

Collection cfp: Sexing Science Fiction

Editors: Sherry Ginn, Ph.D.

Michael G. Cornelius, Ph.D.

A scholarly treatment of the issue of Sex in Science Fiction is currently under consideration for publication by McFarland Publishers as part of its Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy series (series editors Donald E. Palumbo and C. W. Sullivan III). This book, tentatively entitled *Sexing Science Fiction*, will be a collection of articles, with the general objective of filling the gap in the literature about this topic. Although treatments of the issues surrounding sexuality have been published, none has been so recently, and this book aims to explore the myriad ways in which authors writing in the genre, regardless of format (e.g., print, film, television, etc.), envision the ways in which different beings express this most fundamental of behaviors.

At its core, the construct of “science fiction” is something of an oxymoron. “Fiction” denotes fantasy, fancy, that which is divorced from “reality.” Certainly fiction has always spoke to and explored what is considered to be real or reality, but in its very construction one sees the seeds for a departure from the tangible and into realms that exist beyond this real world. “Science,” however, suggests a specific discipline grounded in reality, based on predictable principles of action and inaction. Science is the study of the physical world in all its varied manifestations; it relies on observation, experimentation, and the judicious recording and interpretation of reality and fact. The two together, then, create that aforementioned oxymoron: “science fiction,” which for all intents and purposes could be translated into “real unreality.” More than a genre like fantasy, which creates entirely new realms of possibility, science fiction constructs its possibilities from what is real, from what is, indeed, possible, or conceivably so. The fact that science fiction and its most common manifestations—space flight, technology, alien realms—are so connected to the future, and to our visions and re-visions of the future, suggests that the genre is concerned not with what is unreal, but rather with what may be real, or may soon be real. The flights of fancy that govern science fiction are grounded in the tangible, in the realm of what is possible, real, hoped for, and feared.

Of course, in life and in fiction, few things are more “hoped for” or “feared” than sex, and sex’s many manifestations in our world delight, confound, and enrage. Debate about sex, its role and its function, its form and its meaning, permeate every aspect of our culture—philosophically, ideologically, culturally, religiously, politically. Sex is both “real” and “unreal” or, perhaps, “surreal.” We discuss the future of sex and sexuality quite vociferously. It is part of us, something we both acknowledge and dissuade, something we are both prideful of and ashamed of as a culture, as individuals, as members of sexually-based relationships.

This collection, then, looks to understand and explore these two areas of “unreal reality,” to note ways in which our culture’s continually changing and evolving mores of sex and sexuality are reflected in, dissected by, and deconstructed through the genre of science fiction. The editors would like to see papers that challenge and affirm the ways in which sex and sexuality relate to the genre of science fiction itself. Both of these fashioned notions—sex and sexuality and the genre of science fiction—should be forefront in the

work, as ways in which to interrogate specific texts, symbols, movements, writers, subgenres, or other like areas.

The following is a suggested grouping of topics, but it is by no means exhaustive. This list is meant merely as a preliminary guideline. All relevant topics related to Sex in Science Fiction will be considered.

- Manifestations of female or male sexuality as differentiated or highlighted by the genre of science fiction
- Sexuality in general as it relates to the genre as a whole
- Un- or non-gendered sexuality found in science fiction
- Sexual identity
- Sexuality and reproduction (both inter- and intra-species)
- Sexuality and technology

Deadline for formal proposals is 1 December 2010. Send abstracts of 500 words to Sherry at DoctorGinn@gmail.com. Use this address for any questions you may have concerning the project as well.

Please cross-list where appropriate.

Editor Sherry Ginn is the author of *Our Space, Our Place: Women in the Worlds of Science Fiction Television* (2005). Her monograph on power and control in the Whedonverses will be published by McFarland in 2011.

Michael G. Cornelius is the author/editor of eleven books, including two previous collections for McFarland Press, three works for Chelsea House, and several works of fiction.

Sherry Ginn, Ph.D.
Rowan Cabarrus Community College
1531 Trinity Church Rd
Concord, NC 28027
USA
DoctorGinn@gmail.com

Michael G. Cornelius, Ph.D.
Department of English and Mass Communications
Wilson College
1015 Philadelphia Ave
Chambersburg, PA 17201
USA
mcornelius@wilson.edu