



**Publication of the National Fantasy Fan Federation
History and Research Bureau**



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EDITORIAL



Why Feud? What's the Matter?—The Modern Fight Culture

There's a lot of reason to see an upturn in the science fiction culture, but there remains a lot of feuding going on here and there in fandom, now becoming more and more visible on Facebook. What's going on here?

I have had my own experience of feuding in fandom. At first I was reading about fan feuds in fanzines, where people were complaining that this sort of thing was going on. A lot of that complaining was in N3F fanzines of the time. The feuds seemed to exist between rival science fiction clubs where the members of each club all lived in the same place and had literal meetings rather than being correspondence organizations.

The N3F complaints started receiving replies that said they were complaining because the feuds were giving them disturbances in things that they were doing. Apparently this was right, because the interchanges they got into on the subject began looking like a feud. They started explaining what the fighting was all about. This got the interest of other N3F members and a lot of them started getting into high controversies.

The condition accelerated and I told them my dues were coming up and I wasn't paying them, and was leaving the NFFF because there was so much warfare going on in it and it seemed like that would be going on and on. Marian Zimmer Bradley agreed that this was reason for dropping out of the organization and that she didn't think that there should be all that conflict, but there was, and there were some things that simply needed to be argued about. However, I didn't see any more of what was going on in the NFFF. Fighting began being reported in Yandro, including cases where fans were taking the matter up in court with lawsuits, ignoring the fact that fandom didn't have anything that would get legal respect. "Justice shall prevail, put the fans in jail" said one verse

about the situation. The people I was in my closest contact with started brawling, and I diminished my correspondences. Thereafter I was an observer from afar, and then I did a couple of years in the army during which I wasn't seeing much of fandom. When I started taking an interest in fandom again, the people I had known were difficult to contact and seemed to have been diverted from their earlier attitudes, and fighting was going on in science fiction in general regarding editorial policies, and objections to what some stories were saying were getting intense. A lot of the magazines seemed to be going over to the avant-garde, who were involved in trying to score for magazine sales, and the kind of writing that was being done was in a state of change, which was described in a science fiction college course I took as "New Wave writing". Some of the new writing was originating in places where fans had gathered and were following policies of revolution and changing attitudes.

Now the fan conflicts seem to be going on mainly for the sake of fighting, the original controversies having been battered away into oblivion on all sides. I think fandom was at its worst once these controversies had commenced. Some earlier amenities seemed not recoverable. Remembering all the conflicts has resulted in perpetuated hard feelings, to put it mildly. All the ammo the participants had was being utilized in some of these run-ins.

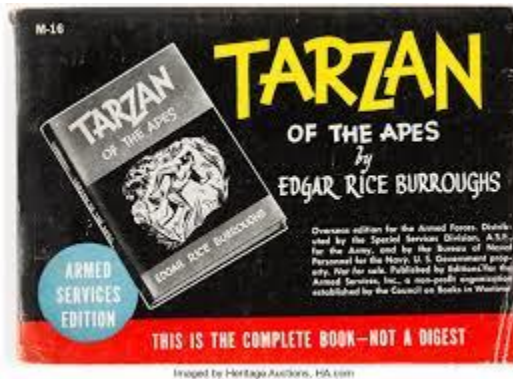
So what's it all about? Why should feuds have sprung up all over fandom? It seems to me to have resulted from a love for fighting, for people proving that they were not afraid of conflict and could grapple just as well as the characters in science fiction stories. Warfare begets further warfare, and finally it isn't over until a climax has been reached, and the climax is grim days for everyone. I think we are in the aftermath of all this, and that we should forget about the fights that there were, which have become pointless, an all-lose-a-fight matter, and try to resurrect our interest in fantasy and science fiction and those discussions we used to have about them. The NFFF now has a book review magazine and further reviews in Tightbeam, but it still lacks discussions of books with many participants. Shouldn't we try to resurrect those? In fact, we should try to resurrect everything we once enjoyed about fandom. We need activists to get things started—and I have noticed some emergence of such activism on Facebook SF pages. Here in the N3F things are getting started again, and I hope that we will be seeing them proceed.

