



# Fafnir

NORDIC JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY RESEARCH

Volume 5, issue 2, 2018

[journal.finfar.org](http://journal.finfar.org)



The Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research  
Suomen science fiction- ja fantasiatutkimuksen seura ry

## Submission Guidelines

*Fafnir* is a Gold Open Access international peer-reviewed journal. Send submissions to our editors in chief at [submissions@finfar.org](mailto:submissions@finfar.org). Book reviews, dissertation reviews, and related queries should be sent to [reviews@finfar.org](mailto:reviews@finfar.org).

We publish academic work on science-fiction and fantasy (SFF) literature, audiovisual art, games, and fan culture. Interdisciplinary perspectives are encouraged. In addition to peer-reviewed academic articles, *Fafnir* invites texts ranging from short overviews, essays, interviews, conference reports, and opinion pieces as well as academic reviews for books and dissertations on any suitable SFF subject. Our journal provides an international forum for scholarly discussions on science fiction and fantasy, including current debates within the field.

## Open-Access Policy

All content for *Fafnir* is immediately available through open access, and we endorse the definition of open access laid out in Bethesda Meeting on Open Access Publishing. Our content is licensed under *Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 3.0 Unported License*. All reprint requests can be sent to the editors at *Fafnir*, which retains copyright.

## Editorial Staff

### Editors in Chief

Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay

Laura E. Goodin

Aino-Kaisa Koistinen

### Reviews Editor

Dennis Wilson Wise

### Managing Editor

Jaana Hakala

## Advisory Board

Merja Polvinen, University of Helsinki, Chair  
Paula Arvas, University of Helsinki  
Stefan Ekman, University of Gothenburg  
Ingvil Hellstrand, University of Stavanger  
Irma Hirsjärvi, University of Jyväskylä  
Jyrki Korpua, University of Oulu  
Urpo Kovala, University of Jyväskylä  
Frans Mäyrä, University of Tampere  
Jerry Määttä, Uppsala University  
Cheryl Morgan (publisher and critic)

Sari Polvinen, University of Helsinki  
Liisa Rantalaiho, University of Tampere  
Adam Roberts, Royal Holloway, U. London  
Hanna-Riikka Roine, U. of Helsinki  
Johan Schimanski, University of Oslo  
Sofia Sjö, Åbo Akademi University  
Peter Stockwell, University of Nottingham  
Sanna Tapionkaski, University of Jyväskylä  
Päivi Vääänen, University of Helsinki

Supported by the The Finnish Society for Science Fiction Research and Fantasy (FINFAR)  
(Suomen science fiction- ja fantasiatutkimuksen seura ry)

ISSN: 2342-2009 (online)

[journal.finfar.org](http://journal.finfar.org)

Cover Photo: Arthur Rackham (illus.), "Siegfried Kills Fafnir," 1911, on Wikimedia Commons



## Table of Contents

<b>Editorial 2/2018</b> .....	5
-------------------------------	---

### Peer-reviewed Articles

Misanthropic Messiahs: <i>Timon of Athens</i> and <i>Dune</i> – The Role of Christ-like Leaders GARDNER POTTORFF.....	7
Mimesis: Beyond Ophis in the <i>Star Trek</i> Universe DAVID GARFINKLE .....	15

### Book Reviews

<i>Pagan Saints in Middle-earth</i> (by Claudio A. Testi) JAMES HAMBY.....	23
<i>The Great Tower of Elfland: The Mythopoeic Worldview of J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and George MacDonald</i> (by Zachary A. Rhone) T. MAY STONE .....	26
<i>Dis-Orienting Planets: Racial Representations of Asia in Science Fiction</i> (by Isiah Lavender III) KATHERINE E. BISHOP .....	29

<b>Call for Papers 2/2019</b> .....	33
-------------------------------------	----







## Editorial 2/2018

*Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, Laura E. Goodin, &  
Dennis Wilson Wise*

We present this issue of *Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research* with some ambivalence. First, we are very happy indeed to welcome Esko Suoranta, a postgraduate researcher at the University of Helsinki, who will be joining us as our new co-editor-in-chief beginning with our next issue. Esko is working on his PhD, *Affordances for the Future: Allegory and Cognition in Technocritical Speculative Fiction*. His research on William Gibson's later novels has been published in *Fafnir*, and his essay on Malka Older's Infomocracy appeared in *Vector* in late 2018. In addition to speculative fiction, his research interests include postmodernism, posthumanism, cognitive literary studies, and narratology. He tweets as @Escogar. He says, "I'm very excited to start working with the editorial team at *Fafnir*, the journal that offered me the first opportunities to publish my research when I was still an undergraduate. I'm confident that together with Laura and Bodhisattva we can maintain its high quality as a scholarly journal, further improve our editorial processes, and break new ground in finding new readers and contributors. So, onward to glory!"

However, we also bid farewell to longtime co-editor-in-chief Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, who is moving on to pursue other exciting research projects. We'd like to offer our deep gratitude to Aino-Kaisa for all her contributions to and hard work on this journal, and wish her all the best in her upcoming adventures.

Aino-Kaisa says: "I would heartily like to thank all my fellow editors, past and present, for making *Fafnir* the quality journal it is today. In my time as an editor-in-chief for *Fafnir*, the journal has certainly grown from a little dragon to a full-grown beast that has spread its wings beyond Finland and the Nordic area to international skies as well. I have seen not only an increase in the number of articles offered for our journal but also the growing amount of international interest *Fafnir* is attracting – which can also be seen in the fact that we have moved from three Finnish editors to an

---

international editorial staff. I am confident that after I leave the journal, *Fafnir* will continue to live long and prosper as the fantastic beast it was always meant to be.”

Our two articles in this issue examine iconic works of speculative fiction in widely different ways. Gardner Pottorff’s “Misanthropic Messiahs: *Timon of Athens* and *Dune* – The Role of Christ-like Leaders” looks at the inversion of familiar religious imagery to generate “anti-messiahs” as heroes (and anti-heroes). David Garfinkle’s “Mimesis: Beyond Opsis in the *Star Trek* Universe” uses works from the *Star Trek* canon as exemplars for introducing concepts of identity and mimesis in an instructional setting.

Three reviews round out this issue. Two of the reviews deal with books about Tolkien – James Hamby discusses Claudio A. Testi’s argument that Tolkien contains both Christian and pagan symbolism, and T. May Stone covers the mythopoeic worldview attributed to a number of Christian fantasists by Zachary A. Rhone. Lastly, Katherine E. Bishop tackles a collection of essays edited by Isiah Lavender about racial representations of Asia in contemporary science fiction.

We also bring your attention to a call for papers on climate fiction (issue 2/2019). The submission deadline is August 15, 2019, and the issue is scheduled for publication at the end of 2019. The call for papers gives full details and submission guidelines.

As ever, we hope this issue intrigues and informs you, and inspires your own research journeys.

Live long and prosper!

Bodhisattva Chattopadhyay, Aino-Kaisa Koistinen, and Laura E. Goodin, Editors-in-chief

Dennis Wilson Wise, Reviews Editor

*Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research.*



## Misanthropic Messiahs: *Timon of Athens* and *Dune* – The Role of Christ-like Leaders

*Gardner Pottorff*

**Abstract:** This article discusses the religious imagery found in *Timon of Athens* and *Dune*, both well-known works. On the surface, it may seem that these works have very little connection. However, a closer examination offers an abundance of religious imagery from both works. The main characters in *Timon of Athens* and *Dune* – Timon and Paul Atreides, respectively – act as reverse Christ figures that are sometimes analogous to the Biblical Christ, but often serve as the antithesis to Christ as represented in Biblical narratives. The attributes and life episodes of Christ can be inverted to identify, examine, and analyse characters who can be considered antimessiahs, and to aid in understanding the themes that the authors of these characters aim to express.

**Keywords:** *Dune*, *Timon of Athens*, religious, messianic structure

### Introduction

Throughout Shakespeare's plays, religious imagery abounds. One of the more interesting plays where this occurs is *Timon of Athens*. The religious imagery in this play, which is centred on Timon, serves as a compliment to the action of the play, strengthening the misanthropic ideals of both Timon and the people around him. Timon serves as a Christ figure within the play. This is a popular convention of Shakespeare's time: representing the author's religion or belief system through their literary or dramatic characters and works. Timon has many of the same attributes that a Christ-like literary figure would have. However, Shakespeare breaks convention by making Timon a reverse Christ figure, a person who spreads death and disease instead of love and healing. This is evidenced by several scenes throughout the play that solidify the idea of Timon as an anti-messiah who wishes harm and destruction on his fellow man. Timon's rise and fall as a messiah – albeit one of doom, instead of a messiah of redemption – is typical of a religious structure that

creates examples and leaders of its characters. The reader can track Timon's trajectory using a religious tragic arrangement that follows a pattern of rise and fall, during which reverse-messiah attributes manifest themselves. There are contemporary connections to this representation of Timon as a reverse Christ as well. For example, Frank Herbert's character Paul Atreides is a messianic figure: one who uses his power to create a fanatic following that consumes him. Neither Timon nor Paul wanted their role: Timon loves giving and helping people, but when abandoned by friends becomes misanthropic, and Paul is forced into his role of messiah by his father's death and his own exile. This paper will connect the role of messianic/Christ figures in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* and Frank Herbert's *Dune* based on their respective central characters' role in hating or subsuming humanity.

The religious messianic structure is used within both *Timon* and *Dune* to highlight the ills that society forces a person to do. Both Timon and Paul are controlled by societal rules; Shakespeare and Herbert regard these rules with scorn. The religious structure serves as a model for the society in which the characters live: the "collapse of society seems imminent because it has become thoroughly degenerate" (Draper 195). Timon's society is characterised by the accrual of wealth and the collection of gifts. Shakespeare uses the messianic structure, with "Christ theologically and ideologically present" and as "the definitive metaphor" (Streete 56). However, Shakespeare subverts the messianic figure by including reverse morals to show how the love of wealth or power debases and degrades humans, especially after they have depended on it for too long. Timon's rise as an anti-messianic figure and his eventual downfall are made more poignant by the magnification that the Christian structure creates: Timon is "analogous to Christ within the Christian scheme" (Knight 297),<sup>1</sup> following the same pattern that Christ did. Frank Herbert's *Dune* operates in much the same way. Paul's fall from grace and eventual return to power are given new meanings because of the focus that the specific Christian form provides. The form is rigid, allowing the author to create characters that are inflexible, unmoving examples of leaders who spread death and disease instead of healing and redemption; the characters are caught in their anti-messianic fates. Morrison states that in Shakespeare, and by extension Herbert, "everything runs back to character and that character is fate – that what a man is, determines everything" (48). Much as Christ's character and messianic fate was determined by his birth and heavenly parent, so too are those of the characters in *Timon of Athens* and *Dune* decided by external influences: power, wealth, or betrayal. The reader can follow Timon's and Paul's trajectories based on the experiences that Christ had, but their experiences are informed by hate, loneliness, and a loss of wealth, rather than love, friendship, and a spurning of wealth. Both characters follow the same path as Jesus Christ, but in so doing, spread contradictory emotions and take contradictory actions.

