Several of my closest friends find my enthusiasm for science fiction and fantasy peculiar. They can’t understand my fascination for barbarian kingdoms replete with dragons, sorcery, and sword-wielding Amazon warriors. The wonder of an interstellar space flight to uncharted galaxies is lost on them. They imagine that science fiction and fantasy is so filled with spaceships, robots, and bug-eyed monsters that there is no room for lesbian and gay dreams and visions.

I know differently. Science fiction and fantasy can be as “gay” as the works of Rita Mae Brown, Edmund White, and Armistead Maupin. There are lesbian Amazons and gay starship captains. But the genre offers much more than homosexual characterizations. Science fiction can provide a healthy escape from the struggle of our everyday lives, an immediate ticket to fictional realms impossible to explore in standard or “mundane” fiction. Science fiction can engage the intellect in gripping discourse, and encourage questions like “why?” and “what if?” By imagining the “what if?,” science fiction and fantasy challenges readers to build their own worlds, with better and more humane cultures than our own. And the adventures of a lusty Amazon or the tribulations of a sweaty starship pilot can be as sexy as the latest erotic video.

What is now referred to as “Science Fiction and Fantasy” was codified into a unique literary genre within pulp magazines during the 1920s and 1930s. The intended audience for this early fiction was teenagers; few stories dealt with even the
most superficial aspects of sex. But sexual material was not entirely absent, and occasionally homosexuality was mentioned. Some science fiction writers and readers realized that the genre provided ingenious means to discuss homosexuality without naming it. In "The Feminine Metamorphosis" by David H. Keller (1929), a group of rich, talented businesswomen band together to take over the American economy and dispense with men. It was one of numerous variations on the theme of single-sexed or sex segregated societies which appeared regularly in the pulps. By using this science fiction convention, authors could describe women who loathe men and prefer women, and explore gender roles and sexual politics without being forced to discuss homosexuality.

Other pulp authors used the traditional vampire story to circumvent prohibitions by disguising same-sex passion as bodies. Comic situations abound as the wife (in her husband's body) flirts with a male friend, with same-sex attraction played entirely for laughs. But whether a "soul sick lesbian," an effeminate caricature, or a sex-changing human, the image of the homosexual was overwhelmingly stereotypic and one-dimensional. Lesbian and gay characters were denied full development, social context, or intelligent dialogue.

With the 1952 publication of Theodore Sturgeon's "The World Well Lost" in Amazing, the situation began to change. "The World Well Lost" concerned a pair of alien "lovebirds" who charm Earth until it is learned they are homosexual. Once their secret is out, the lovebirds must face homophobic oppression and are returned to their home planet. Sturgeon continued his pathbreaking exploration of gay subject matter in his 1957 "The Affair of the Green Monkey," in which an effeminate alien is taught to "pass" as human. Sturgeon opened the door to open discussion of homosexuality within the genre, and several science fiction writers followed his lead in the decades that followed.

MARION ZIMMER Bradley stands out among the science fiction authors of the 1950s and early 1960s. Bradley began her professional career with the 1954 publication of "Centaurian Changeling" in Fantasy and Science Fiction. Early in her career, Bradley began incorporating homosexual themes into her fiction. In her 1958 short story, "The Planet Savers," set on the imaginary world of Darkover, a repressed homosexual is the protagonist. Five years later, Fantasy and Science Fiction published Bradley's "Another Rib," co-written with her friend Juelia Coulson. As pathbreaking as Sturgeon's work, "Another Rib" concerned an all-male crew's homosexual adaptation to an alien environment. Bradley's sensitivities were not surprising; she had been an early contributor to both The Ladder and The Mattachine Review.

