Proceedings of the

2020

Science Fictions & Popular Cultures

Academic Conference

I·HAWAIICON

Slater, Cole & Littman, *Editors*

Science Fictions Popular Cultures Academic Conference

2020

Proceedings
and Meeting Booklet

Advance Copy
Preliminary Schedule and Meeting Booklet

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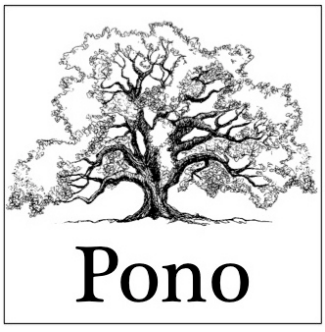

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SCIENCE FICTIONS, POPULAR CULTURES ACADEMIC CONFERENCE

Kailua-Kona, Big Island of Hawai'i, September 24-27, 2020

SCIENCE FICTIONS, POPULAR CULTURES is devoted to uncovering and examining cross-disciplinary, cross-genre, and cross-media scholarship.

Beyond Boundaries

Just as *Battlestar Galactica* and *Global Dynamics* pushed technology to work better than designed...

- Just as artists are not bounded by one media or platform...
- Just as science pushes the limits of what is fiction to discover what is fact...
- Just as science fiction constantly defies and defines the parameters of genre...
- Just as popular culture erases the divides of academic disciplines...

SCIENCE FICTIONS, POPULAR CULTURES seeks to both defy and redefine how the academy views science fiction and popular culture—and the research, scholarship and creative endeavors of those working across these fields. A refereed Conference Proceedings is published to document the event.

SCIENCE FICTIONS, POPULAR CULTURES is an academic conference featuring peer-reviewed scholarship from a wide spectrum of disciplines addressing the narratives and performances of science, science fiction, and popular culture entertainment across media, platforms, and cultures.

Brief SFPC Daily Schedule

Kindly note there are nearly 200 hours of programming going on in parallel for which your registration badge gains you access.

Schedules are often changing, please consult the daily pocket schedule or the smart phone app for the latest information on your speaking time, and that of others.

Thursday

Thursday 9/24/2020 800-825am HST (2pm EDT)
Worshipping the Robot: Religion, fandom, and Enthiran
Signe Cohen, cohens@missouri.edu, Religious Studies Department, University of Missouri
A popular Indian science fiction film about a scientist and his robot double - and the literal worship of the actor who plays them both.

Thursday 9/24/2020 830am-855am HST (230pm EDT)
A Robust Anthropology: The Human Body as Interface with Reality
James Papandrea, jimpapandrea@mac.com, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary
Is the human being essentially a consciousness that is temporarily housed in a shell which can be traded or discarded? Or is the body an essential element of one's humanity?

Thursday 9/24/2020 900am-925am HST (3pm EDT)
Bringing Fundamental Physics into Popular Culture: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics and String Theory in the Performing Arts
Mircea Sava, mircea0806@yahoo.com, University of Bucharest
Science is portrayed in the performing arts through inventive mechanisms: the highly specialized contemporary physical theories – relativity, quantum mechanics and string theory – succeed in reaching the popular domain by media such as theatre and dance.

Thursday 9/24/2020 930am-955am HST (330pm EDT)
Suits, Shells, and Skins: "Becoming Japanese" in Contemporary American Science Fiction
Amanda Weiss, amanda.weiss@modlangs.gatech.edu, Georgia Institute of Technology
This presentation explores new trends in Techno-Orientalism, arguing that Hollywood productions like Pacific Rim reveal an evolving narrative of the US-Japan relationship and changing discourse on race and ethnicity in America.

Thursday 9/24/2020 1200pm-1225pm HST (6pm EDT)
Xenophilia and Xenophobia in Doctor Who
Greg Littmann, glittma@siue.edu, SIUE
The stories told in Doctor Who have been driven by two conflicting attitudes to the strange and alien. One is xenophilia, love of strange and alien things. The other is xenophobia, fear of the different.

Thursday 9/24/2020 1230pm-1255pm HST (630pm EDT)

Science Fiction Romanticism: Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters of the Third Kind

Jerold Abrams, abramsjj@creighton.edu, Creighton University

Against Pauline Kael, who in The New Yorker, praises Close Encounters of the Third Kind as a "kid's movie," happily free of philosophy, I argue the film is deeply philosophical moving image of science fiction romanticism.

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FRIDAY

Friday 9/25/2020 800-825am HST (2pm EDT)

Permaculturists vs. Technofuturists, Or: Anthropocene, And Then What?

Marius Bomholt, marius.bomholt@gmail.com, Universidad Complutense, Madrid

Technology is changing our lives at an ever faster pace. How do we adapt to this change? Is Neo-Luddism the answer or should we embrace it wholeheartedly? Let's see how fiction deals with this dilemma.

Friday 9/25/2020 830am-855am HST (230pm EDT)

Are You a Good Person? Gender Relations in Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Julie Hugonny, Juliehugonny@gmail.com, Independent Scholar

After the end of the world, a man and a woman face each other. "Are you a good person?", she asks. In this simple, yet overwhelming question lies the future of our humanity.

Friday 9/25/2020 900-925am HST (3pm EDT)

Building a Better Bride: Female Frankenstein Monsters in the Comics

Michael Torregrossa, popular.preternaturaliana@gmail.com, Independent Scholar

The Bride of Frankenstein flourishes in popular culture inspired by Mary Shelley's novel, and she has had an especially intriguing career in comics. This paper will survey these works.

Friday 9/25/2020 930am-955am HST (330pm EDT)

Molecular Adventures: Fiction, Imagination and Science of Biopunk

Leila Kucukalic, lejla.kucukalic@ku.ac.ae, Khalifa University

Biopunk Stories and Science Changing the World Together

Friday 9/25/2020 1000am-1055am HST (4pm EDT)

BattleStar Gallactica Fan Panel

James Papandrea, jimpapandrea@mac.com; Randy Jensen, rjensen@nwciowa.edu; Margaret Mendenhall, margaretmendenhallphd@gmail.com; Olivier Guyon, oliv.guyon@gmail.com; Gene Slay, craftworks@yahoo.com; Kathy Guyon, kathyr.guyon@gmail.com; among others

Listen in or join our roundtable of enthusiastic super fans who philosophize, predict, celebrate, and lament aspects of this fan favorite.

Friday 9/25/2020 1200pm-1225pm HST (6pm EDT)

Beyond Jung's Red Book: Lessons To Humanity From Star Trek: The Original Series

Margaret Mendenhall, margaretmendenhallphd@gmail.com, Graduate Student, Pacifica Graduate Institute
Through a Jungian analysis of various episodes from Star Trek: The Original Series, I will show that the impetus that drives Kirk is a furthering of Jung's life work as illustrated in The Red Book.

Friday 9/25/2020 1230pm-1255pm HST (630pm EDT)
Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Who's the Greatest Leader of Them All?
Jimmy LeDuc, james.leduc@mnsu.edu, Minnesota State University, Saint Paul College
he Mirror Universe is a fascinating part of the Star Trek universe. It has given the world some of its most exciting leaders. What makes these leaders unique? How do they survive this tumultuous world?

Friday 9/25/2020 100pm-155pm HST (7pm EDT)
Dr. Who Fan Panel
Greg Littmann, glittma@siue.edu, Sumeyra Buran, sumeyra19@hotmail.com; Sawyer Slater, sawyerjeann@gmail.com; James LeDuc, james.leduc@mnsu.edu, among others
Listen in or join our roundtable of enthusiastic super fans who philosophize, predict, celebrate, and lament aspects of this fan favorite.

