

How Speculative Fiction Conceived the Twentieth Century

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Throughout my twenty-five -year academic career, I have sought to be a nimble, versatile scholar and teacher. At the two universities where I have worked, I have taught a wide variety of literatures, including speculative fiction and nineteenth- and twentieth-century English and American literatures. My research-led teaching has drawn on the insights gained alongside students in the classroom in developing my scholarly work. My research and pedagogy have diversified and evolved together during this period. Over two decades, I have published a substantial body of work on Science Fiction, Ecocriticism, Native American fiction, creative writing pedagogy, and literary Modernism. Some of my favorite courses have been devoted to Native American literature and speculative fiction. I have taught Native American writers as part of courses featuring texts that I have researched and written about. I have enjoyed teaching literature and film courses on time travel, posthumanism, zombies, Star Wars, and Harry Potter. I have presented several papers at scholarly conferences on speculative writers such as Richard Jefferies, M. P. Shiel, J. J. Connington, and others, which led to a considerable range of peer-reviewed work on a variety of authors in the speculative realm, including Alfred Bester, George Romero, and others.

In this commentary, I will examine the coherence, significance, and contribution to knowledge of my scholarly work to this point in my professional career, and demonstrate why I am in an excellent position to pursue a PhD by Publication. The idea that provides coherence to my career—my consistent contribution to literary criticism—is in reclaiming marginalized voices and drawing new writers into the scholarly conversation. Native American fiction was just beginning to blossom when I began to publish articles on writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Simon Ortiz, and Sherman Alexie. Geary Hobson had been largely ignored by literature scholars, and my literary biography brought attention to his writing. In working on speculative writers

during the literary Modernist period, I have argued that important avenues of inquiry had been closed for too long and that writers of speculative fiction were worthy of study and inclusion in discussions of the era. Related to that is my work editing *The Routledge Anthology of Climate Fiction* (2024), a volume that argues that the roots of cli-fi extend deeper into the past than is commonly accepted by scholars in the field. Future publications on Robert Bloch and Evelyn Underhill will argue for their reconsideration by scholars, Bloch as a pioneer in psychological horror and Underhill as a neglected writer of weird fiction. The coherence to my career, then, is in the consistent push to draw voices in from the margins and to expand the scholarly conversation.

This commentary is organized into three sections that track my career chronologically, more or less, each linked by a common thread that runs through just about all of my scholarly pursuits and goes a long way toward defining my career. The first section focuses on articles published during the first decade of the twenty-first century that focused on Native American literature, offering context for writers who were only then becoming the subjects of scholarly attention. The second section discusses my attempts to place the work of World War I soldier-poets Julian Grenfell and Wilfred Owen in ecocritical contexts. My most recent work—the subject of the third and final section—asserts that any serious discussion of literary Modernism must include the fantastic stories that proliferated during that era because in many cases speculative writers arrived first to the ideas that subsequently defined the broader movement; and because only in speculative fiction is the radical core of the movement allowed free rein. In what follows I have, for ease of reference, added references in square brackets to the corresponding outputs in my Scholarly Document.

Science Fiction Landscapes

Early in my professional career, I delivered an Ursula Le Guin paper at WisCon Feminist Science Fiction Convention (1998) that showed her evolving environmental consciousness during the 1970s and 1980s [1]. Indeed, this was my first public foray into ecocriticism, and it set the course for the rest of my career. *The Ecocriticism Reader* by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm (1996) was published while I was in my M.A. program; it helped to make tangible for me the ideas that I found most exciting. As I studied, wrote, and published on Le Guin, World War I soldier poets, and Native American literature, I was actively participating in the development of ecocriticism. Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (Glotfelty xviii). Since then, the definition has undergone refinement, sharpening, and expansion. The so-called second wave of ecocriticism arrived about twenty years ago as the critical approach became more activist. Climate change, the COVID-19 pandemic, habitat loss, environmental justice, and the rejection of anthropocentrism have become central aspects of ecocritical thinking, which the journal *Green Letters* has called “the poetics of space” (Green). It is not enough simply to write about how the nonhuman world is depicted; theorist Kate Rigby argues that ecocritics must discover how literature might “assist us to confront catastrophe” (Rigby qtd. Jeffery and Angelaki). My work has tracked the developments in ecocriticism, from my early, first-wave scholarship to my most recent work that embraces more of an activist stance with regard to the literature of climate change.

In writing this paper, I discovered applications for ecocritical ideas not just in the most obvious places, but also in Le Guin’s science fiction texts that create a setting that erases nearly everything that remained of the non-human world. Charting the development of her ecological

awareness, my paper argues that, unlike her overt and challenging growth into feminism, Le Guin's development as an environmentally-conscious writer came gradually and without much comment. A detailed evaluation of her work—especially *The Dispossessed* (1974), *Always Coming Home* (1985), and *A Fisherman of the Inland Sea* (1994)—reveals a gradual greening of ideas. Specifically, I argue that the environmental philosophy of bioregionalism emerged in her fiction as a guiding force. It is an idea that I had not seen before regarding Le Guin's work, one that I supported with detailed textual analysis. Bioregionalism had its moment in the 1980s, led by advocates such as Peter Berg, who was the first to clearly define the term, calling a bioregion “a geographic area defined by natural characteristics, including watersheds, landforms, soils, geologic qualities, native plants and animals, climate and weather [which] included human beings as a species in the interplay of these natural characteristics” (Ewert 439). Gary Snyder and journalist Kirkpatrick Sale, among others, were prominent advocates for bioregionalism. Their definition of bioregionalism, one that was widely embraced and applied at the time across the environmental community, emphasized four elements: a sense of place, identification with a watershed, the interplay of technology and ecosystems, and sustainable economy. The goal in disbanding the artificial political boundaries established by conflict and accident is to make groupings of people more responsive to the landscape, to bring some sense and responsibility to communities by unifying people with broadly shared interests. I applied these ideas to Le Guin's fiction by looking at the organization of human society in *The Dispossessed*, which emphasizes social structures largely independent of the landscape, and comparing it to later works to show how Le Guin's ideas about the environment were responding to the quickly spreading environmental movement.

My paper argues that her later works are very different from *The Dispossessed* and can be seen as experiments in bioregional Utopia. This early-career study of bioregionalism helped deepen my thinking about the possibilities of ecocriticism. I was able to put into practice for the first time my belief that there were broad connections between the social, ecological, literary, and scientific, and this effort created some momentum for me as I began to think seriously about an academic career. Buoyed by the contemporaneous establishment of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment and by the publication of several foundational works of ecocriticism, including *The Ecocriticism Reader*, my scholarly pursuits began to mesh productively with my experiences teaching outdoors, concern for the state of the natural world, and passion for fiction old and new that explores the ways humans interact with the non-human environment.

