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EDITORIAL



Must Man Fight Wars? Why Not Advance?

When you think of it, a war makes the whole human race look bad. It starts taking up most of the time of those fighting it, who put aside everything else for warfare's sake, and it enlarges to include everybody, or so it seems. If such and such nations are not fighting full warfare at such and such a time, they have been fighting or will start fighting a war at another time, is the general picture. It seems like if somebody does something, somebody else is going to object. And on closer inspection, the objections are valid, but even if they aren't, someone is liable to strike, and there go good intentions.

What we live in is a warfare world. But there is no sense in adjusting to it. Any adjustments we make should be away from warfare. There is little good to be found in it, and it shows life at its worst. Adapting yourself to warfare is a loss—a loss found in the self. War is not the Truth simply because it is found everywhere and all the time. It tends to be a successful lie.

How do all these wars start? Are people simply unable to get along with one another for extended periods of time? Is it part of the lot of mankind to be drawn into warfare at intervals? (For some, these aren't intervals; that's places where a warfare condition lasts the length of a lifetime, or where one war rapidly follows another, whereby there are people for which a lifetime consists of warfare. One might check Jefferson Swycaffer's novel REVOLT AND REBIRTH for a look at what that does to people's lives.) It might be that if we look at the kinds of things we're doing now, we'll run across what starts wars in some of our projects and doings which are unpopular, even unendurable to other people...such as assisting in the transportation of slaves, which is what underlay the Civil War in America. We may be assisting in that when we are part of the system which includes such practices. Slavery isn't a good thing, and it results in uprisings and warfare.

What about the “wage slaves” of today? Or present practices like indenturing? People who lead such miserable existences, though, are all ready for drafting, or they might even option for military service to get away from the lives they have been leading. Much of the energy which might be spent in correcting these conditions is, as some have said, expended in warfare.

We would be better off as individuals if we looked for betterment in our activities, rather than competition and argumentation. The counter-culture is not a very good option. It progresses into strife. Why not keep our culture where it belongs, with ourselves and the people we know and who know us?

This is where the N3F comes in. There is feuding going on far and wide, and some of it is getting into the NFFF. The new proposal of keeping people out of the NFFF who are only joining to fight is a good one; why foster what might be infiltration? If they have a “cause” behind them, one which runs contrary to the NFFF, the best and easiest thing to do is just keep them out, with possible reviewing of the matter if we have not been correct in our evaluations. They will say that they are being misunderstood if that is a fact, and what caused our misunderstanding of their intentions would be a matter for discussion before they are allowed to enter. If it can be proven that their intentions are not actually negative or bad ones (and they will have the energy to discuss it if their desire to join the organization is real), and these things are discussed with them, they can be brought in.

Meanwhile let us have our own attitudes be positive and well-oriented ones, looking toward improvement and progress in our goals which are appropriate to the organization. Let’s not condemn other fan activity even if it is in disagreement with our own. Live and let live. Science fiction mostly isn’t very inspiring, but it is still legitimate reading matter, and we are not being sinners when we read it (I refer here to some of the attitudes toward science fiction I have seen expressed); perhaps those who object to it are less literate than we are—but there’s no need to rub it in when speaking to them; what is best is to avoid their argumentation and keep to what we like. It should be our desire to defend science fiction against such talk, and keep our distance from those talking that way, so that we aren’t talking the same way about them. If we get into a flurry about what they are saying, that detracts from our own discussions, which may be what we are in the NFFF to have.

Let’s keep it clean, and get some order around here—the better we make the

organization, the more we will be respected...and fandom in general might want to consider this concept as well.



Ionosphere during eclipse. NASA photo effect.



"I knew I'd forget something. It's refilling the fuel generator complex."



FAN-PRO RELATIONS by Jefferson Swycaffer

Our pro writer contact discusses meeting with fans of science fiction

As a professionally published author, I have had only a relatively few interactions with fans. I have, over the years, had a great many pen-pals, some of whom first wrote to me to send me fan-mail regarding my books and stories. I'm pleased to say that many of these people are still pen-pals, although much more on a peer-to-peer basis than on a fan-pro basis. At least one of them has gone on to become a professionally published author himself.

