

## Abstracts

- 442 **Alcena Madeline Davis Rogan**, Alien Sex Acts in Feminist Science Fiction: Heuristic Models for Thinking a Feminist Future of Desire

Even at their most bizarre, representations of alien sex are bound to reinscribe the terms of human desire. Thus there can be no representation of an alien sex act that is radically alien. However, for certain writers, this representational impasse provides an occasion for thinking through the limits of fictional and feminist representation. Through a reading of Monique Wittig's *Les Guérillères*, Samuel Delany's *Trouble on Triton* and *Stars in My Pocket like Grains of Sand*, and Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, I explore how alien sex is represented not only or even primarily in literal terms but also as an act that takes place in a fictional discursive milieu that critiques contemporary human sexual relations. I also describe how these writers' creative imaginings of alien sex function as a dialectical corollary to their theoretical investigations into the limits of representation. (AMDR)

- 457 **Eric S. Rabkin**, Science Fiction and the Future of Criticism

Science fiction, ranging from films to industrial design to world's fairs, is a cultural system no more confined to literature than love is to love letters. From its self-recognition in 1926, science fiction has involved commercial and social realities most obviously visible in fandom and the hundreds of annual science fiction conventions. This system includes many types of consumers and producers, even collaboratively self-correcting volunteer bibliographers. Collectively, science fiction fandom, the first organized fandom, has created vast informational resources that allow not only reference but also statistical inquiry. The Genre Evolution Project (<http://www.umich.edu/~genreevo/>) shows that these social structures and resources potentiate, in an age of widespread computer networking, the transformation of criticism from acts of isolated scholars working with narrowly defined subjects to collaborative projects drawing on human and informational resources across disciplinary boundaries. Science fiction points to a future in which criticism will be more systematic, collaborative, and quantitative. (ESR)

- 474 **Jane Donawerth**, Body Parts: Twentieth-Century Science Fiction Short Stories by Women

This essay is a feminist, historical exploration of body parts in short science fiction stories by women. In early-twentieth-century stories about prostheses, blood transfusion, and radioactive experiments, Clare Winger Harris, Kathleen Ludwick, and Judith Merril use body parts to explore fears of damage to masculine identity by war, of alienation of men from women, and of racial pollution. In stories from the last quarter of the twentieth century, the South American author Angélica Gorodischer depicts a housewife's escape from oppressive domestic technology through time travel in which she murders male leaders, while Eileen Gunn offers a critique of bioengineering and sociobiology, satirizing fears of women in modern business

and of erasure of identity in global corporate structures. An end-of-the-century fiction by the African American Akua Lezli Hope imagines a black woman altered through cosmetic surgery to become a tenor sax and critiques technologies that transform women's bodies into cultural signifiers of social function and class. (JD)

- 482 **N. Katherine Hayles and Nicholas Gessler**, The Slipstream of Mixed Reality: Unstable Ontologies and Semiotic Markers in *The Thirteenth Floor*, *Dark City*, and *Mulholland Drive*

Whereas first-generation theorists of virtual reality tended to regard simulated worlds as separate from real life, current trends in miniaturization, implants, wearable computers, and embedded sensors have shifted the emphasis to "mixed realities" mingling computationally intensive simulations with input from the real world. Contemporary films and novels have mirrored this trend, creating a blend of simulations mixed with everyday reality that Bruce Sterling has called "slipstream fiction." To explore this phenomenon, we analyze three films that mix simulation with reality: *The Thirteenth Floor*, *Dark City*, and *Mulholland Drive*. These films present themselves initially as murder mysteries, but this pose quickly gives way to even more serious concerns, about the ontological status of the represented worlds. The narrative configurations suggest that when death is no longer the plots' logical end point, storytelling techniques undergo significant transformation, subverting usual assumptions about chronology, subjectivity, and topology and requiring new interpretive techniques. (NKH and NG)

- 500 **Samuel R. Delany**, Joanna Russ and D. W. Griffith

This essay begins by asserting the importance of Joanna Russ as an American writer of the second half of the twentieth century. Her feminist concerns and her stylistic bravura are examined, as are the ways in which she deals with the socioeconomic construction of power in order to transcend any uncritical biological essentialism. The second half of the essay considers the context of two phrases that occur in D. W. Griffith's film *Intolerance* and also in Russ's writing: "hill girl" and "the female man" (*The Female Man* is the title of one of Russ's novels). The possibility that Griffith's film is Russ's textual source for these phrases is considered. (SRD)