Native American Literature

I spent my undergraduate years at St. Lawrence University in far upstate New York and became friends with some of the local Native Americans in the vibrant Iroquois community that straddles the Canadian border. I started reading Native American fiction for pleasure at that point, and my research interests led me to several publications, including work that focused on Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, Chief Joseph, Geary Hobson, and others. At this stage of my career, I was not particularly interested in opening up new avenues of scholarly inquiry into Native American writing. From the start, I knew that I was an outsider to that genre and that I might not be the best person to explain to the world what these stories might or might not mean. Instead, I wanted to help to make them accessible to a much wider audience. I focused on writing for reference books and tried to open up ways for students to wander in and find the same kind of

enjoyment that I did. More than that, I saw in these texts a vision for how humans might take the next step in our relationship to the non-human world. Specifically, in the Native American literature that I studied, through all of its humor and emotion shone through the idea of connection not only to a community and a history of a group of people, but also a connection to the land and an idea that we are as dependent on the land as we are on each other. I have used these stories in my teaching over the years—especially work by Sherman Alexie—and they have helped me to sharpen my thinking about the broad footing upon which ecocriticism is built

Native American literature has been defined in many ways over the years. Currently, it encompasses any written work by Native writers who reside in what currently is the United States, although national boundaries are frequently of little use in describing Native works. Many Native and non-Native writers and critics recognize the 1970s as an important turning point in Native American literature, with the publication of early work by writers who became luminaries in the field, such as N. Scott Momaday, Joy Harjo, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Joseph Bruchac (Roemer 2). I have written and published on several of these members of what scholar Kenneth Lincoln called the “Native American renaissance” (Lincoln). Robert M. Nelson describes the most important characteristic of Native American literature to be the connections among setting, character, and plot. Nelson sees the landscape depicted in Native texts to be as essential as any of the main characters (Nelson 6-8). Simon Ortiz defines the genre this way:

The struggle to maintain life and the resistance against loss [...] illustrate a theme, national in character and scope, common to all American native people and to all people indigenous to lands which have suffered imperialism and colonialism. In the decade of the 70s, it has been the predominant subject and theme that has concerned Indian writers. (Ortiz “The Historical” 68)

I contributed an article to the Anaxos series of reference books with a study of Silko's novel, *Ceremony* (1977) [2]. My article discusses several issues in her novel—such as race, class, and the idea of the Pueblo people—but the most prominent theme, the idea that undergirds the rest, I argue, is Silko's depiction of the Pueblo people's deep connection to the land. The characters who populate the novel come into conflict over “property” rights, fencing of previously open areas, creeping development, and other environmental concerns. Particularly important to this novel is the conflict over the mining of uranium on Pueblo land, a battle that raged during Silko's youth. In an interview that is quoted in my article, Silko spoke of the idea of time not as a line but as an ocean, always moving, which is critical to understanding the nature of the conflict in the story between the uranium miners and the people whose land is about to become uninhabitable. A vision of the nature of time such as this makes inescapable the idea that past and future generations have as much right to the land as anyone in the present moment. Silko argues that we owe good stewardship not only to ourselves but also to those who left the land to us and to those yet to be born. My writing on Silko anticipated “second-wave” ecocriticism in that it uses the established tools of ecocriticism to discuss environmental justice in *Ceremony*, an inclination noted at about the same time by Lawrence Buell in his influential study, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (2003). Buell's main purpose, he argues, is to put “the landscapes of exurbia and industrialization [into] conversation with one another” (Buell 7) which is certainly a prominent theme of Silko's novel. My article on *Ceremony*, which was published in 2006, summarizes a selection of critical approaches to *Ceremony* along with citations to help students with their research, including the groundbreaking *Leslie Marmon Silko: A Collection of Critical Essays*,

which was published in 1999. *Literary Themes for Students: Race and Prejudice in Literature*, according to WorldCat, is held by 433 academic and public libraries around the world.

I published several articles for Thomson Gale, a scholarly publisher with many series held by academic libraries all over the world. I was particularly drawn to this publisher because of the depth and reach of their publications. I had come of age using their databases and knew them to be the gold standard when it came to literary research at that time. I wrote a literary biography of the poet Simon Ortiz for Gale's *Encyclopedia of American Indian Literature* (2008) that stressed his work's connection to environmental themes [3]. I couched Ortiz's environmental writing as his exploration of the word "home," a central tenet of Gary Snyder's bioregional ethic. I found a lot of overlap between these two writers that centered around the definition of the word "home" and the development of a sense of place. For both writers, any ideas about character or intention or future or past are explicitly linked to the setting of the story. For Snyder, a water source was the key. His bioregional ethic emphasized one's residence in a particular watershed as the defining factor for any community membership. No matter the writer, the idea of home in Native America texts nearly always concerns itself with a character's relationship with particular place at a particular time. There is little in the way of abstract or generic settings in Native texts. Critic Robert M. Nelson writes:

The test of humanity in these works, though, is the land itself rather than any ideology: the protagonists of these fictions prove their humanity not by conquering the land or by living in spite of it, but rather by finding ways [...] to live with the land holding and being held by the life that precedes and survives the life of any individual, as well as the life of any culture. (Nelson 8)

In my paper, I use the idea of home to explicate several stories from Ortiz's collection, *Going for the Rain* (1976) and a few poems from collections such as *A Good Journey* (1977), including "How to Make a Good Chili Stew." This poem, I argue, represents Ortiz's most direct statement on his particular ideas about the importance of having a strong sense of place. A good chili, the poem says, is impossible to make unless you are outdoors in an inspiring place with a good dog by your side. Failing that, the chili just won't taste good. *Encyclopedia of American Indian Literature*, according to WorldCat, is held by 831 academic and public libraries around the world.

I contributed several articles to Thomson Gale's series, *Student's Encyclopedia of American Literary Characters*. One of them focuses on Victor, the recurring semi-autobiographical character who appears in many works by Native American author, Sherman Alexie [4]. My article studies Victor in several of his literary incarnations, starting from the youngest we meet him, when he is nine years old. He is a keen observer of the world around him, a trait that defines him throughout his literary life. One of the arcs that runs through the collection *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993) connects directly to the idea that I had been writing about in my ecocritical explorations of Native American literature. In the story "This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona," Victor travels from Washington to Arizona to retrieve the remains of his wayward father, who has died far from home. The idea that one may roam but one must eventually and finally return home is a powerful one that undergirds Alexie's sense of human ecology. For Alexie, although an individual might be far from home and family, the pull to return is ever-present. Alexie asserts more than just an idea about individuals here. He seems to imply that Western modes of thinking about the environment are far too limited to accommodate the lived experience of Native Americans:

Thomas took the ashes and smiled, closed his eyes, and told this story: "I'm going to travel to Spokane Falls one last time and toss these ashes into the water. And your father will rise like a salmon, leap over the bridge, over me, and find his way home. It will be beautiful. His teeth will shine like silver, like a rainbow. He will rise, Victor, he will rise." (Alexie 11)

Alexie builds into his characters a sense of home, in this case, a connection to the salmon of the Columbia River. This story ends by reminding the reader about the nature of the force that draws all of Alexie's characters back home in one way or another: "So Victor drove his father's pickup toward home while Thomas went into his house, closed the door behind him, and heard a new story come to him in the silence afterward" (Alexie 11). My article studies Victor across eight stories and provides students with an overview of the motivations and personality of the most significant character that Alexie has created in his fiction.