The mid-1960s brought an upsurge of political activism to American life, and this social reality was reflected in a new kind of science fiction. J. G. Ballard, Michael Moorcock, Robert Silverberg, Thomas Disch, Samuel R. Delany, and Joanna Russ emerged as "new wave" science fiction writers, willing to experiment radically with style and content. As lesbians and gay men came out of the closets throughout the 1970s, social change remained thematic in science fiction. For the first time, lesbians and gay men emerged as protagonists in science fiction and fantasy. One of the first attempts to incorporate the "sexual revolution" of the time into the genre was science fic-

Among the authors directly responsible for this flood were Marion Zimmer Bradley, Samuel Delany, and Joanna Russ. Samuel Delany published his massive novel _Dhalgren_ in 1975 after a long absence from publishing. The brilliant, kaleidoscopic blockbuster, which readers either loved or despised, revolved around a nameless bisexual drifter in a near-deserted American city, and introduced explicit sexuality to the genre. Delany's _Triton_ (1976) described a feminist utopia where homosexuality is neither condemned nor proscribed. And the hero of Delany's 1979 fantasy collection, _Tales of Neveryon_, was a gay ex-slave who leads a revolution for freedom.

Joanna Russ almost single-handedly introduced the lesbian-feminist movement to science fiction. Her powerful short story "When It Changed" (1972) is one of the first science fiction pieces to portray an all-female society as positive, and her novel _The Female Man_ (1975), with its juxtaposition of four very different female realities, is recognized as both a science fiction and feminist classic.

Several authors continued to use the closeted science fiction conventions of the past, but they transformed them into something new and often openly gay. Joanna Russ' planet of Whistleway, for example, was an all-female planet that didn't want to become heterosexual. Sally Miller Gearhart, James Tiptree, Jr., and Suzy McKee Charnas created similar feminist worlds. And the vampires in Anne Rice's _Interview with the Vampire_ (1976) fall passionately in love with each other.

The mainstream explosion of gay-themed science fiction peaked in the early 1980s and has since subsided. Gay and lesbian science fiction and fantasy is now more often published by the gay and feminist presses, like Alyson, Naiad, and Spinster Ink, which aim at a more specialized audience.

But if no longer as frequently the protagonists, lesbian and gay characters abound within the genre, and in many cases are no longer confined by stereotypes. Gays, lesbians, and transsexuals, for example, appear regularly within "cyberpunk" fiction—one of the newest forms of science fiction characterized by rock and roll imagery, and best represented by the stylistic works of William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. Feminist-oriented science fiction and fantasy has remained a prominent component in the field. Strong, independent female protagonists are now commonplace.

Inevitably, AIDS has entered the scope of science fiction. One of the first science fiction stories to use AIDS as a subject was Samuel Delany's "The Tale of Plagues and Carnivals," in which an ancient plague in the barbarian world of Neveryon is intercut with the author's candid observations and concerns about AIDS. Michael Bishop, in his _Unicorn Mountain_, is equally profound in his quiet portrait of a young gay man with AIDS whose contact with Native American culture and a small herd of unicorns results in a magical transformation. A more bleak and homophobic vision is rendered in Norman Spinrad's _Nightmarish."_ "Journals of the Plague Years," published last year in the anthology _Full Spectrum_, Spinrad imagines a future of sexual and religious fascism in which people who test HIV-positive are institutionalized, while a cure for AIDS is repressed by corporate greed. AIDS is cured in F.M. Busby's new novel _The Breeds of Man_, but the genetic tampering required for the cure results in a new, sexually androgynous kind of human being.

The following lesbian and gay science fiction and fantasy was all published after 1979. This list is not meant to be complete, but rather is my own assessment of the best of the bunch. ▼

Thanks to Lyn Paleo for her help with this article.

Eric Garver is a historian and community activist with a strong desire to discover, document, and protect lesbian and gay culture. With Lyn Paleo, he co-authored _Uranian Worlds: A Reader's Guide to Alternative Sexuality in Science Fiction and Fantasy_ (G.K. Hall, 1983), and is a co-editor of _Worlds Apart: An Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Science Fiction and Fantasy_ (Alyson, 1986). Garver and Paleo are currently updating Uranian Worlds to include those books published since 1979.