Friday 9/25/2020 200pm-225pm HST (8pm EDT)
Science in Science Fiction: End of the Y Chromosome and Birth of the Many Sexes
Sumeyra Buran, sumeyra19@hotmail.com, University of California Riverside-Istanbul Medeniyet University
Gwyneth Jones's Life (2004) puts biogenetical science into science fiction futuring the DNA of tomorrow's children. The discovery of Transferred Y chromosome is the end of a male chromosome and birth of many sexes.

Friday 9/25/2020 400pm-455pm (10pm EDT)
Warp Speed Star Trek Trivia Game
Jason Eberl, jason.eberl@slu.edu, St Louis University
Put together a team (or choose to go it alone) for our trivia bonanza- never evers and seasoned experts alike are welcome to play!

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SATURDAY

Saturday 9/26/2020 800am-850am (2pm EDT)
Televisual Representations of LGBTQIA Characters: The Golden Girls, The Bold Type, and BoJack Horseman -- Panel Presentation
Mona Rocha, morocha@csufresno.edu; Madison Neal & James Rocha
Representation of LGBTQIA Characters on TV

Saturday 9/26/2020 900am-955am (3pm EDT)
The Meaning of Black Mirror
David Kyle Johnson, davidjohnson@kings.edu, davidjohnson@kings.edu
Explore the meaning of Black Mirror with the editor of Wiley-Blackwell's new book Black Mirror and Philosophy. Is it a warning about the potential dangers of technology, or about the human condition?

Saturday 9/26/2020 1000am-1025am (4pm EDT)
A Loveless World: Anti-love Stories In Black Mirror
Robert Price, robertgrantprice@gmail.com, robertgrantprice@gmail.com
The Netflix series Black Mirror is less a series about technology than it is a series about love. The show teaches us, as did St. Thomas and Irma Thomas, that love requires total sacrifice.

Saturday 9/26/2020 1100am-1155am (5pm EDT)
Academic Panel Discussion: Black Mirror as Philosophy
David Kyle Johnson, davidjohnson@kings.edu, davidjohnson@kings.edu; Gregory Littmann, glittma@siue.edu; Robert Price, robertgrantprice@gmail.com; George Dunn, fritferret@aol.com; Claire Benn, cmabenn@gmail.com; David Gamez, david@davidgamez.eu; Bertha Manninen, Bertha.Manninen@asu.edu; among others
Join a panel of authors from Wiley-Blackwell's new book Black Mirror and Philosophy to discuss the philosophical implications of Charlie Brooker's dystopian hit: Black Mirror. The session will concentrate on answering questions from the audience.

Saturday 9/26/2020 1200pm-1255pm (6pm EDT)
Black Mirror Trivia
David Kyle Johnson, davidjohnson@kings.edu, davidjohnson@kings.edu
Put together a team (or choose to go it alone) for a Black Mirror trivia bonanza, hosted by the editor of Wiley-Blackwell's new book Black Mirror and Philosophy. Prizes will be awarded.

Saturday 9/26/2020 200pm-255pm (8pm EDT)

Star Trek Fan Panel

Amanda Weiss, amanda.weiss@modlangs.gatech.edu, amanda.weiss@modlangs.gatech.edu; Margare Mendenhall; margaretmendenhallphd@gmail.com; Kyla Defore, deforeky@hawaii.edu; James LeDuc, james.leduc@mnsu.edu; among others

Listen in or join our roundtable of enthusiastic super fans who philosophize, predict, celebrate, and lament aspects of this fan favorite.

Saturday 9/26/2020 400pm-455pm (10pm EDT)

HawaiiCon Members Meeting

Jessica Gauthier, President of HawaiiCon, jessica@hawaiicon.com, HawaiiCon.com

Join HawaiiCon Boardmembers and senior staff to talk story about the current and future status of HawaiiCon

Brief SFPC Daily Schedule

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SUNDAY

Sunday 9/27/2020 830am-855am (230pm EDT)

Transcending the Corporeal: The dystopic affect of Utopian visions

Edmund Ankomah, ehankom@ilstu.edu, Illinois State University

Popular culture is saturated with figurations of utopian visions often enacted on dystopic spaces that threaten the mortal-corporeal. In this paper, I dialectically engage with the characterization and affect of this technocultural episteme.

Sunday 9/27/2020 900am-925am (230pm EDT)

Egoism and Altruism in Parasyte: The Maxim

Randall Jensen, rjensen@nwciowa.edu, Northwestern College

Imagine that one night your right hand is replaced by a ruthless alien cannibalistic parasite. What should you do? Let's think about right and wrong in the strange narrative universe of Parasyte: The Maxim.

Sunday 9/27/2020 1000am-1055am (4pm EDT)

Firefly Fan Panel

Heather Preston, Catamariner@gmail.com, John Bertram, Bertram7718@gmail.com; Rara Spiegel, KCSeducation@kcshi.org; James Rocha, jamesr@csufresno.edu; among others

Listen in or join our roundtable of enthusiastic super fans who philosophize, predict, celebrate, and lament aspects of this fan favorite.

Sunday 9/27/2020 12pm-1255pm (6pm EDT)

Favorite Robots in Science Fiction Fan Panel

Kathy Guyuon, kathyr.guyon@gmail.com; Michael Torregrossa, popular.preternaturaliana@gmail.com; Randy Jensen, rjensen@nwciowa.edu; Duke Kell, dkell@whea.net; Olivier Guyon, oliv.guyon@gmail.com; John Bertram, Bertram7718@gmail.com; among others

Listen in or join our roundtable of enthusiastic super fans who philosophize, predict, celebrate, and lament aspects of this fan favorite.

Sunday 9/27/2020 1pm-125pm (7pm EDT)

Deadly Women: Female Vampire Slayers and the Weapons they Use

U Melissa Anyiwo & Rebecca L Paynic, manyiwo@curry.edu, Curry College

A Criminal Justice Researcher and a Vampire Scholar provide a content analysis of the weapons chosen by female slayers to prove that they are as badass as their male counterparts.

Sunday 9/27/2020 130pm-155pm (730pm EDT)

Star Trek and the Wrath of Melville: How to Read a Text, Let White Whales Be, and Tell the True Villains from the Heroes

H Peter Steeves, psteeves@depaul.edu, DePaul University

"Moby-Dick" and "Star Trek" have more in common than one might think. A keen understanding of Melville's novel forces us to question if Kirk and Spock are villains, fully deserving of the wrath of Khan.

SFPC PRO-TIPS FOR SUCCESS

#1: Hawai'i can be hot, really hot. And it rains unexpectedly. So, we suggest wearing very casual clothing for this conference. Shorts are perfectly acceptable. Sandals are acceptable too (we call them "slip-ahs" here). *Kindly note it can get a bit chilly in the evenings and in the all-to-often over air-conditioned meeting rooms, so having a casual light jacket or pull-over is a reasonable thing to bring along.*

#2: There is little to no public transportation here, so it is best to rent a car or get where you are going and stay there. *Lyft* and *Uber* have just been started on the island, but they are inconsistent and spotty, as any new enterprise is.

#3: Food is expensive here, because everything comes in by boat or airplane. Most places take credit cards and in the event you end up needing more American cash, let Tim or Carrie know and we can help you get some.

#4: When you meet a person younger than you whom you don't know, they might address you as "Uncle" or "Auntie." This is a sign of respect here. You should also feel free to greet others by saying "Aloha" and showing your appreciation by saying "Mahalo." Greeting people with a hug and a kiss on the cheek is also common here, so don't be surprised. Moreover, using local Hawaiian words is not viewed as cultural appropriation here, but is instead considered polite.