Thomson Gale has a deep catalogue of reference books aimed at undergraduate researchers in literature and other disciplines. My article, "'I Will Fight No More Forever': The Misinterpretation of Chief Joseph's Words" [5], was published in the two-volume collection, *Literary Themes for Students* (2007). My article argues that the famous "surrender" speech by Nez Perce chief, Joseph, delivered at the end of a long, bloody retreat toward Canada that stretched from the Nez Perce homeland in Oregon and Washington through Idaho and Wyoming, and, finally, to Bear Paw Mountain in northern Montana, forty miles short of the Canadian border and freedom, was egregiously—and possibly willfully—misinterpreted at the time by the American military, press, and public. Chief Joseph was portrayed in American media at the time as a military leader who spoke for all of the Nez Perce people. American cultural hierarchies were assumed and overlaid on both him and the effort to end their rebellion and flight. My article

argues that Chief Joseph was communicating with a completely different set of cultural assumptions that originated from a communal rather than hierarchical decision-making process. My article links this particular mismatch of languages to the long series of miscommunication during the Native American genocide. In short, the military and political culture of the United States is one of hierarchy and rank, a system wholly alien to the Nez Perce and to many if not most Native American tribes. I explicated Chief Joseph's speech line by line to show how careful he was in speaking only for himself and his immediate family as he announced a surrender. American generals heard the leader of a hierarchy announce a complete surrender and acted accordingly, rounding up all of the Nez Perce and imprisoning them. The speech by Chief Joseph did no such thing, my paper argues, and the results, as they generally have been when indigenous people face their conquerors, were tragic. I continued to think about this paper long after I finished it, and mulled the connections among the various ideas about justice. In some cases, including this one, environmental justice is indistinguishable from social justice. Although the idea of environmental justice was still developing in literary studies, both for me and in general, my focus in this paper illuminated one possibility for a new way of understanding the many connections between literary texts and various ideas about justice. *Literary Themes for Students*, according to WorldCat, is held by 433 academic and public libraries around the world.

In the case of Geary Hobson, social justice manifests itself often in language justice, an idea I had not considered before working on a literary biography of Hobson. My essay [6] appeared in the Gale Cengage volume, *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Twentieth Century American Nature Poets*. My article was the first to discuss Hobson's career as a whole, to offer a literary biography and career overview of an author who had been critically neglected to that point. In writing this article, I was lucky enough to arrange a series of phone calls with Hobson

about his life and publications. He loved talking about his favorite writers. In our several discussions, he kept returning to a pivotal moment in his life that occurred in 1970 when he watched *Trail of Tears* on public television, a film that featured Johnny Cash as a Cherokee forced to relocate by the United States government by the Indian Removal Act of 1838. As a young man, Hobson sat transfixed as the actors on his little black and white television were speaking the Cherokee language—the first time he had ever heard his language spoken outside of his family and friends. It was like a dream, he said, and a life-affirming one, to finally hear his language. He told me that he had seen the show once, it had changed his life, but he never met anyone else who had ever seen it. I worked with my research librarian at my school and sent him a DVD copy of the film, which was extremely hard to track down. He was grateful. From this experience, I learned some of the great joy to be had in scholarly activity and the power of a scholar to bring knowledge to the world. Until my article was published, there had been no literary biography undertaken of Hobson. Now, for anyone wishing to find out more about this author, my research is available. As the United States continues to come to terms with the Native American genocide and as the importance of Native American literature is increasingly recognized in and beyond academia, my article assures that one forerunner of the genre has received the beginning of the critical attention he deserves. As my articles above have helped to place the work of Simon Ortiz, Sherman Alexie, and Leslie Marmon Silko into scholarly context, this article offered new insights into Geary Hobson's work.

The individual entries in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Twentieth Century American Nature Poets*—including mine on Hobson—have now been incorporated into the Gale Research databases that are held by thousands of academic and public libraries throughout the world. In fact, in EBSCO's *Modern Language Association International Bibliography*

database—by far the most popular literary studies database in the United States—lists my article as the first hit when the search term is “Geary Hobson.” My article is also quoted and cited in Hobson’s *Wikipedia* entry. My article was not only the first literary biography published on Hobson, it is also at the top of the list of search results in the most popular literary research database in North America.

World War 1 and the Poetic Landscape

I grew in confidence and excitement about applying an ecocritical lens to areas of literature where an environmental focus has been lacking. In teaching an English Literature survey course, I began to see the many aspects of the landscape depicted in some World War I soldier poetry that, I believed, had not received enough critical attention. Wilfred Owens’s poem, “A Terre,” was one such case, and I saw an opportunity to read it as a critique of pre-Darwinist thinking about humanity’s place in the web of life. In my essay, “Wilfred Owen’s ‘A Terre’” [7], I argue that war is a force that acts to destroy the relationship between humanity, society, and the environment. Social norms, especially the class system typical of England during World War I, are transformed by the officer’s injuries. Beginning with stanza 5, the concept of the Great Chain of Being becomes a useful way to proceed with the reading of the poem. The idea of the Great Chain could not have been unknown to Owen, especially given his background in Christian thought. Since Plato, the image of a cosmic chain that connects every element of the created world with every other element established the hierarchy on which Natural Theology and then Darwinian philosophy was based. In his book, *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), American philosopher Arthur Lovejoy explains:

The conception and structure of the world [...] as a "Great Chain of Being," composed of an immense or [...] of an infinite number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents, which barely escape non-existence, through "every possible" grade up to the [...] highest possible kind of creature, between which and the Absolute Being the disparity was assumed to be infinite [...]. (Lovejoy 59)

My paper asserts that this is the context from which Owen removes the dying officer who is at the center of the narrative. By displacing him from his divinely determined position in the cosmic chain, the poem presents an orderly natural world shattered by the outrages of war. In war, even the most fundamentally joined elements of human life, the duality at the heart of Western religion—the human body and soul—are split by the terrifyingly unnatural upheaval caused by war's untimely and violent death. The MLA Bibliography lists only my article when "A Terre" is the search term, and *The Explicator* is one of the most widely-held literary journals in the world. It is in the collection of close to 2,000 academic libraries.