This is a fascinating, kinky, first novel, which manages to cover hustling, sadomasochism, and boy love, in one big leap. Sennah is a young slave and made prostitute on the cruel world of Naphar. When Sennah meets an aristocratic Lady, he imagines a rescue from bondage, but his hopes are dashed when he discovers the Lady's sadomasochistic desires. Sennah finally manages to escape her manipulations, helped in large part by his love for Pell, a younger friend. Baker has returned to Naphar twice, in Journey to Memblair (Avon, 1987) and its sequel Burnin' Tears of Sestrum (Avon, 1988), but neither has as strong a homosexual theme as Quarreling.


Clive Barker has developed an impressive reputation as a writer of horror fiction. His clean writing, graphic violence and adult approach to sexuality have given him a wide following and made novels like The Demonsmoke Game and Gabel international bestsellers. Several of his early short stories, first published in his Books of Blood series, deal directly with homosexual themes. "Human Remains" concerns Gavin, an attractive, young London male prostitute who encounters a blood-thirsty, sadistic client. In "In the Hills, the Cities," a gay male couple vacationing in Eastern Europe stumble upon an ancient and horrifying pagan ritual. For Barker, homosexuality is simply another part of the sexual world; unlike most horror novelists, he neither condemns nor punishes.


Michael Bishop is the author of many fantasy and science fiction stories and twice won the Nebula Award for best short fiction. His latest fantasy novel, Unicorn Mountain, combines condoms, AIDS, Native Americans, and unicorns into a magical story. Libby Quaren, a divorced rancher trying to eke out a living in the isolated Colorado Rockies, grandly shares her ranch with her ranch hand and friend Sam Coldponey, an Ute Indian. She takes in Bo Gavino, a young gay relative with AIDS, after he has been rejected by his lover and his family. These three people find their lives transformed when a small herd of unicorns is discovered on their ranch.


Like much of Marion Zimmer Bradley's science fiction, City of Sorcery is set on her imaginary world of Darkover. The Terran colonizers of Darkover have been out of communication with their mother world for centuries and have interbred with an indigenous, telepathic people. Darkover is feudal and its aristocrats have inherited the indigenous psychic gifts. City of Sorcery is set decades after Earth has rediscovered Darkover and Terran/Darkover relations have been normalized. Free Amazonas—women who live outside the cultural values that keep the rest of Darkover's female population enslaved—have become an important link between the two cultures. Amazon Camilla and Magda Lorcan are lesbian lovers who search for a mysterious city of telepathic Amazonas.


A sequel to Heritage of Hastur, Bradley's 1976 novel of gay male awakening. The plot focuses on the return of a powerful psychic matrix to Darkover. A heterosexual love affair is the central theme of the novel, but significant gay male subplots abound. Regis Hastur, the gay protagonist of Heritage of Hastur, reaffirms his love for Danilo, decadent bisexual Leroy Ridgeway secretly plots treason, and the manipulative Lord Dynt Ardais, the villain of Heritage, ultimately redeems himself. Under the leadership of Regis Hastur, Darkover develops ongoing relations with the Terrans.

The protagonists of Bradley's 1976 The Shattered Chain, Magda Lorcan and Jastie ni Melora, switch places. Jastie moves to the Terran colony with her heterosexual "freesame," starts a Terran job, and tries to reconcile her Amazon oath with her new life. When she becomes pregnant, her loyalty to her husband, to her Amazon sisters, and to her family heritage are in conflict. Meanwhile Magda has entered an Amazon Guild house and eventually discovers her love of women, taking Camilla as her lover. The collapse of Jastie's marriage sends her into the wilderness, and Magda must use her Amazon skills to rescue her friend. Magda and Jastie learn that their love for each other is of primary importance to them both.

Lois McMaster Bujold sets her novel on Athos, an all-male planet once founded by misogynistic religious fanatics and now entirely homosexual. Athosians reproduce by manipulating ovarian cultures in mechanical wombs. When the imported cultures prove infertile, Dr. Ethan Urquhart is sent off-planet where he finds intrigue and adventure. After earning that women are not the monsters he had been taught they were, but surprisingly not succumbing to the temptations of heterosexuality, Dr. Urquhart returns to Athos with a potential new male lover.


