment of mental illnesses, and he represented, with the conventions and conceits of science fiction, his America in the 1950s and 1960s, invaded by psychiatric clinics.

The first biological psychiatry featured the use of retention or surgical methods. It is generally deemed to have ended with the diffusion of psychoanalysis, at the start of the 1940s; nonetheless the use of forced hospitalization and electroshock therapy, which continued until the end of the

1950s, represented a remnant of that first phase. Psychoanalysis became predominant in American psychiatry with the arrival of European doctors fleeing Nazism. Also, thanks to the actions of Adolf Meyer, who contributed to bringing together psychoanalysis and psychiatry, and who encouraged the drafting of the DSM, psychoanalysis experienced a boom during the two decades following WWII, reaching its apex between the end of the 1950s and the early-1960s. These years also marked the birth of the anti-psychiatry movement. Although the texts that originated this movement were written by Laing, Goffman, and Foucault, an anti-psychiatry conscience, however, can be traced back to an article published in *Life* magazine (1946), which showed the conditions of psychiatric hospitals. Lastly, the second biological psychiatry involved a study of the brain functions and of neurotransmitters, and the consequent introduction of new therapies.

This timeline of psychiatry is fully represented in Dick's novels and it is outlined in Fig. 1. The overlaps, which coincide with adhesion to conflicting views of psychiatry, are part of the writer's complex personality: "he could favor strongly psychodynamic Jungian explanations, then dismiss all of those for a purely biochemical etiology of mental illness. [...] he might seem to be allied to the discourse of the anti-psychiatry movement, since his countercultural location shared their disdain for authority, yet he also continually relied on the official diagnostic language of psychiatry in his life and throughout his fiction, from the first to the last" (Luckhurst, 2015, p. 18). *We Can Build You* is the novel that best describes the massive hospitalization of U.S. patients. In it, Dick resumes the news about asylums that he probably read in the 1940s and 1950s (at the end of the first biological psychiatry) and that he still felt current when he wrote the novel. The psychoanalytic phase can also be easily identified in Dick's works, albeit not in its Freudian sense (the most popular one in the United States). In many of his novels, Dick described the *Grabwelt* illustrated by the Swiss psychiatrist Ludwig Binswanger: the planet Mars seen by the autistic child Manfred in *Martian Time-slip* is a tomb-world. Anti-psychiatry was also widely represented by Dick. Its origins coincide with the writer's artistic maturity, and in some way satisfied this paranoid and anti-system ideas: the accusations flung at the concentration camp-system of the asylums is clear in the novel *Clans of the Alphane Moon*. The second biological psychiatry retains the biological-organicist imprint of the first, but is characterized by the diffusion of psychiatric drugs. It is widely present in Dick's last works, the *Valis* books.

There are certainly vast overlapping areas both between the development phases of twentieth-century psychiatry and between Philip Dick's creative phases. We also need to consider a certain misalignment between the historical phase and the novel-writing phase, which is due to the time that it takes for theories and research to be acknowledged by popular informational media sources (Dick was a self-taught writer and not a professional psychiatrist). Some topics were discussed by Dick even several years after their peak diffusion; however, as one can see from the diagram, there is a certain correspondence between the phases of psychiatry and their representation in his science fiction works.

This correspondence between phases of psychiatry and their respective representations in Dick's work allows us to draw some conclusions. The problem of mental illness was strongly felt in the United States between the 1950s and 1970s. *Life Magazine*'s report on the success of books such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey point out it. Dick's massive recourse to psychological theories and to the description of neurotic characters allows us to say that the writer hit the zeitgeist.

Science fiction, as a literary genre, has the task of reshaping the society of the present and putting it in a future or alternate world. Dick takes one of the aspects of society that he considers most important (mental illness as medical and philosophical concept) and puts it in the background of almost all his texts. The way he does it changes according to the historical period in which he writes his stories. Fig. 1 directs attention on this shift in Dick's histor-

ical perspective: he describes the American society of the future and its characters according to the models of psychiatry that are being imposed in the various decades. He followed with interest every change in the evolution of psychiatry so that his novels could be classified as psychiatric novels.

Notes:

[1] Volker Hess and Benoît Majerus also see in Shorter, A bias in his Story, to the advantage of neurology (Hess, Majerus, 2011).

[2] The history of the development of psycho-pharmacology is described in Healy D. (2008), in particular pp. 421-430.

[3] The effects of vitamins on psychiatric disorders continue to this day: see Brown & Roffman (2014).

[4] In the novel *The Man Who Japed* (written in 1955 and published in 1956), reference is made to mental patients as individuals who are not accepted by society: "Noose was a derisive term contracted from neuro-psychiatric. Allen disliked it. It had a blind, savage quality that made him think of the old hate terms, nigger and kike" (Dick, 1956, p. 20). The term "kikes" refers to the book by Albert Deutsch on the conditions of people confined in the psychiatric wards in those years; moreover, the term "nigger" refers to stigma and prejudice in addition to minority ethnic groups, extending to mental patients as well.

Other references to psychiatric treatments of the first phase (hospitalisation, electroshock) can also be found in "Piper in the Woods" (1953) where there is a "lie detector," called shock-box, to get answers that cannot be obtained consciously: the reference to electroshocks is clear; in the story "Null-O" (1958), Lemuel is a troubled boy and his parents fear that the authorities may seize the child and compulsorily detain him in a mental institute. In *Confessions of a Crap Artist* (1975 but written in 1959), Fay says that Claudia Hambro underwent electroshock treatments a couple of years before: the novel is set in 1959.

[5] The dates on which the novels and stories were written are taken from the "Chronological survey and guide" by Lawrence Sutin (1989); the publication dates are taken from the Stephensen-Payne P., Benson Jr, G. (1995).

[7] In one of Dick's first novels, *Eye in the Sky* (1957), written in 1955 and therefore before Dick discovered existentialist psychoanalysis, there is long reference to the Freudian theory of sublimation, which may reveal an acceptance of Freudian theory: "[...] the initial resistance to Freud's monumental discovery has been overcome. Naturally, he met terrific opposition. But, happily, that's all dying out. Nowadays you rarely find an educated person speaking of sex and sexuality. I use the terms merely in their clinical sense, to describe an abnormal clinical condition" (Dick, 1957, p. 126).

[8] The Jungian psychoanalysis of the psychological types is mentioned several times by Dick in the novels written during the psychoanalytical phase. For example, in *The Game-Players of Titan* (which Dick completed in 1963), Mrs McClain is described as follows: "She's what Jung described as an introverted feeling type; they run deep. They're inclined toward idealism and melancholy" (Dick, 1963b, p. 29.) In the novel *Dr Bloodmoney*, Barnes, who travels around the farming communities that survived the atomic holocaust by doing manual jobs, brings the bomb with him.

[9] The references to psychoanalysis as therapy à la page are too many to list them all. We can mention here some aspects. In "Oh, To Be a Blobel!" (written in 1963) psychoanalysis is so widespread that there are "new fully homeostatic psychoanalysts" (Dick, 1964a, p. 359), mechanical analysts as easy to use as an appliance. As regards psychoanalysts as the professional elite, one may recall that in *Dr Bloodmoney* (written in 1963), Stuart McConchie, a store clerk, when referring to the psychiatrist whose office is right across the street says: "Doctor Stockstill had parked his foreign car in the lot; he could afford to

pay five dollars a day. [...] Psychiatrists make a lot [of money]" (Dick, 1965b, p. 2). A similar comment on the professional fees charged by psychoanalysts can be found in the novel "What'll We Do with Ragland Park?" (also written in 1963): Sebastian Hada, the main character, is at the psychoanalyst's office: "He lay semisupine, arms behind his head, gazing at a Paul Klee print on the wall. . . or perhaps it was an original; good analysts did make a god-awful amount of money: Yasumi's charge to him was one thousand dollars a half hour" (Dick, 1963a, p. 75).

