



Aliens: The Anthropology of Science Fiction (Alternatives)

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How and when does there come to be an “anthropology of the alien?” This set of essays, written for the eighth J. Lloyd Eaton Conference on Fantasy and Science Fiction, is concerned with the significance of that question. “[Anthropology] is the science that must designate the alien if it is to redefine a place for itself in the universe,” according to the Introduction.

The idea of the alien is not new. In the Renaissance, Montaigne’s purpose in describing an alien encounter was excorporation—mankind was the “savage” because the artificial devices of nature controlled him. Shakespeare’s version of the alien encounter was incorporation; his character of Caliban is brought to the artificial, political world of man and incorporated into the body politic

“The essays in this volume . . . show, in their general orientation, that the tribe of Shakespeare still, in literary studies at least, outnumbers that of Montaigne.” These essays show the interrelation of the excorporating possibilities to the internal soundings of the alien encounter within the human mind and form.

This book is divided into three parts: “Searchings: The Quest for the Alien” includes “The Aliens in Our Mind,” by Larry Niven; “Effing the Ineffable,” by Gregory Benford; “Border Patrols,” by Michael Beehler; “Alien Aliens,” by Pascal Ducommun; and “Metamorphoses of the Dragon,” by George E. Slusser.

“Sightings: The Aliens among Us” includes “Discriminating among Friends,” by John Huntington; “Sex, Superman, Sociobiology,” by Joseph D. Miller; “Cowboys and Telepaths,” by Eric S. Rabkin; “Robots,” by Noel Perrin; “Aliens in the Supermarket,” by George R. Guffey; and “Aliens ‘R’ U.S.,” by Zoe Sofia.

“Soundings: Man as the Alien” includes “H. G. Wells’ Familiar Aliens,” by John R. Reed; “Inspiration and Possession,” by Clayton Koelb; “Cybernauts in Cyberspace,” by David Porush; “The Human Alien,” by Leighton Brett Cooke; “From Astarte to Barbie,” by Frank McConnell; and “An Indication of Monsters;” by Colin Greenland.



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