

Introduction to Science Fiction

Prof. Andrew Goldstone

(andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)

Office hours: Wednesdays, 12–1 p.m. or by appointment

November 20, 2023. Butler, cont.; *Star Trek: TNG*.

review: “Bloodchild”

- ▶ sources of disturbance: violations of
 - ▶ bodily integrity: maggots, blood and guts, “And she opened him”
 - ▶ personal autonomy: the Preserve, the cage of limbs, the choice
- ▶ overdetermined themes: love, coming of age, male pregnancy, paying the rent
 - ▶ what price survival? ...what price love?
 - ▶ “It’s not [about slavery]”: it is...because it’s not

Butler across categories

It was a silly movie “Devil Girl from Mars”, although it wasn’t as bad as I make it sound. I watched it as a kid, and it seemed a silly movie to me, so I turned it off and I began writing. My idea was, gee, I can write a better story than that. And since the story that I had seen was supposed to be science fiction, I began writing science fiction. (Butler in 1997)

Despite her dyslexia, by the time she was 12, she had become an avid reader of science fiction. After seeing a science fiction film entitled *Devil Girl from Mars*, Butler decided to begin producing science fiction that did not ignore issues of race and gender. (2006 obituary for Butler)

I didn’t even know he [Delany] was black until I was at Clarion. (Butler in 1998)

What good is all this...?

“Speech Sounds”

- ▶ What aspects of identity matter in this story?

“Speech Sounds”

- ▶ What aspects of identity matter in this story?
- ▶ Who rides the bus in LA?

“Speech Sounds”

- ▶ What aspects of identity matter in this story?
- ▶ Who rides the bus in LA?

She had lost reading and writing. That was her most serious impairment and her most painful. She had taught history at UCLA. She had done freelance writing. Now she could not even read her own manuscripts.
(573)

pandemic thinking

Or were these children simply immune?...

Rye glanced at the dead murderer...Anger, frustration, hopelessness, insane jealousy . . . how many more of him were—people willing to destroy what they could not have? (578)

communication comparison

- ▶ What is communication without language:
 - ▶ Odd groups: in “Speech Sounds”?
 - ▶ Even groups: in “Darmok”?

communication comparison

- ▶ What is communication without language:
 - ▶ Odd groups: in “Speech Sounds”?
 - ▶ Even groups: in “Darmok”?

She shrugged, tapped his shoulder, then her own, and held up her index and second fingers tight together, just to be sure.

He grasped the two fingers and nodded. He was with her. (575–76)

- ▶ Watch 40:57–end. What is communication with or without language here? Count the ways!

metaphor: a theory of literature?

PICARD (closing his fist). With fist closed. An army. Open... to lure the enemy. Then closed... To attack. That's how you communicate, isn't it? By citing example. By metaphor.

metaphor: a theory of literature?

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DATA. The Tamarian ego structure does not seem to allow what we normally think of as self-identity. Their ability to abstract is highly unusual. They seem to communicate through narrative imagery—by reference to the individuals and places which appear in their mytho-historical accounts.

TROI. It's as if I were to say to you "Juliet. On her balcony."

BEVERLY. An image of romance.

TROI. Exactly. Image is everything to the Tamarians.

next

- ▶ VanderMeer through p. 67
- ▶ paper due Tuesday 11/28