[10] Dick was also impressed by two articles included in the book edited by May: the article "The World of the Compulsive," in which V. E. von Gebsattel describes a case of obsession and phobia of contamination; and the article "Findings in a Case of Schizophrenic Depression" by Eugene Minkowski, in which the patient imagined that the entire world knew about his crimes. These articles inspired Dick to create the character of Kongrosian in the novel *The Simulacra* (Wolk, 1995, p. 114), written in 1963 and published in 1964.

[11] In *The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch*, Dick describes one of the charges that anti-psychiatry made to psychoanalysis: the transformation from a therapy to an impersonal diagnostic classification. Diseases were trivialized and diagnoses were automated with diagnostic manuals. In the novel, this automation is rendered through the invention of the automatic psychoanalyst. It is a simple briefcase that diagnoses mental disorders and describes them through units of measures called "freud." Barney, the main character who has to undergo the test, says: "I'm going to fail my mental," Barney said. "My precog ability tells me I am; it's helping me. I can't endure enough Freuds of stress to satisfy them--look at me." (Dick, 1964e, p. 23).

[12] In the other novels written during the same period, Dick includes phrases or scenes that reveal the characteristics of the United States during the anti-psychiatric period. In *Now Wait for the Last Year* (written in 1963-65 and published in 1967) the following claim is made: "Against that backdrop Himmel did not look so ludicrous. It was the times. Madness haunted the atmosphere itself, from the Mole on down to this quality-control functionary who was clearly disturbed in the clinical, psychiatric sense" (Dick, 1967, p. 18). Even *The Ganymede Takeover* (which was started in 1964 and published in 1967) contains many anti-psychiatric references: Balkani is a psychiatrist portrayed in a very negative way by Dick. He developed a psychotherapeutic technique intended to replace classic psychoanalysis. The conflict between the old and new psychotherapy is also exemplified in a symbolic way, when Balkani looks at Sigmund Freud's bronze bust statue and has the impression that Freud is smiling at him in a way that is anything but pleasant; afterwards, he uses it to kill Joan Hiashi (who he believes to be human but is a robotic copy instead, whilst the real Joan managed to escape from the clinic) and to break the intercom on the video-phone. He hopes that the psychological theory created by Balkani replaces "the universe of Freud, together with all the other people [who] would take this book as their Bible in the revolution of youth against age" (Dick, Nelson, 1967, p. 132). The idea is that a new movement will replace psychoanalysis, which is considered to be obsolete by then.

The anti-psychiatric distaste for the irresponsible use of psychotropic drugs by psychiatrists is ridiculed by Dick in *Ubik* (started in 1966 and published in 1969): the facility that is home to a group of telepathic individuals on the moon is equipped with vending machines stocked with tranquilizers and stimulants, as if they were dispensers of candy or cigarettes. Ms Wirt says to the precogs: "All medication-dispensing machines, however, are coin-operated. I might say, in regard to this, that you will find in the game room of this suite a tranquilizer-dispensing machine. And, if you wish, we can probably have one of the stimulant-dispensing machines moved in from the adjoining installations" (Dick, 1969, p. 67).

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Appendix

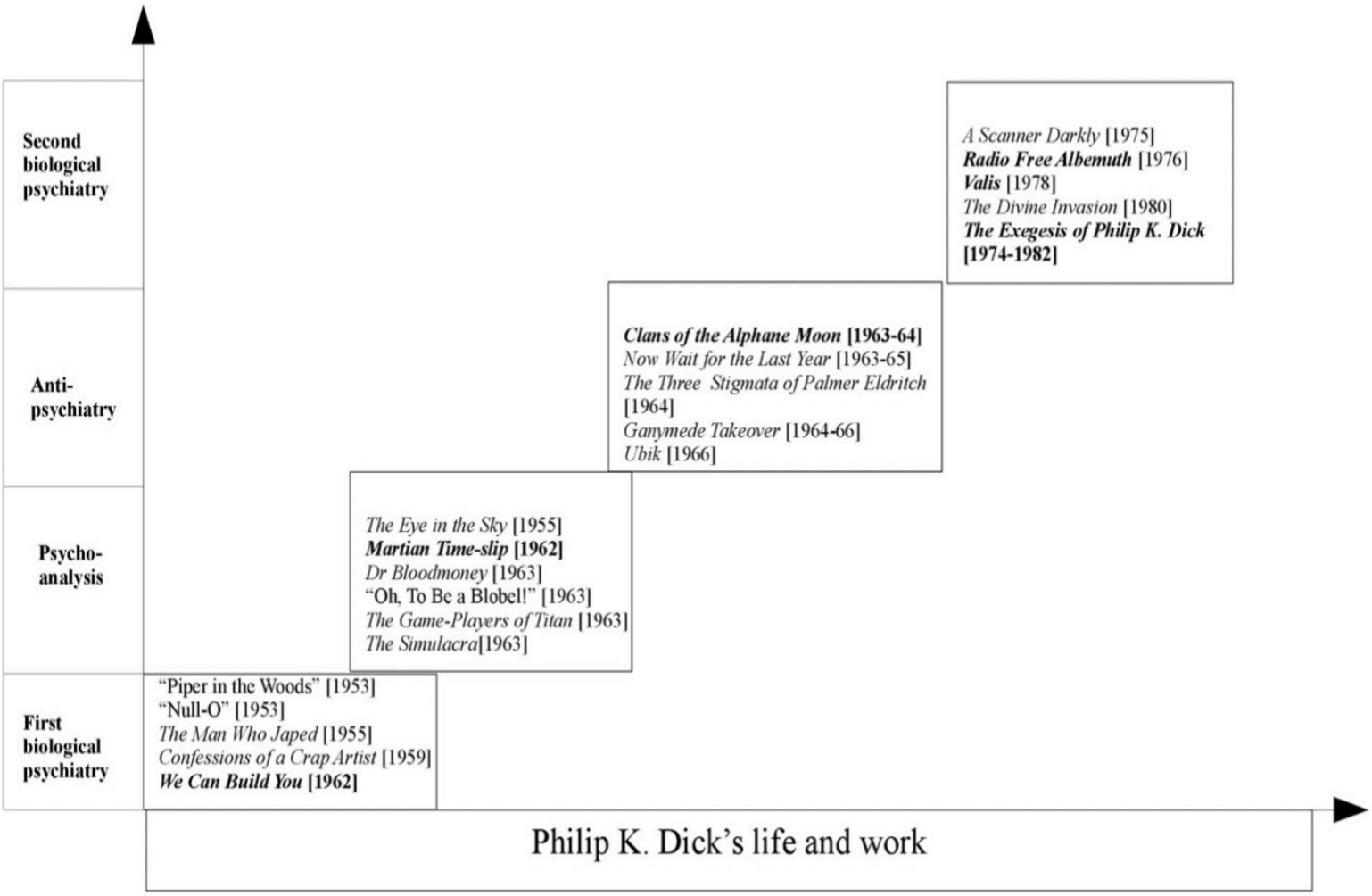

Fig. 1: Timeline of psychiatry in novels of Philip K. Dick. [Between square brackets the date of writing]

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"You Can Be More": Farscape, Melodrama, and Space Opera Revisited

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Abstract: The science fiction television series *Farscape* (Syfy, 1999–2003) was notable for its subversive blend of science fiction and soap opera conventions, which allowed the series to present as a complex study of gender and sexuality. However, small but overt elements serve to undermine the subtler feminist or queer potential of *Farscape*'s overall structures. This article examines the series, specifically in light of later-season episodes and the two-part conclusion, *The Peacekeeper Wars*, in examining whether *Farscape* successfully maintains its position as groundbreaking cult television.

