

Journey Planet 21

The Science Fiction Year



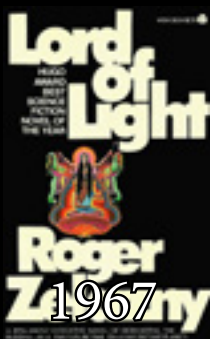
1963



1939



1954



1967



1937



1996



1982



1938



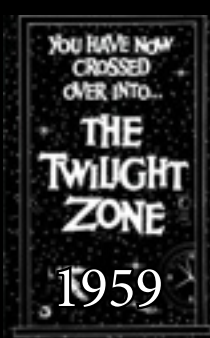
1999



1991



1984



1959



1987



1967



1948

Table of Contents

Page 4 - Editorials
by Chris Garcia, Warren Buff, and James Bacon

Page 13 - 1939
by Ben Yalow

Page 18 - 1953: The Greatest Year in Science Fiction
by Brad Lyau

Page 21 - Some Significant Years
by Juan Sanmiguel

Page 24 - 1967
by Warren Buff

Page 30 - 1999 - The Best Year Ever
by Chris Garcia

Page 35 - The Greatest Year
by Chuck Serface



Journey Planet 21
James Bacon, Warren Buff, Chris Garcia
~Editors~

~Editorials~

Christopher J Garcia

Warren Buff came up with the idea for the issue, and I have to say WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?!?!?! It's such a natural fit for a themed zine like *Journey Planet* that I can't believe that we hadn't come up with it. It's a great concept, and I'm glad that we're doing it now!

What's funny is that I'd been thinking about years. Years and Science Fiction, to be exact. I was working with Sasquan to develop a history exhibit. I've done this sort of thing before, but this time I had a plan. I was going to show the Hugo award statues from each year, and along with them, a single artifact representing something from that year in fandom. I spent weeks going through the history of fandom and science fiction, looking at every event I could. I'd made several decisions based on re-reading things like *All Our Yesterdays* and *A Wealth of Fable*. Trying to find a single object to represent a year is not easy. Let's take 1978. You've got the thing most directly impacting Fandom, that being the release of *Warhoon 28*, Richard Bergeron's legendary collection of Walt Willis' fan writing. That one would be a no-brainer, right? Well, if you want to make things a little bit broader, you also have *Hardware Wars*, the most widely-seen fan film in history. A theoretical trailer to an up-coming film, *Hardware Wars* might be the best parody of *Star Wars* ever produced. Bob Wilkins, host of the Bay Area's *Creature Features*, sold off his entire collection of films a couple of years before his death. He sold everything EXCEPT for *Hardware Wars*. To me, that's a very good candidate. Then, a bit broader into the science fiction field, you've got Jeff Wayne's *War of the Worlds*, a musical telling of H.G. Wells' novel. It's so much fun, and it's one of the few areas where I could easily incorporate audio. And you'd also have novels like *IQ 83*. Which do you choose?

Of course, when I found out I'd be a Dad with a two week old when WorldCon happened, I dropped it to help Vanessa through the pregnancy, but the idea's there, right?

Then, you have a year like 1977. It's the easiest year ever – 1977 is *Star Wars*. Not only in science fiction, not only in fandom, but in AMERICA, and various other places as well. It's also probably the most important year in science fiction overall, really. *Star Wars* funda-

mentally changed the way that films were produced, packaged, and most importantly, consumed. It changed science fiction forever, and even established a new fandom. You have 1975, the year of *Mothership Connection* by George Clinton, as well as the start of Laser Books, which had all those incredible Kelly Freas covers. It also had a really important impact on how books were sold, targeting major retailers like Gold Circle. There was also *The Female Man*, and zines like *Janus*, which represent the introduction of feminism into fandom.

Years matter. Even if we can't totally agree that 1999 is the best year in the history of Science Fiction (and it IS, no doubt), years represent moments in time, and they bleed. 1975 bled into 1976, and then into the 80s. 1999 bled into 2000 and 2001, and through to today. Years represent mile markers, and they make it possible for us to better understand how things blow up. Find the source of the explosion and follow the impacts out from ground zero. .

For me, 2015 will be a giant turning point in the story of my life. 2014, I had my mid-life crisis, got engaged, ran a film festival, met some incredible people, went through some serious money problems, moved to the mountains, learned that I love Kale, was GoH at Westercon, and on and on and on. In my life, only 2011 comes close (Mold bloom forcing me to move, first Fan GoH gigs, the Hugo, etc.) and I'm looking forward to 2015 being another incredible year.

Of course, with a kid coming, it'll be sleep-deprived.

So, enjoy this issue, the first *Journey Planet* of 2015, and we're so excited to be nominated for Best Fanzine for the 4th time. I believe that makes me a 19-time Hugo nominee!



Warren Buff

We were at JOFcon, walking back from dinner, when Ben Yalow mentioned he was disappointed to hear that Sasquan wouldn't be doing Retro Hugos. When I asked him why, he quite plainly stated that it was because 1939 was the greatest year in science fiction history. That got me thinking.

What was the greatest year in the genre's history? Was there ever quite an *anno mirabilis* for our beloved stories of what could be? Did I agree with Ben's assessment, or find another year stronger?

Ultimately, both of us have our say in this issue, and my great disappointment was that I didn't have enough focus to set a reasonably distant deadline and check back in with folks to get articles out of them. I did hear a lot of suggestions from some very knowledgeable fans who didn't have time to write a piece on a short deadline (or another short deadline, or another), some of which I'll share here for the sake of revealing some of what we were aiming for.

Many folks thought someone would surely tackle 1926. In that regard, I must say they were all wrong.

Bud Webster suggested 1949 on the strength of two great anthologies from Margulies and Freund, Weinbaum's *A Martian Odyssey*, and the first issue of *Fantasy & Science Fiction*.

Curt Phillips split the difference on greatness, calling 1939 science fiction's best year, while he considered 1934 its most important year.

Ted White felt his choices would either be too obvious (1926 or 1938) or too personal (he listed several important years in his relationship with science fiction, much like James Bacon's article).

I hadn't thought about it until beginning to write this editorial, but all three of those scholarly fen reside in the state of Virginia. I'm blessed to be a short drive away from such a knowledge of our field's history.

Samuel Montgomery-Blinn suggested that 1977 should get serious consideration for the release of *Star Wars*. Michael Walsh suggested 1941 (and I suppose the data in Ben's article could be used to argue that case).

In short, we got some really good feedback, even if we didn't out with a reasonable plan for getting submissions from folks. I'll take the

blame for that, having never worked on an editorial team before.

The delays were compounded by a couple of wonderful, distracting weekends. In February, Chris and Vanessa were married at the Computer History Museum in Santa Clara. Given the guest list, it felt a lot like a really good consuite, which means it probably took as much of Chris's brain as planning Corflu did. The following month, I married Mandy in Raleigh. Our guest list wasn't quite as fannish, though a number of good fannish friends were among the assembly. We didn't have nearly the logistical components to our wedding that Chris and Vanessa did (no tech, for starters), though it still ate my brain for the weeks leading up to the big day.

