



The WSFA Journal

November/December 2011

Season's Readings



Oxford Dodos (Minutes, First Friday, 7 October 2011)

By Steve Smith

Order: Meeting called to order by VP Sam Scheiner at 21:16

Officers:

President:

VP:

Secretary:

Treasurer: <money> (In email, Steve sent the following: As soon as I get the numbers sorted out, I will transfer some of the funds from PayPal to the other accounts to cover Capclave memberships and book sales. There seems to have been a problem (mea culpa!) with the invoice for cover design. This will go out Monday or Tuesday.)

Trustees: untrustworthy

Committees

Entertivities: Bill Lawhorn will grace us with his wit throughout the meeting.

Journal: none

WSFA Press: SF Revu is giving us free advertising.

Website: Up. There was an update that got stressful for a bit. The Webmasters will be changing out the entire e-commerce site in November.

Facebook: We're up to 126 followers. We don't have the new logo up yet.

Bill Lawhorn had a snit. (Not, as promised, wit. Snit)

Meetup: We have 98 followers

CAPCLAVE

Capclave Present: We need volunteers!

The program is online.

Bill Lawhorn has a very few dodo calendars

The hotel is sold out Friday; rooms are still available for Saturday and Sunday.

Capclave Future: We'll just see how it goes

Capclave Far Future: George R. R. Martin has a new e-mail address. This is resulting in much hilarity.

Committee to really discuss science fiction: Will discuss Capclave

Awards: None

Business

Old Business: None

New business: None

New members: (get names from sign in sheet)

Announcements

Kathi Overton tells us that the theme of the Bungalow's Halloween affair is "The Tell-Tale Heart". WSFA is invited; costumes are encouraged but not necessary.

Candy Madigan is vending at Calvert.

Bill Lawhorn introduced the "Oxford Dodo" (aka Mike Walsh)

Mike Walsh (the non-dodo one) has books by Carrie Vaughn.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 2149.

Changing Course

By Alisha Brown



Jenna looked out the door nervously and clutched Isabel to her. The day was as bright and friendly as possible this time of year and most of the people at the fall harvest festival were happy. Everyone, that is, except the people gathered here in the church. This was the annual Widow Hunt, or at least that is what it was jokingly called. It was officially sanctioned as a prayer for deceased husbands and wives, but everyone knew that this was also the place to find a new spouse. That was why Jenna was here. Her solid Jackson had been crushed under a landslide in the spring. Jenna had been nearing the time of Isabel's birth and the shock had nearly sent her into early labor. The preacher and his wife had taken her in, but she couldn't stay with them forever. She wasn't the only one looking either. There was Kenneth Ringer. His wife had died of a fever he said, but others whispered that he had beaten her to death over the

nine years they were married. And his boys were mean. She hunched down further in the pew and hoped to escape his notice.

There was Old Abel Carson, but he came every year and it had become the town joke. He would loudly proclaim each time that he hadn't found what he was looking for, but maybe next year the widows would be prettier. Elsa Jain was here too. This was her fourth time in the last decade. Maybe she had bad luck choosing husbands, but some joked that it was her cooking that did 'em in. Jenna had hoped that Ted Mclain would come, but he had been devoted to his wife Michele and she couldn't blame him. Mrs. Mclain had been a real nice lady and Jenna would miss her at the sewing circles. But Ted didn't have any little ones, so he didn't need to find a new wife anytime soon.

Since Ted hadn't shown, it left Kenneth with a choice of her or Elsa. Elsa could have him. Her cooking would be the toast of the town if it could off him too. She stood and settled Isabel on her hip. Holding her head high and her skirts in the other hand, she swept grandly down the aisle and out the door. Just as she was coming, she ran into a man.

"Pardon," he said and stepped past her into the church.

The brief glimpse she had told her that he was a stranger, maybe from the mountains. They sometimes came down for the fall festival, but usually they just went to the store and headed back out of town again. She was about to go back into the church to find out when she felt a tug on her skirts.

Wide brown eyes looked up at her from above the freckled nose of a small boy. He tugged on her skirts again and held something up for her to look at. It was a couple of wooden rings and a rope.

"What's this?"

"Puzzle. Can ye help?" he said.

She glanced through the church door, but the stranger was already talking to Elsa. Well, he would either like her or he wouldn't.

"Let's see what we can do about ye puzzle," she said to the boy.

"Come on ova' here and sit down by me."

She spread her skirts around her and settled Isabel on them with her back to Jenna. Isabel had just learned to sit up and would tumble over backwards at the slightest breeze.

"Now what's ye name?"

"Charlie."

"Hmmm. That's a nice name. Now let's see this puzzle."

He crouched down, handed it over and rested his chin on his

patched knees.

"Ye gotta take the ring off, but I can't figure it out."

"This is a really nice puzzle. Ye Da make it for ye?"

"Yeah. Ma says he's real handy."

Ma says... Well maybe the stranger wasn't looking for a new wife.

"All right, well, now I see. It's real clever, but I think ye can figure it out. I'll help ye though, if ye want."

"Yeah please."