Keywords: *Farscape;* television; science fiction; gender; popular culture; space opera

The science fiction television series *Farscape* (Syfy, 1999–2003) has been read as a Cold War metaphor (Guffey, 2013), a study of female community (Ginn, 2013b), and a meditation on the complexities of human (and alien) nature (Telotte, 2013). The series was also notable for its subversive blend of science fiction and melodrama, its challenge to gender and sexuality binaries, and its many muppets. Although its genre-bending accomplishments are now arguably overshadowed by the adventurousness of more recent series like *Battlestar Galactica* (Syfy, 2004–09) or *Fringe* (Fox, 2008–12), *Farscape* presented a uniquely complex study of gender and sexuality within an overall milieu of aliens, guns, and outer space; it could be read as both science fiction and soap opera, incorporating and challenging the tropes common to both (Lavigne, 2005). This reading, however, applies primarily to earlier episodes, as later installments witnessed the addition of several minor but conspicuous elements—particularly in the final (fourth) season and the concluding miniseries *The Peacekeeper Wars* (Hallmark, 2004)—that serve to undermine the subtler feminist or queer potential of *Farscape*'s initial seasons. This article is intended as a revisitation and significant revision of research I first published in 2005—work which had been written before the release of *The Peacekeeper Wars*. The nature of the series' conclusion, as well as a decade of additional consideration on my part, has altered many of my original arguments. *Farscape* does both incorporate and subvert traditional soap opera elements, but many of its advances were rendered problematic by the formulaic nature of later episodes. *Farscape* follows John Crichton (Ben Browder), an astronaut from Earth who accidentally pilots an experimental shuttle through a wormhole to the far reaches of the galaxy, where a fascist regime of human-like "Peacekeeper" soldiers is at war with the equally violent, brutal, and visibly alien Scarran Imperium. There, Crichton encounters a group of escaped prisoners: exiled Peacekeeper soldier Aeryn Sun (Claudia Black), tentacled Luxan warrior D'Argo (Anthony Simcoe), priestess and Delvian living plant Zhaan (Virginia Hey), and deposed Hynerian dictator Rygel XVI (voiced by Jonathan Hardy). They are soon joined by the rebellious Nebari thief Chiana (Gigi Edgley). On the living ship Moya, the group attempts to escape pursuit by both the Peacekeepers and the Scarrans, most notably those forces led by the Scarran-Peacekeeper hybrid Scorpius (Wayne Pygram), who seeks the wormhole technology that Crichton alone possesses. As Crichton struggles to maintain his freedom, win Aeryn's love, and find his way home, he learns intergalactic survival skills through encounters with a series of alien planets, new life forms, enemies, and allies.

Farscape's progressiveness was always limited; any discussion regarding the subversive potential of Crichton's journey must acknowledge that he is yet another heterosexual white male adventurer within a genre (and culture) already suffused with too many of the same, and that the series may play with gender and genre expectations, but its lack of human racial diversity leaves much to be desired. Further, the

early seasons were much more experimental than latter parts of the narrative. After *Farscape*'s unexpected cancellation left a newly engaged Crichton and Aeryn reduced to a collapsing pile of tiny crystals, forever suspended in the "might have been" of a sudden cliffhanger (4.22, "Bad Timing"), the *Peacekeeper Wars* miniseries offered a follow-up (airing in two 90-minute segments) that both concluded the series and ultimately reinscribed traditional, heteronormative binaries in what had initially been a gender-progressive space opera adventure.

Space Opera

When I first referred to *Farscape* as a "space opera" in 2005, I did so in a positive sense; while the term has been used derisively elsewhere, to describe "juvenile programs [that] presented self-righteous and square-jawed heroes championing conformity and conservation through a range of clear-cut morality tales" (Feasey, 2004, p.57), it can also highlight *Farscape*'s liminal position as a space-based action/adventure that is also a soap opera, and the ways in which the series' soap opera elements have successfully been blended with science fiction action tropes to create a compelling, character-driven science fiction narrative. In this respect, the series is part of an acknowledged trend in science fiction readership circles:

> Space opera is a subgenre of speculative fiction or science fiction that emphasizes romantic, often melodramatic adventure, set mainly or entirely in space, generally involving conflict between opponents possessing powerful (and sometimes quite fanciful) technologies and abilities. Perhaps the most significant trait of space opera is that settings, characters, battles, powers, and themes tend to be very large-scale. (Goodreads, n.d.)

Farscape's complicated narrative arcs may draw comparisons with other serialized 1990s and early 2000s-era science fiction television programs like *The X-Files* (1993–2002), *Babylon 5* (1994–98), and *Stargate SG-1* (1997–2007). The series' emergence synchronizes with an overall rise in complex television writing that may trace back to the 1980s successes of prime-time soap operas *Dallas* (1978–91) and *Dynasty* (1981–89), which helped to popularize the type of serialized narratives that demanded viewer attention across multiple episodes and seasons (rather than allowing audiences to tune in for a single-episode procedural "case of the week").

Some of the series' narrative twists specifically reflect common historical soap opera tropes:

- the evil woman
- the great sacrifice
- the winning back of an estranged lover/spouse
- marrying her for her money, respectability, etc.
- the unwed mother
- deceptions about the paternity of children
- career vs. housewife
- the alcoholic woman (and occasionally man)

(Weibel, cited Modleski, 1982, p.86, Lavigne, 2005, p.60)

In *Farscape*, we see duplicitous women exemplified by the villainous Commandant Grayza (Rebecca Riggs) and the perennially deceptive Sikozu (Raelee Hill). Zhaan (Virgina Hey) sacrifices herself to save Aeryn's life (3.01, "Season of Death"). Crichton fights to win Aeryn; Aeryn fights to win Crichton; D'Argo and Chiana break up and make up. Crichton marries an alien princess in order to provide his unborn child with a father (3.13, "Look at the Princess, Part 3: The Maltese Crichton"); Aeryn insists on being married before her child is born (*The Peacekeeper Wars*). She also allows Crichton to believe the child is his, even when she herself isn't sure (4.06, "Natural Election"). Finally, Crichton cannot reconcile his domestic fantasies of Aeryn with the reality (3.22, "Dog With Two Bones"; 4.01, "Crichton Kicks"), and he turns to drugs in order to forget her (4.05, "Promises").