There is currently a turn toward the messianic in critical theory and philosophy. Bradley and Fletcher discuss the theoretical trend toward the messianic in their article "Introduction: On a Newly Arisen Tone in Philosophy". They assert that the messianic structure represents "a new way of thinking our time, our now" (186). As such, it is necessary to investigate the appearance of messianic structures in literature, past and present. *Timon of Athens* and *Dune* are disparate literatures, hardly related, yet they both represent facets of the messianic structure. This structure, according to Tyson Lewis, is "not simply waiting for a Messiah to come to save human history; rather, the messianic is ... the completion of humanity's self-realization in a future temporality" (239). At this point, a brief discussion of the role of messianic structure in literature and critical analysis becomes necessary. The messianic narrative structure is one that appears throughout many forms of literature, both religious and agnostic. The typical messianic structure

<sup>1</sup> See also Knight's book *The Wheel of Fire*. He discusses more of Timon's hateful attributes as related to Christianity.



revolves around a central character who becomes a leader/savior to a group of people; the character is a harbinger and creator of progress and near-permanent change. The development and transformation brought about by a typical messianic character is positive. The messiah influences other characters and groups to do good, help humanity, and sacrifice themselves for an overarching purpose, a purpose that allows individuals to recognise their own positive potential. This influence for positive is intrinsic to the messiah. Beare notes in his article, “It Gets Better ... All In Good Time: Messianic Rhetoric and A Political Theology of Social Control”, that “there is an inherent messianicity in the way [the messiah’s] message suggests a mode of being ... with an orientation toward an imagined better future” (357). The typical messiah offers an affirmative message, a message of positive activism, a message of hope and optimism. A narrative that follows this messianic structure is the narrative of Christ. Christ is used as the basis for comparison, as his messianic narrative will be familiar to most. What is suggested in the following pages is the reverse of the typical messiah/Christ narrative where the messiah brings good to their followers and the world. The messiahs in *Timon of Athens* and *Dune* create change and influence characters, but their message is one of doom, destruction, and negativity. As such, they are anti-messiahs: characters that conform to the messianic path and structure, but with inverse results. What follows is an attempt to further discuss how these antimessiahs function within a narrative structure.

## **The Christian Structure and Anti-Messianic Path within *Timon of Athens***

The tragic Christian structure within *Timon* allows the character of Timon to rise as a reverse messiah to the people. The play begins with the main character on the good side of fortune. Timon is a rich nobleman who gives gifts and feasts freely, without worrying about his expenses. People say of him:

Plutus, the god of gold,  
Is but his steward. No meed but he repays  
sevenfold above itself; no gift to him  
but breeds the giver a return exceeding  
all use of quittance. (1.1.289–92)

At this moment, Timon is still a good person, willing to help his fellow humans in times of need, giving freely of all he has. His generosity is aligned with the Christian religious structure of a giving and kind person. However, Shakespeare – never satisfied with convention – tantalizes the reader with shadows of the original structure while at the same time giving it his own twist. Mallin writes that in Shakespeare, the “strangest figure of Christ by far must be among the worst, the most gratuitous, whose resemblance to the redeemer has not taste of ... sacrifice or salvation” (48). Therefore, Timon, unlike Christ – whose poverty allowed him to be generous to the common people and do good for them – Timon’s fortunate and wealthy position allows him to have generosity towards the poor and rich alike. Timon is a patron of the arts, giving to poor artists when they need his help. He also aids his wealthy friends in times of need, and even gives to them just for his own pleasure. However, this fortunate position will not allow Timon to become a fully anti-messianic character. A reversal of fortune is needed that will bring out the “worst” in Timon, and the Christian religious structure allows for this change in fortune.

The prosperity and destiny of Timon changes for the worse, leading him down the dark path of an anti-messiah. His generous nature and ignorance lead to his downfall, and “initially Timon seems immune to ... [change] and secure in his position as benefactor”

(Bailey 389). However, Timon has given away most of his treasure to his so-called friends in spurts of blind openhandedness, and disregarded the bills that have been piling up. When confronted by three collectors, Timon is surprised, and brushes them off, saying “[g]o to my steward” (2.2.22), “repair to me next morning” (2.2.29), and give “me breath/... /I’ll wait upon you instantly” (2.2.37–39). His ignorance and unwillingness to listen to Flavius – who has previously tried to warn him, saying, “Vouchsafe me a word; it does concern you near” (1.2.177) – creates a critical moment that starts Timon on his downward spiral. Timon soon asks his friends for help, but they betray him. Like Christ, who was betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter, Timon cannot find help in the arms of his friends, and this leads to his descent into full reverse-messiah mode. His so-called friend Lucullus tells Flaminius – who was sent asking for monetary assistance – that he will have no part in lending money: “Thy lord’s a bountiful/gentleman; but thou art wise, and thou know’st/... that this is no time to lend money, especially on bare friendship” (3.1.40–43). Timon is also told by another friend, who is jealous of being the last person asked – “Who bates mine honor shall not know my coin” (3.3.28). These friends, at a time of most desperate need, find excuses not to help Timon, betraying his trust. Christ also experienced the pain of betrayal and refutation by his disciples and friends. Judas betrayed Christ to the Pharisees, and Peter denied Christ three times. Jesus remained loving toward his disciples even after these sinful, evil actions. Timon also experiences this sort of betrayal and denial, but reacts in an opposite manner; he begins to hate and despise the people who will not support him. He calls them “mouth-friends” (3.6.88), and states that they will henceforth “hated be/of Timon, man, and humanity” (105). Timon’s reaction to betrayal, a “hatred of life in general” (Frye 179), is opposed to that of Christ’s. Shakespeare created Timon so that his “basic error [which is the reverse to that of Christ] consists in focusing entirely upon one side of man’s nature while ignoring the other, so that he is totally lacking in balance” (204). Shakespeare’s ability to subvert the traditional Christian story of the self-sacrificing, all-loving Christ figure allows for a more complex tale.<sup>2</sup> Timon, through his anti-messianic attributes, highlights the corruption of both the individual and the community that dependence on money or power can bring about.

Using the religious structure, the reader begins to see a dichotomy between the messages that Christ and Timon preach. Both of them use many of the same methods – instruction, sermons, and disciples – but their messages are quite different, each seeking an opposing goal. Christ, the example of a true Messiah, “preaches love: love universal” (Knight 71), forgiveness, and kindness, both to the masses and to his disciples. Timon, on the other hand, delivers substantially more caustic and evil declarations. The reader sees this hate delivered in directives given to the people who come to him, especially Alcibiades and the prostitutes. Timon, in typical anti-messianic fashion, subverts Christ’s methods and uses them for his own destructive purposes. This is never more clearly exemplified than when Timon is speaking to the prostitutes. He exhorts them to “Consumptions sow/In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins/and mar men’s spurring” (4.3.152–54). This is the tamest of Timon’s instructions to the prostitutes. He continues his commands:

Hoar the flamen  
That scolds against the quality of flesh  
and not believes himself. Down with the nose,  
down with it flat; take the bridge quite away. (4.3.157–60)

---

<sup>2</sup> Rolf Soellner, in his book *Timon of Athens: Shakespeare's Pessimistic Tragedy*, argues that Timon is a hero because of his misanthropy, and Shakespeare meant for him to be viewed as such. This is a contrasting perspective to this paper.

Timon is instructing the prostitutes to give the race of men venereal disease, with his “misanthropy ... implied in his giving” (Jackson 47). He completes his instruction with a command that sums up his anti-messianic leadership: “Plague all/That your activity may defeat and quell/The source of all erection” (4.3.164–66). These commands and requests are clearly contrary to the teachings and lifestyle of Jesus Christ. Where Christ heals, Timon destroys. By subverting Christ’s methods and teachings, Shakespeare shows the reader the power that one individual can have, and how that power can be used for hostile purposes.

Timon’s anti-messianic aspects continue to be noticed as his servant Flavius<sup>3</sup> and former friend/harbinger Apemantus come to visit him in his wilderness home. Timon preaches sermons of hate and vitriol towards both of these men, who had cared for him or tried to warn him of impending doom in his previous life. Apemantus comes bearing food for Timon. Timon responds with strings of insults: “A madman so long, now a fool” (4.3.223), “Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon” (4.3.364), “Thou tedious rogue” (4.3.375). Timon has nothing but hate for the people who come to him and offer help. This venomous agitation is continued when Flavius arrives at Timon’s wild domicile. Timon says to Flavius, “Away! What art thou?” (4.3.477). Flavius is distraught at this treatment and asks if Timon has forgotten him. Timon responds with “I have forgot all men;/Then, if thou grant’st thou’rt a man, I have forgot thee” (4.3.480). Timon refuses to even countenance someone who once showed him love. These hateful spewings are perfect opposites to the love, kindness, and forgiveness that Christ preaches to the people who come seeking him. Timon and Christ share one last dichotomous relationship. Christ, in the ultimate example of selfsacrifice and love, allows himself to be crucified to save the world from humankind’s sinful actions. Timon, staying true to the anti-messianic attributes he has exhibited throughout the play, kills himself.<sup>4</sup> Suicide represents Timon’s pinnacle as anti-messiah. He retreats into his cave to be killed by the sea: alone, friendless, and hateful. His concluding moments show that he continues to hate the human race: he states “whoso please/to stop affliction ... /come hither ... /and hang himself” (5.1.208–11). Even Timon’s final words are full of vitriol and evil: “What is amiss, plague and infection mend!/Graves only be men’s works and death their gain” (5.1.220–21). With these words, Timon seals his fate as an anti-messiah, a character who is diametrically opposed to Christ and his example. Timon has followed the same path as Christ and used some of the same methods of instruction; however, Timon has used his position as a leader – an anti-messiah – to harm and destroy, instead of heal and protect.