He was a polite young man. His ma must be teaching him proper manners. After they worked out the puzzle, he sat and entertained Isabel with grass tufts. He would tickle her chin and she would snatch at the grass and giggle. It made Jenna smile, but it was bittersweet. She wished Isabel had a big brother like this to keep her safe. The stranger was still inside the church, so it must be going well for Elsa. She was smiling at Isabel and Charlie, when a step beside her made her look up.

"Now this is a pretty picture." It was the stranger who had gone into the church. "Who's ye new friend Charlie?"

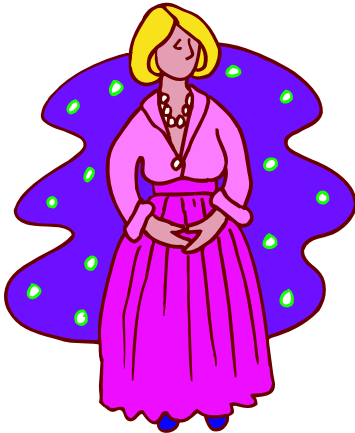
"Oh, sorry Da. I forgot to ask." The boy looked so dejected that Jenna laughed.

"I'm Mrs. Jenna Besser and this is little Isabel."

"Roger Trent."

They smiled at each other for a moment and he took a seat by Charlie.

"Now forgive me if I'm being forward Mrs. Besser, but did I see ye coming out of the church just a while ago?"



“Yes, I lost my Jackson last spring.”

“I’m sorry to hear that. It’s the same with my Kerry. A good woman.”

“She must have been to have raised such a polite young man,” she said and ruffled Charlie’s hair.

“I like her Da. She solved my puzzle. Can she be our new Ma?”

“Charlie, now ye know we talked about this. It’s grown up stuff. I want ye to go see if there are any catapilla’s in that tree ova’there and let us talk.”

“All right Da.”

Jenna watched him walk reluctantly away.

“There is nothing like the honesty of children to cut to the truth.”

Roger said, twisting a few strands of grass from the ground. “My boys need a Ma.”

“And my Isabel needs a Da,” she said, blushed and looked down. Somehow when she had thought about finding a new husband, it had seemed a lot less awkward. She went on reluctantly, “Boys? How many?”

“I have an older boy, Jacob, back at the homestead. He’s almost fourteen.”

They sat in silence for a time. Jenna had a million questions she wanted to ask, but the truth was that none of them mattered. She already knew that she would marry this man if he asked her. It was a necessity and she was grateful to the Lord for sending her someone other than Kenneth.

“I have my own place. It’s not an easy life, but I keep my family fed. Would you come and be a Ma to my boys? I’ll give your Isabel the best life I can.”

“Yes,” she said and blushed. This was not like Jackson’s proposal. It was so practical and it embarrassed her that her life had come to this, but that was what the Widow Hunt was all about.



They were married the next morning and left town immediately after, heading up the holler towards Jasper ridge. His place, he said was high up and around the other side of Egret peak. Charlie led a mountain pony with Jenna’s bundle loaded on top while the adults took turns carrying Isabel in a sling. It made Jenna smile to see Isabel asleep on Roger’s shoulder and reminded her of Jackson and how he might have cared for Isabel. It took them three days of walking to get to Roger’s homestead.

Jacob must have been on the lookout for them because he came running down the valley when they got close. He was a nice looking boy too. Tall and lean like his father. Charlie must favor his mother. After Jacob kissed her cheek, he and Roger had a whispered conference out of her hearing. He ran off back up the valley and they trudged after.

Roger’s house was not what she expected. It was little more than a shack and she couldn’t help being disappointed. But then, she was tired from the journey and maybe things would look better after a night’s sleep.

“Now you come here and rest in the shade,” Roger said and guided her to a rough hewn bench under the shade of a leafy tree. “Jacob’s bringing you some cold water.”

When she’d had a long drink and rested a bit, he cleared his throat.

“I wasn’t honest with you,” he said and laid his hands on his knees. “I wasn’t honest with you about a lot of things, but the most important is that my wife is...”

“Dying.” The croak of a whisper cut through the afternoon like a knife. A woman, wrapped in a blanket had staggered from the hut on the arms of her two sons.

Jenna felt many things in those moments, but foremost was sorrow for the boys. They had eyes only for their mother and with such longing that it brought tears to Jenna’s eyes.

“You musn’t blame Roger. I made him do it as a last request for a dying woman,” she said as she settled next to Jenna and took her hand. “I wanted to meet the woman who would take care of my Roger and teach my boys to be caring men. Is this your girl? May I hold her? To feel such a soft precious cheek against my withering one would be a blessing.”

Jenna settled Isabel into the woman’s lap, but held on in case Isabel decided that she was going to practice wiggling.

“Now you boys clear off and let us talk. We have a lot to say.”

Kerry died two days later and Jenna cried as much as if she had known her all her life. After they buried Kerry, Jenna and Roger said their vows again with their children and God as witnesses. They pushed food around on the rough wooden plates from the hut while the boys sniffled and Isabel napped on a blanket.

Jacob broke the silence finally.

“Can we go now Dad?”

“Soon.”

“Go? Go where?” asked Jenna.