There's a lot to do if we wish to become active and start doing the things we should do to bring about a better science fiction fandom.

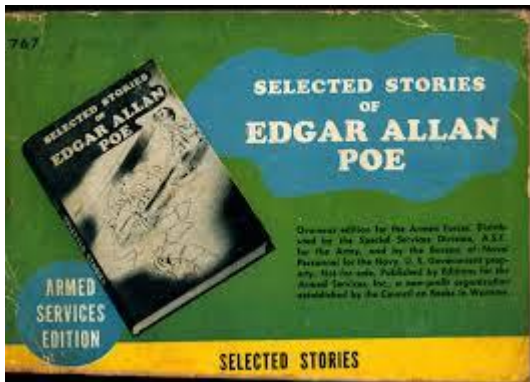
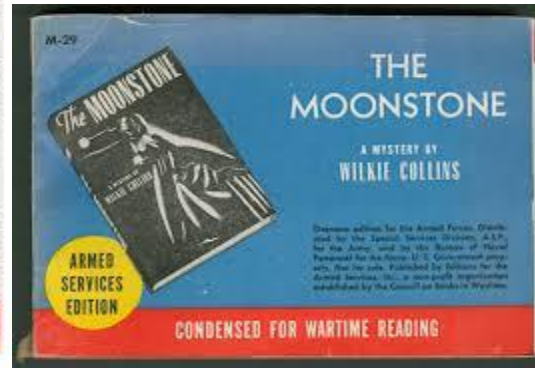
Genre Paperbacks in the Armed Services Editions

by Jon D. Swartz, N3F Historian

A look at science fiction as seen by the men in uniform



Imaged by Heritage Auctions, HA.com



The Armed Services Editions (ASEs) were paperback reprint books that were distributed free to servicemen during World War II by the Council on Books in Wartime. The Council was formed in 1942 by a group of publishers, booksellers, authors, and librarians who wanted to do their part in the war effort by mobilizing all sections of the book industry. The ASE project was the biggest book giveaway in history: 122,951,031 copies was the biggest book giveaway in history: 122,951,031 copies of 1,322 titles, only 99 of which had previously been reprinted!

Brief History of the Armed Services Editions

To refresh the reader's memory, the ASE series began in 1943 with publication of Leo Rosten's EDUCATION OF HYMAN KAPLAN and ended in 1947 with Ernie Pyle's HOME COUNTRY, by which time almost 123 million copies of the books had been distributed to servicemen in Europe and the Far East.

The project continued for an additional two years after WW2 ended in order to serve the millions of servicemen and servicewomen who were still on active duty overseas. All types of books were represented: adventure and historical novels, biographies, classics, cartoon books, current bestsellers, travel books, drama, humor, history, current affairs, poetry, science, self-help/inspirational, sports, westerns, mysteries, music and the arts, SF/F/H titles, *etc.* In short, there were books to appeal to everyone who wanted to read. Most of the books were staple-bound, five and a half by three and seven-eighths inches in size, although some were printed in a larger six and a half by four and a half format (*e.g.*, SELECTED STORIES OF EDGAR ALLEN POE). But all were designed to fit easily in a serviceman's pocket.

While the great majority of titles were published unabridged (with the cover statement: "This is the complete book—not a digest"), a few very long books had to be issued in abridged editions (*e.g.*, Wilkie Collins' THE MOONSTONE). Abridged books carried statements such as "Condensed for Wartime Reading" and "Condensed for the Modern Reader".

The covers of the ASEs featured small illustrations depicting the dust jackets of the original hardcover editions. Some authorities report that this was done in the hope that servicemen, after they had been discharged and were once again civilians, would seek out and purchase original editions of the books they had read as ASEs.

The Council was non-profit, but authors and publishers each received a royalty of one half cent per copy printed. Since the first titles were published in print runs of one

hundred thousand copies each, several authors had more than one of their books selected, and some titles were reprinted during the course of the project, the royalties for a few authors were substantial. The books were distributed overseas only, and thus kept out of the civilian market and competition with book sales at home.