My article on Julian Grenfell's poem, "Into Battle" [8], which appeared in *The Explicator* in 2003, continues my focus on the soldier poetry of this era. My paper uses close textual analysis in a way similar to my Owen paper, and it opens an original reading of the poem by focusing on depictions of the landscape. The poem begins on a peaceful afternoon, and its speaker, a soldier who will march into battle the following morning, takes solace in the natural world. It is enough for him that the "naked earth" (1) and the "green grass and bursting trees" (2) seem to sanction his attitude and enthusiasm for the upcoming battle. Life, in the first stanza, is all one, and battle allows a man to feel himself a part of nature. There is no trepidation here, no thought that war might produce a catastrophic result for either the soldier or the earth itself. By the end of the poem, however, not only is the soldier no longer able to romanticize his

connection to the natural world, he is unable to hear or see anything except “the thundering line of battle” (44). With the battle comes a new sound that completely obliterates what he had experienced the day before: “in the air death moans and sings” (45). Any connection to the land is lost, and war is represented as an anti-environmental force, severing the bonds between humans and their habitat. War has taken the soldier from confidence and harmony with the environment to blind and helpless death on the battlefield. My article on Grenfell is one of only two on that poet in the MLA Bibliography. Both of my articles on World War 1 soldier poets are a part of a broader re-evaluation of WWI poetry that has taken place during the past ten years that has sought to widen the scope of the genre to represent a wider range of global authors and contexts. The article appeared in *The Explicator* a decade before Grenfell began to be critically re-evaluated; it was not until Santanu Das’s *The Poetry of the First World War* (2013) that Grenfell’s work began to receive more intense critical attention.

Bringing the Speculative to Modernism

In 2008, I contributed an article [9] to the *Student's Encyclopedia of American Literary Characters* that demonstrated my growing scholarly interest in speculative fiction. Alfred Bester’s character, Gully Foyle, from the novel *The Stars My Destination* (*Tiger! Tiger!* in the UK and elsewhere) (1956), offered an opportunity to return to ecocriticism and speculative fiction in what is otherwise a broad character study. Indeed, my article argues, Gully’s geographical location determines his actions, whether he is in the abandoned food locker in deep space, in a prison deep underground in France, hiding in a water-filled tunnel, or on the glitzy asteroid, Ceres. Critical attention to that point, my article argues, had been limited, at best, and had focused on Gully’s story as representative of a few themes unrelated to the environment. In a

perceptive reading, Adam Roberts places Gully Foyle within a long tradition of characters motivated solely by revenge. Donald Palumbo labels Foyle as a representation of the “monomyth,” enacting the age-old story of the quest; in Palumbo’s estimation, Foyle is an archetype for a questing character: he is thrust into an adventure he does not ask for where he faces and overcomes great difficulty. Other critics placed the novel squarely in the *bildungsroman* tradition. These influential readings offer valuable ways of reading the text, but there is much more that can be said by reading this novel through an ecocritical lens. For example, my article treats the physical reality of Foyle’s presence in particular places at particular times—a core tenet of the environmental ethic that reaches back to my earlier forays into bioregionalism—as his defining characteristic. He was a blank slate before he adapted to his environment under pressure to survive. During the novel, his setting changed, and so he needed to, as well. Although the guidelines for this particular publication did not allow me much space to pursue this line of inquiry, an ecocritical reading of Bester’s novel is something I intend to explore in future. *Student's Encyclopedia of American Literary Characters*, which was published in 2008, is held by over two hundred academic and public libraries in the United States, United Kingdom, China, Australia, Malaysia, South Africa, Philippines, Taiwan, Germany, Paraguay, Canada, France, Ecuador, and others.

Several years ago, I began a collaboration with two colleagues, Robert Stauffer and James Reitter, that focuses on speculative fiction from 1880-1940. We brought to the collaboration a shared interest in the weird and speculative. Our related but distinct scholarly interests—James and horror, Rob and fantasy, and myself and science fiction—were complementary, and helped to identify key threads running across these genres during the modernist era. In writing about science fiction during the literary Modernist period, I deferred to

Hugo Gernsback for his definition of the genre due to his considerable influence and important insights and because the writers I studied certainly were described by and influenced by his definition of the genre. A typical “scientifiction” story was “a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision” (Gernsback). It had to be a new genre, he wrote, because prior to widespread industrialization, it was not possible to imagine a future that was radically different from the present. Two features of the genre Gernsback highlighted are its capacity to instruct readers about the hard facts of science as well as predicting the future. As the science fiction specialist of our trio, I used Gernsback’s definition as part of my effort to describe and chart the development of this new genre. Other definitions soon followed as the genre found larger audiences.

We presented ideas at three conferences. We continued to be struck by the observation that writers of speculative fiction seem to have been systematically excluded from “respectable” discussions of the Modernist era. In the most august tome of them all, *The Cambridge History of Modernism*, there are scattered mentions of H. G. Wells, but the rest of the genre is largely ignored. We had something important to say, and so we decided to write a book about this era to show people that they were missing a deeply significant element of Modernism that was sitting right there in front of them. We called our book *Speculative Modernism: How Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy Conceived the Twentieth Century* (McFarland 2021). Our aim was nothing less than a reassessment of the value of early speculative fiction, much of which had been consigned to the dustbin of literary history, as a vital aspect of the literary Modernist era. Moreover, we argued that many of the defining characteristics of Modernism as practiced by Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, Sherwood Anderson, Gertrude Stein, and others, were anticipated by writers of speculative fiction whose work appeared in disposable magazines and flimsy

paperback novels. We argued that these authors should take their rightful place in literary history as the important Modernists that we argue many of them were. In writing our book, we began with a definition of literary Modernism that had many facets. As J. M. Roberts articulates in *The Twentieth Century*, Modernism was “a shift in the focus of the arts to the subjective, from the object depicted or the story narrated to a vision, a state of mind and primal reaction, above all to the state of mind of the artist, whether it was comprehensible or not to anyone else” (324). The comforts of cultural, economic, and spiritual norms gave way to an impending tidal wave of skepticism and pessimism that began in earnest in the mustard gas-filled trenches and ended with the twin hellfires of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Rebuilding the world using fragments of the shattered old world is a frequent theme in Modernist literature. Characters at the heart of H. G. Wells’s *The Shape of Things to Come* (1936), cast about in the ruins of civilization for some way to rediscover meaning. They use the broken remnants of the old order to begin to rebuild something new. Ezra Pound’s dictum of “make it new” became the calling card that symbolized the era. These were the principles of literary Modernism that defined our study of science fiction, fantasy, and horror in *Speculative Modernism*.