Jo Clayton is a prolific fantasy and science fiction author known for including assertive and adventurous femme protagonists in her works. In her *Duel of Sorcery* trilogy, Clayton’s hero is not just female, but also lesbian... well, sort of. Serre, a warrior woman, finds herself a pawn in a duality match between a fallen sorcerer and The Goddess. Serre’s beloved “shielman” Tytyran is apparently also her lover, which seems to imply a lesbian sexuality. But Tytyran is murdered within the trilogy’s first pages, and Serre’s loneliness evaporates. By the trilogy’s second novel, Serre’s heterosexuality is blossoming. Despite this minor irritation, *The Duel of Sorcery* is worth reading. Serre is, after all, assertive and adventurous.


Catherine Cooke sets her two richly woven and intricate fantasy novels in a magical Arabian Nights world. Arris is just a young boy when his life is plunged into political and spiritual intrigue. Unknown to him, he is actually a chosen one of the Goddess. Her manipulations force Arris into series of dangerous and exotic adventures, including being a slave and skilled lover of a cruel Emperor. While living with the Emperor, Arris is trained as an assassin and is eventually sent on a mission—to kill the powerful Prince Semsha. But instead of killing the Prince, Arris falls in love with him.


Samuel Delany continues his growth as an author and an artist with his four-volume fantasy series *Return to Neveryon*. Delany’s world of Neveryon is a pre-historic place, a world of dragons, barbarians, Amazons, prehistoric splendor, ever-verse passions, and primitive precocity. Numerous characters inhabit the Neveryon stories, but a central figure in most of them is Gork, an examine slave who leads a successful rebellion and rises to political power. Delany uses these stories, written in the “Sword and Sorcery” tradition of “Conan the Barbarian,” to offer brilliant, and some-times long-winded, monologues about historical philosophy, the development of capitalism, sadomasochism, AIDS, and the meaning of freedom.


Rat Korga is a slave on the planet Rhyonon until a planetary cataclysm completely alters his circumstances. He discovers that he is the ideal erotic partner of Marj Dyeth, a diplomat from the planet Veli. But fate and social prejudice separate them. This is classic science fiction space opera, but of a highly intellectual sort. Delany is a meticulous stylist and not always easy reading. Some readers may find him too dense. But for those who find his fiction to be challenging, thought-provoking and highly erotic, *Stars in My Pockets Like Grains of Sand* is excellent. Will Korga and Dyeth get back together? The answer may not until Delany’s sequel—*The Splendor and Misery of Radish—in Cities—is released.


Despite a few clunker stories, Jeffery Elliot’s *Kindred Spirits* is a landmark: the first gay and lesbian science fiction anthology ever published. Standout stories include Edgar Pangborn’s “The Night Wind,” Rachel Pollack’s “Black Rose and White Rose,” and Joanna Russ’ “When It Changed.” The anthology also includes tales by Elizabeth A. Lynn, David Gerrold and Jessica Amanda Salmonson.

Winter 1989

Katherine V. Forrest is one of the current stellar lights of lesbian fiction. Her "Kate Delafield" mysteries have acquired a strong and devoted following which appreciates Forrest’s use of exciting action and hot lesbian sexuality. In Daughters of a Coral Dawn, Forrest’s first venture into science fiction, thousands of women, descendants of a single alien mother, flee Earth to colonize a woman-only world. While the plot of Daughters meanders a bit and is not as effective as some of Forrest’s best mysteries, the novel shows its author to have great promise in the science fiction field.


An entertaining collection of short fiction dealing with lesbian and gay themes, including several science fiction pieces. "Xenies," for example, first published under a pseudonym in Fantasy and Science Fiction, concerns the sexual relationships between an alien and two—very different—space men, and "The Test" perceives lesbian and gay men as humankind’s new evolutionary step. Perhaps the most intriguing piece in the collection is "O’Captain, My Captain," a spicy story about a mysterious vampiric space captain who gets her nourishment from cummings.