#5: In addition to the 30 hours of SFPC programming, there is another 30 hours of programming for K-12 teachers you might enjoy, and 160 additional hours of programming that includes question and answer sessions—we call it "talk story"—with celebrities, filmmakers, authors, game inventors, and snorkeling tours, and, and, and..…. a beach. Your SFPC registration gets you access to all of this AND the peer-reviewed, published proceedings. We double-dog dare you to be bored!

#6: Hawaii is very casual, and "island-time" really exists. As such, schedules are constantly in flux, and sometimes it is hard to keep track of what is happening when and who is now going to be where instead of what you'd thought.

MEETING PAPERS

ALPHABETICAL

Science Fiction Romanticism: Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters of the Third Kind

J.J. Abrams
Creighton University, *abramsjj@creighton.edu*

Against Pauline Kael, who in The New Yorker, praises Close Encounters of the Third Kind as a "kid's movie," happily free of philosophy, I argue the film is deeply philosophical moving image of science fiction romanticism.

"Film critic Pauline Kael in ""Close Encounters of the Third Kind: The Greening of the Solar System"" (The New Yorker, 1977) describes Steven Spielberg's early science fiction film as ""a kid's movie in the best sense,"" ""spiritual cotton candy"" that ""goes down easy,"" and ""mercifully"" free of ""cosmological philosophizing."" I disagree with Kael's analysis. On the surface, Close Encounters of the Third Kind may appear to be light fare, enjoyable viewing for all generations. But beneath this surface, the film is deep work of philosophy which explores of the limits of reason and the nature of mind as shaped through and through by emotion and imagination. In fact, Close Encounters of the Third Kind is a moving image of philosophical romanticism.

Jerold J. Abrams is associate professor of philosophy at Creighton University in Omaha, Nebraska, where he teaches and writes in aesthetics and philosophy of film, with a focus on science fiction. Recent publications include "Aristotle and James T. Kirk: The Problem of Greatness," in The Ultimate Star Trek and Philosophy (Blackwell, 2016); "Submitting to Superior Aliens," in The X-Files and Philosophy (Open Court, 2017); "Aesthetics in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," in the Journal of Science Fiction and Philosophy, 2018); and "Shakespeare's Supervillain: Coriolanus," in The Dark Side: A Supervillain Reader (University of Mississippi, forthcoming).

"

Transcending the Corporeal: The dystopic affect of Utopian visions

Edmund H Ankomah
Illinois State University, *ehankom@ilstu.edu*

Popular culture is saturated with figurations of utopian visions often enacted on dystopic spaces that threaten the mortal-corporeal. In this paper, I dialectically engage with the characterization and affect of this technocultural episteme.

This paper engages with the subject of corporeal reconfigurations and the desire to transcend mortal bodies, space and time especially as it plays out in two Science Fiction (SF) films: Pfister and Paglen's thriller "Transcendence" and Spike Jonze's "Her". I explore the arguments that both inform and are occasioned by the positing of singularity (mechanization of the human and humanization of the machine) as an imperative for world-improvement or utopia. To explore the dialectic birthed by the argument for techno-transcendence as world-improvement, the paper situates a discussion of Utopian world-construction and how the epistemological boundaries between figurations of utopia and dystopia are transgressed.

In Metamorphoses of Science Fiction (1979), Darko Suvin, in an attempt to situate the critical nexus between SF and Utopia, describes utopia as the 'sociopolitical subgenre of science fiction'. Critically engaging with SF's configuration of techno-utopic spaces, I navigate the central paradoxes in the desire to transcend mortal bodies; I argue that techno-utopia is enacted as dystopic violence on the mortal-corporeal.

While not negating the desirable utopic prospects of technology, the paper highlights and warns against not disregarding the dystopic possibilities of technological transcendence, as we see enacted in the SF texts. SF's enactment of futurity is set on a canvas of possibility and uncertainty. On this canvas, the confluence that seemingly erupts between the real, probable and uncertain is always dialectical. Thus, utopia becomes as much a valid enactment of technoculture, as much as dystopic figurations are.

Edmund Ankomah is a first-year doctoral student in Literary and Cultural Studies at Illinois State University. He is originally from Ghana, in West Africa, where he obtained his Bachelors and Master of Philosophy (MPhil) degrees in English. He graduated with Honors in both degrees. For his MPhil, he focused on the American literary ethos of transcendentalist philosophy. His thesis title was "Echoes of Emerson in Walt Whitman's Song of Myself." In this thesis, he explored issues of filiation, indebtedness and intertextuality in the works of 19th century America's foremost transcendentalist poets: Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman. He has taught in writing programs at the Department of English , University of Ghana, and is currently a Graduate Teaching Assistant at Illinois State University. His research interests include Transcendentalist philosophy, Posthumanism and Marxist eco-critique.

Deadly Women: Female Vampire Slayers and the Weapons they Use

U Melissa M Anyiwo
Curry College, *manyiwo@curry.edu*

A Criminal Justice Researcher and a Vampire Scholar provide a content analysis of the weapons chosen by female slayers to prove that they are as badass as their male counterparts.

The traditional image of female slayers connects many of the contradictions inherent in the fascination with the undead and fears of female sexuality. In simple terms, the vampiress and her slayers developed alongside the more general image of women as dangerous when released from patriarchal control. Warrior women offer images of strong independent women who take on the traditionally masculine heroic role - killing the bad guys, and saving the world while retaining her authentic self. Thus, are warrior women or tough girls evidence of a more equalitarian future for women, or are they merely fetishized images for primarily male consumption that continue to transmit lessons about the dangers of unfettered womanhood?

This content analysis examines female slayers and their violent preferences relative to weapons as they have evolved. What does weapon choice convey in terms of making meaning? Have females evolved with the types of weapons suited for their unique work? Does female weapon choice in the fantasy world reflect similar trends in reality? By exploring the traditional tools of the slayer used by Buffy Summers and her ilk (techniques like stakes, holy water, garlic, silver) and comparing it to more fantasy weapons employed by Selene (Underworld Series) we will unpack what happens when female warriors turn away from magic and pick up guns. In addition, female "baddies" and their weapon choices are examined. A Criminal Justice Researcher and a Vampire Scholar examine these and other questions to prove that female slayers are as badass as their male counterparts.

U. Melissa Anyiwo is a Professor and Coordinator of African American Studies at Curry College, Massachusetts and Co-Chair of the Vampire Studies Area of the National Popular Cultures Association. She has published multiple texts on the vampire as ethnic and gendered archetype, including Buffy Conquers the Academy (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013), Race in the Vampire Narrative (Sense, 2015), Gender in the Vampire Narrative (Sense, 2016) and Gender Warriors: Reading Contemporary Urban Fantasy (Sense, 2018). Finally, she starred in the documentary "Lestat, Louis, and the Vampire Phenomenon" for the Interview with the Vampire 20th Anniversary Edition DVD (Warner Brothers, 2014). Rebecca L Paynich has been involved in several research projects throughout her academic career including work as a researcher on the

Project Safe Neighborhood grant for the state of North Dakota. In addition to research in law enforcement, she conducts research in the criminal justice policy and crime analysis fields. She is the co-author of Fundamentals of Crime Mapping, and Law Enforcement in the United States, 2nd & 3rd editions. Rebecca Paynich earned a Master of Arts in Criminal Justice (2000) and Ph.D. in Political Science (2003) with an emphasis on the administration of justice from Washington State University.