Ultimately, we got enough material together for a small issue, which means it can see print relatively easily. Hopefully, we can stir up this conversation a bit, and get folks thinking about what years they've found great in science fiction. Enjoy!

About the Art from Chris

Architecture is amazing!

When I knew that we were doing this issue based around years, I knew I wanted to include architectural images. Visions of the future must deal with Architecture, as it is the most visible expression of time and place. The buildings and details I selected were all gathered to express the times related in the articles... or that I just thought were really cool!

Buildings/Projects Featured

Page 11 - Palace of the Soviets (Never Built)

Page 12 - Detail of Chanin Building, New York

Page 17 - La Corbusier's Palace of the Assembly, Chandigarh, India

Page 22 - The Theme Building at LAX

Page 23 - Sydney's Tower at Australia Square

Page 27 - Montreal's Habitat 67

Page 28 - Proposal for the Golden Gate Water Desalination Plant

Page 29 - Belgrade's Masterplan (underway)

Page 34 - Frank Lloyd Wright's concept for a Grand Boulevard for LA

BACover - The Atrium Lobby of the Hyatt Regency San Francisco

James Bacon

1981

Memories are vague, and I am unsure what exactly was great about this year, but I was a child and remember vividly seeing one particular movie which I loved:

Flash Gordon.

That's right. I was oblivious to the *Star Wars* phenomenon that was going on; I had not yet seen the movie, and was instead enjoying science fiction on the television and movies, mostly the ones that seemed to interest Dad. *Flash Gordon* was amazing, and later when we got a VHS player, along with *Star Wars*, *The Great Escape*, *A Bridge Too Far* and others, we would watch and rewatch *Flash Gordon* until the tape was worn.

Dad took us to see it in Dun Laoghaire, at the Cinema.

I loved Queen at the time – I thought their music was amazing, and when I got my first Walkman, I soon had a cassette copy of their greatest hits and listened non-stop, along with the actual album from the movie.

Flash Gordon was always on in the house, we all knew the words line by line, and it was hilarious, and even now, if I shout out, 'Not the bore worms,' my brothers know what's going on.

It outlasted itself, and when Ted came along and featured *Flash Gordon* so much, we all understood, like if you were invited to a party where Sam J. Jones was at, everyone in the whole world would understand you bailing out, and we got that, along with the laughter.

Christ, we never laughed so much, everything – Shots, Cocaine Death to Ming, it was our family Christmas movie in 2012 and it was amazingly brilliant cause we were a *Flash Gordon* household.

The year of *Flash Gordon*. And *The Fall Guy*, and *Diff'rent Strokes* and *The Incredible Hulk*.

1978.

But 1978 must have been a better year for me. Yeah. Like *Battlestar Galactica*. I remember dad ensuring we saw the TV movie, and we watched the series and also the one with Pegasus, which was great. We had beans and bread and eggs for lunch that day. It was a Saturday and it was grand stuff, we just loved the militaristic feel to the science fiction. And you know, I can remember now the ploy of viper pilots trying to pretend they were multiple squadrons, and Pegasus just disappearing like she did.

There was also *Battle of the Planets* on BBC, a bastardised version of Gatchaman, but how was I to know and wasn't it utterly brilliant in its own way, and it was animé and it was awesome.

Grange Hill a TV school drama, with Tucker and a load of wonderful girls. Who I immediately fell in love with. It was high drama, in the afternoon, and close to the bone and I loved it.

The California Highway Patrol in the form of Ponch and John were on every Saturday, God I loved that, the beat of the drum and then the really heavy bass and then the synth, it was all so exciting and warm and big bikes and just amazing. *CHiP's* side by side, spiralling onto the Freeway,

And the sleezy bit of music and the weaving and patrol cars bull bars.

But oh God, *The Waltons* and *Little House on the Prairie*, I probably hated these the most, and it was cause they so resembled Ireland in their backward slavish to the church ways and shitty lives with feck all, if ever a couple of places wanted napalming, it was Walton Mountain and that Damn House. I hated them. But we had *Doctor Who* on the Telly and it was a good one.

Wait. 1979.

Yeah 1979 had *Buck Rogers*, that sense of spinning through time, the music so serious and building and *Buck Rogers* coming back to Earth, and Captain Wilma Dearing. Holy Ghod. Now we were talking. And Hawk, and Dr. Prepostrous and Dr. Huewart. It was no where as good as *Battlestar* but there was a lot of time in the week.

And of course, the sound of Dixie and *The Dukes of Hazzard*. Every schoolboy would scream like a horn when we left school, the sound of The General Lee, and visions of a 1969 Dodge Charger launching into the sky, the horn blasting with Cletus in pursuit. Just the good old boys, never meaning no harm, beats all you've never saw, been in trouble with the law, since the day they was born. I tell you there was an innocence that is lost now, can you imagine America, giving us Irish kids Dixie and Daisy Duke.

Later it would be the *A-Team*.

And this is the problem I am faced with. Apart from utter confusion about being sure I saw *Star Wars* on Telly, and it was broadcast in 1982 in the UK, and knowing that I saw *Return of the Jedi* and that was in the Cinema, means I probably only saw *Star Wars* in 1984, when it was broadcast at Christmas. That I watched it hundred of times as we video recorded it, is of little interest to puritans. We may have rented it. It is hard to know.

Journey Planet 21

So the TV of the seventies and eighties are probably the most important thing to me. It introduced me to science fiction, America, and Americana. I loved it. 1986 was a big year, as I read my first *2000AD*. I had read or had comics read to me from the age of 4. War comics.

1989 was perhaps a vital year, as I walked into a comic shop and met fandom.

Yet I find it really hard to pinpoint a great year. Mostly as I wasn't there probably in the paying attention and alert to what is happening way. It is also very subjective, and contradictory. Every time I find a year I like, I realise it is only part of what I consider to be great.

So, I am left in an unusual position, but it leaves me with a simple solution. They've been grand times, and I have loved them, and every minute was great.

[illegible]

It's been an amazing yet unusual experience, here in Heathrow, London. The Hugo nominations were piped through and a packed room waited. Emma Newman and Pete Newman were the first people in the room to be nominated for [Tea and Jeopardy](#), then [Journey Planet](#) with Colin Harris and myself there and Niall Harrison of [Strange Horizons](#).

The Hugo's are such a wonderful and amazing thing, they'll out live me. I'm so grateful. It feels so nice that we do these fanzines on things we like and then people like it so much they nominate us. It's a huge honour and motivational pat on the shoulder and yet.