Our book contains seven chapters; I count myself as lead—although not exclusive—author for three of them. My contributions focus on the kinds of ecocritical themes I had been exploring throughout my scholarly career. In the chapter “Utopocalypse” [10], I analyzed literary Utopians who delved into the idea of human perfectibility during the final decades of the nineteenth century, writers who helped create a robust speculative-fiction audience. In the chapter “This Island Earth,” I examined humanity’s relationship with the non-human world in stories that offer a different path of existence beyond our anthropocentrism. Humanity is blinded by an egocentrism drawn from its adherence to science into feelings of invulnerability, an idea

explored in speculative Modernist texts such as H. G. Wells's *War of the Worlds* (1898). The final chapter in which I was lead author is titled "Machinocracy." The fast-changing technology of the era takes center stage here, and matters of society and history slip away into the misty past. During this era, some writers created stories about the limits of machines to save us from ourselves, while others created characters building weapons of mass destruction. What unites these three chapters is their focus on environmental concerns. More specifically, in all three I explore texts that look at humanity's assertion of control over their environment, a heady idea during an era of rapid technological development that was explored in stories about climate and other natural disasters, overpopulation, evolution, pandemics, and doomsday machines.

We began our book with the first stirrings of the Modernist impulse that we claim is a reaction against Utopian thinking so popular during the final decades of the nineteenth century. For my writing about utopias and dystopias, I have used the definition provided by one of the foremost scholars on utopian fiction, Lyman Tower Sargent, who wrote: that a utopia is "a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived" (Sargent *Utopianism* 6). Dystopian themes generally run in opposition to Sargent's definition. There are several different flavors of dystopia, the most often seen arise from natural and human-caused disasters or oppressive governments. Interesting paths forward include the one proposed by Gregory Claeys who writes that now is the time for a more activist utopian vision, one that responds to the nearly unfathomable catastrophe of anthropogenic climate change (26-40). The nature and definition of utopia becomes even more complex and fluid in a historical context, as Claeys observes that "today's present, somewhere, was someone's ideal future in the past" (20). Utopian thinking provided fertile ground for what came next in

speculative fiction: depictions of social dystopias or the redefinition of the “ideal place” as an individual endeavor.

The beginning of speculative fiction as we know it did not seem to be much changed from where fantastic literature had been up to that point. The emphasis on both sides of the Atlantic was on the collective future: how society might be organized in ways that could prevent war, feed the hungry, reward talent and hard work, and create greater equality for all. I argued that the First World War marked a clear divergence in science fiction between the American and British approaches. While writers in Britain continued to flip Utopian ideas into dystopias—with stories full of characters who find it hard to thrive in anyone’s depiction of a universally good society—American writers focused on the power of the individual to build a future worth living in. One can only speculate on the cause of this split. Perhaps it was partly the devastating effect that trench warfare had on an entire generation of British citizens, a trauma only remotely experienced in the States. Perhaps it was the relative success of the labor movement in Britain both before and after the war contrasted to the swing toward limited government and individualism in the United States at the same time, an idea I explored in *Speculative Modernism*:

Starting in 1919—at the conclusion of the War and with peace talks continuing at Versailles—[future President Herbert] Hoover began advocating for low taxes, limited-government, and minimum regulations, policies that arguably contributed to the stock market crash and the worldwide Great Depression. [...] Hoover rose to fame in part by elevating figures such as [Davy] Crockett, who represented the “less than a thousand men, inspired by the urge of freedom” whom Hoover lionized in his speech dedicating the memorial at Kings Mountain in 1931. (Gillard, et al. *Speculative Modernism* 31-32)

In the United States, the idea of the “rugged individualist” began to take hold in the thriving 1920s-era United States, becoming popular enough to get Hoover elected to the Presidency in 1928. The idea also permeated speculative fiction whose magazines were filled with stories of individual Americans saving humanity from monthly threats.

Speculative Modernism argues that on the other side of the Atlantic, however, glimpses emerge of Utopias gone awry in such works as British humorist Max Beerbohm’s “Enoch Soames” (1916) which hints at how individuality has been surrendered a hundred years hence. The bleak solitude at the end of time in British horror writer William Hope Hodgson’s *Dream of X* (1912) shows us society at its end, serving the only purpose for which society ever seems to be useful: keeping the monsters, both external and psychological, at bay. At the same time, speculative writers in the United States began to adapt the myth of the “rugged individual” into a new kind of American archetype: a character who could live autonomously with nature as an ally rather than an opponent. It is no surprise that speculative fiction took up this idea; it was in the air at the time. John Muir’s advocacy for preservation, stated in two influential articles in 1890, led to Theodore Roosevelt’s campaign to create national parks and national forests in the United States, ideas he put into action as President from 1901-1909. Robert E. Howard’s Conan is key example used in the book of the kind of self-sufficient character who would fit well into the world of Muir and Roosevelt. More and more, American readers, like their hero, Conan, thought of a perfect society as something from which to flee.

I was the lead author on the chapter titled “This Island Earth” [11]. This chapter focuses on ecocritical readings of speculative texts to show the Modernist influence taking hold in stories about humanity’s relationship to the environment. Whereas at an earlier point, writers drew sharp lines between the human experience and the supposedly much more authentic “natural” world,

speculative Modernists saw the boundaries between worlds blurring in ways that anticipate modern ecocritical arguments about the breakdown of human constructions like “nature” and “culture.” Influential British editor and artist Wyndham Lewis argued in “Manifesto” (1914) that the industrial era “has reared up steel trees where the green ones were lacking; has exploded in useful growths, and has found wilder intricacies than those of nature” (Lewis 36). Anne Raine makes the argument that “For both [Virginia] Woolf and [William Carlos] Williams, the goal of modernist innovation is not greater fidelity to nature [...] but rather a richer apprehension of human consciousness or the construction of aesthetic objects with their own autonomous life” (100). The first section of this chapter looks at the legacy of the Utopians who assumed that humans could wield the tools of science to bend the natural world to their will. These writers were not quite yet Modernist in their sensibilities, but they set the stage for what was to come. *Mizora* (1880-81) by Mary E. Bradley Lane and *News from Nowhere* (1890) by William Morris illustrate useful examples of this kind of thinking. The second section of my chapter is devoted to *The Purple Cloud* (1901) by M. P. Shiel, a decidedly Modernist text that abandons Utopian thinking. It explores the Modernist idea that human ingenuity has its limits, that there are mysteries that we will never solve despite our best efforts. The enigma at the core of Shiel’s post-apocalyptic novel—what happened to wipe out all surface life on Earth—is never resolved, even though Adam Jeffson devotes a great deal of effort in pursuit of the answer. The third section of this chapter explores the idea that the natural world will outlive humanity, that not only is humanity not the apotheosis of life, but humans are as negligible as any other individual species on Earth, destined to come into being, have a moment, and then become extinct. As speculative Modernist ideas go, this one represents the potential of the whole era because it harnesses the tools of speculative fiction to critique a troubled society. Shiel’s work anticipates

conversations that began much later in the twentieth century with the rise of biocentrism as a philosophical and critical stance. Shiel's novel posits not simply the near-death and rebirth of human civilization, but the extinction of humanity as we knew it, replaced by a what amounts to new, posthuman species. Life on Earth—the noxious purple cloud notwithstanding—continues unabated, and Shiel's novel illustrates the idea that, in a post-Darwinian and ecological era, humans are far from an exceptional or privileged species.