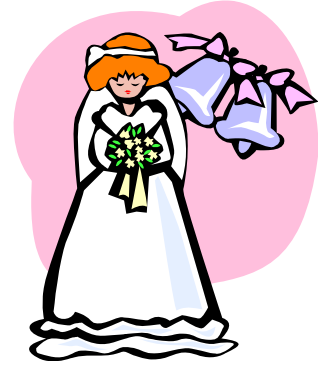
“I said when we first arrived that I hadn’t been honest with you about many things. I’d like to start. Can I show you something?”

She nodded, but her heart was heavy. So far the first few week of her second marriage had had more trials than her whole first marriage. Now what did she have to face? She gathered the stirring Isabel and followed Roger farther up the valley.

Finally he stopped and pointed. There, behind a thick stand of trees was something grey or silvered.

“You see, we aren’t really from around here. We only stopped here when Kerry got so sick. She wanted her final resting place to be like her birth place. She was like you once and grew to love our life, like I hope you will. This is called a shuttle and it is going to take us up to my Star Cruiser, the Pegasus.” He pushed a series of buttons and a door opened up.

“What is a Star Cruiser?” Jenna said and stepped through the door into her new life.

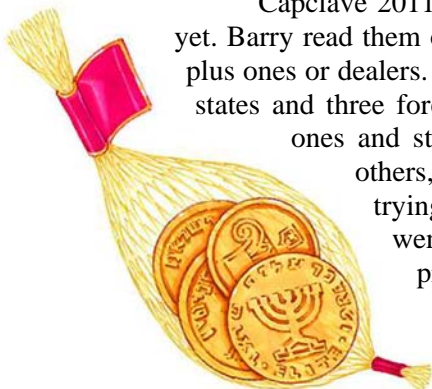


I’ll Just Have My Heart Attack Now!

WSFA Meeting 10/21/11: President Barry called the meeting to order at 21:22 hours with an “Okay.” Someone knocked, causing an upset. It turned out to be John, but it upset the animals. Sam Lubell asked if anyone had sent the WSFA minutes from the last meeting. Steve Smith had and gave Sam L. the printed version. Kitten talk interrupted.

President Barry said there was a Capclave that went pretty well. Vice not there. Sam L said he had a new journal; the last one was sent to webmasters, but is not yet up. He will send a reminder. Steve for treasurer said we had a little money left. Not in Trump territory, said Brian. Is that the Roger Zealzy trumps? Fighting like cats and dogs. Candy offered to beat her cat up. Trustees had nothing to report. No one saw the play *Fahrenheit 451*. Entertivities: Jimmy Rogers said tomorrow night is the Zombie walk. People bring signs protesting for Zombie rights. This issue of the *WSFA Journal* has material from club members, not just Malta. WSFA Press not here, Cathy said books are selling briskly; the Valente novella was mentioned on Jonathan Strahan’s podcast. Webmasters not here. Facebook is up and running and people are posting said Cathy. John said our Meetup group had 97 people. We are gaining more than we lose. Candy said, “If everyone shows up I don’t know where we will put them.” Bob said the neighbours used to complain when we sang God Save the Queen, but we haven’t done that for decades. There were two Meetup dinner events at Capclave, reported John. “Six of us went off to the Thai Jasmine Bistro; eight of us went out to the Sushi Chalet, that was a bit of a hike. We tried to recruit the driver into WSFA.”

Capclave 2011. Cathy said we had a Capclave. There was no final report on numbers yet. Barry read them out. Total registrations 401. 268 registered who were not participants or plus ones or dealers. 311 paid. Participants 76. 108 non-local people (outside MD or VA), 12 states and three foreign country (UK, Canada, Australia). 90 people had discounted (plus ones and student). Cathy asked him to break out the day memberships from the others, the draw for Saturday only. For past couple of years we have been trying to do more outreach to military and students, so curious as to how it went down. Students we’ve been more aggressive about. Most people were pretty happy with the convention. Terry Pratchett was special guest so we



are grateful to Emily Whitten and Terry and his entourage. We did something different with the interview, it was the just the two GoHs who talked to each other. Questions were submitted. We don't have the final bill from the hotel, so don't have a sense of where we are, tend to be +/- \$. We won't know till we get the final bill. Based on the numbers, I don't think we're too far off. Hotels operate on a cost plus basis. "So I'll just have my heart attack now. Send in your receipts."

Sam L. said people should send to the WSFA list any reactions to restaurants. Capclave Present is waiting to see what hotel doing. Cathy said based on gripe session might want to tweak things. <See paper version for specifics> Walsh for Capclave Future said less than George. Two year contract so up in the air for 2013; there are issues to be considered. He would like to hear impressions about how things worked. Pluses or minuses. George RR Martin will probably draw more people. Guests looking at fun and games.

For Committee to Talk SF, Jimmy Rogers said he had talked to Bill, will be a change. I know change received well by organizations. We'll take a break from *Asimov's*. I'm willing to take over. We can switch to stories in audio format. Several podcasts mentioned in this *Journal*. Some do reprints and some original. Talk to him. He was planning to list audio stories and have five or six to discuss. Prez suggested a few weeks before email to the list with links. Elisha suggested doing backlist. He doesn't get *Asimov's* so this would start next month. He could do a tutorial about how to do it. And they are 99% free. Elisha said some of them are reprints of print stories, so could do those and have those who don't want to listen could read them. Jimmy said some were first printed in the 80s so might be hard to find. Change is good.