Permaculturists vs. Technofuturists, Or: Anthropocene, And Then What?

Marius C Bomholt
Universidad Complutense, Madrid, *marius.bomholt@gmail.com*

Technology is changing our lives at an ever faster pace. How do we adapt to this change? Is Neo-Luddism the answer or should we embrace it wholeheartedly? Let's see how fiction deals with this dilemma.

In his recently published novel Technophoria (2020), the German author Niklas Maak has one of his characters articulate what this specific fictional creature perceives to be a fundamental dichotomy at play in contemporary Western societies: on the one hand, says Driessen, there are those who believe that in order to counteract the impending ecological doom and to create a tomorrow that's livable--and worth living--for most instead of heading straight into the abyss, we have to revert to a sort of pre-modern state of living, trying to undo the damage inflicted by two hundred years of the still nascent Anthropocene. These permaculturists, as Driessen and Maak call them, are opposed by those who, instead of shunning technology (or at least, resist the grip of our ever-accelerating technological advance), believe that right now, for the first time ever in human history, we hold the key to tackle most, if not all, of humankind's problems precisely by means of technology.

In the context of Maak's novel, the duality of permaculturists vs. technofuturists is clearly inscribed in a very contemporary ecological horizon, but the greater antagonism at work here is at least as old as the Industrial Revolution, when, at the dawn of the 19th century, English Luddites gathered to smash the mechanical looms that threatened to take away their work and livelihood (we all know how that ended...). I think, most of us would agree that now we have arrived at a threshold once more, as technology not only has an impact on our ecological future, but alters (and will continue to alter) the way we work, play, think and love.

My intention for the present paper is to illustrate and examine how this bipolar disposition--

oscillating between a growing wariness toward technology and its wholehearted endorsement--is negotiated in different fashions in a series of recent literary and audiovisual creations that seek to offer convincing portraits of the not-too-distant future. My, admittedly eclectic, selection includes novels such as Technophoria or Dave Eggers' The Circle (2013), a choice of Black Mirror episodes, plus a complementary look at such motion pictures as Spike Jonze's Her (2013) or Giorgios Lanthimos' The Lobster (2015). While its key texts are yet to be determined, the theoretical framework for the paper I propose would, naturally, draw on the works of post- and transhumanist theoreticians like Ray Brassier or Nick Bostrom as well as scholars associated with the different 'post-

growth' currents we find in contemporary philosophy (e.g. Niko Paech).

Marius Christian Bomholt is currently a TA at Universidad Complutense and the Instituto Universitario Ortega y Gasset in Madrid, Spain. Although he's from a literary theory background (in his dissertation he examined the more properly aesthetic dimensions of Slavoj Zizek's thought), he also has a keen interest in all things dystopian.

Science in Science Fiction: End of the Y Chromosome and Birth of the Many Sexes

Sumeyra Buran
University of California Riverside-Istanbul Medeniyet University, *sumeyra19@hotmail.com*

Gwyneth Jones's Life (2004) puts biogenetical science into science fiction futuring the DNA of tomorrow's children. The discovery of Transferred Y chromosome is the end of a male chromosome and birth of many sexes.

Gwyneth Jones's Life (2004) puts biotechnological science into science fiction portraying the story of a female bioscientist who tries to prove her discovery about the DNA of tomorrow's children. The novel gets some inspiration from the cytogenetics Barbara McClintock who was awarded the 1983 Nobel Prize discovering the jumps of DNA from one chromosome to another but the novel discovers the end of the Y chromosome. Life's bioscientist Anna Senoz discovers that the X chromosome jumps to the part of the Y which can be transferred to the X chromosome and so develops an infertile male Transferred Y chromosome. The genius AI in the novel designs this experimental virtual TY modeling which proves that the Y chromosome is a genetic fossil living shorter than the X and is getting lost in the evolutionary past of the human being. Is this discovery the end of a male chromosome? Will all human beings have two X chromosomes physically male and fertile or are all the grandchildren in the male line of TY chromosome going to be female? The novel questions whether it is possible that human sexuality can be changed and the future genetics can create as many sexes as possible. The novel also creates speculations of a Nuclear Transfer Child as a clone baby that parents can buy the trait for a color scheme out of a vanity-parenting catalog, and also explores the Transformationists as genetically transformed humans; the future of the human race who are born "with indetermined sex organs," or some others with "varied sexual orientation, confessed to being anatomically male or female." This study examines how science in science fiction engages with biogenetics which shapes public deliberation and consideration about scientific developments and their consequences for the society in which the sexual divide is no longer working.

Sumeyra Buran is a full-time tenure track assistant professor of English at Istanbul Medeniyet University. She is interested in science in sci-fi, women writers, science fiction, speculative fiction, technofeminism, cyber and cyborg, Anthropocene, posthumanism, ecofeminism, and women studies. She is a visiting scholar at the University of California Riverside awarded a research grant by the TUBITAK for her research project for associate professorship on violence against women in British Science Fiction. Dr. Buran will become co-editor with Sherryl Vint of a collection book Technologies of Feminist Speculative Fiction to be published by Palgrave. She is also the author of TechnoFeminist Science Fiction.

Worshipping the Robot: Religion, fandom, and Enthiran

Signe M. Cohen
Religious Studies Department, University of Missouri, *cohens@missouri.edu*

A popular Indian science fiction film about a scientist and his robot double - and the literal worship of the actor who plays them both

The fantastic commercial success of S. Shankar's 2010 Indian science fiction film Enthiran resulted in even greater popularity for the film's star actor, Rajinikanth, who plays the double part of a genius scientist and his robot doppelganger. Fan adoration of actors is nothing new, but in this case, Rajinikanth is literally worshipped as a god: Fans treat the release of his films as religious occasions, shave their heads and offer special prayers in temples, and throw coins and other sacrificial offerings at the movie screen when the actor appears. They treat the advertising cardboard cutouts bearing the actor's likeness as murtis (Hindu sacred images) and bathe them in milk as a religious offering.

What does it mean, then, when a robot is depicted on-screen by an actor who is himself worshipped as a god? I argue that the film, while drawing on Western science fiction classics like James Whale's Frankenstein, the Terminator films, and Metropolis in its visual imagery, also uses classical Hindu mythology (and the actor's popularity) to articulate the machine's potentiality for divinity. In so doing, the film upends the Western science fiction trope of the robot maker "playing god" and demonstrates that the potential for godhead exists simultaneously in the human scientist, the robot, and the adored actor who plays them both.

Signe Cohen is Associate Professor of South Asian Religions and Chair of the Religious Studies Department at the University of Missouri. She has published on ancient Hindu and Buddhist texts, comparative mythology, robots and religion, and Harry Potter. She is currently completing a book about ancient Hindu and Buddhist robot stories.

"The Fire Of Fever And The Purging Scourge": Utopia And Radical Violence In N.K. Jemisin's "The Ones Who Stay And Fight"

Micah K Donohue
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Confronting the increasingly apocalyptic reality of the United States today, Jemisin's "Fight" asks what isn't ethically justifiable to create a utopian "world where people have learned to love" that may only be attainable through violence.