The fourth section of this chapter provides intensive close readings of *Crack of Doom* (1895) by Robert Cromie and *Nordenholt's Million* (1923) by J. J. Connington to explore the idea that the pinnacle of human ingenuity just might be the invention of the means by which to cause our own extinction. *Nordenholt's Million* is a novel where a scientist attempts to control nature only to have that experiment careen wildly out of control. For Connington, humanity will not be saved by anything it knows or does or invents. Instead, as in *The War of the Worlds*, all of human knowledge and science is ineffective against the non-human world run amok. Nordenholt, an industrialist who assumes dictatorial leadership of the U.K. in the face of the death of vegetation worldwide, represents the combined knowledge of Western science. Although he is able to ruthlessly accomplish some of his survival goals, none of it would have mattered had not the vegetation-destroying bacteria run out of food and died of its own accord. In both *Nordenholt* and *War of the Worlds*, the tools of science are only useful when it comes to reestablishing an “improved” version of humanity on Earth. Self-annihilating hubris might make some believe they can “manage” the non-human world, but that way leads to extinction.

There are seeds throughout Cromie's novel of ideas that were later developed and popularized by Sigmund Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). If civilization restricts human freedom to act on individual instincts—

especially when it comes to sex and violence—then the way toward maximum freedom is to eliminate society. For much of my analysis in this chapter, I focus on one speech by the antagonist of the novel. If ever there were a repudiation of the ideal of “benevolent Nature,” it is enunciated by Cromie’s villain, Brande:

[Nature] has no system, unless it be a *reductio ad absurdum*, which only blunders on the right way after fruitlessly trying every other conceivable path. She is not wise. She never fills a pail but she spills a hogshead. All her works are not beautiful. She never makes a masterpiece but she smashes a million “wasters” without a care.

Like any great literary villain, much of what Brande says has a kernel of truth to it. He, like other Modernists and like Darwin before them, had less reverence for the nonhuman world than those “religious maniacs” Brande mentions below. (One wonders if that phrase might seem redundant to Brande.) He begins with an observation about Darwinian evolution and spins it incrementally into his ultimate argument which advocates the destruction of all life on Earth.

The theory of evolution—her gospel—reeks with ruffianism, nature-patented and promoted. The whole scheme of the universe, all material existence as it is popularly known, is founded upon and begotten of a system of everlasting suffering as hideous as the fantastic nightmares of religious maniacs. [...] Wholesale murder is Nature’s first law. She creates only to kill, and applies the rule as remorselessly to the units in a star-drift as to the tadpoles in a horse-pond. (Cromie 84-86)

Brande’s misanthropy is contrasted to the hero Marcel’s Romantic outlook on human relations with the nonhuman world:

I could not go indoors. A roof would smother me. Give me the open lawns, the leafy woods, the breath of the summer wind. Away, then, to the silence of the coming night.

For an hour leave me to my thoughts. [...] The resolution by which I have abided was formed as I wandered lonely through the woods. (Cromie 74)

In *Speculative Modernism*, I noted the echo of Wordsworth's "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" in Marcel's reverie. Wordsworth's well-known poem is a Romantic meditation on the power of solitude in a non-human context. The speaker in the poem feels great kinship with daffodils, sparkling waves, and other beautiful sights. Marcel feels a similar release when, during his lonely walk through the woods, he is able to think clearly and accurately about Natalie, the object of his love, and also the sister of the universe-hating maniac, Brande. In *Speculative Modernism*, I argue that:

Brande's attitude encompasses multitudes in that it anticipates Fascism, eugenics, and Sabina Spielrein's ideas about "the death drive," an idea she explored seventeen years later in her paper, "Destruction as the Cause of Coming into Being" (1912). Many of those later Modernist voices either ignored anything outside of urban areas or recognized the chaos of the non-human world and recoiled. (Gillard, et al. *Speculative Modernism* 98)

If civilization restricts human freedom to act on individual instincts—especially when it comes to sex and violence—then the way toward maximum freedom is to eliminate society. Brande just takes things several steps further down the same path and anticipates some major preoccupations of Modernism.

As the twentieth century dawned bloody and bleak, genre literature explicitly rejected the idea that the "natural" world is benevolent and beautiful. Several stories in this chapter make clear that Western culture is the problem, and the non-human world, whether it be through cataclysms, toxins, extraterrestrial influence, or even the re-emergence of once-dominant

primordial life, will eventually create a solution. Speculative fiction gave writers of this era the imaginative opportunity to see far into the future, as in the case of works such as William Hope Hodgson's *House on the Borderland* (1908), or to imagine humanity's end at the hands of a greater power, as in the case of *The Coming Race* (1871) by Edward Bulwer-Lytton. These writers and others recognized that the Earth could and would likely continue long after human extinction. My published research argues that only in speculative fiction is the radical core of Modernism allowed to run its fullest course.

In the chapter titled "Machinocracy" [12], I argue that anxiety about developments in technology, especially instruments of war, consumed Modernist thinking. It was natural that machines and the wonders of the future became the subjects of Speculative Modernists. This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part studies stories by Edward Page Mitchell, Bob Brown, and George Frederick Stratton to make the point that in the early years of the speculative Modernist era, machines were frequently depicted as the salvation of humanity. In these stories, humans have problems and machines solve them. In the second section of this chapter, stories by Arthur Conan Doyle, Frank Stockton, and E. M. Forster demonstrate the point that even with the best ideas humanity has to offer, sometimes our problems are too vast and too complex for even the most powerful technology to solve. In the third section of this chapter, one that contains discussions of work by Robert E. Coates, H. G. Wells, and the short story "Rust" (1939) by Joseph E. Kelleam, I explore the emerging anxiety that technology is not simply incapable of saving humanity, but that it also might ultimately destroy the species entirely. The late 1800s and early 1900s brought spectacular and shocking new inventions such as powered flight, the telephone, and the automobile; inventors themselves gained tremendous individual fame and acclaim. Especially during the interwar years, Speculative Modernist writers became

disillusioned with the power of technology to change human lives for the better and wrote stories about these new machines allowing humanity's worst instincts to manifest themselves.