The literary awards committee announced that Carrie Vaughn was the winner. We don't announce the order of the other stories. We never ranked them. Only the finalists are named, the others are anonymous. Carolyn said she will never tell. "Mostly because I forgot them." Jimmy asked about positions on the committee for next year. Bob said to see him in a few months. Three people will be rotated off.

Old business. Sam L. brought back the T-shirt list. Gold nugget color.

New business. Cathy said, normally Fo' Paws has a table in the dealer's room. But because Scott had an accident coming back from Bouchercon they could not come. The accident said \$ worth of damage said Mike Walsh. Cathy said she will find out if they had a Capclave shirt already designed. She'll post on the email list. Brian suggested a card. He's now in charge.

John said during Capclave, while trying to get our driver into the WSFA fold, he looked for a flyer. Brian said we didn't have them at Capclave. Make a note that next year we should bring WSFA flyers. Steve said the flyer is up on our website. Sam L. said he will update the flyer with the new logo.

First meetings: Dana Biers lives in Ellicott City. Found out about us from Meetup. Mostly a TV fan. If it is a genre show in the last few years, probably easier to tell you what she is not a fan of. She likes Bujold, Anita Blake, and urban fantasy.

Rick Hanson lives between Beltsville and Silver Spring. Likes Vernor Vinge, Peter Hamilton, and SF that makes your head hurt. Found us through Meetup. He had been trying to get here for six months but busy. Has cats to give away. Prez suggested MetroFerrel to get them fixed.

Second meeting: Steve Aimes. First meeting was 20 years ago and none of us has aged a day. I know people here and been meaning to come for eons. I made it to Capclave and realized Third Friday, I had nothing to do. Lost something at the con. Like hard sf, tend to go for things that are well written. Elisha Brown made it to Capclave, lots of fun. Told all my friends I saw Terry Pratchett and now they all hate me. Reads all over the place.

Announcements: Baltimore doing zombie race and selling tickets. Run for your life. Mike said Old Earth books will publish Pavanne by Keith Roberts in time for Philcon. Erica did the proofreading and said it rocks. Spiffy books. George said Arlington Central Library having its book sale. State Department is having its sale this weekend. Meeting unanimously adjourned 22:14.

Attendance: Kenneth Adams, Carolyn Frank, Erica and Lydia Ginter, Cathy Green, Brian Lewis, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy and John Madigan, Barry Newton, Shirl Phelps, Evan Phillips, Jimmy Rogers, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Laura Somerville, Bill Squire, Mike Taylor, Michael Wash,

Eva Whitley, Thomas Woldering, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Steve Aines, Rick Hansen, Alisha Brown, and Dana Biers.

Alien Infertility in Science Fiction

Part III

By Victor Grech, Consultant Pediatrician (Cardiology) and Associate Professor of Pediatrics, University of Malta; Clare Thake-Vassallo, Senior Lecturer, Translation and Interpreting Studies, University of Malta; and Ivan Callus, Associate Professor and Head, English Language Dept., University of Malta.

(See previous issues for parts I and II)

Conversely humans may impose infertility through contraception on alien species, and in *The Gripping Hand* (1993),¹ which is set in the *Motie* universe, humanity deliberately develops an intestinal fluke that permanently turns Moties into males, allowing Moties to control their population, as in their natural state, Moties are sequential hermaphrodites, changing from male to female, and must become regularly pregnant or die, and hence would overrun the cosmos if allowed out of their solar system. Humanity also similarly threatens the sentient and elephant-like 'Ganae' in Van Vogt's *Resurrection* (1948) with enforced infertility if the Ganae do not themselves limit their fertility.²



Interestingly, sex on Gene Brewer's planet in *K-Pax* (1995) is portrayed as painful, odorous and nauseating, and the sexual act is therefore solely procreative and not pleasurable.³ Naturally, overpopulation is not an issue on K-Pax.

Infertility has also been associated with ageing species, as a species' age is allegorically related to senescence, with all of the vicissitudes associated with extreme maturity, including infertility. Authors who portray such scenarios deliberately forget that such advanced races would be in possession of sophisticated reproductive aids and would surely be able to overcome such obstacles. In Stone's *Women with Wings* (1930), set in thirtieth century Earth, ninety-five percent of women entering childbirth suddenly start to die. The solutions proposed include racial sterilisation, creating humans in laboratories and stealing women from other planets. A solution is found by humanity's ability to procreate with Venusians (whose males are conveniently becoming sterile), resulting in health hybrids.⁴ Other examples include the 'Pei'an' race in Zelazny's *Isle of the Dead* (1969),⁵ and the 'Highbreed' race in the cartoon series *Ben Ten* episode *War of the Worlds: Part 2* (2009).⁶ Other famous aging species who are portrayed as having lost vitality and interest in life are the Martians in Wells's *The War*

¹ Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle *The Gripping Hand* (New York: Pocket Books, 1993).

² A. E. van Vogt, 'Resurrection', *Astounding Science Fiction*, August 1948.

³ Gene Brewer, *K-Pax* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1995).