All of these narrative twists are commonly employed by soap operas, which maintain loyal viewerships by focusing on dramatic, never-ending domestic tensions; in *Farscape*, intergalactic warfare may threaten all life in the universe, but the interpersonal relationships between Crichton and his new-found family are what ultimately provide the plot. Dramatic

tensions are based equally in interstellar conflict and domestic family fractures, as Moya's crew must avert war while also learning to reconcile their interpersonal differences. As Modleski has noted of soap operas,

> They present the viewer with a picture of a family which, though it is always in the process of breaking down, stays together no matter how intolerable its situation may get. Or, perhaps more accurately, the family remains close perpetually because it is perpetually in a chaotic state. The unhappiness generated by the family can only be solved in the family. Misery becomes not . . . the consequence and sign of the family's breakdown, but the very means of its functioning and perpetuation. (1982, p.90, cited Lavigne, 2005, p.58)

Moya's hallways are repeatedly the set pieces where domestic drama plays out—the same halls, seen over and over, as the actors pace through the same set episode after episode. The repetition reinforces the series' domestic basis: characters may explore a multitude of new ships and new planets—Aeryn may fly off at the toss of a coin, or Crichton may even return to Earth—but ultimately, everyone comes back home to Moya. The ship herself is often the source or site of conflict, as she is frequently under attack or wounded (e.g. 3.03, "Self-Inflicted Wounds, Part 1: Could'a, Would'a, Should'a"); she, too, is a character, with wants and desires of her own, and she perhaps best exemplifies *Farscape*'s "space operatic" nature, as the interstellar ship that serves as the home base for interplanetary adventure is simultaneously mother and friend. The crew is composed of escaped prisoners thrown together by happenstance, but once thrown there, they are stuck with each other; the friendships and romances they form (and the schisms between them) are vital plot points throughout the series.

If "soap opera can be understood at its most basic level as a serialised drama that focuses on a range of family affairs, personal relationships and friendships" (Feasey, 2004, p.8), then *Farscape* is in many ways a perfect fit. This "space opera" combination of intergalactic adventure and soapy melodrama arguably granted *Farscape* much of its appeal to female audiences in particular. While historically, hard science fiction and its communities have often been seen as unwelcoming to female fans (Lefanu, 1988, p.4), soaps have been marketed to—and popular with—women (Kuhn, 1984; Modleski, 1982). *Farscape* is not "hard" science fiction, based in scientific research and detail, but its basic premise—an astronaut scientist shot into space via his own wormhole physics experiment—arguably reads as such. On one level, the show's production (and its incorporation of Aeryn Sun) followed a science fiction/fantasy genre trend that saw big-screen 1980s action heroines like Ellen Ripley and Sarah Connor followed by televised 1990s female leads like *Buffy* and *Xena* (Helford, 2000, p.4), which increased attention from female viewers and highlighted changes in the genre. However, *Farscape*'s use of soap opera tropes further allowed it to attract a substantial female viewership (Crew, 2003; see also Ginn, 2013a, pp.24-25). This observation is not meant to encourage stereotypes about male and female viewers, but, instead, is meant to comment on *Farscape*'s successful blend of masculinized and feminized approaches (such as action/adventure and serialized domestic drama, respectively).

Examining the aesthetics of this blend can also provide us with an initial look at *Farscape*'s limitations. The question of gendered spectatorship has long suffused both film theory and soap opera studies (Kunst, 1984); within such an argument, most visual media is constructed by and for a heterosexual male subject position, containing images of female forms that cultivate the male gaze—a gaze that soap operas may thwart by privileging female narratives and resisting any primary, single-protagonist point of view (Joyrich, 1988; Kuhn, 1984; Modleski, 1982). *Farscape* makes use of this disruptive potential by combining the close-up, multi-character facial shots so common to soap operas (Modleski, 1982, p.99) with aliens, action sequences, and firefights (Lavigne, 2005, p.57). However, such aesthetic hybridity also ultimately plays to science fiction's assumed male spectator. While there are exceptions, such as

Noranti or Ahkna, most of the women on the series are young and slender, their costumes decidedly revealing; Chiana's grey alien makeup uses dark lines to outline her cleavage, while Jool, Sikozu, and Aeryn frequently bare their midriffs for the camera. Zhaan is shown naked from behind in the series pilot (1.01, "Premiere"), while Chiana and Aeryn are both shown with naked backs and shoulders during sex scenes (2.10, "Look at the Princess, Part 1: A Kiss is But a Kiss"; 3.08, "Green-Eyed Monster"). *Farscape* is an adventurous, genre-bending series—within certain limits—and those limits include the sexualization of female bodies (Scodari, 2003, p.119). While Crichton may wear tight-fitting t-shirts or appear shirtless from time to time (1.14, "Jeremiah Crichton), *Farscape* skews toward the male gaze. Further examination of its narratives reveals that its patriarchal frameworks become more apparent as the series progresses.

Gender Performances

While *Farscape* is centered on the adventures of Crichton, the heterosexual white male lead, it also introduces an array of multi-layered, individualized female protagonists. It hints at a sympathetic villainess, focuses on a sex-positive female character, and plays with gender performance binaries. The last of these, in particular, became more restricted by season 4, when specific episodes also raised questions about women's rights. The series' original playfulness, however, is notable.

In soap terms, *Farscape*'s disruptive potential is particularly noticeable in the series' treatment of the "evil woman." This soap opera villainess is typically distinguished by her agency; in a world of disempowered victims, she seeks to take control, and as a result of her machinations she may become the focus of the audience's (women's) anger (Modleski, 1982, p.98). Grayza, the over-sexualized, half-clothed femme fatale whom Crichton dubs "Commander Cleavage," is a highly placed Peacekeeper officer who commands squadrons of soldiers. She also unabashedly uses her sexuality to advance her professional status. She has a pheromone gland between her breasts that she uses to rape Crichton (4.02, "What Was Lost, Part 1: Sacrifice") and chemically brainwash Lieutenant Braca (David Franklin) (3.07, "Thanks for Sharing"). In many ways, she is the prototypical villainess; her seductions are coldly calculated. "Would you have a weapon in your arsenal," she asks, "and leave it unused out of squeamish good taste?" (4.16, "Bringing Home the Beacon").

While Grayza has agency within the narrative, however, she is only one amongst a broad array of empowered female characters that do—differentiating her from soap situations where the villainous woman is the only one with independence and control. *Farscape* features a number of different female characters, all of whom demonstrate various forms of agency: Aeryn, the soldier; Zhaan, the priestess; Chiana, the thief; Jool (Tammy MacIntosh), the scientist; Sikozu, the spy; War Minister Ahkna (Francesca Buller), the Scarran military leader; and Noranti (Melissa Jaffer), the herbalist. Chiana is the most direct foil to Grayza; she, too, uses her sexuality as a tool. She flirts routinely with Crichton (i.e. 1.15, "Durka Returns") and engages quite vocally in sex with D'Argo (2.10, "Look at the Princess, Part 1: A Kiss is But a Kiss"); she is also openly willing to barter sexual favors in exchange for discounts on needed merchandise (4.16, "Bringing Home the Beacon"). Unlike Grayza, she takes pleasure in her sexual activities and does not engage with others without their consent. She is, nevertheless, a valued member of the crew; though she is slut-shamed by others (in *Farscape* terms, called a "tralk") and her shipmates may disdain her early in the series, they defend her by the end. Chiana and Grayza balance one another, but even they compose only a small part of a diverse array of strong female characters; the series thus branches out from classical soap opera tropes. In its earlier seasons, *Farscape* is further marked by its frequent play with gender binaries:

> The *Farscape* universe is not a world without gender, but it is a world in which gender is constructed in a much wider range of ways than a traditional human gender-role structure allows. It is not a monstrous world but a playful one. (Christopher, 2004, p.277)

No one on *Farscape* is completely masculine or feminine. Crichton and D'Argo are consistently the most domestically-oriented ("feminine") characters, as they both ultimately want to have families and live in peace. Crichton's fantasies of a domestic Earth-Aeryn never work out, however (3.22, "Dog With Two Bones"; Christopher, 2004, p.276), and D'Argo's dream of settling down with Chiana and his son Jothee (Matthew Newton) is shattered when Chiana rebels by seducing Jothee (see 3.01, "Season of Death"; 3.03, "Self-Inflicted Wounds, Part 1: Could'a, Would'a, Should'a"). Even when Chiana relents, D'Argo is soon to die, his desire for a quiet farm life forever unfulfilled (*The Peacekeeper Wars*). Crichton and D'Argo are prone to discussing their feelings with each other (e.g. 4.06, "Natural Election"); they are among the more emotionally sensitive of the series' main characters. Further, as Christopher (2004) observes, the primary romance between Crichton and Aeryn consists of dual arcs of gender transformation, as the feminized Crichton becomes more of a masculine action hero, while the masculinized Aeryn learns to experience and express emotion. Neither arc is a complete reversal; Aeryn remains the physically superior partner, able to fire a weapon while giving birth or defeat Crichton in hand-to-hand combat, while Crichton is an eccentric, "radically unstable" force throughout the series, vacillating between action-hero competence and emotional vulnerability as required (Christopher, 2004, p. 268; see also Feasey, 2004, p.63).