Like Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," with which it is in explicit intertextual conversation, N.K. Jemisin's "The Ones Who Stay and Fight" (2018) examines the cost of utopia. In particular, "The Ones Who Stay and Fight" revisits a foundational but vexed trope in utopian literature, that of radical violence--violence that fundamentally alters the nature of an existing society so as to profoundly improve it. Socrates advocates banishing everyone over the age of ten beyond the city's walls in order to make possible a genuine transformation of the polis in Plato's Republic; Thomas More's Utopia begins, in a sense, with the invasion and renaming of Abraxa as Utopia; and Le Guin, in "Omelas," has the cultural prosperity of her eponymous city depend on terrible violence condensed to the harrowing abuse of an individual child. In the city of Um-Helat, the setting of "Fight," Jemisin incorporates socially transformative and individually fatal forms of violence, and the narrator of the story claims both forms of "blood sacrifice" are necessary to preserve the "postcolonial utopia" that is Um-Helat.

Erasmus claimed that More's libellus Utopia was a mirror in which contemporary Europe could be seen reflected; "Fight" is no less a reflection of twenty-first-century America. Confronting the increasingly apocalyptic environmental, racial, economic, and political reality of the United States today, Jemisin's "The Ones Who Stay and Fight" asks what isn't ethically justifiable (even ethically imperative) to create a "world where people have learned to love," a utopian elsewhere that may only be attainable after "the fire of fever and the purging scourge" of violence have been endured.

Micah K. Donohue is assistant professor of English at Eastern New Mexico University. His work focuses on speculative fiction in US, borderlands, and hemispheric American contexts.

Are You a Good Person? Gender Relations in Post-Apocalyptic Fiction

Julie Hugonny
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After the end of the world, a man and a woman face each other. "Are you a good person?", she asks. In this simple, yet overwhelming question lies the future of our humanity.

Post-apocalyptic fiction, or "last man" narratives, are overwhelmingly masculine. After the dust of a catastrophic event settles, Men stand as survivors, tragic heroes and witnesses to the extinction of humanity.

The last woman, when she exists at all, is little more than a commodity, a tool of survival and the promise of a rebirth of the human species. Generally presented as a damsel in distress, a vulnerable ball and chain the man must protect and defend, she is never quite his equal, but stands as a profoundly alien presence with which he must compromise.

In the short story "Not with a Bang", by Damon Knight, the last man alive finds himself pleading with his female companion, Louise Oliver, who refuses to repopulate the Earth without a marriage ceremony. Without a pastor at hand, the would-be couple stands in an absurd impasse. Setting the biological imperative of reproduction against the inflexibility of religious codes, Damon Knight exposes the hypocrisy on both sides. His fable also reveals the radical alterity between men and women. As Louise Oliver muses over the real intentions behind her companion's unconvincing gallantry, wondering if he's "really a nice man", he is debating the idea of forcing himself on her.

This doubt over man's core values, now that society and its rules have crumbled, is omnipresent in end-of-the-world scenarios, in which the last woman on Earth asks her male counterpart a simple and fundamental question: "Are you a good person?"
This inquiry, already ringing like an accusation, is an attempt to oppose the descent into a lawless state in which she would be greatly at risk. Is the last woman placing herself as the keeper of man's humanity and the moral center of this new world, or is she desperately clinging to an anachronism no less ridiculous than Louise Oliver's dream of a white wedding?

Julie Hugonny earned her Ph.D. in French literature from New York University in 2014. Her dissertation, titled The Last Man. Apocalyptic science fiction literature from the nineteenth century to World War I, grapples with disasters, epidemics, devolution and the end of the world. Her research interests include science fiction from its origin to present times, and depictions of monsters in literature and film.

Egoism and Altruism in Parasyte: The Maxim

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Imagine that one night your right hand is replaced by a ruthless alien cannibalistic parasite. What should you do? Let's think about right and wrong in the strange narrative universe of Parasyte: The Maxim.

The science fiction horror anime series Parasyte: The Maxim (2014-2015) is based on a classic manga series written by Hitoshi Iwaaki (1988-1995). This highly rated show has received even more attention recently after being added to Netflix in 2020. The show centers on the connection (literally!) between 17-year-old Shinichi Izumi and Migi, a shapeshifting parasite that devours and replaces Shinichi's right hand after failing to reach the intended target, the boy's brain. Now sharing his body with an alien being, Shinichi must negotiate his ordinary world of teachers, friends, and family, along with the secret and not at all ordinary world of alien parasites who masquerade as the humans that serve as their food source. Migi, on the other hand, must embark on a journey of self-discovery and manage to survive while dependent on a human host that seems weak, emotional, and irrational.

This show raises fascinating questions about egoism and altruism, the moral relevance of species and of the environment, and the extent to which morality is based on reason or the emotions, and more. My plan is to for the plot of the anime to structure my presentation and to explore various key questions in ethics as they emerge naturally. I will start with the stark initial contrast between Shinichi's fairly common-sensical moral outlook and Migi's unconstrained self-interest. Migi will kill anyone without compunction if it is necessary, while Shinichi recoils in horror and fright from the prospect of violence. Shinichi is willing to sacrifice himself to save others, while Migi finds this incomprehensible. Migi's egoism will prompt me to critique the familiar argument that psychological egoism is inevitable and assess the case for ethical egoism. As the series progresses, the contrast between the joined protagonists becomes much more complicated and more questions will surface.

Randall M. Jensen (Ph.D. in Philosophy, UCLA, 1997) is Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern College in Iowa. As a member of a very small department he teaches a wide range of courses, including Philosophy and Science Fiction. Since this class permits him to engage in two of his lifelong passions at the same time, it is one of his favorites. Jensen has contributed chapters to many books in the Philosophy and Popular Culture universe, including volumes on Battlestar Galactica, Ender's Game, Red Rising, Batman, Superman, and The Hobbit. Most recently he has written an essay on Okja and the moral status of animals.

The Meaning of Black Mirror

David Kyle Johnson
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Explore the meaning of Black Mirror with the editor of Wiley-Blackwell's new book Black Mirror and Philosophy. Is it a warning about the potential dangers of technology, or about the human condition?

Science fiction often gets unfairly labeled as mere escapism, when in reality it is often doing philosophy. But even when recognized as doing philosophy, it is often misunderstood. Charlie Brooker, for example, has said he finds it "irritating" when people see his show Black Mirror as "a show warning about the dangers of technology." But if Black Mirror--a show that depicts slightly advanced technology (like memory "grains," and "child surveillance" devices) going horribly wrong--isn't about the dangers of technology, what is it about? It is that question that I shall try to answer in this one hour presentation/Q&A. By looking at particular episodes, and chapters from my new book Black Mirror and Philosophy, we will see (as Brooker has said) that "it's not a technological problem" that Black Mirror is pointing to. "[I]t's a human one."

David Kyle Johnson is a professor of philosophy at King's College (PA), who also produces lecture series for The Great Courses (such as Sci-Phi: Science Fiction as Philosophy (2018), The Big Questions of Philosophy (2016), and Exploring Metaphysics (2014)). He has over 20 articles in books and journals (most of which are available for free on academia.edu), maintains two blogs for Psychology Today (Plato on Pop and A Logical Take), and publishes prolifically on the intersection of popular culture and philosophy. He is the Editor-in-Chief of The Palgrave Handbook of Popular Culture as Philosophy, and his latest books include Black Mirror and Philosophy: Dark Reflections (Blackwell-Wiley, 2019) and Exploring The Orville (forthcoming from McFarland press).

Molecular Adventures: Fiction, Imagination and Science of Biopunk

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Biopunk Stories and Science Changing the World Together

This paper critically examines the goals, ideals, and visions of the biopunk movement, which includes scientific and artistic approaches to genetic engineering, i.e., both renegade use of biotechnology and literary and visual representations of biopunk. Since the late 1980s, when biopunk emerged as a DIY molecular biology movement and as a corpus of fiction and art, the movement produced physical and intellectual chimeras in an unprecedented conflation between bioscience, technology and art.