⁴ Leslie F. Stone, 'Women with Wings', *Air Wonder Stories*, May 1930.

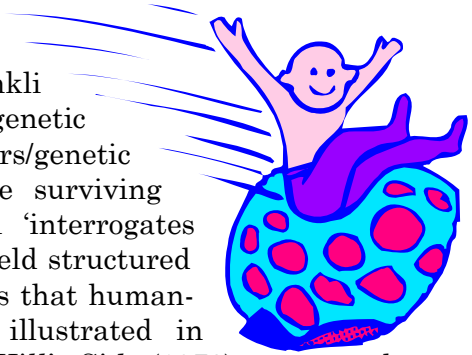
⁵ Roger Zelazny, *Isle of the Dead* (New York: Ace Books, 1969).

⁶ 'War of the Worlds: Part 2', Dwayne McDuffie, *Ben 10: Alien Force*, March 2009.

of the Worlds (1897),⁷ in Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* (1950),⁸ and in Simak's *Huddling Place* (1944).⁹

Alien individuals may decide to impose sterility on themselves, and in Bear's *Venging* (1975) an alien couple that is about to embark on a suicidal attack decide not to produce any more offspring,¹⁰ and in *The Light That Never Was* (1972) a humanoid race hounded by the majority of humans simply decide to stop having children and wait until their situation improves.¹¹ On a more profound note, in Hamilton's *The Naked God* (1999) a gestalt crystalline group mind evolved from an originally organic race decides not to produce any more new minds as having explored the entire universe, any progeny would only have a heritage and never any new discoveries.¹²

In Octavia Butler's *Dawn* (1988) the human race is shown at the brink of extinction after a nuclear war.¹³ The race is saved by a program of interbreeding with alien Oankli and thus redeemed humanity's transformation 'through genetic exchange with extra-terrestrial lovers/rescuers/destroyers/genetic engineers, who reform earth's habitats [...] and coerce surviving humans into intimate fusion with them'.¹⁴ This novel 'interrogates reproductive, linguistic, and nuclear politics in a mythic field structured by late twentieth-century race and gender'.¹⁵ The reality is that human-alien mating is well-nigh impossible, as graphically illustrated in Tiptree's *And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side* (1973) where sexual relations with aliens are depicted as deviant and fetishistic by both of the involved races.¹⁶



Aliens have also been reproductively challenged by warfare, and in Harrison's *Invasion: Earth* (1982), two tropes are combined in two alien species, ex-combatants, who are portrayed as radiation damaged, with a decline in birth rate and an increased mutation in offspring.¹⁷ Similarly, the *Doctor Who* television episode *The Leisure Hive* (1980) also portrays an alien race rendered sterile by a war.¹⁸ Platt's *Doctor Who: Cat's Cradle, Time's Crucible* (1992) explains the absence of children on the Time Lords' home planet through a curse that managed to kill all unborn children and rendered the entire planet sterile.¹⁹

Aliens have also referred to themselves as barren since they lack paranormal powers, unlike humanity in Clarke's *Childhood's End* (1953),²⁰ underscoring Jameson's contention that Utopia is 'not some conceptual nugget we can extract and store away, with

⁷ Herbert George Wells, *The War of the Worlds* (London: Heinemann, 1898).

⁸ Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles* (New York: Bantam, 1950).

⁹ Clifford D. Simak, 'Huddling Place', *Astounding Science Fiction*, July 1944.

¹⁰ Greg Bear, 'The Venging', *Galaxy*, June 1976.

¹¹ Lloyd Biggle Jr., *The Light that Never Was* (London: New English Library, 1972).

¹² Peter F. Hamilton, *The Naked God* (London: Macmillan London Ltd, 1999).

¹³ Octavia Butler, *Dawn* (New York: Popular Library 1988).

¹⁴ Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, p. 180.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ The apt Keatsian quotation of the story's title is from the last stanza of 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci', representing aliens as the intoxicating yet indifferent Belle Dame while humanity is compared to the poem's palely-loitering knight. James Tiptree Jr, 'And I Awoke and Found Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side', in *10,000 Light Years from Home* (New York: Ace, 1973).

¹⁷ Harry Harrison, *Invasion: Earth* (East Rutherford: Ace, 1982).

¹⁸ 'The Leisure Hive', dir by Lovett Bickford, *Doctor Who*, August 1980.

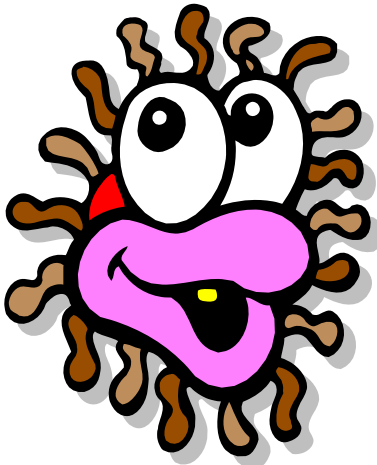
¹⁹ Marc Platt, *Cat's Cradle: Time's Crucible* (London: Doctor Who Books, 1992).