Unfortunately, by season 4 and *The Peacekeeper Wars*, the Crichton/Aeryn relationship—as well as Aeryn's character more broadly— becomes increasingly gender-stereotyped and heteronormative. Suddenly, she is the one who expresses vulnerability and chases after Crichton, while he distances himself with the help of Noranti's emotion-numbing drugs. When a pregnant Aeryn is captured by Scarran forces, all she can do is (rather uncharacteristically) pray (4.18, "Prayer") while she waits for Crichton and her other shipmates to rescue her (4.19, "We're So Screwed, Part 1: Fetal Attraction"). While early in the season, a virtual reality Aeryn is cast as a princess in a tower—ringleted and simpering, highlighting the ridiculousness of this role for the character (4.07, "John Quixote")—later-season Aeryn assumes the damsel role in truth, during which time her hair is longer and she wears noticeably more makeup (Ginn, 2005, p.99). The relationship culminates, predictably, with marriage and childbirth—the marriage just barely coming first as Aeryn insists on a mid-labor wedding reminiscent of *Lethal Weapon IV* (Warner Bros., 1998). Her sudden desire for a wedding (an event previously cast as primarily Crichton's idea, and marked by Aeryn's discomfort in trying white dresses) ensures that the baby will be born within traditional wedlock, thus enforcing a comforting Western nuclear family narrative. *The Peacekeeper Wars* reconfigures Aeryn as the partner more fixated on domestic tradition, thus reinscribing stricter gender boundaries.

Several episodes in season 4 also raise questions about women's issues and feminist politics. First, a group of militant women's rights activists endangers Moya's crew in an episode that depicts disenfranchised feminists as merciless terrorists (4.10, "Coup by Clam"). Then, a sympathetic Chiana rescues a supposed rape victim who turns out to be a deadly predator, in a plot that draws disturbing parallels to stories about women who lie about rape in order to manipulate sympathy or power. Chiana, her good intentions betrayed, apologizes to the shipmates she's endangered: "This is all my fault. I'm sorry about this. I'll kill that tralk myself" (4.14, "Twice Shy").

The most disturbing single episode may be "Mental As Anything" (4.15), in which D'Argo explores suppressed memories and the question of whether he might have killed his former wife, Lo'Laan (Rachel Gordon), in a fit of "Luxan hyperrage." We learn that although D'Argo was not Lo'Laan's murderer, he did physically abuse her. Lo'Laan was Sebacean (i.e. Peacekeeper, visibly appearing human), and unable to defend herself against the hyper-aggressive, blackout fits of violence attributed to D'Argo's Luxan species. D'Argo is thus exonerated through amnesia and a physical inability to control himself, while Lo'Laan's injuries are implied to be her own fault, as she kept them hidden ("Why didn't you tell me?"

mourns D'Argo. "Don't you know how much I loved you?"). The audience is apparently meant to sympathize with D'Argo, whose character has been built over four seasons, rather than the thinly-sketched Lo'Laan, who appears here (for the first and last time) in flashback, and who exists literally as an object, a body to be beaten. D'Argo's masculine aggression, an indelible and uncontrollable part of his identity, is excused; his victim is blamed for not speaking up, and his status as series protagonist is unaltered as the narrative moves onward.

Farscape's approach to gender politics is ultimately ambiguous; it plays with soap stereotypes about femmes fatales, advances the narrative of a sex-positive female character, and presents multiple characters whose behavior subverts gender binaries. However, examining later episodes in more detail reveals specific narratives that are ultimately regressive, reinforcing heteronormative, patriarchal stereotypes.

Motherhood and Reproduction

Farscape also incorporates the parental narratives so important to soap operas (Weibel, cited Modleski, 1982, p.86, Lavigne, 2005, p.60; Modleski, 1982, p.92)—from Zhaan, the "good mother" in seasons 1-3 who cares for everyone aboard the ship (and ultimately sacrifices her life for Aeryn), to Moya (the "mother" ship whose unexpected pregnancy is a pivotal plot point in season 1), to Aeryn (whose pregnancy serves as a driving force in season 4), or even Xhalax Sun (Linda Cropper; Aeryn's murderous mother) and Commandant Grayza (whose pregnancy was written into *The Peacekeeper Wars* because actor Rebecca Riggs was in her third trimester during filming). Rebecca Feasey has suggested that mysteries (and subsequent anguish) surrounding paternity are key to male characters in soaps, bringing men into the domestic sphere while simultaneously challenging their control (2004, p.17); this narrative, too, is present in *Farscape*, as Crichton initially doesn't know who fathered Aeryn's child (4.06, "Natural Election")—and, ultimately, the father is a clone Crichton, now dead. All of these storylines serve to focus on the domestic (and melodramatic) aspects of ship life.

Here, too, there are signs of subversiveness; *Farscape* at times emphasizes the agency and power of pregnant women (or females, in the case of Moya). Grayza snaps to a subordinate in *The Peacekeeper Wars*, "Don't let the belly fool you"; likewise, Aeryn states, "I'm pregnant, not incapacitated," when defending her ability to participate in team missions against a typically infantilizing view of pregnancy. As the ranking officer, Grayza commands the extensive Peacekeeper forces during the miniseries; meanwhile, Aeryn gives birth during a firefight, barely pausing her gun play in the process and emerging soon thereafter with a pulse pistol in one hand and her newborn child cradled in the other.

Notably, however, *Farscape*'s treatment of reproductive technologies predominantly removes female agency from the equation; this, too, becomes more noticeable toward the end of the series. The Peacekeepers, as a wholly masculinized military force (Christopher, 2004, p.257), make little adjustment for female requirements. This is alluded to in season 1 when Moya is the victim of medical experimentation; she is not permitted to mate, but rather is artificially inseminated as Peacekeeper scientists (her captors) work to create a weaponized hybrid ship (her son Talyn). Such female disenfranchisement becomes more pronounced when Aeryn becomes pregnant in season 4; as a former Peacekeeper soldier, she has been biologically modified to hold a zygote in stasis for up to seven years, until it can be "released" at a time convenient to any potential military campaign. She has no control over this process; first, she must visit a Peacekeeper ship in order to have the pregnancy activated (4.21, "We're So Screwed, Part 3: La Bomba"). She is then captured by the Scarrans, who hold her captive with a group of other pregnant alien women, torturing her in an experimental breeding facility. Again, Aeryn is remade in season 4 as the damsel in distress, rendered passive and weak as her pregnancy makes her both a target and a victim of masculinized, militarized forces.