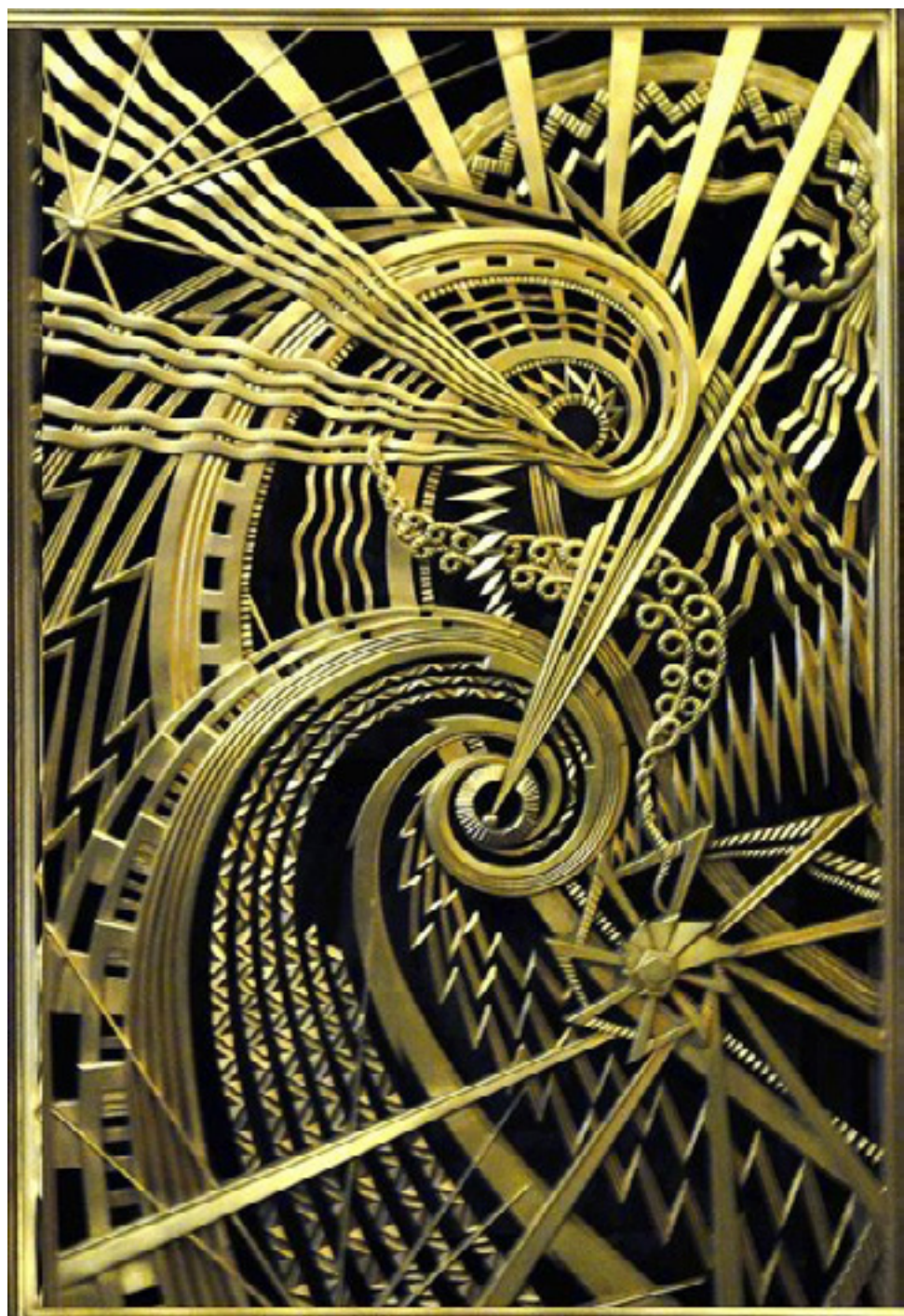
I was sad to not see other zines I enjoy and nominated on the list. So from now on I want to recommend other zines each issue. This issue we'll mention two but look at them in more detail later. [Banana Wings](#) by Claire Brialey and Mark Plummer and [Big Sky](#) by Pete Young.

We'll welcome suggestions. We'll list them, let us know - journeyplanet@gmail.com

We are working on some future issues themed as follows; Art, Dan Dare, Richard III, Penguin Books, Epistolary & Correspondence and Super Heroes. If you are interested in an element and would like to write - let us know.

For now my thanks. I feel lucky, that my hobby is appreciated, invigorated, humbled and honoured. You're a great fecking bunch!







~1939 by Ben Yalow~

What do we mean by the greatest year in SF? I believe that there are a few things that go into it.

There need to be a bunch of really major stories published – ones that change the field, or are memorable long after being written. Or, it can also be the beginning year of a trend that changes the field, and leaves us discussing Before-<X> and After-<X> as different eras.

And I believe that 1939 definitely fell into the latter category, and might well qualify under the first one, as well.

The key part of 1939 is that Campbell finally was completely in charge of *Astounding*; there was no giant back inventory of material bought before he took over completely in May of 1938. He still hadn't developed / discovered the set of writers that would characterize the Golden Age, but they were starting to show up in his pages.

And 1939 was also the year that Campbell started *Unknown* – a magazine that changed fantasy, and made it harder to draw the clear boundary between SF and fantasy, as well as introducing humor and realism into fantasy. Unfortunately, the paper shortages during the war meant that *Unknown* only lasted until 1943 (it started as a monthly, then went bimonthly in 1941), but it was responsible for expanding fantasy beyond the horror fiction that *Weird Tales* published. So let's look at 1939, and the next few years of *ASF* and *Unknown*.

1939:

ASF:

Smith: beginning parts of *Gray Lensman* (the four *Lensman* books essentially were responsible for the galactic civilization meme in the genre; *Gray*

Journey Planet 21

Lensman was the second book in the series, and the first to start by telling you that everything you thought you knew in the first was wrong).

Williamson: *The Crucible of Power, One Against the Legion*

Simak: *Cosmic Engineers*

Campbell: “Cloak of Aesir” (pretty much the last of the Don A. Stuart stories, in which Campbell, under a pen name, set out to show the field what kinds of stories he, as an editor, would look for).

Del Rey: “The Day Is Done”

Van Vogt: “Black Destroyer” (his first story), “Discord in Scarlet”

Heinlein: “Life-Line” (his first story), “Misfit”

Sturgeon: “Ether Breather” (his first genre story, followed, a month later, by another story in *Unknown*)

And Asimov’s “Trends” was published in *ASF*, as well that year – not a great story, but Asimov would hit his stride over the next few years, with his best work.

Unknown:

Russell: *Sinister Barrier*

Gold: “The Trouble With Water”

DeCamp: “Divide and Rule”, “The Gnarly Man”, “Nothing In the Rules”, *Lest Darkness Fall* (the classic that defined the alternate history sub-genre)

Hubbard: *Slaves of Sleep* (yes, before *Dianetics*, Hubbard was a good writer, who had a handful of great stories, as well).

Leiber: “Two Sought Adventure” (the first *Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser* story – those stories created the urban fantasy genre).

““In the time of your life, live - so that in this wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite variety and mystery of it.”

— William Saroyan in *The Time of Your Life*, 1939

That's quite an impressive lineup for 22 issues of two magazines (*Unknown* started with the March 1939 issue). And the artwork expanded the tropes from mostly brass bikinis or strange horror, and artists like Rogers (*ASF*) and Cartier (*Unknown*) hit their stride.