I have been fortunate enough to have received positive and supportive fan mail only, and never any hate mail, threats, or even harsh literary criticism. I have, alas, received a few letters that were totally incoherent, such as the one from someone who wanted to re-do the number system to get rid of the number nine. I will go to my grave wondering what he was imagining. I've received a handful of phone calls, also all positive, upbeat, supportive, and friendly.

Most of my encounters have been at conventions, and the restrictions due to the pandemic have certainly put the kibosh on convention fandom. I miss such gatherings terribly! At conventions, there are two major forms of interaction: the formal discussion panel, and the informal chit-chat. I have spoken on a great many panel discussions, on all sorts of topics. The most popular topics have to do with the art and craft of writing, and, while audiences are eager to learn, the sad truth is that there is no way to teach writing. Writing has to be done, usually by solitary individuals. Teaching writing is a little like teaching exercise: no amount of coaching can substitute for an actual page written or an actual push-up performed. Everyone needs to discover the basics for themselves, because no two of us write in exactly the same way. Sometimes, it seems as if audience

members want to receive a deep, dark secret, hidden lore, or arcane wisdom, and there is a mild sense of disappointment when the only secret that can be imparted is: "Just write".

I critique a lot, reading stories and chapters and offering technical criticism. Here, teaching and learning are completely practical, because we're going into details of grammar, of construction, of pacing, of dialogue, and the like. These are technical matters that can be taught. I have always tried to avoid charging money for critiquing, although one author did offer me payment for final pre-publication spelling and grammar checking. By and large, it is my opinion that this is something best done for free. It is even instructive to the experienced professional doing the critique: we all have things we can yet learn, and learning from each other is one of the best things about organized fandom.

Science is hard to keep up with these days, with quantum computing and tokamak reactors and interferometers that can detect the collision of black holes at galactic distances. A lot of fan interaction revolves around discussing science, especially in the context of science fiction. Which ideas are believable? Which ideas are so utterly nonsensical that they would not serve as the basis for an SF story or novel? There can never be any really conclusive results to this kind of brainstorming, and there aren't any hard-and-fast rules. The wildest and wackiest ideas can be treated with a kind of dignified respect, at which point it becomes possible for more and more readers to suspend disbelief. Also, of course, so many ideas have already been used in published fiction, that it is difficult, almost impossible, to come up with a premise that is wholly new and completely original. A lot of convention "con suite" chats are about the outer limits of what can be credible in a story.

I, personally, am a furry, and was introduced to the furry art style in the early 1980s. A lot of my interactions have been with members of the furry community, and here, too, a lot of discussion is about what ideas are credible, and what ideas are so far "out there" as to be challenging to accept. Furry fiction draws inspiration from nature, and in that, we have a tremendously wide variety of animal behaviors and physical frameworks to serve as our models. Furry fiction has gone a long, long way beyond "bunnies are sexy and lions are angry". The old Aesopian short-cuts aren't valid any longer, and overt metaphors are giving way to more subtle analysis.

Fandom today is better educated, on an average, than in the 1980s when I first encountered organized fandom. There is more diversity, and more tolerance for

differences in values. Fandom has always been highly acceptive of “otherness”, and that beloved trend continues strong today.

Encounters with fans can happen anywhere, and any time. I was at a bus stop, and got into a happy chat with some online gamers. My own gaming experience is very limited, but I was a fan of the old “Civilization” computer games, and that was enough (barely) for me to qualify as a fellow-gamer in the eyes of these other fans. We had a happy twenty minute romp through our favorites, with, as one might expect, a very diverse spectrum of tastes and preferences. Some like shoot-em-up games, some like puzzle games, some like construction and simulation games. Everyone present was happy to accept the label “Nerd” with complete pride. These gamers—and I!—are nerds and completely comfortable with the appellation.