Most of the books were printed on presses used for producing digest magazines and catalogs and which had not been operating at full capacity because of wartime shortages. These fast rotary presses produced magazines "two-up" (*i.e.*, two identical copies at a time). The ASEs were printed "four-up" on these presses: four books completely different in title and content, but with exactly the same number of leaves and attached to each other at top and bottom. The books were then separated from each other with three horizontal slices, producing four pocket-sized books, each with its spine running parallel to the short side of the cover.

The demand for reading material that could be read by service personnel "on the go" (*e.g.*, during the Normandy invasion, when one copy of an ASE was issued to each soldier as he boarded an invasion barge) also resulted in collections of stories and verse, which existed as such in no other form. These specially prepared anthologies were popular since short works could be quite brief and read quickly.

The special "made" collections included the amusing and macabre farces of John Collier (GREEN THOUGHTS AND OTHER STRANGE TALES), the weird tales of Algernon Blackwood (SELECTED SHORT STORIES OF ALGERNON BLACKWOOD), and the satirical fantasy works of "Saki" (H.H. Munro). The Saki collection also carried the title SELECTED SHORT STORIES. In this case, the cover illustration depicted the dust jacket of a book that never was.

Back covers usually carried synopses and laudatory reviews of the book's contents. Brief biographical information on authors also was included in many books. About three fourths of the books produced went to the Army; about one fourth went to the Navy.

Science Fiction/Fantasy/Horror Titles

Many ASEs were genre books or collections that contained genre stories. In addition to those mentioned above, these included WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE (Edwin Bulmer & Philip Wylie), SHORT STORIES OF STEPHEN VINCENT BENET, TARZAN OF THE APES and THE RETURN OF TARZAN (Edgar Rice Burroughs), SLEEP NO MORE (August Derleth, editor), MR. ADAM (Pat Frank), GUERRILLA (Lord Dunsany), THE DIAMOND AS BIG AS THE RITZ AND OTHER STORIES by F. Scott Fitzgerald, SHE and KING SOLOMON'S

MINES (H. Rider Haggard), THE GRAY CHAMPION AND OTHER TALES (Nathaniel Hawthorne), LOST HORIZON (James Hilton), THE ODYSSEY (Homer/T.E. Shaw, translator), GREEN MANSIONS and A CRYSTAL AGE (W.H. Hudson), THE DELICATE APE (Dorothy Hughes), THE GIOCONDA SMILE AND OTHER STORIES (Aldous Huxley), AFTER-DINNER STORY (William Irish [Cornell Woolrich]), SEVEN GOTHIC TALES and WINTER'S TALES (Isak Dineson), LADY INTO FOX (David Garnett), THE DUNWICH HORROR AND OTHER WEIRD TALES (H.P. Lovecraft), THE CADAVER OF GIDEON WYCK (Alexander Laing), THE UNINVITED and THE UNFORESEEN (Dorothy Macardle), THE GREAT GOD PAN AND OTHER WEIRD STORIES (Arthur Machen), STRANGE AND FANTASTIC STORIES (Joseph A. Margolies, editor), THE ENCHANTED VOYAGE, PORTRAIT OF JENNIE, and THE BISHOP'S WIFE AND TWO OTHER NOVELS (Robert Nathan), FRANKENSTEIN (Mary Shelley), DONOVAN'S BRAIN ((Curt Siodmak), THE EDGE OF RUNNING WATER and TO WALK THE NIGHT (William Sloane), THE CROCK OF GOLD and ETCHED IN MOONLIGHT (James Stephens), PAUL BUNYAN (James Stevens), THE GOLDEN ROOMS (Vardis Fisher), THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE AND OTHER STORIES (Robert Louis Stevenson), DRACULA (Bram Stoker), A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT and THE MYSTERIOUS STRANGER (Mark Twain [Samuel Langhorne Clemens]), THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN (George Lowther), NIGHT UNTO NIGHT (Philip Wylie), NOT TOO NARROW, NOT TOO DEEP (Richard Sale), and four science fiction (SF) novels by H.G. Wells—THE FOOD OF THE GODS, THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU, THE TIME MACHINE, and THE WAR OF THE WORLDS.