And let's see what Campbell was able to follow up with in the next few years.

1940:

ASF:

Smith: final part of *Gray Lensman*

Heinlein : "Requiem", "If This Goes On", "The Roads Must Roll", "Coventry", "Blowups Happen"

Hubbard: *Final Blackout*

Van Vogt: "Vault of the Beast", *Slan*

Bates: "Farewell to the Master" (the story is a lot less well known than *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, which was the movie made from it; I, personally, think the written version is better).

Unknown:

Williamson: *The Reign of Wizardry, Darker Than You Think*

DeCamp&Pratt: *The Roaring Trumpet/The Mathematics of Magic* (later published as *The Incomplete Enchanter*)

DeCamp: "The Wheels of If"

Hubbard: *Fear, Typewriter in the Sky*

Sturgeon: "It"

Heinlein: "Magic, Inc."

1941:

ASF:

Heinlein: "And He Built a Crooked House", "Logic of Empire", "Universe", "Solution Unsatisfactory", "Methuselah's Children", "We Also Walk Dogs", "Elsewhen", "By His Bootstraps"

Sturgeon: "Microcosmic God"

Asimov: "Nightfall", "Not Final"

Smith: part of *Second Stage Lensmen*

Journey Planet 21

Unknown:

Sturgeon: “Shottle Bop”, “Yesterday Was Monday”

DeCamp&Pratt: *The Castle of Iron*, *The Land of Unreason*

Heinlein: “They”

Leiber: “The Howling Tower” (*Fafhrd*)

Brown: “Armageddon”

Kuttner&Moore: “A Gnome There Was”

Boucher: “Snulbug”

1942:

ASF:

Smith: final part of *Second Stage Lensmen*

Asimov: “Runaround” (the first robot story), “Foundation”, “Bridle and Saddle” (the second of the short works that eventually were collected as *Foundation*)

Heinlein: *Beyond This Horizon*, “Waldo”

Clement: “Proof”

DelRey: “My Name Is Legion”, “Nerves”

Williamson: “Collision Orbit”

Kuttner&Moore; “The Twonky”

George O. Smith: “QRM—Interplanetary” (first story in *Venus Equilateral*)

Van Vogt: “The Weapon Shop”

Unknown:

Brown: “Etaoin Shrdlu”

Boucher: “The Compleat Werewolf”

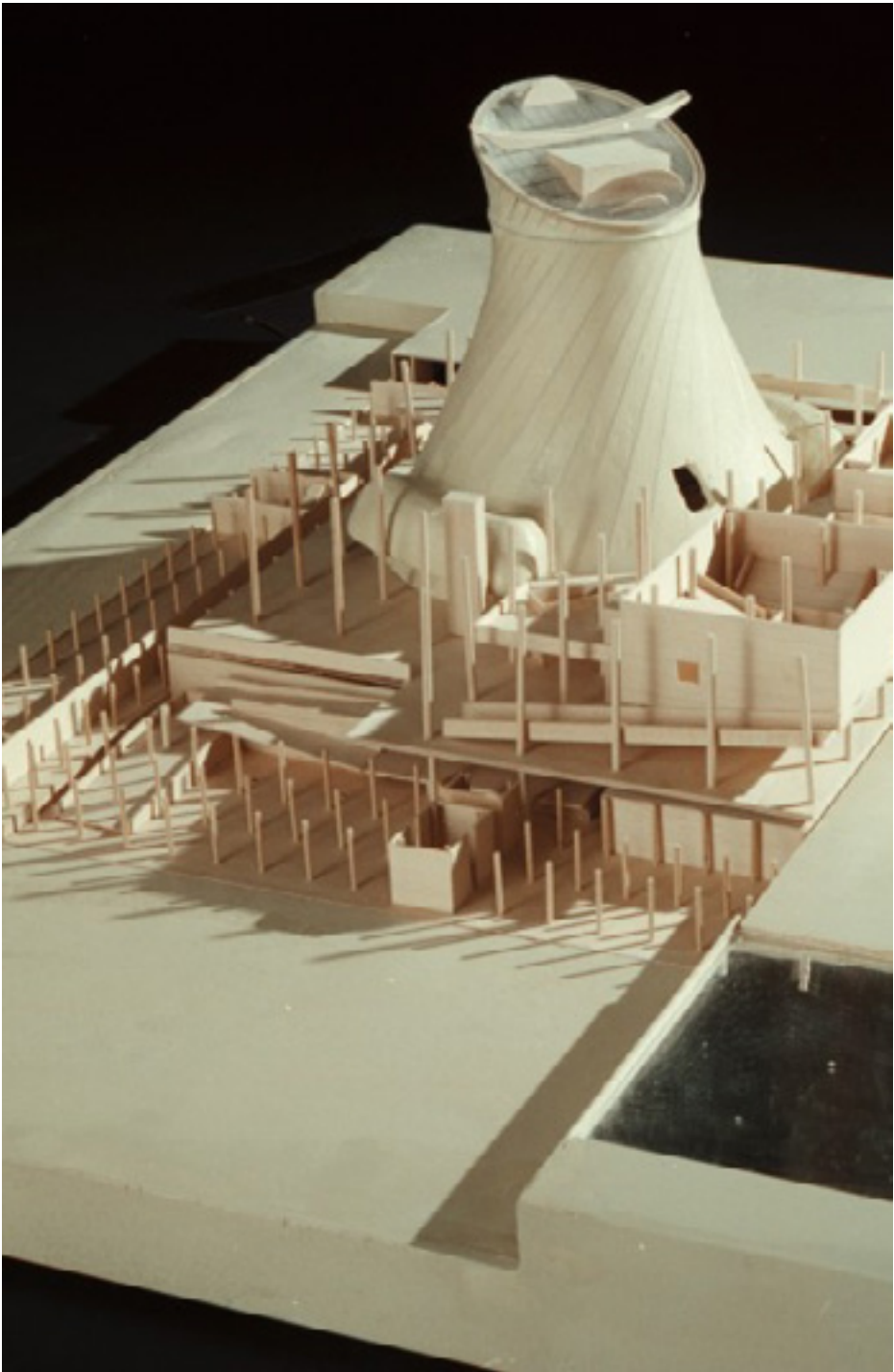
Bester: “Hell Is Forever”

Heinlein: “The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag”

Kuttner&Moore: “Compliments of the Author”

So, in the four year period starting in 1939, Campbell defined the Golden Age, and the stable of writers that would define SF for the next several decades. And, of course, he established the SF careers to H. L. Gold and Anthony Boucher, who would establish *Galaxy* and *F&SF*, the two new giants of the next generation of SF publishing.

But 1939 was when it really took off.



~1953: THE GREATEST YEAR IN SCIENCE FICTION by Brad Lyau~

Before I begin to argue for 1953, permit me to define what I mean by greatest year.