Speculative Modernism challenges the many ways that literary Modernism has been defined. As British historian J. M. Roberts argues in *The Twentieth Century*, Modernism was “a shift in the focus of the arts to the subjective, from the object depicted or the story narrated to a vision, a state of mind and primal reaction, above all to the state of mind of the artist, whether it was comprehensible or not to anyone else” (324). Common themes among nearly all of the definitions of the movement include the idea that the old world was dying and reliance on the way things had always been done had led humanity to a profoundly violent and bleak dead end. The best-known literary Modernists were characterized by their radical experiments in form and style, a reconsideration of humanity's place in the cosmos, and a fresh focus on language, its limits and possibilities. Literary Modernists searched for—but frequently failed to find—a new way of being in the world that made sense and could be sustained for future generations. Giants such as Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and T. S. Eliot blew up every “universal” creed they could think of, smashing and reassembling the tools of their predecessors into weapons that they used to annihilate formerly sacred institutions.

Literary Modernism is marked by the idea that humanity might have worn out its welcome on a fragile and finite Earth. As Christopher Lane claims, in relation to what he sees as an apocalyptic impulse in D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*: “Completed in 1916 at the height of World War I, *Women in Love* shares with near-contemporaneous works by Saki (H. H. Munro) and Wyndham Lewis an acute fascination with [...] humanity's extinction. Far from protecting us from such enmity, these works almost recklessly embrace it” (Lane 769-70). It is ideas such as these that make speculative fiction the perfect vehicle for the times. However, when one looks in

august encyclopedias or literary guide books on Modernism, one will almost never find a mention of the role that speculative fiction played in the creation of this movement. At times, H. G. Wells or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle might make their way into the notice of the academic seeking to understand the times, but rarely is any intrusion into the genres made to chronicle the effects each had on the other. Our book argues that long before the canonical Modernists became household names, writers of speculative fiction, as these genres are now known collectively, had already been exploring the same cultural forces. Speculative Modernist characters, such as Adam Jeffson, the last man on Earth in M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud* (1901), cast about in the ruins of civilization for some way to rediscover meaning, using the remnants of the old world to build the new. Through the lens of Modernism, the impact of speculative fictions such as *The Purple Cloud* is revealed, an impact that was often not felt for a generation as speculative stories were gobbled up mostly by young minds who encountered these books in dime-store paperbacks and magazines. Speculative seeds germinated in a generation who would later fly jet planes and rockets, journey to the Moon, build artificial brains, and push the arts to their limits. *Speculative Modernism* sought to fill what we saw as a major gap in conventional definitions of literary Modernism and to claim speculative fiction's rightful place in the center of literary Modernism.

In *Speculative Modernism*, I argue that experimentation in language is a hallmark of the Modernist movement, and yet it was not until the 1960s that it arrived in speculative fiction. The next generation of editors expanded the reach of speculative fiction magazines into the second half of the twentieth century. Audiences began to demand stories that delved deeply into the possibilities for psychological and ethical complexity in their characters and settings. John Carnell edited *New Worlds* magazine starting in 1946, and “[b]y the late 1950s, authors such as [J. G.] Ballard, [Brian] Aldiss, John Brunner, and Harry Harrison were testing and breaking SF

taboos in the magazine's pages" (Gunn 330). Michael Moorcock took the reins in 1964 and brought with him a commitment toward bringing characters filled with human frailty and layered complexity into science fiction. Moorcock's goal as an editor, as he explained in the introduction to the *New Worlds* anthology, was to put his stamp on the genre:

[I]t would specialise in experimental work by writers like [William] Burroughs and [Eduardo] Paolozzi, but it would be "popular," it would seek to publicise such experimenters; it would publish all those writers who had become demoralised by a lack of sympathetic publishers and by baffled critics; it would attempt a cross-fertilization of popular sf, science and the work of the literary and artistic avant garde. (Moorcock 10-11)

I argue that he and his contemporaries—dubbed speculative fiction's "New Wave"—became the leading force in taking the hard-won gains of the Speculative Modernist era into the second half of the twentieth century.

After *Speculative Modernism* was published, I extended my study of the modes of Modernism in my paper which appeared in the journal *ANQ* in 2022 [13] on Mary Elizabeth Counselman's short story, "Three Marked Pennies" (1934). Counselman is generally not considered a Modernist, but "'maybe the symbols don't mean what they seem to': Mary Elizabeth Counselman and the Language of Modernism," seeks to challenge that categorization. I argue that decades before Moorcock's editorial revolution, Counselman's story represents an unnoticed and very early gesture toward language experimentation in speculative fiction. In this story, Counselman shakes the reliability of written language and questions community consensus in determining meaning in language. When it comes to destabilizing and experimental language, I argue that she was an unacknowledged trailblazer for Modernism in speculative fiction. The

few critical voices who have studied her work have generally praised Counselman's language as "uncomplicated," "clear-cut," and "immensely readable" (Barrett 1). While that is arguably true, there is something much different happening just beneath the surface in "The Three Marked Pennies" (1934). On first reading, the story appears to be a humorous sociological exercise. However, a deeper reading shows that this story uses a Modernist sensibility to show characters bringing idiosyncratic and personal interpretive biases to all communication. The characters exhibit a nineteenth-century faith in their ability to decode language and to use their fluency to acquire the truth of the situation they are in, a confidence that is undermined by the fundamental separation between language and reality depicted in this story. By decoupling the symbols that make up written language from the idea that is meant to be conveyed, Counselman breaks apart the tradition of the reliability of language that ran through the main channel of speculative fiction throughout this period and was, as my paper argues, a very early practitioner of stylistic Modernism in speculative fiction. *ANQ*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Routledge, is a long-established and prominent journal that is available full-text in many scholarly databases and indexed online.

