

second season. The DVD set includes all twenty-two *Bionic Woman* episodes of the second season, plus two more *Six Million Dollar Man* crossover episodes. The set starts off with the two-part fan-favorite “The Return of Bigfoot,” a crossover with *The Six Million Dollar Man* that has Jaime and Steve facing off with the legendary monster and a band of colonizing aliens. Season 2 also has the most iconic episodes in the series, a three-part crossover with *The Six Million Dollar Man* entitled “Kill Oscar” that introduces the “fembots” of the evil sexist Dr. Franklin (played with relish by John Houseman). Dr. Franklin describes his fembots as “the perfect women: programmable, obedient, and as beautiful, or as deadly, as I choose to make them.” The fembots are basically Stepford wives created to infiltrate the government and steal secrets. When Jaime squares off with them, it is a battle between a good, independent feminist cyborg and hyper-feminized robotic women who do whatever men tell them to do (Sharp 519-20). Season 2 also has Jaime go undercover as a professional wrestler, a country singer, and a nun between her bouts with evil scientists and aliens trying to take over the world.

The Bionic Woman helped prepare a generation of nascent feminists to embrace Donna Haraway’s argument for a cyborg feminism that was encapsulated in her famous line, “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess” (181). These digitally remastered DVD sets of the first two seasons of *The Bionic Woman* (and seven episodes of *The Six Million Dollar Man*) will facilitate the scholarly re-evaluation of the series and its place in SF history. They also make available a great teaching resource for classes that cover second-wave feminism, 1970s television, the history of SF, and issues surrounding cyborg identity. In the 1990s and early 2000s I recorded some episodes of *The Bionic Woman* off of the SciFi Channel for teaching purposes (ahem), and have used “The Bionic Woman,” “The Deadly Missiles,” and “Kill Oscar” in several different classes. Students enjoy them immensely: older students wax nostalgic, Spanish-speaking students remember *La Mujer Biónica*, and younger students are pleasantly appalled at what TV was like back in the days when there were only three networks. The series is accessible, and concisely captures the complexities of gender and SF in the 1970s. These DVD sets are also relatively inexpensive, and should be within the reach of interested scholars and university media budgets alike.

Works Cited

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The Mongoliad **[online publication]**

Lars Schmeink

Neal Stephenson, Greg Bear et al. *The Mongoliad*.

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REMEMBERING a forgotten form and thrusting it forcefully into the new millennium with its Web 2.0 communication possibilities, the online publication project *The Mongoliad* tries to transgress established borders within the literary community that become ever more apparent. With the success of digital technologies, more and more electronic readers, smart phone apps and new distribution concepts on the rise, the traditional book market seems in dire need of new concepts. Authors such as Stephen King, Neil Gaiman, Bruce Sterling or Geoff Ryman have begun experimenting with web novels, hypertext publication, or even Twitter messages as possible ways to engage creative writing in the digital age.

One such example, not the earliest but a fairly successful one, is the serialized online publication *The Mongoliad*, created by a group of writers and artists spearheaded by SF&F writers Neal Stephenson and Greg Bear. The creative group, going by the collective name of “Foreworld Cabal,” has created a website where readers can subscribe to weekly installments of chapters (currently at #34) written by the Cabal authors and considered the canon. In addition to canonical chapters, the Cabal also provides video footage (e.g. of martial arts techniques), meticulously researched background information on history, technology or characters, maps, artworks and short sidetrack stories that usually would not have been included in a book publication. As such, *The Mongoliad* proves to be very much prolific of Web 2.0 possibilities, making use of hypertext, links, and the multi-media platform of the net, as well as encouraging fan-fiction and other forms of outside creative engagement with the canonical texts. On the other hand, though, the publication reminds both of 19th century newspaper serialization and early 20th century pulp

magazine's fan interaction. Bringing back the good ol' days of the past to revive the consumption of textual creativity in the present. Similar to the Dickensian reader in Victoria's London, the postmodern iUsers can receive their weekly doses of *The Mongoliad* via app store or in Kindle-format, can read anywhere and any time. And just as during the Golden Age of the pulps, fans can write in to the makers, engage in discussion on the plausibility of story aspects, can offer suggestions and critique or plainly become authors, receiving a quasi-Asimovian commendation into the canon themselves. At least this is the theory, while in reality fan engagement and the addition of outside material has been rather sparse, aside from some nice fan artwork and the quite common forum-discussions on many topics. The possibilities are here, but unfortunately, except for a very limited group, a strong interactive reaction has not happened.

This is not due to an obscurity of the topic itself though, as *The Mongoliad* picks up a literary trend that has been around for a while but in recent years has even proven to be interesting to mainstream writers. Conceptualized as an alternate history, *The Mongoliad* squarely situates itself with other examples of the genre such as Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle* (1962), Harry Turtledove's *Ruled Britannica* (2002) or even Philip Roth's *The Plot against America* (2004). Within the Foreworld (as the alternate reality is termed on the website), the genre-typical moment of historical divergence happens when the Mongol empire finds itself at the door-step of Western (i.e. European) civilization in 1241. Instead of decamping due to the untimely death of the Second Great Khan, in the Foreworld, Ögedei is alive and the armies remain in Europe to threaten the realm of Christianity as a religion as well as its established mundane, geographical boundaries. As Inken Frost in her review of *The Mongoliad* (*Zeitschrift für Fantastikforschung* 1.1 (2011): 140-3) suggests, the several strands of the story narratively mimic what the publication itself tries to do; in both form and content *The Mongoliad* deals with the "crossing of boundaries (technical, structural, geographical...) and the forming of communities in the newly created contact zones" (Frost 141). But whereas the characters of *The Mongoliad* succeed in transgressing boundaries of religion, nationality and gender, and where the Foreworld as literary creation represents a changed historical perspective (and a content oriented analysis within the genre here might prove very interesting indeed), the technical boundary posed by what Henry Jenkins calls "participatory culture" (*Conver-*

gence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide. New York: NY UP, 2006; 3) has on a mass-audience level not been breached. Where a Web 2.0 savvy digital élite might move swiftly from audience to author to critic and back to audience again, hopping between text, film and artwork to participate in the creation and consumption of a product of "convergence culture," the majority of readers does not—yet. *The Mongoliad* will continue (at least until October this year), and hopefully, as new audiences get more and more accustomed with interactive offers such as this, it will become part of what a new creative form. Only time will tell. ■

Announcements

Calls for Papers

Compiled by Jason Embry

Call for Papers - Conference

Title: Paranoia and Pain: Embodied in Psychology, Literature, and Bioscience

Deadline: November 15, 2011

Conference Date: 2-4 April 2012

Contact: paranoia.pain@gmail.com

Topic: Paranoia and Pain is an international cross-disciplinary conference, seeking to raise an awareness of various intersections of literature and science. The conference aims to explore overlapping paradigms of paranoia and pain in psychology, biological sciences, and literary texts/contexts.

Considering the diversity of themes and questions for this conference, individual papers as well as pre-formed panels are invited to examine the following three key areas, proposed by the conference organizers. Other inter- and multi-disciplinary topics, relevant to the conference, will also be considered:

Impressions - Expression of paranoia and pain in literary/scientific contexts; Metaphorical and literal exposition of pain and paranoia; Paranoid texts, painful contexts; The image of paranoia and pain in poetry, prose, and visual arts; Textual culture and the symbolics of pain; Stylistics of pain and paranoia in communication; How does the narrative of pain/paranoia identify with studies of affect?

Intersections - The biology of pain and the emotional interpretation; The biology/literature of anaesthesia;