Fans like to talk about their fandom. If you’re willing to listen, you can pick up new-found fannish friends anywhere and anytime. It isn’t necessary to agree. Hearty disagreement is a good part of the joy of fandom. Star Trek vs Star Wars has given us an infinite canvas for healthy, happy, gratifying debate. Fans like to analyze, to dissect, to look inside the machinery and to look behind the sets. Fans love “what if” scenarios, such as what kind of movie Raiders of the Lost Ark would have been if Tom Sellick had been cast as Indiana Jones. Better? Worse? Different! Fandom is all about going into minute detail regarding such differences.



“I feel cooled off already.”

FANS AND PROS: Chad Oliver: His Life and Some Personal Recollections by Jon D. Swartz



Chad Oliver

Symmes Chadwick (Chad) Oliver was born March 30, 1928 in Cincinnati, Ohio, and died August 9, 1993 after a long battle with cancer, in Austin, Texas. In between, he did a lot of living, much of it as a writer. Most of his writing, first as an amateur and then as a professional, was connected in some way with science fiction (SF).

As a teenager he penned numerous letters of comment to the SF pulp magazines (67 of them published between 1942 and 1952, with some of them signed "Chad Oliver, the Loony Lad of Ledgewood"), and even edited/published his own amateur SF magazine with a friend, Garvin Berry.

Oliver and Berry named their fanzine **The Moon Puddle**, the title a takeoff on A. Merritt's classic 1919 fantastic novel, THE MOON POOL. This one-shot fanzine, of which only about fifty copies were "published", is credited with being the first SF fanzine in Texas. It included a contribution by Dr. David Keller, a physician and psychiatrist who was also a prominent SF writer during the 1930s—1940s.

Oliver's first published story, "The Imperfect Machine", for which he was not paid, appeared in the Summer 1948 issue of the **Texas Literary Quarterly**. This story told of the Stellar Queen, an almost completely automated spaceship, and its first voyage. With only a single passenger, John Thornton, and sent up by a private company, the voyage was ruled a success even though Thornton returned in a coma. Oliver's first published SF story for which he was paid was "Land of Lost Content" (November 1950 issue of **Super Science Stories**), although he had another story

("The Boy Next Door") accepted for publication by **The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction** earlier and usually spoke of this story as his first sale. "Land of Lost Content" told of survivors of Atlantis whose ancestors had fled underground ages ago to survive a holocaust, but who were now returning to the surface because life underground had become stagnant. "The Boy Next Door" was originally written for **Weird Tales**, and was a chilling fantasy/horror story reminiscent of some of Ray Bradbury's early pulp fiction.

Later in life, after he had earned a Ph.D. in anthropology and was an honored professor at a major university, Chad often said that he was neither ashamed of his early fannish activities nor of his lifelong involvement with science fiction: "The best thing about my life in science fiction has just been being a part of it. I love the stuff, I love the writers, and I love the fans."

He and Betty Jane Jenkins (Beje), whom he met in an anthropology class at the University of Texas, were married on November 1, 1952 in Los Angeles. Roger Phillips Graham (who wrote most of his SF as Rog Phillips) served as best man, Ray Bradbury was a member of the wedding party, and the wedding and reception were held at the home of famous SF personality Forrest J. Ackerman.

When we visited my wife's mother in Los Angeles, Chad gave us a letter of introduction to Ackerman. Because of this introduction, we were able to tour the Ackermansion, meet Ray Bradbury and A.E. van Vogt, and my wife got to sit in a chair that had belonged to Lincoln.

While in California in the late 1950s and early 1960s—attending graduate school at UCLA and teaching at the University of California, Riverside—Chad became friends with other writers. Author/critic William F. Nolan has labelled these friends the West Coast Writers Group. In addition to Oliver, the group included Ray Bradbury, Charles Beaumont, Richard Matheson, and Nolan himself. Oliver later wrote a series of short stories with Beaumont, and Nolan included stories from members of the Group in anthologies he later edited. Nolan also anonymously edited Oliver's second short fiction collection, *THE EDGE OF FOREVER*.

Chad published his anthropological work as Symmes C. Oliver, and his fiction as Chad Oliver, the name by which his friends knew him.