Examples of biopunk fictions include, as a precursor, Thomas Disch's Camp Concentration (1967), Greg Bear's Blood Music (1983 as a short story; 1985 as a novel), Paul J. McAuley's "Gene Wars" (1991), Paul Di Filippo's Ribofunk (1996), Charles Stross' "Rogue Farm" (2003), Paul Bacigalupi's The Windup Girl (2009), Taiyo Fujii's Gene Mapper (2013) and Edward Ashton's Three Days in April (2015) together with biopunk anthologies such as Bio-Punk: Stories from the Far Side of Research (2013), edited by Ra Page and Growing Dread: Biopunk Visions (2011), edited by Erik Scott de Bie and Angel Leigh McCoy. Scientific biopunk groups include BioBricks Foundation, Four Thieves Vinegar, DIYBio, and The Slime Mould Collective.
In science and in literature, the poetics of biopunk focuses not only on experimentation and hybridity, but also on resistance against commercialized and institutionalized scientific practice. By directing attention toward these limitations and inequalities in the world of biotechnology, biopunk manifestos and fictions produce accounts that advocate grassroots action and citizen science in genetics.

Like biopunk science, biopunk literature has a dangerous, disagreeable side. It portrays not only the biopunk rebels, but shows the challenges of genetic editing: its failures and oddities, its messiness and its human side (as genetic science is activity that is both performed by and on humans). The accidents and experiments with living matter portrayed in biopunk literature ask for serious consideration of the use of genetics but also offer space where genetic science can dream. In biopunk art, molecular genetics is released from the superficial certainty about its enterprise, the outcomes and uses of genetic science still far from being fully clear and fully controllable. By speculating and extrapolating not only the societal but scientific trends, biopunk fictions allow biopunk science to examine and re-conceptualize itself.

Lejla Kucukalic received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Delaware. She taught at Columbia University and University of California Los Angeles and is currently at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi. She is the author of Philip K. Dick, Canonical Writer of the Digital Age (Routledge, 2008) and Biofictions: Literary and Visual Imagination in the Age of Biotechnology (Routledge, 2021) and articles about apocalyptic fiction and Arabic science fiction.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Who's the Greatest Leader of Them All?

Jimmy A LeDuc
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The Mirror Universe is a fascinating part of Star Trek. The Universe has produced some fascinating leaders. What makes these leaders unique? What might we learn from them to inform our own ethical practice?

Star Trek's mirror universe portrays an authoritarian approach to leadership, which echoes many of the fascist methods employed by leaders not only across history but in our contemporary world as well. Such practices rely on ruthless methods in order to survive what is perceived to be the cutthroat nature of business. Mirror Spock (the Original Series), Mirror Lorca (Star Trek: Discovery), and Mirror Phillipe Georgiou (Star Trek: Discovery) employ variations of the key tenets of what most leaders would consider to be highly unethical practices. However, each of these mirror leaders uses these brutal practices effectively in an effort to survive and be successful within the parameters of their environment. In reviewing their individual styles, we will explore whether there is anything positive we can learn from them to apply to leadership in our own universe. By exploring these three Mirror leaders, we will address if any of their techniques can be tools in working towards effective and ethical transformational leadership in our own universe. Is there anything that their leadership choices can teach us as we navigate today's global climate? If context really is king, perhaps the methods of the Mirror Universe can be used to inform our daily lives in a positive way.

Jimmy LeDuc holds an MFA in Drama from the University of Oklahoma and is pursuing his EdD in Leadership from Minnesota State University. He also serves as Theatre Instructor and Director at Saint Paul College, and is an active member of the Assessment Committee at Saint Paul College. Jimmy serves on the Convention Committee for the CONvergence Speculative Fiction Convention in Minneapolis each year and has served as a panel member as well. He has a passion for science fiction and fantasy, including a love of Star Trek that he brings into his teaching and leadership work as well.

Xenophilia and Xenophobia in Doctor Who

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The stories told in Doctor Who have been driven by two conflicting attitudes to the strange and alien. One is xenophilia, love of strange and alien things. The other is xenophobia, fear of the different.

The television series Doctor Who stands as part of a literature of fantastic travel that reaches back to our earliest epics, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh and the Odyssey. Such fictions have traditionally been marked by two conflicting attitudes towards the strange and alien. One of these is xenophilia, a love of and delight in the alien. The other is xenophobia, fear or hostility towards the alien. Every era of Doctor Who takes both attitudes to varying degrees and in different ways. The interplay of xenophilia and xenophobia in the show reflects, and often challenges, contemporary social attitudes to the foreign and unfamiliar.

Consideration of xenophilic and xenophobic attitudes in Doctor Who is philosophically interesting for at least three reason. Firstly, it helps us to reflect on our own attitudes to the unfamiliar and foreign. Secondly, it helps to raise questions about the extent and limit of our duty to be tolerant, accepting, friendly and loving. Thirdly, it raises que0stions about the moral status of producing art with xenophilic or xenophobic themes. Is there anything morally praiseworthy, at least under some circumstances, about producing art in which sympathetic characters celebrate the alien? Is there anything morally problematic, at least under some circumstances, with producing art in which sympathetic characters respond to the alien with hostility or fear?

Greg Littmann is associate professor in the Philosophy Department at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. He publishes on the philosophy of art, metaphysics, evolutionary epistemology, the philosophy of logic, and the philosophy of professional philosophy. He has also written numerous chapters that relate philosophy to popular culture for a general audience, including volumes on Alien, Black Mirror, Doctor Who, Dungeons and Dragons, Final Fantasy, Game of Thrones, Star Trek, Star Wars, The Walking Dead, and on authors Neil Gaiman and Stephen King.

You Were Never Really Here: Representations Of Artificial Intelligence In Charlie Brooker's Black Mirror

Kingsley Marshall
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This paper considers how science fiction series presents artificial intelligence and machine learning as a critical discourse within which the implications of the impact of technological change on society.

> "Once memories and dreams, the dead and ghosts become technologically reproducible."
> Friedrich Kittler (1999:11)

Black Mirror (2011-) is a science-fiction television series first broadcast on Channel 4 in the UK before moving to Netflix in 2016. The show presents a world in which mechanisation, automation and digitisation have disrupted individual identity, as well as social structures and traditions. Each episode typically makes use of technological change as a starting point, before exploring the impact and implications of the deployment of these technologies on a human scale by those that make use of them or are impacted by their use.

Science fiction often presents the future as dystopic, while real-life tech companies present an opposite view of providing positive outcomes for humanity. Black Mirror is situated in both spaces, using technocritical fictional representations to ask questions of the complex implications of the ethical deployment of new technology.

This paper considers how the series presents artificial intelligence and machine learning as a critical discourse within which the implications of the impact of technological change on society can be considered both in terms of future and present day applications and the ethics and philosophical concerns pertaining to the use of such technologies.

Dr Kingsley Marshall is a sound designer and music composer, and producer of short and micro-budget feature films. His academic research is centred on cultures of production, and the representation of real events - specifically the US presidency, asymmetrical conflict, and the ethics of artificial intelligence development as part of the 'fourth industrial revolution'.
He has published widely, and speaks regularly at international conferences. Recent publications include Reading Westworld (Palgrave, 2019), Listen to the Sounds: Music and Sound Design in Twin Peaks (Palgrave, 2020), Black Mirror (Bloomsbury, 2020) and the Handbook on Violence in Film and Media (Palgrave, 2020).