Jewelle Gomez’s identity as a black lesbian and feminist is an essential component of her “Gilda Stories,” a regrettably uncollected, delightful series of feminist vampire tales. Gilda became a vampire while escaping slavery in the anti-bel- hum South; in many ways, her vampirism and her lesbianism are her freedom. Like most traditional vampires, Gilda survives through the centuries by drinking her victims’ blood, but she only kills when she has to. “No Day Too Long,” the only Gilda story currently in print, is set on contemporary Long Island, where Gilda becomes intimately involved with a group of black lesbian feminists.

Wingwomen of Hera


Sandi Hall, author of an earlier lesbian science fiction novel, The Gaia Mothers (1982), offers the first book of her Comets Botanists Trilogy. The focus is two very different planets, Hera and Maladar. Hera supports an all-female population, reproducing by parthenogenesis. Maladar has a co-sexual population and a mechanized, authoritarian government. Each culture develops its own problems, and eventually contact between the two worlds becomes necessary.


Michael McDowell is half of the writing team that produced the delightful "Nathan Aldyne" mysteries; he also is a screenwriter of popular motion pictures like Beetlejuice. He has a skill for combining imagination, suspense, and horror, yet avoids the unnecessary and gratuitous violence so common in the horror field. In his six-part Blackwater, The Caseys, a large backwater family, is disturbed for generations by the residuum of evil of a mysterious 1919 flood in Perdido, Alabama. This evil takes the form of Elinor Dammert, who exerts a supernatural influence over the family... and the river! McDowell includes both gay male and lesbian characterizations in this sprawling family saga.

McDowell again uses his Southern roots as a locale in *The Elementals*. A funeral brings the far-flung members of the McCrays and the Savages, two respected Mobile families, to a summer mansion at the deserted family beach-front property on the Golf. As the hot summer wears on, the skeletons in the family closet begin literally to haunt the party. This is suspenseful and well-drawn horror fiction, enhanced with significant and positive gay male content.

Her non-vampire fiction, sometimes written under the name A.N. Roquelaure, is rich in eroticism and sexuality. In *Interview with the Vampire*, the earliest volume of Rice's vampire series, the author introduces Louis, a weary vampire living near Castro Street in San Francisco. Louis has been made a vampire by Lestat, a handsome aristocratic Frenchman with whom Louis has fallen in love. So begins a saga that leads from Castro Street, to a southern plantation, 19th century Paris, ancient Egypt, then back to San Francisco. When Akasha, the Queen of the Vampires, is awakened from her eternal slumber—watch out! Great fun to read, *Chronicles of the Vampires* has developed a devoted following.


The Net, by up-and-coming writer Loren McGregor, is a finely wrought visit to a dazzling future where the risks are high and the stakes are great. Wealthy space captain Jason Hortich is offered a challenge: to steal a priceless ruby from a well-guarded museum. Hortich's pride and curiosity are stimulated and she accepts. The ensuing caper is fast and exciting. Hortich's future is extremely high tech and body alterations are common. The captain's lesbian lover, for example, has a peit of fur implanted on her shoulders.


It isn't surprising that Anne Rice's vampires leap out of their closet doors with mass censorship and concentration camps for lesbians and gay men. Leatherman Stephen Ashcroft escapes the homophobic roundups, but joins the Resistance to free his incarcerated lover.


Jessica Amanda Salmonson, editor of the award-winning *Amazon* anthology, spins a fantasy trilogy revolving around a female Samurai warrior named Tomoe Gozen. Set in an alternative world based on medieval Japan, Tomoe Gozen is forced by fate and duty to lead armies to slaughter demons and sometimes to love beautiful women. The action is swift, but may be a bit bloody for some tastes.