Some of these genre ASEs were reprinted, most notably DRACULA and THE WAR OF THE WORLDS. The selection committee obviously did a good job finding classic genre books that had been published by the early 1940s.

On the other hand, there were some curious omissions from the list of authors whose books were selected—at least curious to this writer. Not a single book by John Buchan, Arthur Conan Doyle, A. Merritt, Sax Rohmer, or Jules Verne was selected for the project.

Collecting Armed Services Editions

Complete and partial collections of ASEs exist today. The Library of Congress has a complete set of the titles printed, as do the Universities of Alabama and Texas. Other universities have partial collections. The University of Virginia's virtual catalog of its 1996 exhibition of ASEs, "Books Go To War", was once on line. The collection exhibited was

the property of Philip Van Doren Stern, a one-time editor at Pocket Books and the general manager of the Council's publishing program.

For the most part, prices for these books are relatively low, as almost all of the remaining ones routinely offered for sale are not in very good condition. Most copies were read and re-read, then either left overseas or brought back home crammed into duffel bags.

The hardest title to find (and most expensive to collect) is generally acknowledged to be THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, currently selling for around \$1,000 in fine condition. This is interesting to me because no comic books were selected for reprint in ASE format. If any had been, I strongly suspect that they would have been very popular with servicemen.

Collectors seem to be most interested in the ASE paperback original books (PBOs) and in the SF/F/H titles. There were more than 60 PBOs, or "made" books, in this wartime series.

The Significance of ASEs

Despite the interest of some universities and private collectors, the importance of ASEs has never fully been recognized. Award-winning SF author Frederik Pohl once wrote that ASEs might have played a part in the postwar growth of the American paperback book industry. Prior to World War II, there were only a couple of American publishers doing mass-market paperbacks.

Ian Ballantine, an American who had been studying in England, returned to America with the task of improving the American distribution of Penguin Books. The success of the ASEs may have been one of the factors that encouraged him to help in the founding of Bantam Books just after the war, and later to found Ballantine Books, his own company. The sales of Bantam Books soared after the war, and the popularity of Penguin Books also increased in the United States.

Others have seen the ASE series as important to American culture in general. Professor Matthew J. Bruccoli has written "The importance of giving away books to young men who had never had the opportunity to read before in their lives, together with the G.I. Bill, was a turning point in American literacy."

Some Conclusions

Whatever the overall effects of the ASEs, the SF/F/H genre certainly benefited from this change in popular reading habits. In the 1950s Ace Books and Ballantine Books both proved to be very important outlets for the publishing of genre paperback books in the United States.

Genre author/critic Richard Lupoff has written in his *THE GREAT AMERICAN PAPERBACK* that copies of ASEs were still available for servicemen during the Korean conflict. In his discussion of ASEs, Lupoff concluded that, while the United States has been involved in several other wars since the 1950s, "there has never been another effort like the Armed Services Editions, and there probably never will be again."

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Note: This is an abridged version of an article I wrote almost 20 years ago. As far as I know, it is still accurate.



The Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction by Jeffrey Redmond



The University of Kansas SF Center, apparently a source of some present-day science fiction writing, brought into focus

The Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas is celebrating Science Fiction since 1969. It is a safe space for inquiry into, education about, and celebration of the genre. The center provides a wealth of information and informed commentary about science fiction and the Center's programs, including awards, course syllabi, writing resources, and much more.

"The best current site, without question, is that sponsored by the Center for the Study of Science Fiction at the University of Kansas. It contains a treasure of information and links to other resources. It is the one place to start for anyone seeking information about teaching science fiction." —Dennis M. Kratz, ANATOMY OF WONDER.

James Gunn, the Center's founder, died on December 23, 2020. He once explained:

"We are working to save the world through science fiction! This is only partly hyperbole, as we believe that the more people have the opportunity to become educated about the core messages of science fiction, the better our world can be—and the better-prepared we are, as a species, to face the future. To help achieve this, we offer a comprehensive and ever-growing set of courses and other resources to serve SF students, educators, scholars, readers, and fans, and through collaboration extend the influence of the literature of change, ideas, and the human species to the world at large.