Chad was an excellent teacher and won several teaching awards at the University of Texas. After his death, the university named a teaching award in his honor. His classes were extremely popular, and anecdotes about his lectures abound. One of my favorites occurred when he was teaching a class which my wife attended. He was lecturing and packing tobacco in his pipe at the same time. He was holding his pipe over a wastebasket so the tobacco wouldn't spill onto the floor. A lot of the tobacco had found its way into the wastebasket instead of his pipe. He paused in his efforts, looked up, and—in an aside that only the students in the front of the class could hear—said that maybe he should just light the wastebasket.

Chad read and collected many of the "air-war" adventure pulps when growing up. His favorite was *G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES*, and when some of these stories were reprinted in

paperback form by Berkley in the early 1970s, he told me of buying one and reading it on the floor with a big bottle of coke and a Baby Ruth candy bar. He readily admitted this experience was pure regression when he told me, a psychologist, about it.

Chad was a wonderful friend to me and my wife when the three of us were at the University of Texas together in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Chad and I were fellow faculty members during 1969-1974, and Carol did her graduate work in anthropology under his direction.

In 1965-1966, Carol and I were editors of a departmental fanzine called **The Bull-Roarer**, and Chad was one of the faculty members who was both sympathetic and helpful in getting this amateur work "published". For years, my wife and I had lunch with Chad every week at a popular restaurant near the campus. We had a regular booth that was saved for us by the waitresses and occasionally other faculty members and students joined us. Our conversations covered just about everything, but many of them were about SF and writing.

When we were at the University together, Chad introduced me to visiting authors Walter M. Miller, Jr. and Randall Garrett, and they spoke at the university's SF club that Chad and I sponsored. I still remember how Garrett loudly proclaimed that the club needed more female members!

One of the last times I spoke with him face to face was in the early 1980s when we had lunch together in Austin. He said he had never been happier because now he had a group of other SF writers to hang out with. This "Austin School" consisted of SF writers who lived in and around the Texas state capitol in the 1980s and included Neal Barrett, Jr., Leigh Kennedy, Lewis Shiner, Bruce Sterling, Lisa Tuttle, Steven Utley, and Howard Waldrop. At the time Chad referred to them as his personal "gifts from the gods".

Chad was a lifelong sports fan and played football in high school despite a childhood bout with rheumatic fever that had kept him out of school for two years. Even in middle age he enjoyed playing tennis, especially with Carol's brother, Tony. Chad, Tony, and I went to some UT football games together, and one fall Chad and I watched the World Series at our home. I still have home movies of that event.

Chad usually kept in touch when he was out of town for any length of time, usually with postcards on which he scribbled humorous messages. An avid fisherman, he was introduced to the sport early in life by his physician father and tried to spend at least a month every summer fly-fishing for trout in Colorado.

I came across one of these postcards recently, dated August 14, 1972, and postmarked Lake City, Colorado. His sense of humor was evident in this message when he ended it: "I am trapped in the Alamo. Send help...." A framed picture of Chad—kneeling by a stream in Colorado, smiling, and holding a trout he had caught—has set atop a desk in my home office for years.

All of my associations with Chad were pleasant ones. I miss him.

Behind the Scenes: **WOMEN AND SCIENCE FICTION** by Jeffrey Redmond

Identifying some of the women who helped shape science fiction



Mary Woolstonecraft Shelley



Margaret Atwood



Joanna Russ



Ursula Le Guin



Alice Sheldon

If Mary Shelley invented the genre why are so few female sci-fi writers household names? Two hundred years ago, Mary Shelley sat down to write a ghost story and created science fiction. Women still pen the genre's finest, exemplified by Ursula Le Guin. Yet so often they are overlooked.

Two centuries. Two hundred years. That's how long we've had science fiction. From the birth of Frankenstein to the demise of Ursula Le Guin. Two hundred years.