Once Aeryn is rescued and the zygote is released from stasis, she again loses control of her pregnancy. When she and Crichton are reduced to their compo-

nent crystalline pieces (4.22, "Bad Timing"), efforts to reconstruct the two protagonists in *The Peacekeeper Wars* are only mostly successful, as the fertilized egg ends up gestating in the body of the amphibious Dominar Rygel XVI. It is necessary to transfer the fetus back quickly, as the pregnancy is "geometric" and the gestation will only last a period of solar days—a narrative affectation that both preserves Aeryn's athletic body as long as possible onscreen, and allows the birth to take place at the end of *The Peacekeeper Wars* instead of what presumably would have been the curtailed season 5.

It's likely a coincidence that *The Peacekeeper Wars* contrasts Aeryn's pregnancy with Grayza's, since the first is the scripted conclusion of a long-running story (artificially sped up for the purposes of the miniseries) while the second is the expedient result of an actor clearly carrying a very nonfictional child. The onscreen result, however, suggests a clear class distinction in the way that reproductive technologies are accessed, as Grayza's pregnancy is not "geometric" (she retains her gravid figure throughout the series) and does not appear to be under any external controls; she seems to have deliberately conceived her child with a superior officer (whom she then murders, as she remains the femme fatale). Aeryn, in contrast, is the grunt soldier—a member of the Peacekeeper working class—whose pregnancy can proceed only with authorized medical intervention, and whose accelerated term is artificially imposed in order to leave her more time for active duty. In fact, were Aeryn still a Peacekeeper commando in the series, her child would be taken from her and raised in group dormitories, as she herself was taken from Xhalax (3.08, "Green-Eyed Monster"); it is not clear whether Grayza's child would be subject to the same regulations. While both science fiction and feminist theory have long imagined artificial wombs, accelerated gestation periods, or other reproductive technologies that would free women from the physical travails of pregnancy and childbirth, or "the tyranny of their reproductive biology" (Firestone, 1971, p. 206), *Farscape* presents a regressive system wherein these technologies serve to disenfranchise women (or female aliens) such as Aeryn Sun, Xhalax Sun, and Moya. Only Grayza, as a member of Peacekeeper command, retains control—making "natural" pregnancy the domain of the privileged and powerful, rather than the disenfranchised infantry who serve, and breed, at their commanders' pleasure.

In soaps, narratives of women's pregnancy center the domestic drama and reinforce the importance of women's stories and spaces; in *Farscape,* pregnant women may have power in dramatic moments, but their bodies are ultimately in service to the military-industrial complex that controls them.

Queerness in Space

Finally, in many ways, *Farscape* may be read as a queer series, notable for its characters' varied performances of sexuality and gender. Both soaps and science fiction programs have incorporated diverse mixes of queer characters and themes, and this is less a specific soap opera trope than a symptom of the series' latent subversiveness; while *Farscape*'s canon lacks overtly same-sex pairings, the homoerotic undertones between characters like Crichton and Scorpius are marked. Battis has commented on their "very sexy blood vow" (2010, p. 106) in "Prayer" (4.18) and argued that "*Farscape*'s covert queer-feminist potential lies in its exploration of the links between sexuality and kinship . . . Moya's crew enjoys complex and durable ties with one another, limned with sexuality but not necessarily limited to carnal expression" (p.107). Further, the series routinely questions traditional notions of sexuality and sexual desirability through its non-standard depictions of both alien and human figures. *Farscape* is as likely to clothe a puppet in black fetish gear (2.14, "Won't Get Fooled Again") or emphasize an older woman's orgasm (e.g. Noranti in 4.10, "Coup by Clam") as to focus on the young, svelte, normatively sexualized bodies so often emphasized in Hollywood. Its characters vomit and fart; its world is visceral, and thus so are its sexual relationships. It is within this context of pragmatic eroticism that Chiana's "proud iden-

tity as a sexual nonconformist" (Battis, 2010, p.105) or Zhaan's pansexual "unity" rituals are normalized.

Admittedly, such readings are limited. While the overall series may be interpreted as possessing queer themes or imagery (Battis, 2010, p.107), and many elements of *Farscape* do challenge associated gender binaries, specific episodes undermine this interpretation with transphobic jokes. For example, we see Crais in high heels (2.15, "Won't Get Fooled Again"), Crichton and Rygel in drag (4.10, "Coup by Clam"), or Anthony Simcoe (D'Argo's actor) made up as Jool (4.11, "Unrealized Reality"; 4.18, "Prayer"); all are played for laughs, which become more overt as the series progresses. By season 4, Simcoe-dressed-as-Jool leads to one of *Farscape*'s most transphobic exchanges:

SCORPIUS: Shoot him.

CRICHTON: Technically, it's a she.

SCORPIUS: Shoot it. (4.18, "Prayer")

Trans activists have struggled to have their voices heard in feminist circles (Koyama, 2006), and analyses by white cisgender feminists in particular may have read such material as adventurous or playful; at the time, I myself interpreted Crais's heels as a lightly disruptive and progressive interrogation of the male gaze and masculine gender performance (Lavigne, 2005). However, such a reading fails to acknowledge the series' use of transphobic stereotypes—an issue endemic to wider Western popular culture, part of decades of "man in a dress" "humour" that has included transmisogynist "jokes" disguised as "celebration" (St. Patrick, 2015). This repetitive *Farscape* "gag" has not aged well, and it ultimately restricts any queer-friendly interpretation of the series.

Conclusion

On a broad scale, *Farscape*'s blend of soap opera and science fiction lends it a subversive potential particularly receptive to feminist or queer elements. At least in its earlier seasons, *Farscape* combines and subsequently subverts the conventions and limitations of both soap operas and science fiction, cultivating a more feminized point of view than that assumed by earlier, more episodic science fiction television programs. *Farscape*'s inclusion of soap elements—a musical score, close-up shots, family conflict, and a long-running serial narrative—creates a more feminized (i.e. domestic) text, and thus may have appealed to a wider audience than a pure science fiction series. Its focus on character-driven stories and interpersonal conflicts, while part of a larger trend in television programming, broke away from more episodic paradigms like that of *Stargate SG-1* and created a long-running story that developed a devoted fan base of both women and men. While the series failed to include same-sex pairings (or much in the way of multiracial human elements), it did include multiple types of gender performance; Crichton and Aeryn, in particular, presented gender inversions and behavioral blends at various points throughout each season. *Farscape* is a hybrid text with hybrid characters; its eccentricities are unique and bold.

Moreover, while pure soaps may be critiqued for directing female anger at female power (Modleski, 1982, p.98) or cultivating a sense of helplessness in the viewer (Modleski, 1982, p.91), *Farscape* suffers from neither of these issues. Aeryn in particular, as the violent, masculinized science fiction heroine (à la Ripley or Sarah Connor), presents an androgynous blend of behaviors that makes her appealing to both male and female viewers (Christopher, 2004, p.258) and counters any assertion that the villainess is the only woman who isn't a victim. Also, *Farscape*'s viewers are (or were) far from helpless; when the series was cancelled in 2003, fans deluged the Sci Fi Network switchboards, embarked on a massive letter-writing campaign, took out a full-page ad in *Variety*, aired a 30-second television spot, arranged to send DVD sets to American soldiers overseas, and eventually convinced Hallmark to co-fund *The Peacekeeper Wars* in order to give the series a proper ending. Again, the science fiction tradition inflects the series; while soap fans may write messages to characters (Joyrich, 1988; Modleski, 1982), there are also roots here in the voracious letter-writing campaign that met the threatened cancellation of *Star Trek* in 1969. Having acknowledged the subversive potential of the space opera, however, on a micro level, the series'

adventurousness is at times undermined by conservative details in its own narratives. This is particularly evident in season 4 and *The Peacekeeper Wars*. Specific episodes problematize feminist movements, rape narratives, and domestic violence, while intermittent transphobic jokes compromise any gender flexibility. Aeryn's feminization leads to damseling and the reinscription of a nuclear-family dream, while her pregnancy highlights the series' focus on reproductive technologies and the way that patriarchal authority is used to control female bodies. Considering *Farscape*'s progressive beginnings, the ending is in many ways a distinct disappointment.