I do not mean the most historic or most important year. Anyone familiar with the English-language part of the field would recognize quickly the significance of the years 1516, 1817, 1895, 1926, and 1938. One familiar with the French branch of SF would identify readily the importance of 1752, 1770, 1864, and 1968. I do not think this meaning of “greatest” is what Dr. Garcia intended when suggesting this article. If he did, then all that is needed is a brief historical overview of the history of SF.

I speculate that he meant what is the best year, that is, when the greatest amount of excellent works appeared. This is parallel to many film critics selecting 1939 as the greatest year for movies (*Gone with the Wind*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Wuthering Heights*, etc.).

So, here is my pitch for the year 1953.

First, let's begin with four classic novels:

Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury

Childhood's End by Arthur C. Clarke

The Space Merchants by Frederik Pohl and C.M. Kornbluth

More Than Human by Theodore Sturgeon

There is no doubt as to the excellence and historical significance of these novels; they are definitely the class of the year, and would be for any year.

Then there are other novels which are pretty doggone good and deserve notice.

The Caves of Steel by Isaac Asimov (which many would place in the first group)

Starman Jones by Robert A. Heinlein

One by David Karp

The Green Millennium by Fritz Leiber

Bring the Jubilee by Ward Moore (a landmark book for alternate history buffs)

Ring Around the Sun by Clifford D. Simak

Love Among the Ruins by Evelyn Waugh

The Kraken Awakes by John Wyndham

Also: Hal Clement's *Mission of Gravity* was serialized in *Astounding* in 1953, with its first book publication in 1954. So if you want to count the serialization as its real first appearance, then 1953 becomes even a greater year.

Besides the high quality of novels, there is also the matter of quantity. Genre science fiction, as most of us know, emerged from the pulp magazines of the first half of the 20th century. After World War II the paperback revolution took off and the pulps of all genres began to die off, EXCEPT for science fiction magazines. SF magazines actually increased, peaking in – you guessed it – 1953 with over 30 titles. Besides the innovative ‘Big Three’ of *Astounding*, *Galaxy*, and *Fantasy and Science Fiction*, there were *If*, *Imagination*, *Beyond*, *Startling Stories*, *Amazing Stories*, *Fantastic*, and *Universe*. Of course, there were other titles – some containing gems by writers like Sturgeon, Bester, Silverberg, Dick, Anderson, Budrys, etc. Not all came out monthly, but the sheer volume of stories stands to the widespread popularity of science fiction among the reading public.

Of course, there are the short fiction categories. Here are the finalists from the 1954 retro Hugos (handed out in 2004). The top stories listed in each category are the winners.

Best Novella

“A Case of Conscience” by James Blish [If Sep 1953]

“Three Hearts and Three Lions” by Poul Anderson [F&SF Sep,Oct 1953]

“...And My Fear Is Great...” by Theodore Sturgeon [Beyond Fantasy Fiction Jul 1953]

“Un-Man” by Poul Anderson [Astounding Jan 1953]

“The Rose” by Charles L. Harness [Authentic SF Monthly Mar 1953]

Best Novelette

“Earthman, Come Home” by James Blish [Astounding Nov 1953]

“Second Variety” by Philip K. Dick [Space Science Fiction May 1953]

“The Adventure of the Misplaced Hound” by Poul Anderson and Gordon R. Dickson [Universe Dec 1953]

“Sam Hall” by Poul Anderson [Astounding Aug 1953]

“The Wall Around the World” by Theodore R. Cogswell [Beyond Fantasy

Journey Planet 21

Fiction Sep 1953]

Best Short Story

“The Nine Billion Names of God” by Arthur C. Clarke [Star Science Fiction Stories (Ballantine), 1953]

“It’s a Good Life” by Jerome Bixby [Star Science Fiction Stories #2 (Ballantine), 1953]

“Star Light, Star Bright” by Alfred Bester [F&SF Jul 1953]

“A Saucer of Loneliness” by Theodore Sturgeon [Galaxy Feb 1953]

“Seventh Victim” by Robert Sheckley [Galaxy Apr 1953]

What about movies? The 1950s were notorious for producing huge volumes of dreck in this field. However few did stand out as pretty good. 1953 certainly had its share:

War of the Worlds

The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms

Invaders from Mars

It Came from Outer Space

How about television, which was still in its infancy in 1953? In Britain *The Quatermass Experiment* was broadcast for the first time and still receives reviews as a classic, still holding its own today. In America, viewers saw *The Adventures of Superman*, *Space Patrol*, *Tales of Tomorrow*, and *Captain Video and His Video Rangers*. Not the quality of *Twilight Zone* or *Star Trek*, but at least they laid the groundwork for future attempts.

Finally, there are the comic books. The early 1950s witnessed an explosion of SF, fantasy, and horror comics, which were created and sold well as the long-staple superhero titles were experiencing an ebb in interest. Certainly 1953 can lay claim to more than its fair share of comic book excellence: DC comics had *Strange Adventures* and *Mystery in Space*.

Of course, it was EC Comics that broke ground and produced memorable titles in SF, fantasy, and horror. If it weren’t for the Kefauver Hearings and the resulting Comics Code Authority in 1954, who knows what would have developed. So 1953, unfortunately, stands as the last year of comic book SF excellence for the 1950s.

OK, that’s it from me.

There are other equally compelling years, but I would still place my bet on 1953.

~Some Significant Years~

by Juan Sanmiguel

Chris wanted people to write about the best year of Science Fiction. I was not comfortable with that. Instead I chose to pick some years where significant things happened in some of my fandoms.

In the mid-90s, Science Fiction/Fantasy television was changing. In 1993, the Prime Time Entertainment Network showed “The Gathering”, the *Babylon 5* pilot movie. This was already on my radar since I read about it in *Starlog*. Joe Straczynski, the creator of the show, wrote the article. I was already a fan of Straczynski from his work on *The Real Ghostbusters* and the last season of the new *Twilight Zone*. I did not remember the details about the article, but a new show with Straczynski was enough to interest me. It blew me away when Takashima, second-in-command of the station, telling the hostile aliens to “get stuffed”. After five years of emotional reserve from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, it was great to see a passionate human response to a situation. Later that year at Worldcon in San Francisco, Straczynski explained that *Babylon 5* would be a 5-year mini-series with a beginning, middle, and end. This was a time when a new Science Fiction show was lucky to get a second season. The idea that Straczynski was taking a chance like this was staggering. Not only did the show succeed, but also influenced future shows like *Lost* and *Battlestar Galactica* to have story arcs.

“The Golden Age of Science Fiction is twelve.”

~Peter Graham

One of the biggest challenges of Hugo voting was finding the short fiction nominees. Novels were easy; you could either buy, borrow from a friend, or check them out of the library. In 1995, David Gerrold released “The Martian Child” online. Gerrold said that he heard that people

Journey Planet 21

would have voted for “The Man Who Folded Himself” for the Hugo had they read it in time. Gerrold put the story online so more people could read the story. It won both the Nebula and Hugo. As a result, the magazines would post their nominated stories online. Later this would lead to the Hugo digital packets given out to Worldcon members. Since then Hugo voting has increased.