## Anti-Messianic Attributes of Paul Atriedes in Frank Herbert’s *Dune*

Much as Timon can be compared to and contrasted with Christ, Paul Atriedes from Frank Herbert’s *Dune* can be compared to Timon using the same Christian religious structure. At the beginning of *Dune*, Paul is in a fortunate, prosperous place. He lives in a happy household that loves and adores him, he is wealthy, and he is heir to a title and kingdom. Paul’s life and seeming innocence are described by Halleck, his weapons trainer: Paul is “the well-trained fruit tree ... full of well-trained feelings and abilities ... all bearing for someone else to pick” (Herbert 35). However, the “someone else” is not a person in the case of Paul, but a destiny that uses his “feelings and abilities” to foster in him anti-messiah

<sup>3</sup> Ching and Termizi look at the relationship between Flavius and Timon more closely, seeing it as representative of the Elizabethan masterservant bond.

<sup>4</sup> Pierce has an interesting discussion of Timon’s psychological features as they relate to the tragic form in his essay “Tragedy and *Timon of Athens*”.

attributes that will influence the multitudes. At this point in the book, Paul is willing to help people; he treats everyone with respect and kindness. The Duke – Paul’s father – sees the potential that Paul has to be a wise and beneficent ruler; he comments: “He’ll wear the title well” (127) and “what a catch [Paul] would make” (127), and even tells Paul, “You’ve ... matured lately, Son” (83). The Duke recognises that Paul has great potential and could be a good ruler. However, fate and a similar messianic narrative structure to *Timon of Athens* will not allow this to happen.

Eventually Paul’s prosperity and pampered life change, just as Timon’s position as a wealthy individual changes. The change is not for the better. The family is sent to a distant desert planet – Arrakis – that was previously owned by the mortal enemies of the Atriedes family, the Harkonnens. The first night on the planet, Paul is almost assassinated:

Paul slipped out of bed, headed for the bookcase door that opened into the closet. He stopped at a sound behind him, turned.... From behind the headboard slipped a tiny hunterseeker .... Paul recognized it at once – a common assassination weapon that every child of royal blood learned about at an early age. (66)

Even though Paul survives this attempt on his life, his conditions only get worse. The reader learns that the Atriedes family was left with substandard equipment and large deficit that they will not be able to make up for several years. A report given to the Duke states that “half the crawlers are operable ... everything the Harkonnens left us is ready to break down and fall apart. We’ll be lucky if a fourth of [the equipment] still work[s] six months from now” (86). Even though the family is in a desperate situation at this moment, nothing prepares Paul for the final blow that destroys his fortunes. The Harkonnens mount a counterattack against the planet. A traitor resides in the midst of the Atriedes family, and betrays them, just as Timon was betrayed. The family’s doctor, Yeuh, has provided information to the Harkonnens. This enables them to kill the Duke and capture Paul and his mother, leaving them in the desert to die. This is the moment where Paul’s fall of fortunes align with Timon’s: they both are betrayed and lost to the wilderness.

Like Timon, Paul begins preaching hate and destruction; his destructive attributes even cause him to kill a man. In the desert wilderness, Paul has time to think about what has happened to him and the path he has been set on. He thinks to himself, “I’m a monster .... A freak” (191). Paul feels that the way he has been brought up has forced him into a dishonorable path; he doesn’t feel comfortable with his anti-messiah status, yet still accepts it. He recognizes “his own terrible purpose – the pressure of his life spreading outward” (193). Paul sees the influence that he will have over his peoples and understands he will be an anti-messiah. Paul wants revenge for what the Harkonnens have done to his family. He states “I’ll take full payment for them all one day” (222). Unlike Christ, who forgave his enemies, Paul wishes to destroy them. The reader also sees Paul’s anti-messianic attributes when he kills someone for the first time, in single combat. Paul “thrust upwards to where Jamis’ chest was descending – then away to watch the man crumple. Jamis fell like a limp rag, face down, gasped once and turned his face toward Paul, then lay still on the rock floor” (297). After Paul’s victory over this man, he has a moment where he enjoys the “killing of a man in clear superiority of mind and muscle” (297). Paul spreads death and destruction; he relishes in the devastation that he causes.

Paul shows his final cruelties when he mounts a counterattack on the Harkonnens. He raises an army of desert peoples and executes an elaborate destruction of the Harkonnen invaders. The Fremen, the people who fight for Paul – or Muad’dib, as he begins to be called when the Fremen recognise him as prophet and bringer of doom – are willing to go to any length to serve him, and Paul is willing to exploit their loyalty. The Baron Harkonnen states that Paul’s “people scream his name as they leap into battle. The women throw their babies at us and hurl themselves onto our knives to open a wedge for

their men to attack us. They have no ... decency" (446). Khalid Baheyeldin places Paul within an Islamic messianic context to better understand the character's influence on the Fremmen. He styles Paul as "the Mahdi ('The Rightly Guided One') ... an all human Messianic figure, who comes to fill the world with justice after much of the opposite", a role that grants him access to power that he would not otherwise have (Mahdi). The Mahdi, in both *Dune* and Islam, is a messiah who leads the people toward greatness. However, Paul's role as antimessiah leads not only to Fremmen victory, but also to Fremmen destruction. Julia List has written of Paul's control and ruthlessness: Success "requires exploiting the faith of his followers" and a willingness "to use his followers' faith in him as the 'Mahdi' [or Muad'dib] to succeed in his vendetta" (28). Paul's anti-messianic attributes spread to the Fremmen, just as Timon spread his hatred and desire for destruction to the prostitutes. After the victory that Paul gains by destroying the Harkonnens, he is placed in an even greater position of power: he marries the Emperor's daughter. Unlike Christ and Timon, however, Paul's death is not a literal one, but a death of the last shred of humanity that he may have had. Paul "sentences [the Emperor to his] prison planet" (472) and takes his role as leader of the Empire. Paul offers to his subjects "an always imminent new world order ... [and] enduring freedom ... a kind of demonic parody ... of the messianic voice" (Bradley and Fletcher 187). Paul's days as a simple child have disappeared, died, and he is now become a god to the people upon which he has forced his anti-messianic rule. The old Paul is dead, and Muad'dib reigns supreme.

## Conclusion

The pattern and life of Christ can be used as an example to examine Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens*, and in turn, Frank Herbert's *Dune*. Christ's rise as a Messiah, his teachings of love, and the final sacrifice that he makes inform both *Timon of Athens* and *Dune*. The main characters of each literary work follow the same trajectory that Christ follows in his lifetime; however, Timon and Paul are anti-messiahs, displaying characteristics that are diametrically opposed to the teachings and example of Christ. Where Christ preaches a message of love and forgiveness, Timon and Paul spread messages of destruction and revenge. Timon and Paul both have followings of individuals who can be considered disciples. Timon's disciples are the prostitutes, commanded to spread disease and death among the human race. Paul has a race of wild desert people following his antimessianic leadership; they are willing to do anything to please Paul and will destroy any who oppose him. Eventually, like Christ, Timon and Paul die. Christ's death was one of self-sacrifice and healing for the human race. Timon, on the other, is selfish even to last, committing suicide in order to be away from the humans he hates so much, wishing ill on humankind to the last. Paul's death is more subtle, a death of the innocent, childlike spirit that he used to have, signaling his ascension to full anti-messianic power. At the end of *Dune*, Paul fully embraces who he has become – an antimessiah who spreads death to whoever and whatever he commands. Overall, the religious Christian structure, specifically the structure of the life of Christ, gives a new interpretation to *Timon of Athens* and *Dune*. This interpretation allows the reader to have a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the separate main characters, and creates interesting connections between religion, Shakespeare, and contemporary works.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Cox's article "Was Shakespeare a Christian, and If So, What Kind of Christian Was He?" discusses what form of Christianity Shakespeare adhered to. In a longer discussion of messianic figures, this would be extremely useful in placing Shakespeare, and by extension, Timon, in a religious context.



*Biography:* Gardner Pottorff is an adjunct instructor at State Fair Community College in Missouri. He teaches composition and foundational English classes. In 2016, he completed his thesis on postcolonial aspects of *Dune* and *Tarzan of the Apes* at the University of Central Missouri, thereafter receiving his MA in English. Most of his research centers on postcolonial theory and how it informs the genre of science fiction. Currently, he is working on an article that identifies the progression of colonization in John Steakley's *Armor* and Robert Heinlein's *Orphans of the Sky*.

## Works Cited

- Bailey, Amanda. "Timon of Athens, Forms of Payback, and the Genre of Debt." *English Literary Renaissance*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2011, pp. 375–400. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1111/j.14756757.2011.01089.x.
- Baheyeldin, Khalid. "Arabic and Islamic Themes in Frank Herbert's *Dune*." *The Baheyeldin Dynasty*, www.baheyeldin.com, 22 Jan. 2004, <https://baheyeldin.com/literature/arabic-and-islamicthemes-in-frank-herberts-dune.html>. Accessed 30 Jan. 2019.
- Beare, Zachary. "It Gets Better ... All in Good Time: Messianic Rhetoric and a Political Theology of Social Control." *Journal for Cultural Research*, vol. 19, no. 4, 2015, pp. 352–64. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/14797585.2015.1033844.
- Bradley, Arthur, and Paul Fletcher. "Introduction: On a Newly Arisen Messianic Tone in Philosophy." *Journal for Cultural Research*, vol. 13, no. 3/4, 2009, pp. 183–89. EBSCOhost, doi:10.1080/14797580903101128.
- Draper, R. P. "Timon of Athens." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1957, pp. 195–200. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2866963.
- Frye, Roland M. *Shakespeare and Christian Doctrine*. Princeton UP, 1963.
- Jackson, Ken. "'One Wish' or the Possibility of the Impossible: Derrida, the Gift, and God in Timon of Athens." *Shakespeare Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2001, pp. 34–66. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3648646.
- Knight, G. W. *Shakespeare and Religion: Essays of Forty Years*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.
- List, Julia. "'Call Me a Protestant': Liberal Christianity, Individualism, and the Messiah in Stranger in a Strange Land, Dune, and Lord of Light." *Science Fiction Studies*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2009, pp. 21–47. EBSCOhost, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost>.
- Mallin, Eric S. *Godless Shakespeare*. Continuum, 2007.
- Morrison, George H. *Christ in Shakespeare*. Doubleday, Doran & CO., 1928.
- Streete, Adrian. *Protestantism and Drama in Early Modern England*. Cambridge UP, 2009.