²⁰ Arthur C. Clarke, *Childhood's End* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1953).

a view towards using it as the building block of some future system' but rather, a negative critical principle.²¹

Fertility in alien species is not exclusively depicted as lacking and indeed, the commonest scenarios are those of alien hyperfecundity or desire for *lebensraum*, with threatened or actual invasion of Earth and/or of its human colonies.²² For example, frightening alien hyperfecundity is seen on Medea in Niven's *Flare Time* (1985),²³ and alien invasion is threatened famously by Martians,²⁴ Niven's Kzin,²⁵ Niven and Pournelle's Moties,²⁶ the incredible and physically unbeatable aliens in Simak's *Our Children's Children* (1974)²⁷ and innumerable others.

A freemartin is an infertile female mammal which has been masculinised and has non-functioning ovaries through the intrauterine exposure of male hormones from an accompanying male twin. This is the normal outcome of mixed-sex twins in all cattle species, and also occasionally occurs in other twin mammal pregnancies.²⁸ Alien freemartins are alluded to in Niven's *Footfall* (1985), females that have all of the requisite characteristics of females of the species but never come into heat during the breeding season.²⁹



The alien state may curtail population levels by deliberately removing knowledge of sex, and in *Star Trek* episode *The Apple* (1967), humanoid but alien denizens serve their State but have no knowledge of sex, and in return, never age or die,³⁰

Aliens have also had to submit to the immortality/infertility trope and Silverberg's *Downward to the Earth* (1969)³¹ refers frequently to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) with many of the themes experienced by Conrad's anti-hero (such as anti-colonialism and even a character named Kurtz).³² The novel portrays the alien inhabitants of a human ex-colony world who experience physical rebirth, and are alternately reborn as one or the other of the planet's two sentient races. This process somehow leads to few offspring being produced. Similarly, Sheckley's *The Sweeper of Loray* (1959) depicts an alien village where an endemic vegetable lengthens lifespans significantly but reduces the village's birth rate.³³

In Niven's *Motie* universe, the alien Moties must become pregnant regularly or die, and decision-maker Moties have a biological imperative not only to breed but also to protect

²¹ Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 175.

²² *Lebensraum* is German for 'living space', a Nazi concept popularised in Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1925).

²³ Larry Niven, 'Flare Time', in *Medea, Harlan's World*, ed. by Ellison.

²⁴ Wells, *The War of the Worlds*.

²⁵ Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*.

²⁶ Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, *The Mote In God's Eye* (New York: Pocket Books, 1976).

²⁷ Clifford D. Simak, *Our Children's Children* (New York: Putnam, 1974).

²⁸ F. R. Lillie, 'Theory of the Free Martin', *Science*, 43 (1916), 611.

²⁹ Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle, *Footfall* (New York: Del Rey, 1985).

³⁰ 'The Apple', dir. by Joseph Pevney, *Star Trek The Original Series*, October 1967.

³¹ Robert Silverberg, *Downward to the Earth* (New York: Signet, 1969).

³² Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Blackwood's Magazine, 1899).

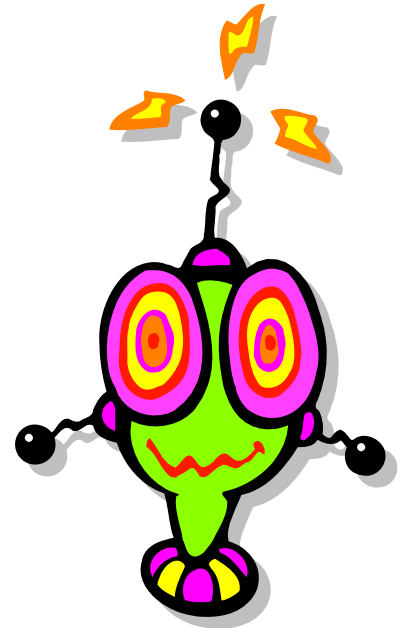
³³ Robert Sheckley, 'The Sweeper of Loray', *Galaxy*, April 1959.

their offspring and siblings. Decision makers who are old or have become sterile may be allowed to hold positions for the good of the race, including the position of ‘Keeper’, whose function it is to safeguard museums that server as repositories for technology so as to help the survivors rebuild civilisation as quickly as possible during the inevitable and endless cycles of advancement of civilisation and collapse.³⁴

The Draconian species in Brunner’s *Total Eclipse* (1974) experience radical changes in physical morphology, from an infant neuter stage, to an active male stage, to a short and fertile female stage and finally, to a sessile and sterile old age.³⁵ This type of change is known as peramorphosis, a cataclysmic change in which a species takes on form beyond adulthood.