Getting new anime was a challenging proposition. One had to wait for a company to get the rights and release it on video or DVD. This could take months or years. Some impatient fans did their own subtitles and released those videos files on the Internet. In 2009, the online streaming company Crunchyroll became legitimate. After a few years on the legal borderline, Crunchyroll got some investment capital and made deals with many of the major studios to stream their shows legally in the United States and in other countries. Fans could watch new anime programs as they came out of Japan for a small monthly fee or free with commercials. Other companies followed Crunchyroll’s model and now most anime shows are accessible to the US. We are now in the golden age of anime fandom.

What happened in those years were important and lead to better things. The best is always yet to come.





~1967 by Warren Buff~

In 1967, Science Fiction was in transition. The New Wave had advanced to the point that the bulk of fans accepted it, but Campbell was still at the helm of *Analog*. Harlan Ellison released one of the most important SF anthologies ever, while Fred Pohl took home the Hugo for best Professional Magazine with *If*. The era of professional magazines as the primary market for SF was drawing to a close, and that award itself would be replaced with Best Professional Editor just a few years later. And yet, in this no man's land between the dominance of the magazines and the dominance of the original book, some beautiful fiction was published.

Visual SF was also in transition. *Star Trek* hit its stride in 1967, releasing many of its best episodes, while SF film was reaching the end of the schlock era (and wouldn't see the rapid expansion of budgets until the following year). The superhero comics world was consolidating, as many of the smaller publishers were falling by the wayside. Yet Marvel was hitting its experimental phase, and in France, some of the most beloved SF characters in bandes dessinées were debuted. In a few short years, *Métal hurlant* would take the world by storm.

Looking at written SF from establishment figures, 1967 offers us *The Past Through Tomorrow*, the first major collection of Heinlein's *Future Histories*. It's perhaps become too easy to discount Heinlein's importance in recent years as he's become a club for old white men to wave at folks they might rather have off their lawns. And yet, his short fiction is undeniably brilliant. The whole idea of linking a series of stories set across hundreds of years in a common timeline echoes down to today. While series of stories weren't unheard of (see such serial adventures as those of Doc Savage) or even a common setting for an author's fiction (as in Lovecraft), the ambition of linking so many stories across time, often without including recurring characters, has paved the way for many of the shared worlds we've seen since. While fans knew Heinlein meant these stories to be linked, laying them out in

one collection in chronological order with a timeline has preserved that understanding for even the uninitiated. You don't have to go through the old gatekeeper who insists Heinlein could do no wrong to read and understand this material, and *The Past Through Tomorrow* is a remarkably good place to start.

Asimov, too, had a good year in 1967, even if only for his story "The Billiard Ball". It's a satisfying story, even if the Newtonian premise doesn't hold up well under General Relativity. The story resonates with humanity, as the best of Asimov so often does.

But to really find the best of 1967 in print, you have to look to the new guard. *Dangerous Visions* produced five 1968 Hugo nominees and two winners, and would have scored the triple had its editor, Harlan Ellison, not taken the Best Short Story category with "I Have No Mouth, and I Must Scream". Ellison scored another nomination for "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes", Samuel R. Delaney scored three nominations, Roger Zelazny got one win out of two nominations, and the year's two Novella winners were Phillip José Farmer and Anne McCaffrey (with one of the first installments in the *Pern* universe). In the first year of four fiction categories, all five winners were either figures of the new guard or published in *Dangerous Visions*.

It's difficult to overstate how strong a collection *Dangerous Visions* is. Even seeing that it wasn't really breaking much new ground, as fiction markets had already proven willing to tackle sex, drugs, and social criticism, the book is basically an honor roll of 1960s SF. Furthermore, the cover and interior are graced with woodcuts from Leo and Diane Dillon, which upend some of our expectations about SF illustration. I'm most enamored of its moody, allegorical pieces, such as "Evensong", "The Day After the Day the Martians Came", "The Man Who Went to the Moon – Twice", "Auto-da-Fé", and "Faith of Our Fathers". They're not necessarily the best of the work (and none of them is among the three that won Hugo or Nebula awards), but they're the bits that suit my taste best. And yet, the anthology is so large, and so rambling, that it's likely to suit many other tastes, too. It doesn't, ultimately, cover entirely new ground the way Ellison intended, but it makes up for that minor failing in quality.

I'd also be remiss if I left out 1967's best SF novel, Roger Zelazny's *Lord of Light*. While Zelazny had previously won a Best Novel Hugo

Journey Planet 21

for ...*And Call Me Conrad*, it was *Lord of Light* where he really hit his stride as a novelist. Zelazny deliberately wrote *Lord of Light* in the space between science fiction and fantasy, taking advantage of the blurred lines to tell a story with some degree of scientific justification in a mythical style. The result is hands-down my favorite science fiction novel.

Looking to television, we can't ignore *Star Trek*, which had one of its best years in 1967. Just looking at the Hugo Award ballot for Best Dramatic presentation in 1968, we see five episodes of *Star Trek*, each written by an author well-known in science fiction – Harlan Ellison beat out Ted Sturgeon, Jerome Bixby, Norman Spinrad, and David Gerrold. The frightening thing is that there are famous episodes from 1967 which didn't even make the ballot. While the nominees included “The City on the Edge of Forever”, “Amok Time”, “Mirror, Mirror”, “The Doomsday Machine”, and “The Trouble With Tribbles”, that still leaves “Space Seed”, “Arena”, “The Devil in the Dark”, and “This Side of Paradise”. Think about that for a moment – the year was so good that “Space Seed” couldn't make the Hugo ballot in a year when *Trek* dominated the nominations entirely. There may never have been a better calendar year for a *Star Trek* show.

Looking a little farther afield, England was also producing some of its finest SF as well. The Second Doctor had just been introduced, and while there's plenty of diversity of opinion on the topic, a panel at Renovation determined Patrick Troughton's Doctor to be the best. Only one of the serials from 1967, however, is still retained in its entirety – *The Tomb of the Cybermen*. It's hard to judge that era of the show if you didn't live through it in Britain, so I'll trust the general opinion on the Second Doctor.

We do, however, still have the entire run of *The Prisoner*. Its first fourteen episodes ran in 1967, and represent some of the most cerebral television of the era. As a meditation on truth, identity, and freedom, it still holds up.

The one place where 1967 falls down, however, is in film. This is the end of an era of schlock science fiction films, and what better to close that era on than *Mars Needs Women*? When I'd originally started investigating years, I'd mistakenly believed that *2001* and *Dangerous Visions* had been released in the same year. And if I'd been right, and Kubrick's SF masterpiece had been shifted back a year, the case for 1967 would go

from strong to irrefutable. Unfortunately, he was still cutting film and dealing with effects shots, oblivious to my desire to have two landmark works of science fiction land in the same year.

Comics, on the other hand, provides a few gems. Marvel's experimental phase was in full effect, with Jim Steranko's run on *Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D* reaching its truly weird phase. While the plots are generally standard issue spy stuff, they get more science fictional, and the art more psychedelic. This series was running in the *Strange Tales* anthology opposite Doctor Strange, and they made a strong pair. The Silver Surfer was also given his first solo feature as a backup in the *Fantastic Four Annual*. While all of these characters were introduced prior to 1967, the art in their books was taking a new direction in that year, and one which benefited comics.