## Mimesis: Beyond Opsis in the *Star Trek* Universe

*David Garfinkle*

**Abstract:** This case study considers popular examples of science fiction in film and on television for classroom instruction at the junior undergraduate level of coursework. Drawing on the familiarity of *Star Trek* in popular culture, this study uses episodes from the original series and scenes from the later film franchises as exemplars to introduce the irrational and extra-visual aspects of mimesis in contemporary science fiction. The article offers a conversation between the popular moments of *Star Trek* and the elements and variations of mimesis as defined by Michael Taussig in his *Mimesis and Alterity: A History of the Senses* (1993). The distinctive variations of mimesis as examined focus attention on Taussig's notions of alterity, similarity, contact, and absorption, and how these features combine in terms of self-reflection, representation and self-identification. Variants of mimetics on screen pose further exemplars of degrees of absorption, in co-encounters, co-identifications, and co-poiesis, or shared meaning-making, which can help the reader to make connections with other theorists for future examination. Sample mimetically influenced theories include Adorno's *mimetic comportment*, Baudrillard's *telemorphosis*, Kristeva's *intertextuality*, Hellstrand's *ontological mimicry*, and Freud's primary mode of ego-identification in terms of the cinematic image, as explored by Doane and Metz, as well as the cyborg hybrid figurations of Haraway, Braidotti, and the Deleuzian *body-without-organs*.

**Keywords:** *Star Trek*, mimesis, alterity, contact, identification, similarity, absorption

One model of mimesis takes a road less traveled than the common varieties offered by divine mimesis (Plato), poetic mimesis (Aristotle), or even prosaic mimesis (Auerbach), which have grounded the meaning of *imitation* in modern Western cultures. In *Mimesis and Alterity: A History of the Senses*, Marxian anthropologist Michael Taussig regarded mimesis as variations of *alterity*, altered co-identifications of the Other as alien. His prerequisite for mimesis as a face-to-face encounter of *contact* between two parties affords the interpretive means to distinguish *similarity* from *alterity*, by degrees of *absorption* or co-identifications of self and Other. This case study highlights moments from the *Star Trek* universe in conversation with mimesis to examine hybridic figures

and their modes of *co-poiesis* in modern science fiction. The challenge here is to explore thresholds of reason on the borders of a Cartesian and optical realm, to see what can be learned about the Othering of altered perception central to the hybridic representation of the alienated self and the alien. As a case study in teaching science fiction, this paper incorporates some pertinent references for further exploration.

## 1. Similarity: “The Enemy Within.” *Star Trek: The Original Series (TOS)* (S1, E5, aired 6 Oct. 1966).

In her study of the ontology of mimicry in science fiction, Ingvil Hellstrand observed that the alien Other prior to the 1970s was represented by figures who could pass as human, yet were marked as different (252). This is the case in the episode “The Enemy Within,” where a transporter malfunction splits Captain Kirk into two beings. Before the double becomes known to Kirk, we see the “good” captain regard himself in the mirror. Then, we see Kirk’s double in a different-coloured tunic also note his mirrored reflection. Aside from the coloured tunic, the same actor appears to reflect upon himself, as a likeness of identity. So far, each is alike in outward form. But the double then reveals his dark nature with an attempt at sexual abuse that gets his face scratched by resistant victim Yeoman Rand. Looking again in the mirror, the double is now marked as the Other. These three moments offer variations in similarity: first as *self-reflection*, second as a *representation* of uncharacteristic behavior, and third as *self-identification* of Other as marked.

Initially, the episode demonstrates the most basic understanding of mimesis, where similarity reflects back on the viewer’s gaze with an exact likeness; the mirror image appears to match the original. Where the viewer identifies with “oneself” as *look*, mimesis is a “pure capacity for seeing” (Doane 15). In their historical study of mimesis, Gebauer and Wulf define this modernist mode as “imitation, depiction or copy” (175). Yet, as theorised by Freud, and later Melanie Klein, this modernist act of self-reflection also leads to *primary identification* in ego formation. By means of self-perception, mimesis as similarity demonstrates how the ego-image functions as a prerequisite act of self-identification.

The second moment, when the double reveals his moral lack by uncharacteristic behaviour, further differentiates for the audience the two contrasted identities. This moment of sexual abuse fits with Gregg D. Miller’s definition of poetic mimesis in light of Plato’s fear that unchecked poetic mimesis will seduce the audience away from good morals. Herein, a visual likeness is complicated by an anti-social behavioural mannerism that leads to the double being marked (Miller 52). Miller notes that in poetic mimesis “the mimetic manner is proscribed because it relies on *affect* to seduce its audience” (53, emphasis original). In this second moment, we witness mimesis as *representation*, where one’s manner embodies the distinctive features of difference, in addition to the purely visual image of recognition. The double’s uncharacteristic behavior as individuation shows what Adorno called *mimetic comportment*, a second variation that treats similarity as more than merely a reflected self-image: it is the basic means of establishing one’s identity (232). And the third moment, when the double discovers he is marked, clearly fits with Hellstrand’s view of an early representation of the Other (252), where the double can pass as human but is marked as different for all to see.

The episode offers a further set of complications when the acts on screen are considered from the perspective of the viewer. Mary Ann Doane’s critique of cinematic identification calls attention to what Christian Metz considered as a primary, “fundamental form of identification in the cinema ... that makes all other types of identification possible” (15). Doane, however, treats Metz’s primary identification as secondary since self-identification – by a character on the screen – merely indicates “a form of classification based

---

upon a one-to-one correspondence between sign and referent” (Doane 16). While Metz places the act of representation purely in the visual realm, Doane argues that the

mechanism of identification with a character in the cinema pivots on the representation of the body. Narrative is a *mise-en-scène* of bodies and while images without bodies are perfectly acceptable within limits, it is the character’s body which acts as the perceptual lure for and anchor for identification. (16)

With this fundamental shift in the objects of mimesis, from purely visual correspondences to a narrative realm of embodied figures, something more than similarity is required to understand how mimesis functions on multiple levels of identification. For embodied relations of televisual mimesis, this study now turns to *absorption*.

## **2. Absorption I: *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* (1982; Paramount Pictures, feature film)**

A parodic view of mimesis is demonstrated when Kirk, now Admiral, receives his first pair of reading glasses in the second feature-length film with the original cast. Much light-hearted humour is made in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan* about how the original cast members are getting old. This is not surprising to devoted Trekkies, with 15 years between the original TV series that aired in 1966 and this second feature film of 1982. In brief moments – like a running gag – the antique glasses appear to be in a sub-plot of their own. Trekkies can laugh along with the characters, who offer a parodic commentary on the actual cast members.

The sub-plot as running gag has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Kirk is at first surprised at such a gift, but then – in private – he comes to realise that he actually needs the glasses to read the printed text. Finally, when he needs to read a vital report in the midst of a life-threatening attack, he dons his glasses with only a modest, sheepish manner, on the bridge in public view, as if he realises he has no other choice if he wants to act his role.

As a mini-story about mimesis, the glasses call attention not only to the act of seeing, and the aging actor behind the role, but to a meta-commentary on the nature of reading a text. As viewers, we see an aging William Shatner absorbed in his role, who is absorbed in reading, yet also making a comment about how viewers juggle multiple texts to make sense of the televised representation. Based upon Julia Kristeva’s notion of *intertextuality*, the running gag plays on a parody about meaning-making in the poetic (and cinematic) realms (37). As Gebauer and Wulf put it, every “text stands in mimetic relation to other texts” (294).

The multi-layered representation of a screen figure absorbed in reading demonstrates some key functions of mimetic absorption. In the first variation we view a body whose self is absorbed in identification with another body: the retired admiral compares himself to his younger incarnation, when he did not need glasses. One self is absorbed in an altered self. For aging Trekkies, who may also be amused by this parodic act of absorption, the glasses offer an ironic comment on the screen. For, while even younger viewers get the joke, all viewers are, at the same time, absorbed in the life of the onscreen character. This representation of an actor absorbed in his character resonates with Baudrillard’s notion of *telemorphosis*, wherein the reality depicted on screen reflects the reality of the TV viewer. All aging viewers must confront alterity as part of life: senses diminish as we grow old.

### **3. Absorption II: “This Side of Paradise,” *Star Trek: TOS* (S1, Epi. 24, 1967; TV)**

While the prior variant of mimesis as absorption points the viewer’s focus within, as an inside joke about interior and private changes or alterations of the self, the 1967 episode “This Side of Paradise” demonstrates an outer expression of absorption *without*. In this TOS episode, First Officer Spock revels in the uncharacteristic emotions of love and joy. As another contrast that demonstrates Adorno’s mimetic comportment, it is the outer bodily signs of effusive positive affect that stand out to the viewer. While visiting a paradisiac Earth-like nature world, Spock is sprayed with spores by one of the indigenous plants, and transformed into an open, loving, joyful Vulcan. Like people in love, the infected crew dismiss their work ethic and reject the call to return to the Enterprise. As viewers, we also are infected by the highly unexpected behaviour of Spock, whom we see smiling radiantly, swinging languidly from a tree bough, with a woman at hand who shares his joyful love. I had never before seen Spock, let alone Leonard Nimoy, display such physical happiness and extremely positive affect. Mimetic absorption, here, offers a doubled awareness, of self – lost within the expressive moment – alongside an utterly altered self who rejects his former self free from care and remorse.

### **4. Absorption III: “The Alternative Factor,” *Star Trek: TOS* (S1, Epi. 27, 1967; TV)**

Where the prior variant of mimetic absorption reveled in positive affect as a physical presence, the episode “The Alternative Factor” represents absorption as an absence, in a ghosting agon between two combatants who are inextricably linked. The final image of the episode resonates with two versions of Lazarus, each totally absorbed in the other, who have entered a temporal rift to be locked in eternal combat. In the glowing blue light of the rift, two ghosting bodies tumble over each other in mortal embrace. Forever exiled from the universe of material presence, the image represents a doubled awareness of the self as other entwined with the altered self as Other.<sup>1</sup> Like the divided Kirks, the episode resonates with the modern conflicted subject, again as a single identity with two similar bodies. Yet unlike the visibly distinguished bodies of the two Kirks, the pair of combatants barely register as image when shrouded in the antimatter rift. Like the modern subject trapped on the cusp of a postmodern realm, the scene’s closing image haunts the screen as an emblem of a Sysyphean dialogic of aggressive male hysteria that figures absorption in a psychoanalytic of postmodern patriarchy.