In a cunning twist on a dangerous fertile female alien, in the film *Species III* (2004), a scientist creates a sterile male alien partner,³⁶ a well-known technique that has actually been utilised to curb insect populations as females who expend energy mating with sterile males do not produce offspring.³⁷

Interestingly, in the *Star Trek Voyager* episode *Prototype* (1996),³⁸ a group of sentient warrior robots are discovered. These had turned on their organic builders and destroyed them when they had attempted to shut the robots down as they were no longer needed for war. However, the builders had created a failsafe mechanism in order to prevent the robots from creating more such creatures. *Voyager*’s chief engineer is abducted, coerced to circumvent this limitation and successfully creates a new robot, but on animating it, realises the error of this course of action, and like Frankenstein, destroys her creation.³⁹



Discussion

Several tropes emerge from this reading of infertility in aliens within the SF genre. Clearly, ‘the pull toward strangeness invites the SF writer to investigate aspects of society, self, perception, and the physical universe that are difficult or impossible to represent through conventional realism’.⁴⁰ However, these stories still accede to the ‘cognitive utility of SF [...] based on the rigor of applying scientific laws; such worlds must be possible’, with the need for plausibility,⁴¹ originally inculcated through John W. Campbell’s paradigmatic editorship of *Astounding Science Fiction*, a golden age of SF, an era which ‘valorises a particular sort of writing: ‘Hard SF’, linear narratives, heroes solving problems or countering threats in a space-opera or technological-adventure idiom.’⁴²

Individual issues that arise from this reading include caution as to what we might encounter ‘out there’, an admonishment to exert vigilance and prudence in our exploration

³⁴ Niven, *The Mote In God’s Eye*.

³⁵ John Brunner, *Total Eclipse* (New York: Doubleday, 1974).

³⁶ *Species III*, dir. by Brad Turner (MGM, 2004).

³⁷ International Atomic Energy Agency, *The Sterile-Insect Technique and Its Field Applications* (Vienna: International Atomic Energy Agency, 1974).

³⁸ ‘Prototype’, dir. by Jonathon Frakes, *Star Trek Voyager*, January 1996.

³⁹ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein* (London: John Murray, 1818).

⁴⁰ Brian Attebery, *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction* (London, Routledge, 2002), p. 5.

⁴¹ Roger Luckhurst, ‘The Many Deaths of Science Fiction: A Polemic’, *Science Fiction Studies*, 21 (1994), 35-50, p. 39.

⁴² Adam Roberts, *The History of Science Fiction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 195.

of the unknown while quenching our drive to learn, fuelled, sometimes excessively by what Niven repeatedly refers to as our 'monkey curiosity'. Contrariwise, we should also be cautious as to how we pass on our hard-earned technology to individuals who may not be prepared to handle such boons, with terrible consequences. Furthermore, warfare may also be precipitated by infertility if this affects sufficient numbers of a particular population. In addition, hubristic overreaching of any type risks tragedy, such as unseemly striving for immortality.

This *tour de force* which comprises the intersection of infertility in aliens within SF is clearly representative of SF's escapist and overall optimistic outlook which is repeatedly reiterated, and comparable to a 'gnostic urge to be elsewhere: out of this time, out of this body, out of this chain of circumstance that we call life'.⁴³ Despite canonical fiction labelling SF as junk fiction, SF is hugely enjoyed by its readers and when read for fun, this means that 'we have read them, we are reading them, and we will continue to read them'.⁴⁴

Yet another trope is that as can be seen from the wide timespan of these stories, 'as history keeps reformulating the issues, writers keep reframing, filtering, and inverting the Utopian systems that embody them'.⁴⁵ The genre's readers are also permanently aware of the changing patterns and rules, and consciously or subconsciously see that, however slightly, each new story subtly or radically changes its own genre. In a very real sense, junk fiction readers (and this includes SF) are not simply reading narratives, they are reading entire genres and listening to the stories creating dialogs between each other inside these genres.

Club Secretary Gets Death Threats

November first Friday 11-4-11. "Do we have a quorum? Close enough," said President Barry. "It's gotten quiet. We're hunting rabbits." This led to a debate over duck season or rabbit season. Another count. We're one short. "Good enough," said Barry. "Okay troops, let's have a WSFA meeting. It is 21:14. How many of you RSVP'd you were coming to the meeting?" Paul said, who what where. Barry clarified that he was talking about the Meetup. We just need to show that more than just a couple of people who sign up who come. Ernest was complaining that people were checking other in on the attendance list. "They don't realize how important it is to check yourself in." Sam L. asked "Is that the importance of being Ernest?" Paul took a poll as to whether Sam deserved death for that. <I survived!> VP had nothing to say. Trustees had nothing to say. Sam thanked the flu victim for getting up from his deathbed to put the Journal up. Paul said when he has time, he wants to get more of the site into Wordpress.

Entertivities. We had Halloween. Sam L. said there are two upcoming conventions nearby Philcon and Darkover on.

WSFA Press is doing relatively well. Still totaling up numbers, made about a thousand at Capclave; the website brought in \$. Another \$ is still owed by dealers. These are reflected in the treasurer's report. We sold 40 to Larry Smith who sold out at World Fantasy. Mike Walsh almost sold out. 4-5 other dealers are interested. We are making final arrangements. We have sold approximately 300 of the Valente and 50-75 of the remainder are committed. We sold under half of the Vaughn. Somewhere around \$, so need just \$ to break even. Jeff VanderMeer bought a box of his own books, at dealer's rate. So that's another \$. Only three left of *In Darkest Resnick*, which we have had for over a decade. Someone pointed out that meant we sold one quarter of the stock. We still can do 3 sets of bundles. The President

⁴³ Luckhurst, 'The Many Deaths', p. 24.

⁴⁴ Thomas J. Roberts, *An Aesthetics of Junk Fiction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), p. 95.