J.F. Rivek has taken the conventions of the sword and sorcery novels and turned them inside out. Her dashing, lusty mercenary protagonist is a woman. She is as comfortable bedazzling the serving girl as the stablesman. In *Silvorglass* she is hired to assassinate the Lady Nystasia, a reputed sorceress, but the Lady proves too beautiful for the mercenary to kill. Instead, the two women flee Nystasia's enemies. *Web of Wind* continues the couple's fast-paced adventures as they search for hidden treasure.


Marty Rubin's compelling thriller is more accurately considered a "near future warning" than a science fantasy. Rubin envisions a future United States overrun with religious fascists. The election of right-wing preacher Peter Wickerty to the presidency has resulted in


Joan Slonczewski, a biology profes-

sor, uses her scientific expertise to depict Shora, a planet completely covered by water. The all-female inhabitants of Shora live ecologically balanced lives within enormous floating rafts. When the patriarchal planet of Valedon attacks the watery world, the Sherian women, psychologically and ethically incapable of fighting, must confront the invaders in their own fashion.
THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN BOY-LOVER:
THE POET WILLEM DE MÉRODE

Hans Hafkamp

Since the beginning of the gay emancipation movement in the second part of the nineteenth century a whole library has been written in defense of homosexuality. A defense has been made, for example, by pointing out the important contribution to art and literature by "homosexuals", a considerable section of the library consisting of studies of gay writers and artists, and anthologies of "gay" literature. Although many of these studies pretend to be international, they are mostly devoted to persons from the country of origin of their authors with token representation of writers from other countries. This means that you hardly ever find Dutch persons mentioned. The only Dutchmen included in Edward Carpenter's 1902 collection *Jolalus: An Anthology of Friendship* are William of Orange (who was also king of England) and his servant Bentinck. ¹ Seventy-five years later A. L. Rowe included in his *Homosexuals in History* only one Dutchman: Erasmus of Rotterdam (who wrote in Latin).² Stephen Coote didn't include any Dutch author in his *Penguin Book of Homosexual Verse* (1983).³ It seems, however, that there are changes in the air. David Galloway and Christian Sabisch included two Dutch authors in their *Calamus: Male Homosexuality in Twentieth-century Literature: an International Anthology* (1982): 't Hart and Willem de Mérode.⁴ Anthony Reid will present for the first time in translation an overview of the last 100 years of Dutch gay poetry in his forthcoming anthology *The Eternal Flame*.⁵

In anticipation of an article on paedophile aspects of Dutch gay literature which I shall publish in a future issue of this journal, I would like to sketch here a portrait of Willem de Mérode, author of many boy-love poems. There are some problems when you narrow your subject to paedo- phile instead of gay literature. The most important is of course how to define "paedo- phile". I have decided to use this criterion: one partner must be an adult, and one of the partners must be a minor according to legal definitions.

From 1811 the Netherlands didn't have special legislation about same-sex relations. This changed, however, in 1911. A last minute intervention by the Roman Catholic Minister of Justice resulted in the inclusion of Paragraph 248 section 2 in the Penal Code, which made sexual contacts between an adult and a minor of the same sex between 16 and 21 punishable by up to four years imprisonment. (Sexual contacts with children under the age of 16 were illegal for homosexuals as well as heterosexuals under Paragraph 247 of the Penal Code.) From 1911 to 1939 1354 males were prosecuted under this article.⁶ One of the 59 defendants of 1924 was W. E. Keuning, better known under his pseudonym Willem de Mérode.⁷

Willem Eduard Keuning was born 2 September 1887, the sixth child of the teacher Jan Keuning (1850-1926) and his wife Elisabeth Wormser (1850-1929). At the moment of Willem's birth his parents lived in Spijk, a rural village in the north of the province of Groningen. Young Willem wasn't very healthy and he had to stay home for long periods. This made him a rather lonely child, who read much. In 1902, at age fifteen, he became acquainted with the poetry of Willem Kloos (1859-1938), one of the leaders of the new literary movement grouped around the magazine *De