### **5. Absorption IV: *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996; Paramount Pictures, feature film)**

Two moments from the 1996 feature film *Star Trek: First Contact* enter the realm of cybernetic hybridity to focus on the (cy-)Borg Queen as a post-human component in the

---

<sup>1</sup> The present use of the capitalised *Other* refers to the Other of human subjectivity, while the lowercase version *other* refers to the Lacanian notion of a lack, as the *petit o*. This convention follows other theorists of alterity and identification such as J. L. Baudry (1974–75), Christian Metz (1975), Thomas Elsaesser (1980), Homi Bhabha (1984), Mary Ann Doane (1991), Ruth Leys (1992), Diane Fuss (1995), and Ingvil Hellstrand (2016), as well as many other works in fields including psychoanalysis and post-colonialism, co-creativity, and queer and film studies.



collective machine hive. When the android Data is captured by the Borg and strapped to a gurney, the film treats the environment from Data's limited viewpoint, and calls our viewer's attention to an inhuman space, animated on the margins of the frame by cyborgs of the Borg cube. It seems fitting that both our subjective view – from the eyes of an android – and the hybrid objects in his view can only take in the scene as a Deleuzian “body without organs” (325). For, of course, as neither Data nor the Borg Queen have human organs as such, they serve as exemplary figures who can, in Hellstrand's terms, “pass as human, but *not quite*” (252, emphasis original).<sup>2</sup> The two moments of this scene, when the Borg Queen introduces herself to Data with “I am the Borg,” and just before she kisses Data with the words, “I am your creator now”, together offer further contrasting distinctions about mimetic absorption.

The first moment offers a *physical externalisation* of one bodiless being inserted into the hive's collective many-bodied machinic consciousness. As if witnessed from Data's disembodied viewpoint, there is first a gentle female voice, after which the camera focuses in on the Borg Queen's head and shoulders descending from the machinic hive down towards Data. With the words “I am the Borg”, her bust descends into a mechanised body to register as what Donna Haraway proposed as the gendered cyborg, or what Rosi Braidotti considered as the post-human hybrid of monstrous bodies as signs of the mother-monster-machine.

The moment of cybernetic joining echoes as an artificial mind cybernetically fused into one vast machine body, with the de-individualised post-human units as the Borg's limbic system, or as anti-bodies. Within this machinic environment, both cybernetic bodies – Data's and the Queen's – signal the mutual absorption of beings who no longer pass as “human but not quite,” but as inhuman selves trapped inside the Other. This moment also registers in Hellstrand's timeline where the alien figures of science fiction can no longer pass as human. Both posthuman beings, Data and the Queen, can only function as distinct voices absorbed as disembodied part-signs of one machinic body-without-organs.

When the Borg Queen stimulates the patch of human skin grafted onto Data's arm, however, mimetic absorption leaves the visual realm of bodies physically externalised in cybernetic space. While Data has become de-subjectified, unable to act willfully in his own interests, the Queen projects herself into Data's “consciousness”, in a transference of her feminised co-collective identity into the posthuman android's perspective. Intrigued with how the android is tormented by the intense sensual stimulation of the skin patch, the Queen is absorbed in Data's tactile “rush”. Within what Adorno would refer to as the “shudder” (331), the android is completely absorbed in the irrational sublimation of his logical self – lost *within* by means of extreme psychic overstimulation. Data's consciousness is decentred in the intense affective signals of cognitive overload.

In this scene, with its posthuman selves lost within, the rational mind must confront the internalised bonds of identification, which link self as other with the transference of another self as altered Other. Conjoined, the respective views of altered selves have been absorbed, all overloaded by heightened sensual affectivity as part of the collective machine. Post-contact, the Borg Queen asks Data, “Was it good for you?” The sexual innuendo draws our attention to the scene as exemplary of Laura Mulvey's psychoanalytic view of gendered cinematic positions where the female revels in her disembodiment of the environment for the sensual stimulation of a male-identified android. And overall, with the Borg's collective hive identification, the alien crosses Hellstrand's limit of passing as human, for the Borg cannot pass as human.

<sup>2</sup> Hellstrand applies Homi Bhabha's phrase “almost the same, but not quite” to science fiction with her revised “pass as human, but not quite” (252).

## 6. Vivacity Contact: *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996; Paramount Pictures, feature film)

The mimetic requirement of *contact* functions whenever a person makes physical contact with another object or person. Where two meet for the first time, each forms a distorted image of the other. Appending the dependent variable of *vivacity* enables one to begin to distinguish among degrees of intensity made possible in the altered conditions of a doubled co-presence. Basic *vivacity contact* limits contact to a bodily engagement where the self is altered by some form of sensuous contact.

This scenario informs an intimate moment in *Star Trek: First Contact* (1996), when both Captain Picard and Data are in a missile silo, standing next to a booster rocket. Picard explains that physical contact can increase awareness of the nature of that object, and Data places a hand on the metal surface of the rocket. In *vivacity contact*, a subject's bodily engagement with an Other alters both the experiential nature of a self in contact with the object and the perceptual nature of the self as a conscious subject in communion with that object. Yet, a more intense and vivid variation on contact is revealed when the camera frame opens out to include empath Troi looking down from a catwalk on the three absorbed in shared communion below.

With Troi's quip, "Shall I leave you three alone?" the nature of the contact is heightened by an outside viewpoint, with which the viewers can identify, and which frames the scenario below. Feminist psychoanalyst Bracha Ettinger would see in this framed co-encounter an act of *metramorphosis*, which she defines as "a capacity for differentiation-in-co-emergence that occurs" in an interface "on the borders of presence and absence," or as

a web ... between subject and object, among subjects and partial subjects [that] becomes a psychic space of trans-subjectivity ... where trans-subjective affectivity infiltrates the partial-subjective-objects. (180)

Ettinger's central metaphor of a matrix, or matrixial border-space, is "modelled on intimate sharing in [a Derridean] *jouissance* [as] a capacity for share-ability created in the borderlinking to a female body" (180). The late addition of Troi's female voice, as an embodied witnessing by a female body, calls the viewer's attention to a complex trans-subjective matrix as an act of co-poiesis, or shared meaning-making. By the addition of the female perspective, the intersubjective communion of man and machine framed in the scene is reframed by an erotic trace of the feminine into a vivid trans-subjective mode of co-identifications, which can be called polyvocal, a complex mimetic scenario that is polyvalent.

## 7. Poly-valency: A Conclusion

This magical mimetic transformation to trans-subjectivity reveals how the features of similarity, absorption, and vivacity contact inform screen depictions that link human, alien, and machine as poly-valent assemblages. In poly-valency, the many selves-as-one replace the split subject of modern science-fictional heroes who still pass as human, but not quite. And yet, poly-valency is another complex subject for a later chapter in the mimetics of partial subject positions as depicted in the *Star Trek* universe. With the Borg, for example, and its collective assemblage of evocative border-crossings, a distinct modern identity is not only altered but seems a being of the past. Mimesis has helped to expand understanding of the role of, and relations with, the Other of televisual science fiction produced after the 1960s. Along the way, this article has grounded irrational

---

aspects of mimesis beyond visual analytics, to consider boundary conditions of reason, the self of the disembodied and hyper-sensitized human, in the co-creative mingling of the embodied figures of modern and postmodern science fiction.

*Biography:* Dr. David Garfinkle is a Canadian scholar currently working as a faculty member of the Department of Communication Studies of MacEwan University, Edmonton, Canada. He earned his Master of Arts in Performance Studies from New York University, and his doctorate in theatre history and cultural criticism from the University of Washington, in Seattle. Past publications reflect his research interests in postmodern aesthetics, early modern rhetoric, and modernist theories of theatrical styles from European drama. His current research investigates the role of affect in interpersonal and nonverbal communication. His current teaching includes classical rhetoric, rhetoric of popular culture, public speaking, science fiction on film, and advanced research methods. He can be contacted at garfinkled@macewan.ca.

## Works Cited

- “The Alternative Factor.” *Star Trek: The Original Series*, created by Gene Roddenberry, performance by William Shatner, season 1, episode 27, NBC Broadcasting Company, 30 Mar. 1967.
- Adorno, Theodor W. *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated by Robert Hullot-Kentor, U of Minnesota P, 1997.
- Aristotle. *The Poetics*. Translated by E. Barker, U of Michigan P, 1967.
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Translated by William Trask, Princeton UP, 1953.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Telemorphosis*. Translated by Drew Burk, Univocal, 2011.
- Baudry, Jean-Louis. “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus.” *Film Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1974/1975, pp. 39–47.
- Bhabha, Homi. “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.” *October*, vol. 28, 1984, pp. 125–33.
- Braidotti, Rosi. *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. Columbia UP, 2011.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Translated by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, U of Minnesota P, 1983.
- Doane, Mary Ann. *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*. Routledge, 1991.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. “Primary Identification and the Historical Subject: Fassbinder and Germany.” *Ciné-Tracts*, vol. 11, 1980, pp. 43–52.
- “The Enemy Within.” *Star Trek: The Original Series*, created by Gene Roddenberry, performance by William Shatner, season 1, episode 5, NBC Broadcasting Co., 6 October, 1966. Television.

- 
- Ettinger, Bracha. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. U of Minnesota P, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard, Vintage-Random House, 1988.
- Freud, Sigmund. *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Edited and translated by James Strachey. 1921. Avon Books, 1965.
- Fuss, Diana. *Identification Papers*. Routledge, 1995.
- Gebauer, Gunter, and Christoph Wulf. *Mimesis: Culture, Art, Society*. 1992. Translated by Don Reneau, U of California P, 1995.
- Hellstrand, Ingvil. “‘Almost the same but not quite’: Ontological Politics of Recognition in Modern Science Fiction.” *Feminist Theory*, vol. 17, no. 3, 2016, pp. 251–67.
- Klein, Melanie. “Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms.” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 27, 1946, pp. 99–110.
- Kristeva, Julia. “Word, Dialogue, and Novel.” *The Kristeva Reader*, edited by Toril Moi, translated by Alice Walker, Thomas Gora, and Léon S. Roudiez, Basil Blackwell, 1986, pp. 34–61.
- Leys, Ruth. “The Real Miss Beauchamp: Gender and the Subject of Imitation.” *Feminists Theorize the Political*, edited by Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, Routledge, 1992, pp. 167–214.
- Metz, Christian. “The Imaginary Signifier.” *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 2, 1975, pp. 14–76.
- Miller, Greg Daniel. *Mimesis and Reason: Habermas’s Political Philosophy*. State U of New York P, 2011.
- Mulvey, Laura. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema.” *Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975, pp. 6–18.
- Plato. *Plato: Complete Works*. Edited by John M. Cooper, translated by G.M.A. Grube, Hackett, 1997.
- Star Trek*. Directed by J. J. Abrams, performances by Chris Pine and Zachary Quinto, Paramount Pictures, 2009.
- Star Trek: First Contact*. Created by Gene Roddenberry, directed by Jonathan Frakes, performances by Patrick Stewart, Brent Spiner, Marina Sirtis, and Alice Krige, Paramount Pictures, 1996.
- Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. Created by Gene Roddenberry, directed by Leonard Nimoy, performances by Robin Curtis and Carl Steven, Paramount Pictures, 1984.
- Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. Created by Gene Roddenberry, directed by Nicholas Meyer, performance by William Shatner, Paramount Pictures, 1982.
- Taussig, Michael. *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. Routledge, 1993.
- “This Side of Paradise.” *Star Trek: The Original Series*, created by Gene Roddenberry, performance by Leonard Nimoy, season 1, episode 24, Desilu Studios, 2 Mar. 1967.