Beyond Jung's Red Book: Lessons To Humanity From Star Trek: The Original Series

Margaret Ann Mendenhall
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Through a Jungian analysis of various episodes from Star Trek: The Original Series, I will show that the impetus that drives Kirk is a furthering of Jung's life work as illustrated in The Red Book.

In 1913 C. G. Jung began work recording his adventures into the inner world of the unconscious in Liber Novus, better know simply as The Red Book. This was just prior to the outbreak of World War I and the flu pandemic of 1918. One interpretation of this text and its accompanying images is that Jung's unconscious was reacting to what he viewed as the mechanization of Western society, a culture that had lost its way and its religion.

Some fifty years later, Star Trek: The Original Series premiered, and some of the episodes in it are reminiscent to the imaginings that Jung transcribed in The Red Book. Not only that but there are a number of episodes in the series in which Captain Kirk orders that a society that had been stagnant but orderly and functioning, usually in service to a computer, be abandoned in favor of a more human society in all its messiness. A messy place where different races and those with different opinions had to accept each other and move forward together.

Through a Jungian analysis of various episodes from Star Trek: The Original Series, such as "The Return of the Archons, "The Apple", "A Taste of Armageddon," "This Side of Paradise," and others, I hope to show that the impetus that drives Captain Kirk to re-imagine these worlds is a furthering of Jung's life work as illustrated in The Red Book. To explain Jung's theories through the cultural phenomena that is Star Trek might help to make Jung's concepts and theories more accessible to the world. Especially now, when the world and its soul is in deep need of healing in many senses of the word.

Margaret Mendenhall, PhD, is a graduate of Pacifica Graduate Institute's Mythological Studies Program and has presented papers on Star Trek related topics at various conferences, including the Association for the Study of Women and Mythology, Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, Mythgard Institute and the American Academy of Religion, Western Regional Conference. She has written, performed and produced two one-woman shows: Dancing to the Edge of a Cliff: A Mythical Journey Toward Wholeness and Soul Trek: My Sci-Fi Journey Toward Wholeness, and produced and hosted the public access television series Myth Is All Around Us.

A Robust Anthropology: The Human Body as Interface with Reality

James L Papandrea
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Is the human being essentially a consciousness that is temporarily housed in a shell which can be traded or discarded? Or is the body an essential element of one's humanity?

Ever since Donovan's Brain, science fiction has wondered whether a person can be kept alive without a body. Recently shows like Altered Carbon and Upload take this concept into the realm of anthropology, implicitly asking whether the essence of a person includes the human body. Is the human being essentially a consciousness that is temporarily housed in a shell which can be traded or discarded? Or is the body an essential element of humanity, such that without the body, a person is incomplete?

The film, The Matrix, and its sequels proposed that even if it were possible to enhance the "reality" of "virtual reality" until the subject can no longer distinguish the virtual from the real, virtual reality nevertheless remains virtual and therefore less than real - which assumes that true reality is better than virtual reality, even if it sometimes feels less desirable. So if the perception of human contact can replace actual human contact (you can already have a conversation with an algorithm), then are we willing to accept the manipulation of our perception, settling for the virtual in the absence of the real? Or to put the same question in the terms of The Matrix, should we take the red pill? And if so, does that mean that the anthropology presented in shows like Altered Carbon and Upload fails because it assumes that a person can still be a whole person (or the same person) apart from a (particular) human body?

This presentation will argue that the human body is an essential part of a person, in part because the body is the interface between the mind and reality. Furthermore, the idea of a disembodied person is actually dehumanizing, and has consequences for the way human beings treat each other in the real world.

James L. Papandrea, PhD, is author of From Star Wars to Superman: Christ Figures in Science Fiction and Superhero Films and What Really Happens After We Die (both from Sophia Institute Press). He is Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Papandrea teaches courses in Religion in Film, and Christology as seen through the eyes of filmmakers, as well as courses in the history and theology of early and medieval Christianity. He is the author of over 20 traditionally published books, including some science fiction (written under a pen name).

A Loveless World: Anti-love Stories In Black Mirror

Robert G. Price
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The Netflix series Black Mirror is less a series about technology than it is a series about love. The show teaches us, as did St. Thomas and Irma Thomas, that love requires total sacrifice.

I propose to present a talk that elaborates on a chapter contribution I made to Black Mirror and Philosophy (2020), edited by David Kyle Johnson.

In this talk, I will argue that the hit Netflix series Black Mirror is less a series about technology than it is a series about love. More specifically, the show presents viewers with a deeply Classical understanding of the person and loving relationships, one that draws on the definition of love given to us by St. Thomas Aquinas: that to love well means giving everything to the one we love.

The clue to reading the show as a love story requires us to study another Thomas: the American singer Irma Thomas. Her song "Anyone Who Knows What Love Is (Will Understand?" appears regularly in the show, often at moments when love--or the lack of love--penetrates the narrative. For Irma Thomas views love as sacrificial. Love is difficult. It calls us outside of ourselves. As a result, love is rare in the show, and, though we might wish it otherwise, rare in real life. Drawing on examples from Black Mirror, I will discuss how the show challenges the audience to love as deeply as the two Thomases say we should and warns us against thinking that technology can improve loving human relationships.

Robert Price, Ph.D., is a lecturer at the University of Toronto. Most recently, Robert has contributed, or is writing, a chapter about love to Blackwell's Black Mirror and Philosophy, edited by David Kyle Johnson; two chapters for Open Court's forthcoming book KISS and Philosophy; a chapter in Indiana Jones and Philosophy; and a chapter to Lexington Book's forthcoming Theology and Rene Girard and Theology and H.P. Lovecraft.

Televisual Representations of LGBTQIA Characters: The Golden Girls, The Bold Type, and BoJack Horseman -- Panel Presentation

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Representation of LGBTQIA Characters on TV

Representation matters! Our proposal for a panel, entitled "Televisual Representations of LGBTQIA Characters: Golden Girls, The Bold Type, and BoJack Horseman" addresses the various ways in which TV represents the sexuality of TV characters. We start with a discussion led by Dr. Mona Rocha (Fresno State) of gay and lesbian representation in the famous sitcom television series The Golden Girls. Often hailed as revolutionary, The Golden Girls took on issues such as coming out as gay/lesbian or the fears surrounding HIV/AIDS. In her presentation, Dr. Rocha argues that The Golden Girls were acting as TV allies, inspiring acceptance into mainstream culture through the medium of TV. Our next presenter, graduate student Madison Neal (DePaul) discusses how the TV show The Bold Type casts light on what is like to be a young, queer person today. Neal argues that The Bold Type is more accurate in its representation of queer individuals, not falling trap to outdated tropes and stereotypes, thus combating the homophobia in our society. As Neal explains, The Bold Type not only focuses on specific LGBTQ issues, but the show also finds an important balance of normalizing the everyday life of queer people, humanizing them. Finally, Dr. James Rocha (Fresno State) examines how the Netflix show BoJack Horseman allows for a depiction of asexuality through the character of Todd Chavez. As such, BoJack Horseman gives a voice to otherwise marginalized peoples who might not fit the heternormative patriarchal model that is prevalent in our society. Thus, all of our presenters focus on instances where television and popular culture supported LGBTQIA individuals, allowing them to see themselves on the television screen and to gain greater acceptance and inclusion.

Mona Rocha has research interests in women's and ancient history, and has published, among others, on Psych and Philosophy and Westworld and Philosophy. Her co-authored monograph with James Rocha discusses Joss Whedon's works. James Rocha works on philosophy of law and ethics, and has published on Twin Peaks and Philosophy and The Rolling Stones and Philosophy, among others. Madison Neal is an MA student in WGS at DePaul with research interests in feminist philosophy and consent in queer relationships. She's also interested in the gender binary and performative behaviors, and reproductive rights. She has presented her work at regional conferences at Cal State Fresno and Cal State Bakersfield.