" 'The most powerful works of SF don't describe the future—they change it.'—Analee Newitz."

The Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction offers a large and growing variety of SF-related resources, awards, conferences, and other programs. This includes for-

credit and professionalization courses at the University of Kansas, including workshops, seminars, MA and MFA studies, and a writing retreat; gives annual awards for both international SF and student writing, and scholarships to study SF at KU; hosts the annual Gunn Center Conference; operates an educational outreach and speaker-finding program through AboutSF; houses research and reading libraries; provides a wide diversity of SF research and educational resources at KU as well as SF news and resource links to the broader SF culture; and administers the new James Gunn's Ad Astra publication. They regularly expand and improve their offerings to serve the science fiction community, so let them know what they can do to enhance the Gunn Center and this website as a resource for you.

"Science-fiction writers and readers didn't put a man on the Moon all by themselves, but they created a climate of opinion in which the goal of putting a man on the Moon became acceptable." –James Gunn, **New York Times**.

Everyone enjoys equal access to the Gunn Center's offerings, and they actively encourage students and scholars from diverse backgrounds to study with them.

The Center was founded in 1982 as a Kansas Board of Regents Center at the University of Kansas, the first such organization at a major university. Professor James Gunn established it as a focus for the SF programs he offered at KU, beginning in 1969 with one of the first science fiction courses ever offered at a major university.

That was also when the Science Fiction Lecture Series began, and when the University Libraries made its first major acquisition in the field; since then, SF has become the KU Libraries' fastest-growing special collection, mostly through gifts. Special Collections provided most of the illustrations for Gunn's ALTERNATE WORLDS: THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION, published in 1975 (and the new edition from 2013). Also in 1975, the University held its first Intensive English Institute on the Teaching of Science Fiction, which became an annual event.

In 1979, the John W. Campbell Memorial Award for the best science fiction novel of the year was presented for the first time at KU as part of a weekend conference devoted to the teaching and writing of SF. The annual Gunn Center Conference uses the round-table discussion format with associated readings, signings, and so forth. In 2004, the Conference tested a presentation-and-dialogue format with much success. The Theodore Sturgeon Memorial Award for the best short SF of the year was first given in 1987. In 1985, the Center first offered its Writers Workshop in Science Fiction. The Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame, presented in cooperation with the Kansas City

Science Fiction and Fantasy Society, was presented during the Conference Awards ceremony from 1996-2004.

In 2005, Kij Johnson first offered the Novel Writers Workshop, and recently added a “Repeat Offenders” Novel Writers Workshop. Chris McKitterick and Physics Professor Philip Baringer began offering the “Science, Technology, and Society” course in 2006. The first issue of the new James Gunn’s **Ad Astra**, a multidimensional journal of fiction, nonfiction, essays, reviews, and multimedia, launched in June 2012—and is now open for submissions. In 2013, the Center began expanding its interdisciplinary relationships, forming a group of Faculty Affiliates from many KU departments—expect to see more offerings as they build on their collaborations!

In 1991, Dr. Richard W. Gunn, a retired physician in Kansas City and Professor Gunn’s brother, created an endowment for the Center, and it was renamed the J. Wayne and Elsie M. Gunn Center in honor of their parents. McKitterick began building this website the next year. In 2004, the Center formed a Board of Advisors consisting of luminaries from the SF field, the Center’s Directors, and the English Department Chair. In 2007, the Center moved for the first time to a physical space at the University of Arkansas, and in 2009 it opened a comprehensive library of SF books and magazines that is now available for browsing and borrowing. In 2011, KU acquired Theodore Sturgeon’s papers, greatly expanding their already strong science fiction special collection available for researchers to use.