Book-Review:  
*Pagan Saints in Middle-earth*

*James Hamby*

Testi, Claudio A. *Pagan Saints in Middle-earth*. Walking Tree, 2018. ISBN 978-3905703382.

The symbolism of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Legendarium* has long been debated: is the symbolism primarily pagan or Christian? Claudio A. Testi thoroughly examines the various answers to this conundrum before settling on an answer that synthesizes several different interpretations: while the world of Middle-earth is manifestly pagan, its virtuous inhabitants nonetheless are viewed through a Catholic lens. Middle-earth's virtuous inhabitants are, as Testi puts it, "men and women who have not yet received the revelation" of Christ (128). Testi traces the theological underpinnings of this interpretation and explains how this idea shaped Tolkien's notion of "pagan saints" in his works. His argument provides a nuanced understanding of a difficult topic; however, his analysis is still disputable. In the Afterword, for example, Tom Shippey argues that Tolkien's work represents "polyphony", pagan and Christian elements coexisting but not melding, in contrast to the "harmony" uniting these two world views that Testi describes. Testi previously presented his argument in "Tolkien's Work: Is it Christian or Pagan? A Proposal for a 'Synthetic' Approach" for *Tolkien Studies* in 2013. This book expands upon all of the major points that Testi makes in that essay, especially his discussion of the points that favor either a pagan or a Christian perspective. The added focus on these interpretations, including their failings, causes the synthetic argument he later makes to be far more cogent than that earlier essay.

Testi divides his study into two main sections. The first section investigates the three main arguments that Tolkien's work is Christian, pagan, or both simultaneously. Tolkien quite famously asserted on multiple occasions that his work was not allegorical; however, Testi points out that, despite Tolkien's statements, many critics over the years have considered "the *Legendarium* a mythology that becomes more and more Christian in its development" (14). Many critics over the years have seen a strong vein of Christian humanism in Tolkien's works. Joseph Pearce, for instance, in



*Tolkien: Man and Myth* finds Tolkien's Catholic theology ubiquitously present in all of his works, and Bradley Birzer sees Tolkien's *Legendarium* as inextricably entwined with Christian symbolism. Testi agrees that Christianity is indeed a major influence on Tolkien's works, but he also rightly points out that proposing "a specifically Christian interpretation as the *sole* possible reading corresponds to an outright perversion of Tolkien's vision" as it "does not account for the deeply philological inspiration of the *Legendarium*, his attention towards languages and their evolutions, nor his love of pagan sagas" (25–26). To view Tolkien's work as only Christian is too limiting and ignores Tolkien's notions of mythopoeia as a recombination of many older literatures into something new. On the other hand, Testi suggests that interpreting Tolkien's work as exclusively pagan "diminishes the scope of the Tolkienian perspective just like the Christian one does" (41). He furthermore examines how many purely pagan interpretations contain either a "poor understanding of the dramatic nature of the Christian message", ignore "the important differences between Middle-earth and the pagan civilizations of history" (32, 36), or have some other vital flaw that prevents the pagan interpretation from being convincing. Finally, while Testi finds the argument that Tolkien's *Legendarium* is both Christian and pagan to be closer to the truth, he still finds this interpretation insufficient, and he asserts that "the terms 'pagan' and 'Christian' are never conceived of as contradictory. Only if we acknowledge this will it be possible to understand how the fully pagan horizon of the *legendarium* is in complete harmony with the supernatural level of Christian revelation" (63). Furthermore, Testi rejects the polytheistic views of scholars who argue that Tolkien's work is solely pagan. For instance, he argues that Patrick Curry's argument in *Defending Middle-earth* that Tolkien denies the existence of a single, superior creator is inconsistent with Tolkien's stated views on his own work (31). Testi asserts that Curry's view, and the interpretations of others such as Catherine Madsen and Ronald Hutton, suffer from an imperfect understanding of Christian theology.

For Testi, Tolkien's *Legendarium* portrays a pagan world from a Christian perspective. The inhabitants of Middle-earth are undoubtedly pagan but not outside the vision of salvation as articulated by the Roman Catholic Church. Testi asserts that paganism and Christianity exist in harmony with one another and that "it would be impossible to understand the *Legendarium* without acknowledging both its pagan roots and its relation with the Christian revelation" (67). Testi suggests that Tolkien's interest in a synthesis between Christianity and paganism originated in his work with Anglo-Saxon literature, which was largely "written in the Christian era but still imbued with pagan culture" (72), as well as in his Catholic faith and its acceptance of the idea that pre-Christian, noble pagans were eligible for salvation. Testi observes how Tolkien greatly admired pagan poetry with its emphasis on courage as an ethical concern (88), and he felt that this concept of courage had been integrated into Christianity with "its authentic essence of dauntless courage even when facing defeat" (92). Using these ideas of synthesis, Testi argues, Tolkien created his *Legendarium*. Testi spends the last portion of his book exemplifying how Tolkien's pagan world fits into a Catholic view of humanity. Testi concludes his study by stating that, despite no references to faith or internal allegories, the Catholic nature of Tolkien's work "*paradoxically resides in the distinctive non-Christianity of his world*, a universe that is essentially the pagan expression of a level of nature that is nevertheless in harmony with the supernatural level of Revelation" (136, emphasis original). Much like *Beowulf*, Tolkien created a world in which the heroic ethos coexists with Christian salvation.

This book offers an intriguing exploration of the dispute between pagan-versus-Christian interpretations of Tolkien's work. Testi's solution to this question – that

Middle-earth is pagan but in accord with Christianity – is nuanced, scholarly, and well-supported. He does a fine job of pointing out the inadequacies of other interpretations and delineating what is different about his own, which at times is tricky due to the synthetic nature of his reading of Tolkien. Testi carefully defines terms, considers perspectives and inspirations, and presents conflicting interpretations with fairness. Additionally, the Foreword by Verlyn Flieger and the Afterword by Tom Shippey (who does not entirely agree with Testi) provide context for this work's place in the field of Tolkien studies. As mentioned above, Shippey sees the pagan and Christian elements as simultaneously present but independent of one another. Shippey's argument presents a compelling counterpoint to Testi's. However, when considering Tolkien's own description of mythopoesis from "On Fairy-stories" about how different old bones are thrown into a cauldron to create a new soup, and taking into account Tolkien's Catholic belief that virtuous pagans could attain salvation, Testi's view of synthesis seems more likely than believing that the Christian and pagan elements have nothing to do with one another.

Overall, Testi's study offers a wonderful overview of an intriguing question in Tolkien's work. Even readers who disagree with his solution will no doubt benefit from the in-depth and serious consideration he gives to his subject. Indeed, given the evidence that Testi cites, it is difficult to see how Tolkien's work could now be viewed as either exclusively Christian or pagan. For Testi, Tolkien did not create his vision out of the tension between paganism and Christianity but rather out of a synthesis between the two. This book is a wonderful addition to Walking Tree Publishers' *Cormarë Series* and will no doubt prove beneficial to Tolkien scholars and enthusiasts alike in helping them to understand Tolkien's vision of Middle-earth.

*Biography:* James Hamby is the Associate Director of the Writing Center at Middle Tennessee State University. His reviews have appeared previously in *Fafnir*, *Science Fiction Studies*, *The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, *Foundation*, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, *Extrapolation*, *Studies in the Novel*, and other publications. His dissertation, *David Copperfield: Victorian Hero*, argues that Dickens created a new archetypal hero for the Victorian Age patterned on his own life.

## Works Cited

- Birzer, Bradley. *J. R. R. Tolkien's Sanctifying Myth: Understanding Middle-earth*. ISI Books, 2009.
- Curry, Patrick. *Defending Middle-earth*. HarperCollins, 1997.
- Hutton, Ronald. "Can We Still Have a Pagan Tolkien? A Reply to Nils Ivar Agøy." *The Ring and The Cross*, edited by Paul Kerry, Fairleigh Dickinson UP, 2011, pp. 90–105.
- Madsen, Catherine. "'Light from an Invisible Lamp': Natural Religion in *The Lord of the Rings*." *Tolkien and the Invention of the Myth*, edited by Jane Chance, UP of Kentucky, 2004, pp. 35–48.
- Pearce, Joseph. *Tolkien: Man and Myth*. HarperCollins, 1998.



Book-Review:

*The Great Tower of Elfland: The Mythopoeic Worldview of  
J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and George  
MacDonald*

*T. May Stone*

Rhone, Zachary A. *The Great Tower of Elfland: The Mythopoeic Worldview of J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, and George MacDonald*. Kent State UP, 2017. ISBN 978-1-60635-329-5.

Mythopoeia usually refers to the sort of myth-making that happens when fictional worlds include their own fictional (mythic) canons, but Zachary A. Rhone presents a modified sense of the term in this valuable new study of Christian Humanist literary criticism. Other than noting the usual lines of chronological overlap between the authors, Rhone does not go so far as to assert any coordinated effort or collusion between them – after all, as he says, their combined lifetimes span from 1824 to 1973 (96). The study's worthwhile central tenet, however, is the confluence of authorial intent for these four major British fantasy writers. Rhone therefore grounds his study in biographical literary criticism while always carefully noting his four authors' own attitudes toward such criticism (33–34). Rhone attributes to these four fantasy authors the common philosophy of Christian Humanism, although he chooses not to make that point explicit until his final chapter; likewise, Rhone also waits until the final pages of his study before making explicit his specialized definition of mythopoeia as “literary and philosophical myth that reaches toward original myth to reveal divine truth” (120). Despite this unorthodox method of arranging his argument, the results certainly seem to justify it – his method allows him to “present the pieces in order to understand the whole” (12). This structure also allows Rhone to first establish the specific nuances of Christian philosophy important to these authors, as well as how these elements interweave into a structure that transcends conventional Christianity by extending it or building onto it what Rhone outlines as the idea of mythopoeia as a way to God – in Rhone's analogy, these fantasy authors enact mythopoeia by building

a tower in Elfland that readers might use to climb to God. The mythopoeic worldview that these authors share understands language as a sort of path back to God, Rhone argues, and holds myth as a method to draw closer to God and to effect positive change in the fallen world.