Granted, some of this later-series conservatism may be due to the series ending at all—particularly as the Hallmark Channel-produced *Peacekeeper Wars* aired on a channel known for its plethora of heteronormative, Christian-inflected, made-for-TV romances. Part of *Farscape*'s regression may have occurred via its association with the Hallmark brand. It could also be that the series' conclusion marked a change of genre, from soap/space opera's ongoing domestic drama to romance's obligatory happily-ever-after (which, again according to the Hallmark brand, means a wedding). While the series 4 cliffhanger may have held Crichton and Aeryn in perpetual, crystallized stasis, providing a never-ending realm of melodramatic possibility in which the domestic remained unresolved (save in fan fiction), *The Peacekeeper Wars* re-established a more traditional conclusion.

But *Farscape* is a difficult creature to define; one might argue that its melodramatic undertones also serve to subvert its more conservative details, or that the adventurousness of earlier seasons outweighs the ponderous regression of the end. I was a fan of the series when I first watched it; on many levels, I still am. While my capacity to enjoy a text in no way renders it less problematic, I must acknowledge, and have tried to retain, some of that initial enthusiasm. On many levels, *Farscape* remains a "marvellous and whacky 'lost in space' story" (Johnson-Smith, 2005, p.161) and a potential stepping-stone to series that further challenge genre boundaries. If, as seems perpetually rumored (e.g. Asher-Perrin, 2019), a sequel is ever produced, hopefully it returns with the subversive promise of its first years.

Notes:

[1] The term "muppets" is deliberate here, and not a generic reference to puppetry. *Farscape* was produced by the Jim Henson Company and Hallmark Entertainment.

[2] *Stargate SG-1* later recruited both Browder and Black after *Farscape* was off the air. Financial and scheduling conflicts between the two series (both were on the Sci Fi Network, now Syfy) may be partially credited for *Farscape*'s cancellation (Crew, 2003).

[3] A plot point made possible by her alien nature; it also marks her as a victim of abuse. When Grayza was a concubine to Peacekeeper officers, the gland was surgically implanted, removing years from her lifespan (4.02, "What Was Lost, Part 1: Sacrifice").

[4] See Feasey, 2004, p.10 regarding the importance of men sharing intimate confidences in contemporary soap operas.

[5] Since *Farscape* is generally notable for the complex agency of its female characters, the rescue scene in "We're So Screwed, Part 1: Fetal Attraction" (4.19) is particularly regressive, as Crichton and D'Argo simultaneously and manfully carry their half-conscious love interests Aeryn and Chiana to safety.

[6] This is evident when watching the miniseries, though Riggs's pregnancy is confirmed in articles such as Harrisson, J. (2013, August 8). Revisiting Farscape: The Peacekeeper Wars. *Den of Geek*. Retrieved from http://www.denofgeek.com/tv/farscape/26794/revisiting-farscape-the-peacekeeper-wars.

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[7] Many of these details are from personal recollection and the now-defunct Save Farscape website run by Nina Lumpp and Julie Rayhanabad, formerly at www.watchfarscape.com; for more, see Cochran, 2013.

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Books in Review

Ace G. Pilkington,
Science Fiction and Futurism: Their Terms and Ideas,
McFarland & Company Inc., 2017, pb, 222 pp, $35.00
ISBN 9780786498567

Reviewed by **Scarlett Cunningham**

Published as part of Donald E. Palumbo and C.W. Sullivan III's series *Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, Ace G. Pilkington's volume is the first reference volume to be included in the popular series that is known for critical essay collections and monographs. However, as David Brin puts it in the foreward, Pilkington's *Science Fiction and Futurism: Their Terms and Ideas* "is not another SF encyclopedia" (2). Instead, the volume's aim and scope are far broader. While certainly providing impressive coverage of science fiction issues related to history, genre, production, reception, and content, the project stakes a critical claim on the definition and boundaries of science fiction and futurism from the outset in the foreword, preface, and introduction.

Pilkington's near-comprehensive overview of the historically competing definitions of science fiction both summarizes and engages with the long-standing debate between those who locate science fiction's origins in the fantastic and those who identify the genre's roots in scientific progress. Pilkington's primary arguments regarding the genre—that science fiction is closely connected to science and that science fiction constitutes a specifically future-oriented genre—plant him squarely in the camp of those who view it as connected to scientific pursuits. In connecting science fiction to futurism, he takes this implicit connection to science a step further by stressing the genre's predictive function, which he describes as, at times, "startlingly prophetic" (18). Pilkington argues that science fiction serves as "an encouragement for the new uses of science in the world and for the changes that inevitably follow" (12).

This stance, introduced in the framing sections of the book, is sustained in the alphabetized entries of Parts One ("The Terms of Science and Its Fictions") and Two ("Genre Terms"). For example, Pilkington again reiterates his definition of science fiction as predictive in nature in his explanation of the term "Alter Ego," noting that E.T.A. Hoffman's fiction influenced Freud's formulations of psychic doubles and psychological projections in psychology, to the point that an active dialogue may have existed among science fiction writers and psychology professionals. The author does not limit this claim to psychology. Pilkington forges connections between the predictions of science fiction and the actual creation of inventions and theories throughout, citing, for instance, Martin Cooper's invention of the cell phone 20 years after Captain Kirk of the original *Star Trek* was seen with his communicator.

The copious literary, pop cultural, and historical examples cited to elucidate definitions of each term serve as the book's greatest strength. The length of entries varies, the shortest being the brief paragraph given for "He's Dead Jim" and the longest being the five pages devoted to "Deep Blue." At times, this variance can seem arbitrary and the more developed entries are the most satisfying for the reader.

In the case of "Deep Blue," the author uses his experiences as an educator to enliven his discussion of the infamous chess player Garry Kasparov's loss to the machine intelligence Deep Blue. Pilkington contextualizes the event by analyzing the bet between himself and his students on the outcome of

the match, with the students' faith in Kasparov mirroring that of popular news outlets in the desire for a human victory. Pilkington won the bet against the students and insists that he continues to "side" with the machines of the future, predicting that they will be instrumental in positive developments of benefit to humanity, perhaps even ensuring human survival. However, in response to the "technophobes" who fear the takeover of humans by machine, Pilkington deems the artificial intelligence that Deep Blue paves the way for to be primarily dangerous to the human psyche, potentially affecting of how humans define and represent themselves as central to the proper functioning of the universe.

As an alphabetized encyclopedia of terms relating to science fiction and futurism, the text can be used in college courses and personal libraries as a reference. The second section, "Genre Terms," would be especially useful for teaching an introductory level science fiction course or for creative writers aiming to discover or defy genre conventions. However, the volume is equally gratifying for science fiction aficionados of all stripes who wish to process current debates in the role of science fiction in popular culture, history, and the future-oriented project of human progression through science.