The J. Wayne and Elsie M. Gunn Center for the Study of Science Fiction is a University of Kansas Center affiliated with the KU English Department, and most courses are offered for undergraduate and graduate English credit—but all are also available for non-degree-seeking scholars and writers who wish to enhance their professionalization in the field. The Department offers a creative writing option at the undergraduate level and an MFA at the graduate level, which allows work in SF. Based on their growing interdisciplinary relationships at KU and with other universities, they are working to greatly expand opportunities to study SF at KU—stay tuned!

Currently, the Center offers the following:

Science Fiction and the Popular Media most semesters (for credit as ENGL 203).
Intensive English Institute on Teaching Science Fiction each summer (professionalization; also available for credit as a courtesy to the English Department as ENGL 506/790).
Alternates between the short story and novel.

Science Fiction Literature most fall semesters (for credit as ENGL 506/690). Alternated

between the short story and novel.

Science, Technology, and Society most spring semesters (for credit as ENGL 507, 690, or 998; HUM 510 for Honors credit).

Speculative Fiction Writing Workshop every summer (professionalization; also available for graduate credit as a courtesy to the English Department as ENGL 757).

Speculative Fiction Novel Writing Workshop each summer (professionalization only).

Advanced "Repeat Offenders" Speculative Fiction Writing Workshop each summer (professionalization; also available for graduate credit as a courtesy to the English Department as ENGL 757).

Young Adult Novel Writing Workshop (professionalization only).

Undergraduate directed study and advising in speculative fiction literature or creative writing.

Graduate study, directed readings, and thesis or dissertation advising in speculative fiction literature, scholarship, and creative work.

Interdisciplinary courses offered through the Center's Faculty Affiliates from other departments and universities.

The Center continues to offer, within a four week period in the summer, a two week intensive Writers Workshop established by SF Grand Master James Gunn and now offered by SF author and scholar Chris McKitterick, featuring brilliant guest authors such as Pat Cadigan, Bradley Denton, Andy Duncan, James Gunn, and John Kessel; a two week intensive science fiction literature course especially for teachers; a one week Young Adult Novel Writing Workshop; and two advanced "Repeat Offenders" writing workshops (also two weeks). The summer courses run for the full month on either side of the Gunn Center Conference and Awards Banquet.

Everyone enjoys equal access to the Gunn Center's offerings, and they actively encourage students and scholars from diverse backgrounds to study with them. All courses offered by Gunn Center faculty are also available to be taken not-for-credit for professionalization purposes by community members (if space is available).

Founder James Gunn—author, editor, scholar, and teacher of SF—was a SFWA Grand Master and Hall of Fame inductee. He served the Center's mission since he established it in 1982...and brought SF to academia for thirteen years before the organization was designated as a research center.

SF author and scholar Chris McKitterick has served the Center since 1992. He was named Associate Director in 2002 when he joined the KU faculty, and has served as

Director since 2010.

After nearly a decade of assisting with the summer program, Kij Johnson began serving as Associate Director in 2004. She joined KU as Assistant Professor of creative writing in 2012 and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2018.

In 2004 the Center formed its Board of Advisors, which includes long-time friends of the Center, the Directors, and many of SF's leading lights.

In 2005, with donations from publishers, conventions, SFRA, SFWA, and notable people in the field, the Center established AboutSF.com and created the AboutSF Volunteer Coordinator position to serve it.

In 2013, they formed the Gunn Center Affiliates, an interdisciplinary group of faculty and university professionals interested in the intersection of their fields with SF.

In 2015, they formed the International Consortium of Science Fiction, a cooperative of science fiction research and degree-granting programs from around the world.

In 2018, the first Christopher Gunn Memorial Graduate Research Assistant began serving the Center's mission.

A diverse group of authors, scholars, reviewers, and editors serve on the Campbell Award and Sturgeon Award nomination committees and juries.

And, of course, they wouldn't be able to do anything without the energy and commitment of their students, friends, support staff, and volunteers.

They invite you to become part of the Center, as well—if you're interested in volunteering, fill out the contact form over at AboutSF.com, or just drop them an email. For more information about the Center or any of their programs:

Gunn.SF.Center@gmail.com , CampbellConference@gmail.com , or [AboutSF@gmail.com](mailto>AboutSF@gmail.com) .