The introduction provocatively asserts that one worldview unites Tolkien, Lewis, Chesterton, and MacDonald but declines to spell it out until the final chapter, titled “The Overarching Hypothesis”, which one could simply read first. The introduction also offers an engaging, succinct overview of each author’s life and life’s work, which invites a non-scholarly audience and sets up the first four chapters, which each presents a major theme that Rhone argues that the four authors’ personal philosophies share. Rhone carefully knits together a synthesis of the theme in each author’s work, both fiction and non-fiction. The first chapter, “Language and Literature”, may possibly have the broadest appeal across scholarly fields. It lays out the authors’ opinions about the origin of language (divine), its current use (fallible, broken), and finally its purpose (to lead to truth/God). As Rhone’s goal in *The Great Tower of Elfland* is to point to a common purpose in the work of Tolkien, Lewis, Chesterton, and MacDonald, this first, foundational chapter examines their shared belief that, because language is divine, its ultimate purpose should be to lead one to God (who is truth). The equation between God, who is transcendental truth, and language, which expresses truth – or, in human usage, attempts with variable success to express truth – is fundamental to Rhone’s argument for the authors’ shared mythopoeia. Rhone squarely addresses the apparent paradox involved in these authors’ choices to express transcendental, Christian truth through myth and fairy tale, contra mimesis, offering a valuable summary of these fantasists’ defenses of fantastic fiction: Elfland provides a space “where truth can play out without unnecessary constraints” in a way not possible in the sort of literary realism that might be expected of Christian authors (22). Of additional interest to scholars of the fantastic is Rhone’s synthesis of the unique manner in which these authors integrate Coleridge’s Primary and Secondary Imagination into their own creative formulation of Christian mythopoeia.

Following the first chapter’s epistemological focus, Chapter Two, “All That Is Human”, canvases the authors’ ontological philosophies, or rather, which particular elements of Christian Humanist ontology play particularly significant roles within these authors’ mythopoeia: reliance on human reason, belief in an immortal soul, and acceptance of the world’s fallen nature. Chapter Three, “The Journey”, describes the human course of progress (in both an individual and collective sense) with a fascinating focus on the classical philosophical paradox of the negotiation between fate and free will in human action – and also this paradox writ large, on a societal level: the idea of a collective human destiny versus the equally important concept of individual freedom. Throughout this chapter runs “the motif of paths and roads to symbolize the human journey through free will decisions and accompanying fate”, a tangible symbol with which to think through the authors’ compromises in these paradoxical areas (65). What stands out about this chapter is how Rhone deals with his four authors’ most complex concepts with lucid and succinct commentary on the authors’ literary expressions of those concepts. Short, periodic surveys of each of the four authors’ non-fiction texts, including personal correspondence, buttress Rhone’s literary criticism. Chapter Four’s title, “Civilization and Origination”, refers to all four authors’ collective disapproval of modern civilization – broadly meaning the impulse behind civilization and its historic results, the more modern the worse – and their collective agreement

that moving backwards in some aspects of life would advance humanity forwards toward the goal of human perfection.

Rhone knits these strands together in the final chapter, summarizing the authors' shared belief that language is a means to access a higher truth and "that the greatest art should reveal truth which is further up and further in, that humanity's journey should guide them in goodness to goodness, and that a fragmented civilization is not the means to healing" (150). To accomplish this, Rhone argues, each of the authors turned to myth. Believing that to exercise the Secondary Imagination in literary creation is itself to approach closer to a divine state, each of these authors "tried to bring myth and imagination back to a search for divine truth and, in the tradition of original myth-makers, to inspire their listeners to do the same" (120). The final chapter title, "The Overarching Hypothesis", refers not to the fact that it presents the first firmly formulated statement of Rhone's thesis but to what Rhone identifies as the "overarching hypothesis" underlying and motivating each of these four authors' literary careers, a belief that the inherent ills of the human condition "can be redeemed in God" (151). Briefly, Rhone explains the conceit of the study's title: the great tower on top of which MacDonald, Chesterton, Lewis, and Tolkien stand, the tower from which they view everything else, is the particular brand of mythopoeia that Rhone argues belongs to Christian Humanism.

Another paradox appears: "The Great Tower of Elfland" is Christian Humanism. Mythopoeia – in Rhone's sense of the word, wherein myth harkens back to God – describes the purpose and the method (so to speak) of the tower that these authors have built for themselves, but "Elfland" names the material from which the tower is built; Rhone argues that these authors employ elements of the fantastic traditionally regarded as the antithesis of Christianity as a means to gloss and persuade others toward that religion. Rather than reflect confusion, the paradoxes that populate Rhone's study, and his ability to make palpable sometimes impossibly abstract ideas, mark *The Great Tower of Elfland* as a fascinating extension of the already considerable scholarship on these influential writers. At times, Rhone's diction makes evident the academic audience he envisions for his work – a wary reader will need to clear such hurdles as "these binaries exhibit supplementation" – but otherwise Rhone's style is enjoyable and makes for a fairly snappy read (132). Additionally, Rhone's adept embrace of female pronouns in general, as well as his equable ordering of "she and he" and "hers and his", deserves praise. *The Great Tower of Elfland* is a must-read for those who study Tolkien, Lewis, Chesterton, and/or MacDonald, a valuable addition to the library of fantastic literature scholars, and an interesting historical study for the layperson.

*Biography:* Since her Master's degree in American and British literature at Florida Atlantic University alongside FAU's fantasy literature program, T. May Stone has been interested in the fantastic, which focused her research through a Ph.D. from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in Zombie Studies. Currently, May is completing a book tracing the figure of the zombie through a century of American literature, while teaching fantastic literature as an Assistant Professor of English at the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, New Mexico.





Book-Review:  
*Dis-Orienting Planets: Racial Representations of Asia in  
Science Fiction*

*Katherine E. Bishop*

Lavender, Isiah, III, editor. *Dis-Orienting Planets: Racial Representations of Asia in Science Fiction*. UP of Mississippi, 2017. ISBN 978-1496811523.

Given his centrality to the study of race in science fiction, it is fitting that Isiah Lavender III begins the introduction to *Dis-Orienting Planets: Racial Representations of Asia in Science Fiction* autobiographically, showing how he was interested from a young age in stereotypes of techno-Orientalism and ‘Japanese cool.’ Later, he writes, these influences enriched his understanding of inaccurate, yet pervasive, Orientalist visions of Asia. His volume revisits these visions in the context of comparative racialization and the Orientalist imaginary to dispel and dismantle essentializing views of Japan, China, India, and Korea. His titular modifier is more than a timely call to ‘diss’ paternalistic and reductive stereotyping; it further argues for the necessity of ‘disorientation.’ Rather than connoting ‘a lost sense of direction,’ as ‘disorientation’ often does, here the term takes on a sense of looking to the stars anew to chart fresh courses, signaling the importance of Darko Suvin’s notion of “cognitive estrangement” to the effort (and to sf studies at large). Moving beyond Western-centric (often white) ways of envisioning the world can be disorienting, but productively so; Lavender highlights the revolutionary aspects of speculative fiction and hopes it “knocks our planet from its regular spin,” leading to a more inclusive orbit (10).

This volume therefore fits into the body of work on race, globalization, and decolonization that has been growing in sf studies for the past decade. Representative examples of Anglophone scholarship looking to Asia including a 2008 special issue of *MELUS*, a 2013 special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* on Asian sf, and one from 2016 on Indian sf. There have also been a number of edited collections, epitomized by *Robot Ghost and Wired Dreams* (2007) and *Techno-Orientalism, Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media* (2015). *Dis-Orienting Planets* adds vitally to the

conversation already in progress, following Lavender's *Race in American Science Fiction* (2011) and *Black and Brown Planets: The Politics of Race in Science Fiction* (2014). It acknowledges the niches to which Asia and Asians are often relegated, complicating and expanding beyond them to provide an importantly polyvocal purview.

Lavender divides this volume into three sections: "First Encounters" (four chapters), "Fear of a Yellow Planet" (eight chapters), and "Dis-Orienting Planets" (five chapters), centered respectively on the frisson of politics and race, the intersection of 'Yellow Peril' tropes and techno-Orientalism, and reconsidering inclusivity through fandom and cross-species kinship.

"First Encounters" begins with Veronica Hollinger's "Estrangements of Science Fiction," which follows up a special issue of *Science Fiction Studies* (2013) on Chinese sf that Hollinger co-edited. This essay suggests five ways that Chinese sf approaches the genre differently than Anglo-American sf and lauds it as "the language of globalization," quoting *The Guardian's* Damien Walter. This opening sets the stage for the rest of the volume, reminding the reader that comparisons are only valuable so far; Chinese sf is a different sort of sf, not a reductive, hybridized, or misshapen beast. Hollinger's essay is of great interest for its content as well as its publication history: at the end of the essay the reader learns that the piece was originally published in Chinese translation in 2015, practicing its own message of contesting long-held notions of center and periphery. In the second essay, also previously published, Takayuki Tatsumi investigates two issues too rarely discussed in sf studies and in general: the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Japan and black humor, calling upon works from both the United States and Japan. Highlighted texts include Brian Aldiss's controversial "Another Little Boy" (1966); Yasutaka Tsutsui's "Everyone Other Than Japan Sinks" (1973); and Karen Tei Yamashita's "Siamese Twins and Mongaloids" (1999). In such texts, black humor provides a wake-up call from amnesiac ideational saturation stemming from ongoing wars, normalized racism, and naturalized social taxonomies.

Next, Uppinder Mehan interweaves experiential commentary with his confrontation of ethnographic extrapolation in representations of India and Indians. Mehan contrasts the exoticizing gazes in Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light* (1967) and Arthur C. Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama* (1972), which appropriate, negate, and textually domesticate Indian cultural and scientific authenticity, with Ian McDonald's more appreciative yet still touristy *River of Gods* (2004) and *Cyberabad Days* (2009). Conversely, Anuradha Marwah's *Idol Love* (1999), Manjula Padmanabhan's *Escape* (2008), and Rimi Chatterjee's *Signal Red* (2005) avoid the schisms between technology, religion, and the mundane that the exemplar non-Indian authors often extrapolate into being. The last essay of this section, by Stephen Hong Sohn, asks what is specifically Korean about Korean American sf. The tension surrounding heteronormativity in Yoon-Ha Lee's "Wine" (2014) questions the biopowered impulses of military technogeometries, the navigation of land, plot, and characters through warfare. Sohn finds these military technogeometries sustain a specter of perpetual war that typifies the genre in Korea and reflects the reality of its history of invasions.