Over in France, Pierre Christin and Jean-Claude Mézières began their long-running collaboration on *Valérian et Laureline*. At the time, they felt science fiction was under-represented in the French comics market, and managed to start a series which ran through 2013. Given the visual influence of the series on *Star Wars* and its roots in its creators' love for literary SF (Asimov, Vance, and Brunner are among its influences), its beginning is a notable milestone.

Finally, I'd like to make mention of an early influence on my own love of science fiction from 1967. John Christopher's *The White Moun-tains*. My parents introduced me to the Tripods books when I was old enough to handle them, and I haven't looked back. When I chose the year, it was largely on the strength of *Star Trek* and *Dangerous Visions*, but I was happy to see that it also contributed one of my early influences.







~1999: Best Year Ever~

by Chris Garcia

You can say a lot about 1939 in film. It's a great year, with a lot of movies that have stood the test of time. In fact, there's no other year that has more films on the National Film Registry than 1939.

Shame is, it ain't the best year for Science Fiction, Fantasy, or Horror films. That would be, hands down, 1999. Add to that some exceptional written SF, and a really good year for SF television, and you've got the best year in Science Fiction History.

Let's start with books. There aren't a lot of science fiction books that my non-SF friends have read, but they've all read *Cryptonomicon*. Neal Stephenson has some great novels, but if you read only one, it's gotta be *Cryptonomicon*. Probably the smartest novel of the last decade of the twentieth century, and it trawls depths that are seldom explored by science fiction, which may be why Stephenson doesn't really dig into it as if it were a science fiction novel. Instead, it's fiction in which science, in the form of cryptanalysis, mathematics, and computer science, plays as the basis for the story. It was the only SF novel I read during 1999, so it wins on that count.

After that, you've got a few great books that I have read in the years since. *Stardust*, by Neil Gaiman, might be the most adorable of them. It's a well-told story, and I wish I had encountered it before I saw the movie from 2007. *Darwin's Radio*, by Greg Bear, was another great one, and one of the few Bear pieces I really come to in a big way. There was Vinge's *A Deepness in the Sky*, which is one I really enjoyed on my second read. Of course, there was a *Harry Potter* book as well.

Shorter fiction? Lots of great stuff. In fact, as good as 1999 was for movies, it was almost as good for short fiction. "Ancient Engines" by Michael Swanwick was robbed of the Hugo by a better-than-really-good "Scherzo with Tyrannosaurus" by... wait for it... Michael Swanwick. Those two are my favorite Swanwick writings. They're both great, and while I was pulling for "Ancient Engines", it wasn't meant to be.

You had one of the best novelettes that I discovered completely by accident. "The Secret History of the Ornithopter" is as good an Alternate History story as you'll ever find, and it won the Sidewise (I think it was the

first time I was ever aware of the Sidewise) and was Hugo-nominated. To me, it was the best thing in The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, and it was the first great year of F&SF under the watch of the awesome Gordon Van Gelder.

Asimov's had a great year too, and one of the great highlights for me of one of Gardner Dozois' best years had to be Ian MacLeod's *The Chop Girl*. There are times when the first person dictative voice is jarring, but in this case it's so very engaging. It a story told to the reader in a form that not only draws you in, but makes you guess about things that are both slowly revealed, and gently obfuscated. It's a remarkable story, and a Hugo-nominated story as well.

I often point to 1999 as one of the banner years in the development of Steampunk. Most folks don't cotton to that idea, knowing about KW Jeter, Tim Powers, and Jim Blaylock, but forgetting about the transitional period between them and Cheri Priest, Gail Carriger, and China Mieville that was inhabited by folks like Stephen Baxter, Paul diFillipo, and Jeter, I guess. In 1999, you had some great stuff showing up, including *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, but to me, it was all about a website called *Would That It Were*. Focused on Alternate History, there were some spectacular stories, and 1999 was one of its better years. I really started to dig into it in 1999, and to me that was its best year. I wish it were still around, but alas, it was not to be.

Connie Willis is a writer whose novels seldom connect with me, but her shorter works, even as long as novella-length, usually work for me. In the case of "The Winds of Marble Arch", it's Willis writing like Connie does, only somehow she managed to hold on to me by piecing it all together with a historical perspective and couple of fun characters. I see a little too much of myself (and a certain co-editor friend!) in Tom, Connie's main character on a trip to acquire theatre tickets only to be distracted by things only he can see. It's a great story, and a worthy Hugo winner!

Looking at Comics for a second, there was no shortage of strong stuff from the majors (I'd say that DC had its best year with their Vertigo label leading the way). *100 Bullets* debuted, and though it took me ages to acquire a taste for its flesh, I certainly snacked on it through the early part of the year, before full-on gorging by December. *Strange Adventures* returned, this time as a Vertigo title, and it really moved me with early issues. There were the important titles like *A. Bizarro*, one of the best serious treatments

of the Bizarro concept ever done, and *Birds of Prey*, which might have been the best title I was regularly buying. *The Flash* had the “Chain Lightning” storyline, which was really good, and though it’s largely forgotten today, *Fanboy*, by Evanier and Aragones, might have been the most fun I had in comics in the post-*Ambush Bug*/Pre-Batman ‘66 time frame.

And there was *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*. If ever a comic deserved a place in the pantheon of literature, it’s Alan Moore’s masterpiece. Yes, I know that Mr. O’Neil’s art is an important aspect, but Moore’s scripts were masterpieces. The way the story was told, the constant literary allusions, the way that Moore plays with traditions, makes even the tiniest details matter, that is some of the best writing in the history of comics.

The Big Book series of graphic novels from Paradox Press were in full-effect! They only released one in 1999, *The Big Book of Grimm*, but it was a wonderful look at the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. It’s not my favorite of the Big Books (*The Big Book of The Unexplained* and *The Big Book of the Weird West* share that honor) but it’s a really good entry.

Let us look at television, shall we? If I made a list of the most important science fiction and Fantasy television programs of the last 50 years, it would start with the *Star Trek* franchise, followed by the *X-Files* world, and then the Buffyverse shows. All of these had shows on the air in 1999. *Trek* had *Star Trek: Voyager*, which while not the best of the franchise’s entries, did some very interesting things. *The X-Files* was still on, and it was starting on the serious decline, but the even better (and much darker) *Millennium* was still on the air, and it was a strong series that I wish had gone on longer. *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* was in its 3rd season, and started its forth in 1999. It was the transition season, moving from Sunnydale High to UC Sunnydale. And though it happened in 1998, we meet Faith in Season 3, and she played a big part in a lot of Season 3.

These weren’t the only things of Sfnal interest on television, though. Though I HATED it for much of its run, *3rd Rock from the Sun* was drawing good numbers, launching the career of Joseph Gordon Levitt.