For personal matters, you may directly contact Chris McKitterick, Kij Johnson, or James Gunn.

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What is science fiction...and why study it?

Science fiction is the literature of the human species encountering change, and the

literature of ideas and philosophy; it is multi-and interdisciplinary, and at its heart is a community of thinkers and creatives.

Like the scientific method, science fiction provides an approach to understanding the universe we live in. It provides the tools, tropes, and cognitive framework within which we can explore ideas and safely run thought-experiments where we cannot or ought not in real-world experiments. By dramatizing such scenarios, populating them with believable characters, and providing the background necessary for the audience to willingly suspend disbelief, SF brings ideas to life.

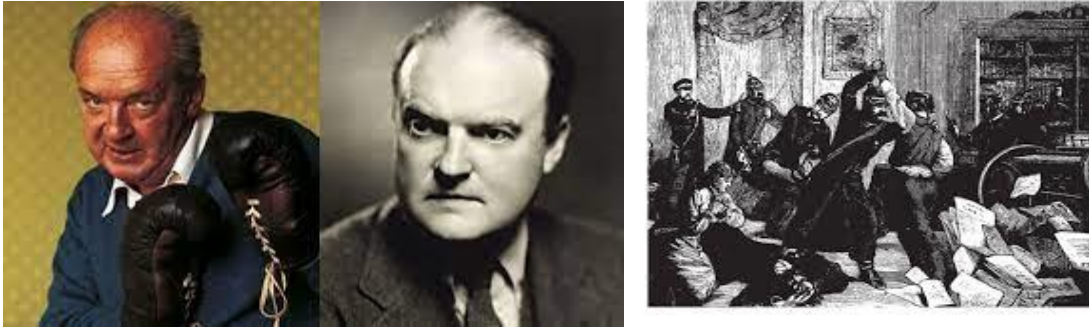
In Episode 5 of *COSMOS: A SPACETIME ODYSSEY*, Neil deGrasse Tyson says, “Science needs the light of free expression to flourish. It depends on the fearless questioning of authority, and the open exchange of ideas...The nature of scientific genius is to question what the rest of us take for granted, then do the experiment.” Replace “science” or “scientific” with “science fiction” in these statements, and you concisely define what SF does—and the value of its study becomes apparent.

In her speech at the National Book Awards, when she was awarded the 2014 Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, Ursula K. Le Guin said, “Hard times are coming when we will be wanting the voices of writers who can see alternatives to how we live now and can see through our fear-stricken society and its obsessive technologies to other ways of being, and even imagine some real grounds for hope. We will need writers who can remember freedom. Poets, visionaries, the realists of a larger reality.”

They believe strongly in the free sharing of information *via* digital humanities such as this website, so you’ll find a lot of content—including all of McKitterick’s course syllabi and many materials from their classes—on this and related sites and social networks as part of the Center’s educational outreach. Feel free to use this content for independent study, or to adapt it for your own educational and nonprofit purposes; just please credit them and link back to this website. They’d also love to hear from you if you use their materials!

The Gunn Center is associated with the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (SFWA), the Science Fiction Research Association (SFRA), the University of Kansas, and other organizations, and is owned by James Gunn and Chris McKitterick. Web developer and creator of most content since 1992 is Chris McKitterick.

Editor’s Note: An interview with Gunn may be found in *Ionisphere* 22, April 2020.



GETTING ALONG by Judy Carroll

What good can come of feuding in fandom?

Do you have something you like to do, just for the fun of it?

Let's say you like to get together with friends and talk about the latest book a favorite science fiction writer has just published. Things are going well. Deep thoughts and humor are intertwined throughout the conversation. There's a feeling of camaraderie in the air. Then, someone new to your group interrupts, and begins an attack on the author and his works. He's adamant in his opinions and refuses to take seriously any positive comment concerning the author. Most everyone is riled up now, and positive and negative opinions meet in the air like thunder.

The above scenario is a simple, fictional example of bigger issues currently happening in science fiction fandom.* Fans** are turning against one another, singly, in groups, and club to club.*** Why?