The genesis of FRANKENSTEIN, OR THE MODERN PROMETHEUS, to give its full title,

is a tale as oft told as Shelley's actual story of scientist Victor and his monstrous creation. Aged just eighteen, the writer was visiting the Villa Diodati near Lake Geneva with her husband, the poet Percy Shelley. The property was rented by Lord Byron and John Polidori for the summer of 1816, and the Shelleys were staying close by.

One evening, Byron suggested that they all write their own ghost story. Mary Shelley writes in her introduction to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*, "I busied myself to think of a story—a story to rival those which had excited me to this task. One which would speak to the mysterious fears of our nature, and awaken thrilling horror—one to make the reader dread to look around, to curdle the blood, and quicken the beating of the heart."

That she certainly did. *Frankenstein's* monster has its place in the horror hall of fame. Everyone knows the creature. But do we really know the story? The basics, of course, imprinted on our collective cultural psyche from umpteen movie adaptations. Victor Frankenstein breaks the last taboo by daring to play god and create life, harnessing electricity to reanimate an eight-foot monster, which then goes on a terrible rampage.

Though in the horror fraternity of *Dracula*, the *Wolf Man* and the *Mummy*, *Frankenstein's* monster is completely science fiction, created by science, not the supernatural. And Mary Shelley's novel is far more nuanced than the cartoonish image we have of the bolt-necked, green-tinged monster lumbering around in pursuit of screaming women.

After abandoning his creation in disgust, guilt drives Frankenstein to track down the monster in the Alps, where the creature reveals it has spent their time apart becoming quite erudite, educating itself from a cache of books and developing acute emotional and social sensibilities by observing, at a distance, a poverty-stricken family. But with this growing self-awareness comes the knowledge of the creature's place in the world, and of what he has and has not...and wants.

Directing Frankenstein to create a woman to share the unique space the monster occupies, the creation does embrace his darker side when Frankenstein refuses, and the monster kills his creator's wife on their wedding night.

A powerful story, and one that has endured. But there's a curious thing. Mary Shelley's detailed explanation of how the novel came about, quoted briefly above, does not appear in the first edition. There is a different introduction in that novel, which states, "Two other friends (a tale from the pen of one of whom would be far more acceptable to the public than anything I can ever hope to produce) and myself agreed

to write each a story, founded on some supernatural occurrence.

“The weather, however, suddenly became serene, and my two friends left me on a journey among the Alps, and, lost in the magnificent scenes which they present, all memory of their ghostly visions. The following tale is the only one which has been completed.”

It’s curious because it’s very self-deprecating. Mary Shelley is essentially saying that the boys got distracted from the job of writing ghost stories because they went to have some laddish fun outside, though if they had finished the task, then their work would easily have been better than anything she could write, and she’s almost apologetic in her presentation of it, because it’s the only one that there is to offer from that night at Villa Diodati. Which we now know to be wrong, because a fraction of Byron’s story did appear at the end of his poem “Mazeppa”, and Polidori’s “The Vampyre” was later published in 1819. The introduction is all the more astonishing, though, because Mary Shelley didn’t write it. Her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, did, subtly shading her achievements by setting them against far superior work he and his mate would have done if only they could have been bothered.

Fast forward to 1983, and the author Joanna Russ publishes a book called HOW TO SUPPRESS WOMEN’S WRITING. The cover of the book has become famous not for any image or visual but for what has become a mantra which explains the thrust of Joanna Russ’s argument, “She didn’t write it. She wrote it but she shouldn’t have. She wrote it, but look what she wrote about. She wrote it, but she only wrote one of it. She wrote it, but she isn’t really an artist and it isn’t really art. She wrote it, but she had help. She wrote it, but she’s an anomaly. She wrote it BUT...”

Excuses. Reasons. Explanations. Mansplanations. Women’s writing generally has been marginalized and subdued since book publishing began, but it’s often through a whispering campaign rather than actually taking typewriters away from women or banning them from writing. Sowing the seeds of doubt. Justification, saying well, okay, this book is not bad, but I bet she couldn’t do it again. Or some man must have helped her. Or, fine, she’s a good writer, but she’s a one-off. Most women don’t write like that.