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Books in Review

Ian Campbell,
Arabic Science Fiction
Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pb. 322 pages, 77,99 € / 72,79 € / 59,49 €
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Reviewed by **Erica Couto-Ferreira**

Arabic Science Fiction responds to the growing interest that both readers and scholars have been experimenting towards for the last two decades of non-Western science-fiction. Anthologies and studies such as *The Apex Book of World SF* series, Jessica Langer's *Postcolonialism and Science Fiction* (Palgrave, 2011) and the essay collection S*o Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Science Fiction & Fantasy,* edited by Nalo Hopkinson and Uppinder Mehan (Arsenal Pulp Press, 2004) show a general concern for how sci-fi has been cultivated, adapted and transformed by writers of speculative fiction with South-Asian, African, and other ethnic backgrounds. The present volume explores the particularities of Arabic science fiction (ASF from now on) in the light of postcolonial frameworks.

Arabic Science Fiction is an in-deep academic analysis that follows up Ian Campbell's previous work on 20th century Moroccan literature and, more specifically, in Muhammad 'Azīz Lahbābi's 1974 novel The Elixir of Life. His article "Science Fiction and Social Criticism in Morocco of the 1970s: Muhammad `Azīz Lahbābī's *The Elixir of Life*", which was published in *Science Fiction Studies* in 2015, marked the beginning of this line of research within Campbell's production and was soon to be expanded by incorporating 'Ahmad Khālid Tawfīq's 2008 *Utopia,* 'Abbās and Bahjar's 2013 *HWJN*, 'Ahmad 'Abd al-Salām al-Baqqāli's 1976 *The Blue Flood* and Nihād Sharīf's 1972 T*he Conqueror of Time* into the analysis. Arabic science-fiction as a field of study is rather new. It started in the 1990s with Muhammad Najīb al-Talāwi's research and arrived in the Western world a decade later. There are still few works focused on ASF, with Ada Barbaro's *La fantascienza nella letteratura araba* (Carocci, 2013) being one of the major works in the field, with even fewer translations of relevant ASF fiction into English and other languages. Campbell's work, therefore, intends to add to present studies regarding the origins, characteristics and evolution of ASF.

The book is aimed at "scholars of SF, of Arabic literature, and of postcolonial literature and theory" (p. viii) and deals almost exclusively with the foundational works of 20th century Arabic science fiction, when the genre becomes self-aware. It has a total of eleven chapters, including the introduction (Chapter 1) and the conclusion (Chapter 11). Three chapters are devoted to discussing theoretical aspects of the genre ("Postcolonial Literature and Arabic SF", "Arabic SF: Definitions and Origins", "Criticism and Theory of Arabic SF"), while the rest of the chapters dissect works by specific authors: Nihād Sharīf's *The Conqueror of Time* (Chapter 5); *The Spider and Man Below Zero*, by Mustafā Mahmud (Chapter 6); *The Gentleman from the Spinach Field,* by Sabrī Mūsā (Chapter 7); *The Blue Flood*, by 'Ahmad 'Abd al-Salām al-Baqqāli (Chapter 8); *Beyond the Veil of Time,* by Tālib 'Umrān (Chapter 9); *The Pale Person, The Multiple Person and The Extinction of Man,* by Tība 'AHmad Ibrāhīm (Chapter 10).

As for the methodology employed, Campbell relies greatly on analysis of the specificities of the Arabic terminology used both in scholarly analysis and also ASF literary production to convey its message. The author states that "I believe that word- and sentence-level analysis as a means of showcasing and critiquing the characteristic tropes, concerns, and themes of the genre will serve first and foremost to firmly anchor these attributes in the texts them-

selves" (p. 11). Another important contribution Campbell makes in his book is the analysis of ASF through the conceptual frame of "double estrangement." As he puts it, "estrangement reflects society in a mirror that distorts, and thereby focuses on, a particular aspect of society in order to render the work of SF a medium for social comment through an examination of contemporary social reality" (p. 4). ASF uses both hybridity and ambivalence to reflect upon the impact of colonialism on Arabic society and tradition: it is hybrid because it adopts the colonizers' language, motifs and cultural viewpoint to criticize dominance from within; it is ambivalent because it navigates between the attraction and the repulsion towards colonizers and their culture. In Campbell's perspective, the estrangement process that is common to most SF becomes double in ASF, since "not only does it engage in the estrangement of its own societies by means more or less familiar to scholars of Western SF, but it also estranges its own societies' reaction to technology, especially insofar as that reaction denies or defers the human consequences (for good or for ill) of technology or tries to combat it by means of reactionary ideas or policies" (pp. 110-111). It is also relevant that ASF is written in Modern Standard Arabic, a literary form of the language that is removed from everyday common language and therefore helps deepening the sense of double estrangement.

All in all, *Arabic Science Fiction* constitutes a valuable contribution to the growing field of science fiction postcolonial studies, opening the path for more widespread exploration of the genre, and perhaps eventually encouraging the translation of a body of fiction unheard of in the West. While the public has been able to enjoy the postcolonial, English-written science-fiction visions of Octavia Butler, Nalo Hopkinson, and Nnedi Okorafor, Silvia Moreno-García, Aliette de Bodard, and Vandana Singh, just a few works in Arabic such as Ahmed Khaled Towfik's *Utopia* (2008) and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (2013) have been recently translated into other languages. Even though Campbell focus on the foundational works of Arabic sci-fi, which was produced by Arabic authors and aimed at Arabic audiences, we hope that the production of authors of Arab descent who write science-fiction and fantasy in English will be considered in future work. This could be a further step to take in order to see whether the concept of "double estrangement" applies to the production of authors like Saladin Ahmed and Basma Abdel Aziz.

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Journal of Science Fiction Special Issue on Environmental Studies

The MOSF Journal of Science Fiction is accepting submissions for a special issue on environmental studies and science fiction to be released in the summer of 2020.

Political and intellectual discourse over the last two decades is replete with the ominous potential of climate change. And for good reason, too – if the burning of the Amazon, the melting of the polar ice caps, and the scarcity and pollution of water in Flint, MI and cities across the nation tell us anything, it should be that the environment is intensely formidable, magnificently sublime, and indefinitely malleable, constantly changing before our very eyes. Over the last several years, studies of science fiction have come into contact with environmental sciences and studies through terms like ecofiction, cli-fi, and most prominently, (post)apocalyptic fiction. As a genre built upon the assumption of change – amongst people, institutions, and ecosystems – science fiction (and speculative fiction more broadly) offers an avenue for progressive discourses, and through works of near-future fiction, serves as a warning about the consequences of our present environmental practices.

We are seeking academic articles of 5,000 to 8,000 words, short reflection pieces of 500 to 1,000 words, and book reviews of 500-750 words by Sunday, March 1st.

We welcome submissions focused on any and all aspects of environmental science fiction, and we are especially interested in works that offer insight into (but are not limited to) the following:

- Connections between science fiction and the environment;
- Ecocritical readings of fiction and media;
- Environment and sub-genres of speculative fiction like dystopian and (post)apocalyptic fictions;
- Political discourse regarding global warming and science fiction;
- Representations of environmental disaster;
- Analyses of authors whose oeuvres are specifically concerned with the environment (such as Octavia Butler and Margaret Atwood);
- Post-apocalyptic culture and concerns;
- Scarcity of resources;
- Applications of theory (social science, geology, psychology);
- Metaphors for climate change;
- Non-Fiction;
- Artwork;
- Music;
- Book Reviews;
- Interviews;

Special consideration will be given to essays addressing literature, theory, and contemporary texts and trends.

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