I want to talk about something that causes a lot of friction, and that I feel is responsible for many problems—in and out of fandom. Opinion *vs* fact.****

Some people seem to confuse opinion with fact. If they decide the latest book by an author is terrible, and not worth the time it took to read it, they have an opinion. Some people can express their opinion in a calm manner, explaining why they didn't like it. Others act as if what they think is fact, and everyone should see how terrible the book is. They become frustrated and outraged that others can't see what is so plainly "visible". They sometimes grab at something they have heard or read and just assume it is true without bothering to check the facts.

Why is the difference of opinion so important? Or, is it important?

Without difference of opinion life could get boring. If everyone had the same opinion, what is there to discuss? Differences of opinion make for interesting

conversations. Interesting conversations make for interesting thoughts. Interesting thoughts make for new ideas. And new ideas, put into action, can help better ourselves and our society. The key word here is “interesting”. Not “deadly”. Not “insulting”.

We need to be aware of others’ opinions, even if we don’t agree with them. They deserve to be heard, just as we do. With respect and kindness. Without constructive communication we are missing the opportunity to learn and understand the people around us.

The world is changed by your example, not by your opinion.—Paulo Coelho

*For a broader view of fandom feuding, please read the editorial by John Thiel in this issue.

**FANDOM is a term used to refer to a subculture composed of fans characterized by a feeling of sympathy and camaraderie with others who share a common interest.—

Definitions.netwww

***FAN FEUDS are ongoing conflicts between individual fans or fan groups...such as clubs...While they are sometimes quiet enmities, usually the term encompasses much issuing of written rants, diatribes and manifestos full of intemperate language, formerly in hastily cranked out fanzines, but now largely online. (The net equivalent is “flamewar”).—

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****Definitions

Opinion—A view or judgment formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.

Fact—A thing that is known or proved to be true.



PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS ON SF AND FANTASY by Will Mayo

One man's view of the life he leads, a literary one. Find any comparisons?

My life has been bedeviled all the way through by those who would seek to make me like everybody else. When, in truth, I couldn't be like everybody else no matter how hard I tried. I am, as a matter of fact, a weird man and have at times been thrown out of stores and stopped on the streets and penned up on account of my weirdness and no amount of talking to could rid me of a weirdness that I now choose to regard as more blessing than curse. The fact that I now choose to seclude myself in rooms all my own and write weird books has only added to the excitement with which people approach me whether they be clergy or so-called concerned neighbor. But no matter. I am content with a weird state of mind. Go ahead. Get the ink wet. I do believe I'm ready.

Here I sit in my own universe with cat and books and comuter and think my own thoughts, doing my own thing. As you there in your own protective bubbles of universes do the same thing for yourselves, thinking your own thoughts and doing deeds wherever you may be.

Every now and then, of course, your universes come by mine and we all smile and nod and wave at one another at our chance passing in the void. It is pleasant to touch base before we are on to another and then another, just so many bubbles passing by in the dark.

This all goes on for a while (seems like forever, doesn't it?) until somebody with needle and thread and unkind word should pop our bubbles one by one and we go whizzing off into oblivion like a child's balloon that has at last run out of gas.

Somewhere out there in the world physicists ponder the life and death of universes while I am given to think about those of my correspondents that have left this life yet continue to inhabit the strange corners of cyberspace. On the Internet, as in not a few houses, the haunting goes on. Old and new ghosts move about the electronics waves and into this computer, that satellite dish, over there, a distant portal, and approach the living with their words across the ether. It is a strange time in the strangest of places. The wires vibrate with the energy of countless millions and we have just begun.

The make believe is a lot more comforting than most realities. A lot more real as well. I sit here pondering my world. You sit there doing the same. Does the universe care? No, the universe goes its own way.

There is, of course, the me on the Internet and there is the me here at home. Chances are, those gentlemen will never meet.

In my dreams, old ghosts walk the earth and all is well again.
I embrace my mother and father, say hello to grandparents long dead
and tiptoe among the gravestones as all the dead come rising.
It is only natural that I should prefer my dreams to this long dead reality.
Virtually, we all come alive there.