It’s no coincidence that the author of this book, Joanna Russ, was also a science fiction author up to her death in 2011. She began to get published in the 1960s with the short story collection PICNIC ON PARADISE in 1968, the same year that Ursula K. Le Guin published A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA. Joanna Russ’s most often-cited book is THE FEMALE MAN, from 1975, which features four women in different parallel universes who

visit each other's realities and compare and contrast the lives and treatment of women.

Joanna Russ and Ursula Le Guin were writing in a period of great science fiction, those post-Second World War years with their technological advances and exploration of space melting into Cold War and the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation. But ask most people who are major science fiction writers of the second half of the 20th Century and I'll bet you'll assemble a list of mostly male names.

If you don't believe me, take a look at ranker.com, a website that allows users to rank pretty much anything. Go to the list of "Greatest Science Fiction Authors". Isaac Asimov. Philip K. Dick. Arthur C. Clarke. H.G. Wells. Robert Heinlein. Frank Herbert. Ray Bradbury. Giants all, no disputing that. The first woman's name appears at number ten on the list, Ursula Le Guin. We don't see another one until twenty-nine—our friend Mary Shelley, followed at thirty by the author of the Pern series, Anne McCaffrey. There are thirteen women in the top hundred in all, most of them appearing in the lower reaches, as ranked by the seventy thousand users who have engaged with this particular topic.

Why aren't there more? Maybe because science fiction, particularly in the golden age years, was just seen as something men did. Maybe because the boys' club atmosphere put women off. Maybe women weren't welcome. The first edition of *Frankenstein* was published anonymously.

In 1967, a new science fiction author came on to the scene, James Tiptree, Jr. It was at least a decade before the author of dozens of thoughtful, intelligent and often subversive short stories was revealed to be a woman called Alice Sheldon. In an interview with Isaac Asimov's *Science Fiction Magazine* in 1983 she said of her pseudonymous career, "A male name seemed like good camouflage. I had the feeling that a man would slip by less observed. I've had too many experiences in my life of being the first woman in some damned occupation."

Women write science fiction. Women have always written science fiction. But often, they have been ignored, or sidelined, or simply slid under the radar. If they're very good at writing science fiction, they can get co-opted out of the genre and into "literary fiction". Take, for example, Margaret Atwood, whose work is out-and-out science fiction, from *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* to *ORYX* and *CRAKE*. She once infamously said her work wasn't science fiction at all, because that was all about "talking squids in outer space".

It was perhaps when she relented on that and embraced her science fiction genes that things began to change. More notice was taken of those who had gone before, and successive new generations of genre writers had their ranks noticeably swollen by

women. There's an excellent website run by Ian Sales (a man, but we won't hold that against him) at SFMistressworks.wordpress.com that is dedicated to reviewing books by women writers, both new ones and lost gems from the past. The name might sound a bit clunky but it's a direct response to the series of yellow-liveried books that reprints classic SF novels under the banner SF Masterworks. It's a good place to start if you want to build a reading list of woman-penned science fiction.

But why should you anyway? Well, because science fiction written by women seems, on the whole, to be vastly superior to that written by men. Why? Good question. Twitter was asked this question. It didn't disappoint the askers.

"Because we're always navigating an alien territory, where the Other is the default, but where we have learned to walk in his shoes".

"Because women are more often required to consider experiences outside their own and exhibit empathy? (If we are talking in generalizations.) Or perhaps women want to create something really different while many men want the *status quo* but with spaceships?"

"Maybe because more women authors than men write character-driven books that address complex issues? Is it my imagination, or are far too many men's SF books post-apocalyptic 'shoot 'em ups'?"

"One reason might be because they've always had to try harder, imagine wider, write better to even get published. Male writers have had it easy and don't push themselves nearly as hard as they could."

"Because the world is good to men, and women have always had to (re)imagine a world that is better to them."