⁴⁵ Atterberry, *Decoding Gender in Science Fiction*, p. 128.

said the Vaughn book is really good. The Valente book got two reviews in *Locus*. That's why sold 12 more copies last night. We are in the process of building a new WSFA Press website, hopefully new and improved Real Soon Now. Bill asked if all the bills have been paid <I guess he hadn't>. Printer has not been paid. Cathy said we should pay printer as soon as possible. But we haven't gotten the bill.

Electronic media – nothing new. Status is very quo. Barry said he's been getting Facebook messages. John said Meetup has 97 members. Alisha is here from Meetup. Sarah on the twitter account tweeted about the registration being open and the next day someone did online.

Capclave 11. Cathy hasn't totaled the bill yet, will work it out. There will be a debrief/autopsy at 2 pm tomorrow. We have a table at Philcon. Preregistration is 53, about the same as last couple of years. Got one online. Sooner we get this hotel settled, the sooner we can get next year's reservations started. Barry asked if anyone is doing hotel stuff for Mike. Bob said he is the liaison, but has not talked about negotiating. There may be issues around smoking in the hotel. No other convention committees.

Literary small press award. Cathy said committee will get together to discuss and tweak the rules. At World Fantasy she let some of the small presses know about the award. Committee is planning a survey. Know it when you see it (but Judge went blind.)

Old business – T shirt sign up going around,

New business – Scott and Jane of Fo Paws had an accident so wasn't at Capclave. If people are interested, they are willing to do a shirt for Capclave. It would run \$20 – 25 a shirt.

Talk SF started talking about *Reamde*.

First meeting, no. 2nd no. Third and eligible to join. Eisha. She'll wait to join until January. John asked about people waiting to join. Would there be a way to change the bylaws, to prorate memberships. Sam S. suggested making them honorary members. A trial membership. Ernest said, maybe for the last quarter. Cathy said, and assuming they actually want it. Paul said, pending she wants to be a member, to make her an honorary member. Free beer she said? She's in. Elisha is now an honorary member.



Bill made motion to adjourn, but was told to wait until after announcements.

Announcements: Bungalow Halloween went well. Jonah Knight played. Rebecca has books to give away, a broken hip, will have her Christmas party in the second Sunday in Jan. Close to 7 corners. Judy and Barry brought strange drinks. This is novel writing month. Barry said Barnes & Noble is coming up with new Nook Color, so discounting original to \$140 refurbished.

Motion to adjourn fourthed. Meeting unanimously adjourned 21:53.

Attendance: Cathy Green, Paul Haggerty, Bill Lawhorn, Ernest Lilley, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy & John Madigan, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Judy & Sam Scheiner, George Shaner, Steve Smith, Laura Somerville, Ivy Yap, Madeleine Yeh, Rebecca Prather, and the honorable Alisha Brown.

Bill Snarks ESPN

11-18-11 WSFA Third Friday in November called to order without a quorum at 21:15. Prez Barry chaired. Sam L. summarized the minutes. Prez had nothing to report. Steve's treasurer report said we had a little bit of money. Candy suggested we use it to pay off her mortgage. Bob said, "We are waiting to hear back from hotel about a room night so haven't paid them."

Trustees had nothing to say other than "Think about running for office come May."

Entertivities: Bill said he got retweeted by ESPN for saying they should cover volleyball. He snarked right back.

Erica said that next weekend is Darkover, about the size of Capclave, emphasis on esoteric. Full track of steampunk programming. Judy said she is going because Ellen Kushner is GOH.

Internet: There was no webmaster. No Facebook report. John for Meetup said we gained 2 people and lost 2. John was looking forward to 100 mark. 9 people RSVP'd for this meeting. No Capclave people were here. Cathy has said they sold one membership already.

Committee to talk SF: Jimmy Rogers said we are discussing podcasts. Talk about what might want to do. Hone in stuff interested in, so don't list everyone. More than you would think are high quality. Fantasy can be irregular.

Nothing from award committee.

Old business. For T shirts see Sam. Have 20.

First time at WSFA— Michael Klater. He has been to a couple of Capclave. Third meeting— Katrin Wheatley, a friend of John and Candy. Just then, in walks a new person, Peter, for his second meeting. He is a student at U of Md. Found out about us on the Internet. Fan of Lem and Dick.

Announcements: Don't feed Jenna anything. Marshmallows for s'mores.

Erica has new cat, Tora, a grey tabby. Bill said winter is upon us so will be attending sporadically based on weather. Barry said anyone who wants to rake leaves come over on Sunday. Promised food. Carolyn said her publisher has new book *Tau Ceti* by Kevin J Anderson and a co-author.

Meeting unanimously adjourned at 21:41.

Attendance: Carolyn Frank, Erica Ginter, Bill Lawhorn, Sam Lubell, Bob Macintosh, Candy & John Madigan, Walter Miles, Sarah Mitchell, Barry & Judy Newton, Jimmy Rogers, Steve Smith, Laura Somerville, Thomas Woldering, Ivy Yap, the honorable Alisha Brown, Zahra Miles, Katrin Wheatley, Michael Ikeda, and Piotr Mardziel.



Online only bonus: References for Alien Infertility in Science Fiction

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