Book Reviews

tion" (95) that rises above bare existence to affirm a resolute presence even in the midst of absence.

There is a danger here, too, which Farrier recognizes and resists with theoretic fervor. Can his deft etymological analysis of words like "hospitality," "host" and "asylum" expose "the state's ontological crisis regarding asylum seekers" (159) in ways that will influence opinion beyond the academy? Farrier contends that we understand asylum only through the narratives told about it and the laws written to define it, in which case discourse, however unruly, is a viable place to start. It can counter the camp *dispositif* by linking an ethics of hospitality (another rich Derridean enigma) to an ethics of reading (which acknowledges the unreadable), thereby imagining a new "mode of political belonging that resembles Rancièrian dissensus . . . where rights express the inherent alterity in the polis" (145). This disaggregated, utopian collectivity in which all are welcome sounds like a benevolent, anarchic opposite of the camp *dispositif*, but whereas the latter is all too real, the former sounds suspiciously like an aesthetic vision – hospitality turning life into a form of art.

Jon Kertzer, University of Calgary

Sara Wasson and Emily Alder, eds. *Gothic Science Fiction 1980–2010*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2011. Pp. xix, 219. £65.00.

Gothic Science Fiction 1980–2010 (published by Liverpool University Press' Science Fiction Texts and Studies Series) is a timely collection of eleven essays on works that combine the "disturbing affective lens" and "confined or claustrophobic environment[s]" of the Gothic mode (Wasson and Alder 2) with the cognitive estrangement of science fiction to explore the troubled boundaries of bodies and nations in the last three decades. Focusing on recent films, TV series, short stories, novels, graphic novels, and a trading card game, these essays make a compelling case for the hybrid genre of Gothic science fiction, showing how it is particularly attuned to the impacts of increasingly invasive technologies and complex globalized politico-economic networks.

Editors Sara Wasson and Emily Alder situate the collection amongst "the 'hyphenated' Gothics that have abounded in recent years" (7) as critics attempt to historicize Gothic studies, but it can be placed just as easily in the context of recent efforts to historicize science fiction studies. The collection's move to examine the relatedness of the Gothic and science fiction has the potential to reinvigorate criticism of both. Divided into three sections—

Redefining Genres, Biopower and Capital, and Gender and Genre—the collection identifies four dominant preoccupations of Gothic science fiction from the 1980s onward: the rise of global capitalism, the proliferation of new technologies, the boundaries of the human (and posthuman), and possible apocalyptic scenarios. While the essays offer insight into how different works explore these concerns, the collection's most significant contribution lies in its exploration of the complexities of genre formation and interrelation.

The most persuasive and effective essays in the collection are those that carefully attend to what the editors call the "the complex mesh of forms and cultural developments" (3) that accompany the emergence and continuing transformations of science fiction. In addition to providing interpretations of primary texts, such essays also offer a more nuanced understanding of the genre and history of science fiction and its kinship with other genres. For example, in what is perhaps the most compelling case for the collection's hybrid focus, Roger Luckhurst argues that, although we cannot point to a time of generic purity, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the genre blurring of the last three decades. His essay on "the post-genre fantastic" (the recent hybridization between horror, Gothic, science fiction, and dark fantasy [22]) examines the "strange spatial zones" (23) of numerous works as signalling both "generic hydridization" (25) and a changing world. More specifically, he suggests that such changes in genre, or "generic pile-ups" (23) as he calls them, may reflect geopolitical transformations and be characteristic of the literature of "a risk society" (33). Luckhurst thus signals an important shift in science fiction studies: a movement away from an obsession with generic boundaries and "pure specimens," typical in criticism of "genres perceived as having low cultural value" (22), toward an emphasis on "crossbreeds and mutants" (Altman as qtd in Luckhurst 22).

As Luckhurst and other authors in this collection suggest, such a critical shift is particularly helpful in understanding recent developments in popular cultural production as well as in understanding better the history of a genre through its interrelatedness with other genres. For example, in his essay on the work of David Conway, Mark P. Williams shows how the "challenge to genre stability is intimately bound to challenges to *gender* stability" (133) and suggests that Conway's "Metal Sushi" (1998) "operates on aesthetic terms that blend decadence and Modernism" while also contributing to the New Weird. In an essay on the biopolitics of empire in *The X-Files*, the *Blade* trilogy, and the Borg of *Star Trek*, Aris Mousoutzanis suggests that Gothic science fiction of the 1990s is but the most recent instance of the historical convergence of the Gothic and science fiction that highlights their shared interests in "contemporary technoscientific formations" and "the corporeal, the

monstrous and the grotesque" (58). Although primarily concerned with the Gothic science fiction of the 1990s, Mousoutzanis briefly but effectively outlines previous historical stages or points of convergence between the genres at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Although also attuned to the complexities of generic hybridity, other essays in this collection are perhaps more notable for their contribution to the study of particularly timely topics, such as biotechnologies of gene manipulation and cloning (Sara Wasson, Emily Alder), critically neglected but highly popular fictional figures such as zombies (Fred Botting, Gwyneth Peaty), and recent sub-genres and media that have only begun to attract critical attention, such as Steampunk (Laura Hilton) and trading card games (Nickianne Moody).

The worst that can be said of some of the less effective essays in this collection is that they seem overly concerned with proving that certain works qualify as instances of Gothic science fiction without paying sufficient attention to why such a hybrid status matters. Although insightful in their readings of individual works, such essays do not perform the same kinds of critical work that other essays are able to do by tackling larger critical concerns.

Overall, however, this is an admirable collection of essays that points to a renewed and refreshing critical focus while also attending to the varied pleasures and anxieties of living in what Angela Carter called "gothic times."

Stefania Forlini

Miriam Verena Richter. *Creating the National Mosaic: Multiculturalism in Canadian Children's Literature from 1950 to 1994*. Cross/Cultures 133 Readings in Post/Colonial Literatures and Cultures in English. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2011. Pp. xx, 354. US$101.

In *Creating the National Mosaic: Multiculturalism in Canadian Children's Literature from 1950 to 1994*, Miriam Verena Richter asserts that "multiculturalism is a . . . core component of Canadian national identity" (xiii). Believing that few would challenge this statement, Richter views the 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism Act (CMA) as completing the "establishment of a multicultural way of life" (xiv). The subject of her study—presumably more controversial—is how Canadian multicultural children's literature has not merely reflected but has actively contributed to the construction of this identity. Nesting her analysis of seven novels in a thorough and valuable