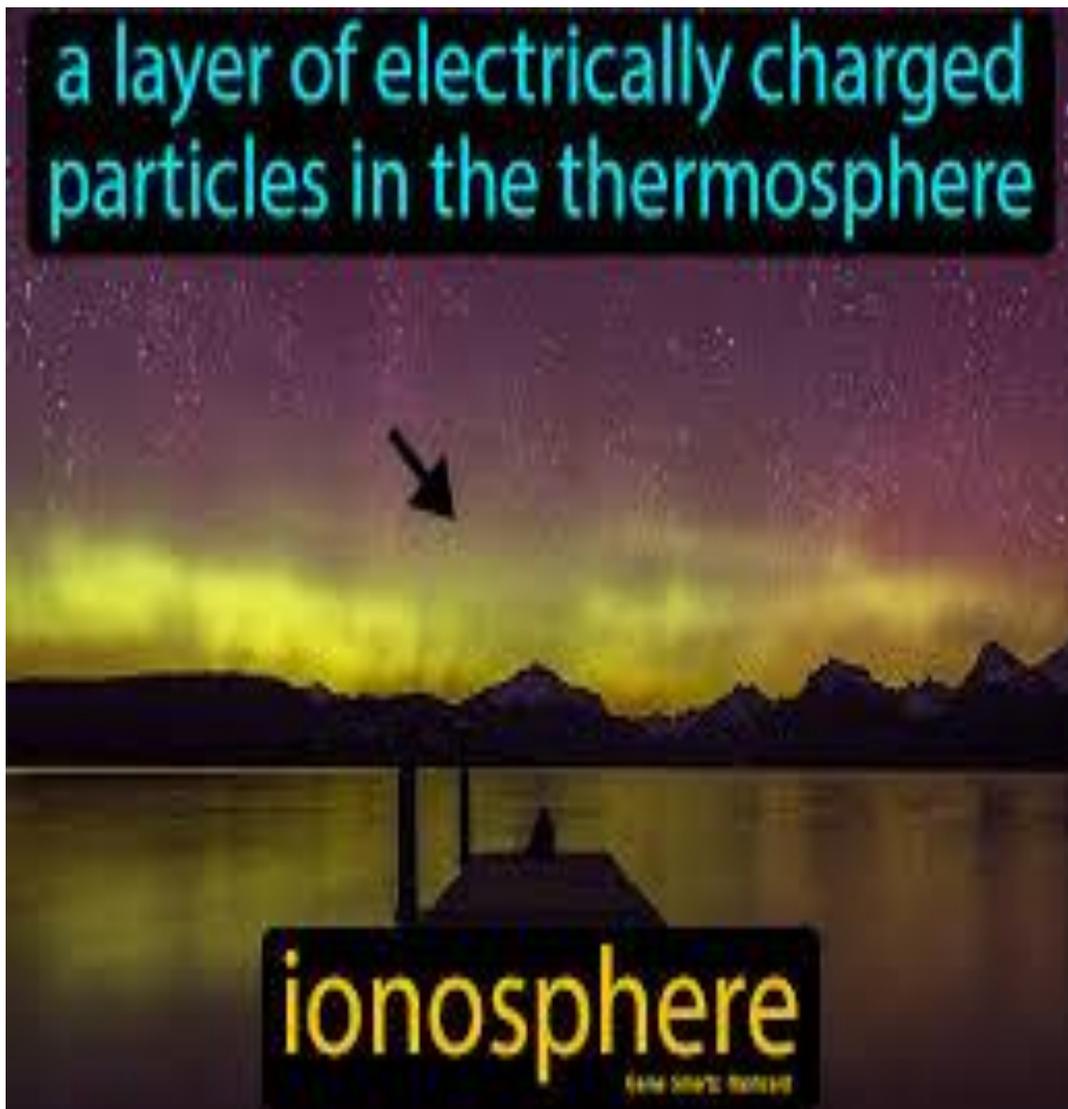
If you look at the science fiction shelves of your local bookshop today, you'd be forgiven for thinking it's always been an equitable game in terms of gender split. Writers such as Kameron Hurley, NK Jemison, Mur [?] Lafferty, GX Todd, Ann Leckie, Naomi Alderman, Nina Allen, Nnedi Okorafor...so many names, writing so many new and exciting and diverse and different books, that one hesitates even to try to make a list because it will only scratch the surface.