Bringing Fundamental Physics into Popular Culture: Relativity, Quantum Mechanics and String Theory in the Performing Arts

Mircea Sava
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Science is portrayed in the performing arts through inventive mechanisms: the highly specialized contemporary physical theories – relativity, quantum mechanics and string theory – succeed in reaching the popular domain by media such as theatre and dance.

Public performances as a means of communicating science to the lay audiences is not a new endeavour. However, with the ascent of new popular media, the performing arts were put to a test of adaptation as a channel of popular science. As a specific scientific domain, contemporary physics remains a difficult subject to approach using non-verbal communication and is traditionally thought of as being much more suited for the written or audio-visual media. This paper aims to analyse the mechanisms through which the highly specialized contemporary physical theories - relativity, quantum mechanics and string theory - succeed in reaching the popular domain by media such as theatre and dance. The play Spooky Action: The Drama of Quantum Mechanics (World Science Festival) or the contemporary dance Three Theories (Karole Armitage) are only two of such performances which deal with physics topics, for which scientists and artists cooperate in a common effort to use the human body in order to create these elaborate science shows. Placed at the boundary of science and art, frequently integrated into science festivals, these performances offer an unequal, though efficient mix of information and entertainment, in the quest of making science accessible and appealing to the public. The impact of these shows on the audience must be judged in an extended context, with the performing arts as only one link in a highly intricate communication and negotiation process of science in popular culture.

Mircea Sava, PhD is Lecturer at the Department of Media Studies at the University of Bucharest, where he teaches Public Relations, Media Theory and Popular Culture. His research interests include the study of the social aspects of science, science in popular culture and science communication. He is author of the book Science and Communication. From Popularization to Public Communication of Science (University of Bucharest Press, 2016). He is also Head of Communications at the University of Bucharest.

Star Trek and the Wrath of Melville: How to Read a Text, Let White Whales Be, and Tell the True Villains from the Heroes

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"Moby-Dick" and "Star Trek" have more in common than one might think. A keen understanding of Melville's novel forces us to question if Kirk and Spock are villains, fully deserving of the wrath of Khan.

Herman Melville's "Moby-Dick" (1851) and the various incarnations of "Star Trek" have a long and intertwined history. "The Original Series," "The Next Generation," "Deep Space 9," "Voyager," "Enterprise," and various movies in the "Star Trek" franchise all have take up Melville's novel, directly referencing the text and specifically dealing with issues of obsession. Though I will discuss such varied examples briefly, this presentation will focus on "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan" (dir. Nicholas Meyer; 1982), the second movie in the "Star Trek" franchise, arguing that the film adds to our understanding of the novel and vice-versa. By doing a close reading of a single chapter in "Moby-Dick" we will come to see how meaning is deconstructively established in any text. By thinking through the ways in which "The Wrath of Khan" is almost an inverse telling of Melville's story, we will see the ways in which, for instance Queequeg's and Spock's coffins operate toward similar ends but with opposite values. And by investigating the ways in which identity is fluid in the film and the book, we will come to question just who is the villain and who is the hero--pondering, in the end, if the Federation itself is perhaps the scourge of the "Star Trek" universe.

H. Peter Steeves is Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Humanities Center at DePaul University, Chicago, IL where he specializes in phenomenology, ethics, and philosophy of science. Steeves is the author of nine books, including: "Founding Community" (Kluwer, 1998); "The Things Themselves" (SUNY P, 2006); "Beautiful, Bright, and Blinding: Phenomenological Aesthetics and the Life of Art" (SUNY P, 2017); and "Being and Showtime" (Sawbuck Books, 2020). He has published 150 book chapters/articles, presented 200 academic lectures, been the recipient of a Fulbright and an NEH grant, and was a member of an astrobiology research group at NASA.

Building a Better Bride: Female Frankenstein Monsters in the Comics

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The Bride of Frankenstein flourishes in popular culture inspired by Mary Shelley's novel, and she has had an especially intriguing career in comics. This paper will survey these works.

Mary Shelley's novel Frankenstein is now over two hundred years old and continues to inspire new versions in all types of media. The comics have been especially prolific. According to a recent search of the Grand Comics Database, there are over four thousand adaptations of the Frankenstein story in comic books and graphics novels. To this corpus, there are also an uncounted number of representations of the novel's characters and themes in cartoons and comic strips. Collectively, these comics represent a massive text base to explore the reception of Shelley's work in modern culture, but scholarship on this material remains limited. As part of my ongoing work in cataloging representations of Frankenstein in comics, I've started to expand the scope of previous research by more fully exploring the careers of the Creature and his creator, Victor Frankenstein, in retellings, linked texts (such as prequels and sequels), and recastings. In this presentation, I'd like to focus on the figure of the Bride, using Erin Hawley's recent essay "The Bride and Her Afterlife: Female Frankenstein Monsters on Page and Screen" (2015) to guide my discussion.

The Bride of Frankenstein is an interesting character. Shelley mentions her but has Victor abort her, and it is filmmaker James Whale and makeup artist Jack Pierce that brought her to life in the iconic portrayal by Elsa Lancaster. This version of the character has influenced many recastings of the story in humor comics (such as Archie, The Far Side, Lio, and The Simpsons, as well as media-tie-ins to Peanuts and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles), but the comics also offer more thoughtful continuations of the novel/film, such as those produced by DC Comics as part of Frankenstein, Agent of S.H.A.D.E. and Dynamite Entertainment's Dean Koontz's Frankenstein and Legenderry: Red Sonja. Retellings also provide some insight into the character, such as Topps Comics' Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. Further comics offer innovative approaches to recasting the Bride, as attested by Zenoscope's Screwed, IDW's Madman & Monster and Image Comics' Madame Frankenstein. All of these attest to the vitality of character of the Bride as a fundamental part of the modern Frankenstein story and the power she holds over our imagination.

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Michael is also active in the Northeast Popular Culture/American Culture Association and

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Suits, Shells, and Skins: "Becoming Japanese" in Contemporary American Science Fiction

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This presentation explores new trends in Techno-Orientalism, arguing that Hollywood productions like Pacific Rim reveal an evolving narrative of the US-Japan relationship and changing discourse on race and ethnicity in America.

This presentation examines new trends in Techno-Orientalism, the phenomenon of signifying the future through Asian bodies, culture, and technologies in Western science fiction literature and film. Seen as a Western response to anxiety over perceived Asian economic, technological, and cultural ascendance, this paper focuses on images of Japan in American SF and the specific ways that Japanese people and culture are incorporated into American tales of the future. Through a discussion of the feature films Pacific Rim (2009) and Ghost in the Shell (2017) and the Netflix production Altered Carbon (2018), it argues that new Hollywood productions frequently merge white American protagonists with Japanese cultural products, bodies, and minds, a union that suggests not only an evolving narrative about the US-Japan relationship but also of changing discourse on the connection between race/ethnicity and technology in America.

Amanda Weiss is Assistant Professor of Japanese at Georgia Institute of Technology, where she teaches courses on Japanese media and society. She also leads a VIP or Vertically Integrated Project in East Asian Media. VIP student projects have included archival work, translation, photography, and media analysis. Her current book project, Han Heroes and Yamato Warriors: Competing Masculinities in East Asian War Cinema, explores contemporary East Asian remembrance of WWII.

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