As a companion volume to *Speculative Modernism*, James, Rob and I edited an anthology of short stories that we discussed in depth in our first book. This peer-reviewed collection, titled *The Spark of Modernism: Speculative Stories That Defined an Era, 1886–1939*, was published by McFarland in June, 2023. We wrote introductions for each of the texts that placed each one into the career arc of the author and provided cultural and material context of its composition. Most of the twenty texts included are short stories, including works by Clare Winger Harris, Max Beerbohm, Joseph E. Kelleam, and others, but a few of them, such as Olivia Howard Dunbar's "The Decay of the Ghost in Fiction" (1905), are nonfiction pieces included to provide

philosophical, cultural, and material context for the era and for the stories. We also wrote an introduction to the collection as a whole that will allow it to stand on its own as a classroom text or for general reading. Our anthology provides a scholarly apparatus that allows us to develop and communicate the ideas asserted in *Speculative Modernism* while also bringing some relatively unknown but important fictions to light. An array of nonfiction pieces on cultural and scientific advances of the time period provides context for the anthology's stories. Our vision for this anthology has many elements. In a sea of anthologies that contain only horror or only fantasy or only science fiction, ours combines three speculative genres in order to show their cross-currents and porous boundaries. By looking at how fantasy, horror, and science fiction responded to the overwhelming forces of change during this era, our anthology provides a much more complete picture of literary responses to the seismic shifts across every aspect of life than previously available. Our anthology is intended for a wide audience, including casual readers. When paired with *Speculative Modernism*, our anthology will be a useful and stimulating teaching resource for college classes but can operate just as well as a stand-alone collection both in and out of the classroom. McFarland's reach is worldwide; we expect our anthology to find an eager audience.

Throughout 2023, I have worked my way through the peer review and contracting process with Routledge for *The Routledge Anthology of Climate Fiction, Volume One* [14]. I have included the introduction and table of contents in my “relevant publications” document. I will be the sole editor and writer of this collection, the first in a series. This book seeks to redefine the genre of climate fiction as not an innovation of the late twentieth century but rather a continuation of the Modernist impulse in speculative fiction that began in the late 1800s. After the 1950s, there are more and more stories in the United States and the United Kingdom that can

be easily identified as climate fiction, but the start date, given by most for the genre, I argue, seems inadequate. It does not account for the stream of climate fiction that was published in the United States and the United Kingdom in the decades before the 1950s. As this anthology demonstrates, the story of climate fiction is much longer and more nuanced than scholarly consensus would have it. In fact, this collection of stories exists to refute the claim that cli-fi began in earnest only in the past seventy years. My anthology is comprised of short stories mainly from the years 1880-1940 with three antecedents from the Bible, Lord Byron, and Edgar Allan Poe that set the table. These stories are most certainly about climate change, although they are not currently recognized as such. As this anthology demonstrates, the story of climate fiction is much longer and more nuanced than scholarly consensus would have it. Each story is preceded by an introduction that provides a reader-friendly scaffolding that draws connections and provides context for the stories and for the genre itself. The peer review process has resulted in three glowingly positive responses, and the senior editor at Routledge has been enthusiastic about the project. I am putting the finishing touches on the book and anticipate the publication date in spring 2024. That the editors at Routledge insisted on giving the press's name to my anthology is a testament to the strength of the collection and, perhaps, a marker of my growing reputation in the field.

Conclusion

Looking back over the past twenty-five years, I have pursued lines of thinking that I began in the Master's program I attended from 1996-1998 where I became enamored with first-wave ecocriticism. My MA program was rigorous: it required ten courses, comprehensive examinations, and a 75-page, research-driven thesis; mine was an ecocritical reading of the

Preface to *Paterson* by William Carlos Williams. During these early career years, I focused my ecocritical scholarship in several areas. I presented an ecocritical reading of Ursula Le Guin's work at a conference. I published ecocritical readings of the World War 1 soldier poets, Julian Grenfell and Wilfred Owen. I turned my attention to Native American writers, and my research interest in that area led me to several publications, including work that focuses on Sherman Alexie, Leslie Marmon Silko, Chief Joseph, Geary Hobson, and others.

In recent years, I have found a scholarly home in the period 1880-1940 in speculative fiction. My work has coalesced around ecocritical readings of British and American authors of this period. I built upon several conference presentations and individual papers to coauthor a peer-reviewed monograph—titled *Speculative Modernism: How Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy Conceived the Twentieth Century*—on the origins of speculative fiction during the Modernist era. Our book delved into a variety of British and American texts and focused each chapter around a theme such as technology or the environment. I was the lead author on a chapter devoted to ecocritical readings of science fiction, horror, and fantasy from the Modernist era, including *The Purple Cloud*, *Ralph 124C 41+*, *News From Nowhere*, and others.

Looking back at the considerable body of peer-reviewed outputs I have produced to date, I see the thread of ecocriticism running through nearly everything I have done. My first teaching position was outdoors at a nature center in New Jersey. In many ways, that experience shaped me into who I have become. Over the years I have worked to discover greater depth to the ecocritical ideas that have motivated my career. My contribution to the field has been consistent and, I believe, innovative. I hope to continue to grow and write about the intersections of speculative fiction and ecocriticism, especially during the literary Modernist era.

My work continues to draw parallels between the rise of literary Modernism and the rise of twentieth-century speculative fiction. As complementary texts, both *Speculative Modernism* and *The Spark of Modernism* have allowed me to crystalize and disseminate my research on the links between speculative fiction and literary Modernism. *The Routledge Anthology of Climate Fiction, Volume One* continues my scholarly focus on the Modernist era of speculative fiction, this time by asserting that climate fiction begins much earlier than the current scholarly consensus would have it.

Throughout my career, I have looked to bring neglected and excluded voices into the conversation and to the canon. With my work in speculative fiction, I shone a light on writers such as Robert Cromie, J. J. Connington, M. P. Shiel, and others in trying to expand the Modernist canon and also to draw attention to marginalized voices. My most recent book, *The Routledge Anthology of Climate Fiction Volume One*, argues that the canon of climate fiction should be expanded to include neglected works from the Modernist era. Moving forward, I will look for ways to bring forgotten, but significant, gems of speculative fiction during the years 1880-1940 into the mainstream. My scholarly career is at its peak right now, and my appetite for research remains as strong as ever. Continuing my effort to claim speculative writers for the Speculative Modernist cause, I am in the late stages of editing a collection of speculative stories by Evelyn Underhill, a well-known theologian, stories that have not been published since their original printing in an obscure magazine in 1905. From there, I plan to continue my focus on speculative writers of the period 1880-1940 who have slipped below the critical radar. This commentary, therefore, is provisional. There is so much more to come...

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Declaration:

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

FORM UPR16**Research Ethics Review Checklist**

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Research Degrees Operational Handbook for more information)



| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Postgraduate Research Student (PGRS) Information | | Student ID: | 2151487 | UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH |
| PGRS Name: | William Gillard | | | |
| Department: | School of Area Studies, Sociology, History, Politics and Literature | First Supervisor: | Mark Frost | |
| Start Date: (or progression date for Prof Doc students) | 03/04/2023 | | | |
| Study Mode and Route: | Part-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | MPhil <input type="checkbox"/> | MD <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> | PhD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Professional Doctorate <input type="checkbox"/> | |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Title of Thesis: | How Speculative Fiction Conceived the Twentieth Century |
| Thesis Word Count: (excluding ancillary data) | 12,701 |

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I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s)

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