But it hasn't always been this way, it's been a fight. Sometimes it's been a fight on the front lines by the likes of Joanna Russ, sometimes it's been a battle of subterfuge, by the likes of Alice Sheldon. Sometimes it's been an intersectional fight on many fronts, by the likes of Octavia Butler.

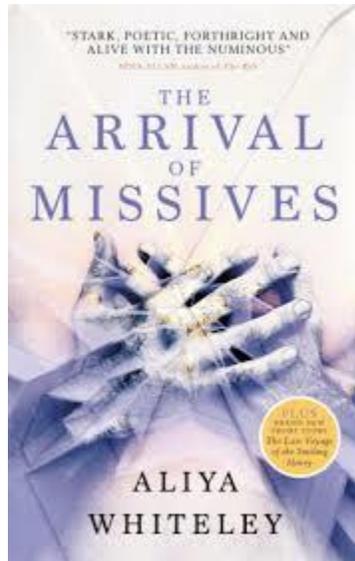
But it's always been a fight, and one that continues. It was a fight for Mary Shelley,

too, of course, the woman who created the genre and whose book was published without her name on it with an introduction written for her by her husband.

But remember this: Mary Shelley was originally tasked to write a ghost story. Instead she invented science fiction with a novel that spoke of horrors, yet pierced the heart of humanity. Women, eh? Never doing what they're told, breaking all the rules, and creating things of a rare and lasting power.



LETTERS



DENISE FISK: I really enjoyed John Thiel's message in the latest issue! It really made me think.

At the end of his editorial, he goofed. He closed with "Who's the man who says otherwise?" He should have included "women" with that closing statement.

This type of gender exclusion is very troubling, especially since, nowadays, women make up 51% of the world's population. It's not only the men any more who 100% run things. There are many millions of females (and growing) involved in important positions, fandom, *etc.* I don't know if you could make it a rule—that writers need to use both genders when writing future items?

So it is definitely old-fashioned to include ONLY the male gender, when the female gender should also be acknowledged in greetings, closings, *etc.*

John Thiel needs to get way up to date on using both genders when writing!

It seems to me the error was chiefly a diplomatic one. I think the tendency to leave the ladies out of certain discussions is often a protective one, when the matter involved relates to war. But I'll be glad to go over the slant my writing has and get away from a sentence structure that leaves the ladies out of it. I've always wanted to hear more from them in discussions. Jeffrey Redmond has been writing a series of articles which express the place women have had in science fiction, and pointing out that they should be given more attention in our writings. You'll find one of them in this issue. I'm always happy to

receive writing from women—nothing could express the female viewpoint better than for a woman to be doing the writing. I think you'd like the March/April issue of F&SF; the new editor is a woman and she has handled the transition and the first issue of her editorship very well indeed. Her editorial comments in the issue express a different, womanly point of view excellently.

WILL MAYO: I see you included a poem of mine in your February issue. Thanks. Nice. Right from the typer into print. And I like what you said about it being a good idea for science fiction writers to write about the reconstruction of our society. It reminds me of how in the 1950s writers were all full of ideas about Esperanto and world government. Neither seems to have worked out too well but behind every dystopia is a utopia waiting to be told...

This letter from Will was sent right after he sent the poem I used in the last issue, which I had received just before the issue came out, and I immediately sent a copy of the issue to Will, so he had sent me an email commenting that the issue was received and he had been reading it; then he read it further and found his poem and sent this email postscript. To get on to answering him:

The main person instigating discussions about Esperanto back then was Rick Sneary, and I believe the big force behind the discussion of world governments and utopias was Redd Boggs, along with Jim Harmon. So I recall seeing the same thing. Dystopias relate to Utopias the same way I think nihilism relates to philosophy, which is typically trying to progress. The dystopian writers have not been answered very well, since the utopian writers already had their say and paid little attention to the nihilistic response of the dystopians.



Did H.P. Lovecraft write science fiction?



Concluding page.