For films, yes, there was *The Phantom Menace*, which was only a little better than the other releases in the *Star Wars* prequels, but it was a lot of fun, and the pod-racing scene was really cool! Released a week prior to that monster was *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, with one of Stanley Tucci’s best performances. Also released about the same time is the teen horror flick *Idle Hands*, and perhaps the most fun film of 1999, *The Mummy*. Yes, I

am aware it weren't the best film, I wouldn't call *The Mummy* 'cinema', but I can't deny that I saw it in the theatre a few times and loved it every time! Same month saw the release of *The Thirteenth Floor*, which was flawed, but still a very interesting cyberpunk-influenced film.

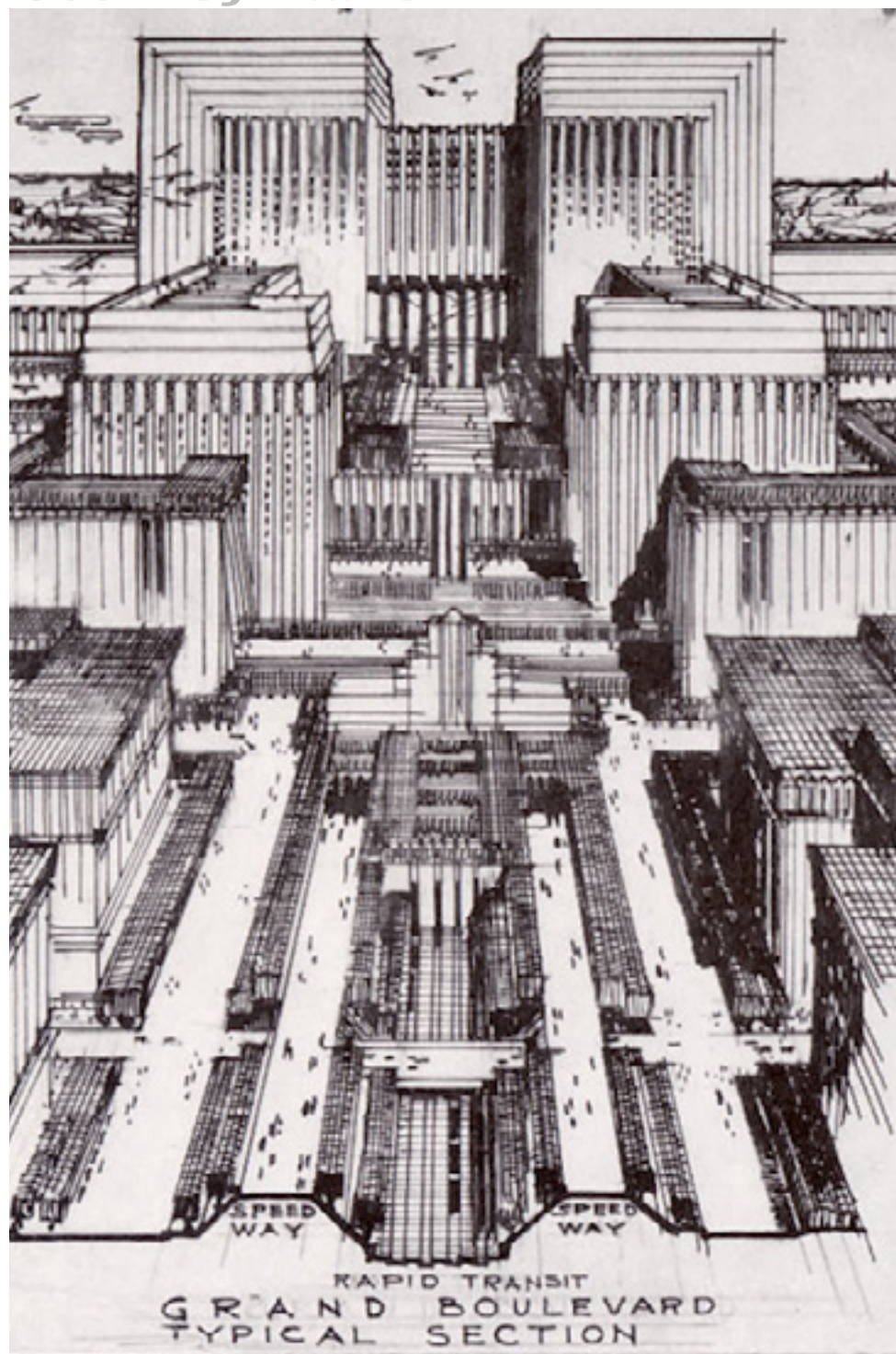
The Sixth Sense was one of the real finds of 1999. It wasn't a great film, though I thought that Toni Collette was really great in it. It's a basic story, it twists the audience's expectations around and it was well-delivered. It launched M. Night Shaymalan, which may be a mixed blessing.

There were two versions of the classic story *The Haunting of Hill House* released in 1999. The first, *The Haunting*, was a well-made version starring Catherine Zeta-Jones and Lili Taylor. It was a polished piece of filmmaking from Jon de Bont and while it does lack a little of the impact of the story, it's a good popcorn movie. The other one, *House on Haunted Hill*, was from Dark Castle, and it was fun. Maybe not great cinema, but it wasn't camp either, though at times it made motions in that direction.

Yes, there were also bad SF&F films. *Deep Blue Sea*, *Lake Placid*, *Universal Soldier: The Return*, and various others, but there were so many great genre films that it's hard to say that it wasn't a high water mark.

Of course, I haven't talked about the most influential film of the last 30 years – *The Blair Witch Project*. As a film, it's a simple horror film about a monster. The way they shot it, hand-held, with actors working improvisationally, was innovative. We saw tons of *Blair Witch* knock-offs in the early 2000s, and ever since the hand-held camera has become a standard. It was *Blair Witch* that brought that to mainstream cinema after the Dogme movement brought it to the forefront of Indy cinema. The most innovative part of *Blair Witch* never made it to the movie screen. It was the way they used a viral advertising scenario to turn it into the most profitable film of all-time. The blairwitch.com website told a story that unfolded over weeks, and built buzz. I was hooked from the moment I heard about it, and when it finally dropped, I knew it was a huge deal.

1999 changed film, for sure, and the most significant films were genre. The written SF was top-notch, the television SF was great, the comics were great. How could any other year compete?



The Greatest Year

With science fiction, Gernsback made it clear
 A movement's underway. Who can tell
 When science fiction met its greatest year?

Amazing Stories stirred inventive seers
 To openly wonder about our future selves.
 With science fiction, Gernsback made it clear

We've just begun. Who then would bring us nearer?
 Though many honored authors thought they'd jelled
 When science fiction met its greatest year,

The process never ends. We won't soon hear
 An answer. Final judgments fail to sell.
 With science fiction, Gernsback made it clear

This question, like the wave a surfer dearly
 Pursues eternally through bliss and hell,
 When science fiction met its greatest year,

Continually inspires the dreams and fears
 Addressed by fandom and the art itself.
 With science fiction, Gernsback made it clear
 When science fiction met its greatest year.

-- **Chuck Surface**

