



"There is no getting away from the machine. It is only the use of it that is in your control."
- Jacques Barzun -

The A/PCA Conference: Science Fiction

"The function of science fiction, in common phrase is to provide social commentary with gadgets."
-"Daleks, Cybermen, Xoanon, and the Key to Time Mortal Engines and Manicheism in the Television Series, *Doctor Who*", Frank W. Oglesbee

"Any criticism that ignores the ideological functions of paraliterature (or any literature) upholds a formalism that is itself guilty of an ideology that affirms the status quo."
-"Ideological Functions of Science Fiction: Limitations and Possibilities of a Critical Approach to Popular Literature", H.J. Schulz

"... without those narratives, our abilities to cope with technological change would be greatly impaired."
-"Science Fiction as Modern Mythos: The Archetypes of Science", C.W. Spinks

"Science fiction literature frequently involves themes which relate to the philosophy of mind."
-"Philosophy of Mind and Science Fiction", Lee F. Werth

"We all wonder whether the horrors and madness of the twentieth century will ever be overcome."
-"Madness in the Psychological Horror Film", Francis Shor

"... young academics who had wanted to write literary criticism of science fiction, but had been intimidated from doing so by fear that such work would seem inconsequential."
"... and many tend to model their own work along structuralist theoretical lines sketched by these two."
"The true SF buff waits for the solution to become manifest, and is then disappointed."
-"Writers of the 'Golden Age': Pop Fiction, Metafiction, and Science Fiction", Thomas J. Remington

"... ready to be sacrificed, dismembered and scattered around, only to produce again, from this dissemination of fragments, narrative modes and traditions, a new harvest of meanings."
"... how to 're-invent themselves and their universe' chiefly through science fiction."
-"Kurt Vonnegut's Carousel of Narrative Forms", Marcel Cornis-Pop

Approximately 23 of the approximately 416 sessions at the A/PCA conference dealt approximately with science fiction (that's approximately 5.5%).

Insofar as these sessions dealt with science fiction, in regards to a certain methodological machinery brought to bear upon objects of interest for criticism or analysis, they dealt with science fiction. They handled science fiction.

Insofar as these sessions dealt with a certain methodological machinery brought to bear upon objects of interest for criticism or analysis, they marked the efficacy, or inefficacy, of the application of the machinery. They laid the cards out and indicated the strength of the hand.

Insofar as these machines marked out the operation of a certain methodological machinery and further marked out the demarcation of a certain social machinery, these machines were put into motion without grounding the relationship between the construction of machines which construct the machinery of construction of a narrative machinery which demarcates the social machinery, and the very putting into motion of these machines as another (or a further) certain narrative machinery demarcating a certain social machinery. These stories about stories with significant social implications did not implicate themselves socially. These analyses were not analyzed.

Insofar as these analyses were analyzed they were analyzed insofar as the interest in the machine was outlined as an interest in knowledge. This interest in knowledge was not outlined. In this regard, it could be said that knowledge (particularly as an interest) was not a machine to speak of (i.e. was not spoken of either as a machine or an interest—and in this respect, interest in knowledge was not spoken of as a machine, which is to say, as a production).

Insofar as this was the case, usage, seen in its particular identified sense (i.e. as in 'this usage'), was seen as an indication of a certain machinery, but was not seen as the machinery which identifies the machinery and produces this identification as a production of knowledge which is administered towards further productions of usage and itself. This machinery (all this machinery) remains in control of its use. This machinery: use. This use: machinery. It is only (the exception and the repetition of the exception) your control (which will control you) speaking.

This contradiction is yet to be approximated as a topic.

How was it? ... well, it was fun, but it was very tiring. And even though I could stand getting tired (partly because the possibility of such variety was always at first exciting and partly because the prospect of reporting on them was also exciting) I don't think that it was very rewarding. It's not as if I were tired-out from so many intriguing deliveries; that is, that it became difficult to concentrate because the intelligence of the discourse was high. I was tired merely because there was so much of it. Actually, if I were a little more intelligent, I might have found it a bit more inspiring. I did find it interesting, but I did not find it inspiring. Which means that the interest, insofar as it was agreeable, was trivial, and insofar as it was disagreeable, it was, in some sense, odd. For instance, the occurrence of a particular prefix modifying the sense of objects of their interest in the wake (and I only assume this because of certain references to Barthes, Foucault, Kristeva, and Derrida—apart from any clearly recognizable instance in which any attempt would have been made to come to any terms, even if only descriptively, with these people—particularly in relation to the latter when speaking about Samuel Delany and someone said: "Oh yes ... he's into Derrida ... but, you see, that's different; that's **meta**-science-fiction") of structuralist and post-structuralist criticism, the prefix "meta". The employment of this prefix as indicative of an affiliation to these movements is curious inasmuch as it seems to re-inscribe a notion of an outside to the text, to self-referentiality. This, for reasons which, if not already apparent to you, would take more time than I care for explanation here, strikes me as odd. Apart from that, a lot of the analyses were fairly predictable in their outcome: one could have, I'm sure, merely read the abstract at the back of the programme if all that one wanted was a sense of the issue. Sometimes this seemed so obvious as to seem a bit peculiar to spend time overstating it: for instance, is there anyone out there who does not see *Star Trek* (specifically *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, but ...) as an example of American Imperialism? The interesting thing might be that in spite of that observation (and given that one would **want** to resist American Imperialism) one could relax one's reserve and still think it was fun. Much like the conference. This contradiction is yet to be approximated as a topic.

Michael Boyce

"This machine is on the move I'm looking out for number one."
- John Lydon

"Isn't your fascination with this subject, this genre, indicative of a certain need to fulfill a deemed necessary experience vicariously, much like its general audience could be said to be doing, and hence, an indication of a general social need which is unfulfilled? If so, or if not, why has this not yet been addressed?"
- A questioner

"Well I think it probably has in some way."
- An answerer