The volume's longest section, "Fear of a Yellow Planet," opens with two essays that acknowledge the nineteenth century's complex legacy. Amy J. Ransom probes into M. P. Shiel's Yellow Peril novels: *The Yellow Danger* (1898), *The Yellow Wave* (1905), and *The Dragon* (1913 (later *The Yellow Peril* (1929))). Known to exploit and exacerbate narratives of racial hierarchies and the supposedly invasive threat of Asia

to the West, Shiel's works also contradictorily reject narratives of white supremacy. This ideological tug of war, Ransom argues, arose from a polarized cultural schema, which in turn led to the West Indian author's own disjunctive sense of identity. Timothy J. Yamamura ponders narratives of domestic and intergalactic invasion, concentrating on how nineteenth-century diplomat and astronomer Percival Lowell's ethnographic writings on Japan and scientific theories about Mars together serve to illuminate the multifaceted issue of "aliens" and alienation, in both cases mirroring back the image of the perceiver. Yamamura astutely finds that Lowell superimposes his impressions of Japan onto Mars, locating utopian possibilities such as alternatives to both capitalist modernity and cultural and racial superiority.

Moving from fantasies of the stars to those closer to home, Stephanie Li, Malisa Kurtz, and Haerin Shin investigate corporeal applications of techno-Orientalism. Li considers sexual fetishization / wishful youth vampirism in Gary Shteyngart's *Super Sad True Love Story* (2010) while Kurtz looks to the reification of biopolitical valuations in Linda Nagata's *The Bohr Maker* (1995) and Larissa Lai's *Salt Fish Girl* (2002). Shin explores the place where desire and commodification meet, looking to the evacuating yet eroticizing simulacrum of exoticized, racialized bodies in the 2013 film *Cloud Atlas*, based on David Mitchell's 2004 novel, and *Robotskins*, a 2007 Philips TV commercial.

For Baryon Tensor Posadas, biopolitics and techno-Orientalism also come together in colonial discourse, which continues to limit imagined futurity in both Japan Studies and Japanese cyberpunk. However, humor, specifically satire, provides means to subvert these concretizations. To illustrate, Posadas utilizes Gorō Masaki's *Venus City* (1992). Likewise reflecting cultures against one another, Bradford Lyau strives to locate two of Cixin Liu's Three Body trilogy novels within a global purview, placing it within Chinese and alongside Western frameworks, particularly Voltaire's philosophy. The final selection in "Fear of a Yellow Planet" returns the reader to the section's strongly thematic fold: Jeshua Enriquez shows how capitalism-driven internalized oppression intensifies the production of model citizens as well as racial commodification in Chang-rae Lee's *On Such a Full Sea* (2014).

Having built upon the theoretical firmament of the first two sections, the final and strongest section, "Dis-Orienting Planets," stretches more expansively, introducing paths less well-trodden in studies of Asian sf and sf more generally. It begins with two essays on the power of fandom, looking at the way fans often generatively combine cultural and political activism. Robin Anne Reid engages with how fans reacted to M. Night Shyamalan's 2008 filmic adaptation of the popular anime *The Last Airbender*, particularly the casting of white actors to play hitherto non-white characters. Aligning the work of activist fandom such as participating in LiveJournal communities, postcard campaigns, and other productively disruptive engagements with critical race scholarship, Reid calls for a destratifying recognition of fans' and scholars' common work. Tied companionably to this campaign for diversity in popular media is Cait Coker's "The Mako Mori Fan Club." Coker considers how Guillermo del Toro's 2013 film *Pacific Rim* serves as a mouthpiece for non-mainstream conceptions of personal and interpersonal diversity. Fans celebrate the film's Asian female protagonist in particular, seeing in her a hero for a new, more inclusive age. Suparno Banerjee shifts the focus to India and the implications of speculative visions of heroism for its emerging geopolitical realities. He writes that the future war motif in Indian sf has changed from "an anti-colonial initiative" to disillusioned extrapolation, contrasting the British writer Humphrey Hawksley's *Dragon Fire* (2000) with the Indian author Ruchir Joshi's *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh* (2001).

The final two essays of the volume move yet further into the periphery. Graham Murphy explores how the (acknowledged) impact of Edward O. Wilson's conception of biophilia, a deep-rooted affiliative kinship with the natural world, plays out in Vandana Singh's "Entanglement" (2014) and "Are You Sannata 3159?" (2010). Murphy argues the latter magnifies the dystopian costs of anti-biophilia and disentanglement, as human and non-human animals alike are consumed by voracious urban centers and an insatiable economic sprawl. Pressing the entanglement clause forward, Joan Gordon's "Intersubjectivity and Cultural Exchange in Kij Johnson's Novels of Japan" steadies readings of Johnson's fantastic epistolary novels *The Fox Woman* (2000) and *Fudoki* (2003) on Gordon's own theory of the amborg gaze: a way of seeing that collapses the disjuncture between subject and object in human / non-human animal relations, and even "between humans of different cultures" (244). The amborg gaze, Gordon explains, promotes hybridity born of affinity and difference by relying on intersubjective, interactive seeing rather than hierarchical looking. In this way, Gordon's essay completes the circuit begun by Hollinger, in the work of translation between the familiar and the exotic, the personal and inauthentic, disrupting assumed norms and speculating upon a respectful juncture point.

On the whole, *Dis-Orienting Planets* fulfills the promise it sets out to achieve, both "dissing" and "disorienting" the pernicious cognitive monster into which Orientalism has multiplied. An appreciable range of contributor and authorial voices emerge in its pages. Moreover, the collection will be of use and of interest to scholars at a range of levels. One minor quibble with the volume is that a few chapters, such as Lyau's, felt out of step with the surrounding conversation, causing me to pause and speculate on their location in the collection. Perhaps those imbalances were intentional, though, meant to press the reader to think about their roles as consumer and producer of meaning. At any rate, each valuable on their own, taken together these essays strengthen the long held claim that the personal is political. Likewise, as several of the contributors suggest, although the issues at hand are girded in sf, widely focused literary and cultural studies scholars would do well to consider them – the walls between genre and culture being, after all, permeable.

Finally, while I might normally hesitate to comment in a book review on matters possibly beyond the editor's control, given the overtly personal aspect of the editor's introduction, a number of contributors' essays, and the subject matter at hand, I feel I may as well join in. As I worked on this review, colleagues passing through my office in southern Japan spontaneously commented on the cover of *Dis-Orienting Planets* – its spectrum of purple hues, unexpected font, and cartoonish image. Then they would often pause for a closer look. Most seemed unsure of how to reconcile their first unsteady impressions with their intrigued second takes; its aesthetics unsettled their expectations. I assured them that if they read on, so too would the contents. In a good way.

*Biography:* Katherine E. Bishop, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Literature at Miyazaki International College in Japan. Her research interests center on ecology, aesthetics, and empire. Recent publications have appeared in *Green Letters: Studies in Ecocriticism* and the *Polish Journal for American Studies*. She is co-editing a forthcoming volume of essays entitled *Plants in Science Fiction: Speculative Vegetation*.



Call for Papers: *Fafnir* 2/2019  
Special edition of *Fafnir* on Speculative Climate Fiction

*Guest editor: Dr. Juha Raipola, Tampere University*

*Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research* invites authors to submit papers for a special edition on speculative climate fiction.

Over the last decade, interest in global anthropogenic climate change as a topic of fiction has grown consistently. In conjunction with increasing societal concern about the impact of global environmental change, a growing number of imaginative visions of climate futures have begun to appear in fiction. Now commonly discussed under the broad rubric of climate fiction, or cli-fi, these fictional accounts of global climate change have typically been speculative in their basic orientation. This means that the emergent narratives of climate fiction can often be fruitfully analysed as part of, or in connection with, a longer tradition of science fictional, weird, fantastic, utopian, dystopian, and apocalyptic visions of ecological changes on the planetary scale.

For this edition of *Fafnir*, we solicit papers on the topic of speculative climate fiction. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Climate fiction as a genre, and its relationship to science fiction and fantasy
- Dystopian futures and climate trauma
- Climate utopias
- Speculative visions of post-fossil economy
- Nonhuman viewpoints in speculative climate fiction
- Altered geographies
- Terraforming and geoengineering as tropes of climate fiction
- Resilience and social and environmental justice in speculative climate fiction

*Fafnir – Nordic Journal of Science Fiction and Fantasy Research* is a peer-reviewed academic journal published in electronic format twice a year. *Fafnir* has been published by the Finnish Society for Science Fiction and Fantasy Research (FINFAR) since

---

2013. *Fafnir* publishes various texts ranging from peer-reviewed research articles to short overviews and book reviews in the field of science-fiction and fantasy research.

The submissions must be original works written in English, Finnish, or Scandinavian languages. Manuscripts for research articles should be approximately 40,000 characters in length. The journal uses the most recent edition of the MLA Style Manual (MLA 8). The manuscripts for research articles will be peer reviewed. Please note that as *Fafnir* is designed to be of interest to readers with varying backgrounds, essays and other texts should be as accessibly written as possible. Also, if English is not your first language, please have your article proofread by an English-language editor. Please pay attention to our journal's submission guidelines, which are available at <http://journal.finfar.org/for-authors/submission-guidelines/>

In addition to research articles, *Fafnir* welcomes text proposals for essays, interviews, overviews, and book reviews on any subject suitable for the journal.

Please send your electronic submission (saved as RTF-file) to the following address: [submissions@finfar.org](mailto:submissions@finfar.org). You should get a reply indicating that we have received your submission within a few days. If not, or if you need further information, please contact the editors at [submissions@finfar.org](mailto:submissions@finfar.org). More detailed information about our journal is available at our webpage: [journal.finfar.org](http://journal.finfar.org).

Offers to review recent academic books can be sent to [reviews@finfar.org](mailto:reviews@finfar.org). We also post lists of available books on the IAFA listserv.

The deadline for submissions to this special issue is 15 August 2019. For other submissions (essays, overviews), contact the editors at [submissions@finfar.org](mailto:submissions@finfar.org). For book reviews, contact the reviews editor at [reviews@finfar.org](mailto:reviews@finfar.org).

This edition is scheduled to be published in the end of 2019.