



# The *Illuminata*

Delving Deep Into the Worlds of Science Fiction and Fantasy

## SC/diots: When Good Channels Go Bad

by Bret M. Funk

I remember my elation when the Sci-fi Channel's release was announced (and again when my cable provider opted to carry it). It seemed like a dream come true, a channel devoted to science fiction, showing films both classic and new, reviving old series, long lost in the annals of syndication, and perhaps—just perhaps!—offering a host of new shows.

But of course, when things seem too good to be true, they usually are.

At first, all was well in the world of Sci-fi. The thrill of watching shows that I hadn't seen since my youth kept me coming back for more. A love of science fiction was about the only thing my father and I had in common, and watching episodes of *Star Trek*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Lost in Space*, and dozens of other shows brought back memories, memories of watching those series with my dad and having him tell me of the first time *he* watched them.

This phenomenon of reminiscence transcended TV; the Sci-fi Channel replayed old 'B' movies as well. I

jumped at the chance to see such films as *Frankenstein*, *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, and even an all night *Godzilla* marathon. When coupled with a handful of innovative shows like *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, the Sci-fi Channel was a little slice of heaven served fresh daily.

Paradise was quickly lost.

Though I tuned in whenever a new wave of series debuted, the Sci-fi Channel quickly lost its thrill. Once the nostalgia wore off, I often found that the shows I loved as a child were far more comical than interesting, and I understand now something that eluded me in my youth: why

they were all cancelled so quickly. The endless stream of 'B' movies became more inane, until I finally felt like I was watching *MST3K* without the commentary. A screening of a 'good' science fiction movie was a rare event; I was more likely to find classics like *Forbidden Planet* or *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* on AMC and TCM. And to top it off, the Sci-fi Channel axed all my favorite shows, replacing them with ridiculous original programming or more outdated series.

It was a dark time, but in 2000, I discovered a gem—two gems, actually—and I knew that Scifi had hit a goldmine.

The first was *The Invisible Man*, a series made enjoyable not by its off-the-wall premise or ridiculous storylines, but by the sarcastic characters and their comical interaction. Though I understand why it was cut, and I can't say I disagree with Scifi's decision, I miss the show. Not only did it keep me entertained, it introduced me to *Farscape*.

*Farscape* is a remarkable show, the first truly innovative science fiction series I've come across in a long time. It combines elements of traditional sci-fi with sarcasm, humor, and a slew of Henson puppets, while at the same time making numerous pop culture references. Even better, it makes those references flawlessly, without the awkwardness found in shows like *Star Trek*. But it's the cast of characters (played by a troupe of highly-talented actors), and their interaction that makes the show so memorable.

I was hooked instantly, going so far as to track down copies of the first season to 'catch-up' on the storyline. Friday nights—a night most Americans use for socializing—I was locked in my house, glued to the television, with the phone off the hook. If, for some reason, I was unable to watch the initial airing, I set up a failsafe system, taping the show not once, but twice.

I don't get that fanatical about most shows, but when a great one comes along (something that happens far too infrequently given the number of series on the air), I can't bear to miss it. And I'm not alone. Look at the facts:

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# Flights of Fancy: Transportation And Communication In The Future (Part 2)

by Brian Otridge

In this installment, we will look at land transportation of the future. In this category I will also cover the concept of low-flying air-cars *a la* your typical Hollywood movie. And in respect of that, my main comment is, bunk! There are numerous reasons why I think that such vehicles are improbable – the energy requirements, the actual and perceived safety issues, the noise levels. In my book, it's a non-starter. But go ahead, use them in your book, just try justifying the technological, economical, sociological, or ecological aspects of it – it's loads of fun and will amuse the kids.

So, in a more serious and realistic vein, where is land transportation on Earth heading? At the moment, nowhere fast or nowhere slow, depending on where you live. The penchant of Americans to guzzle gas is getting the US nowhere in terms of its international reputation and reserves of fuel. The Europeans are trying to artificially stifle the attractiveness of car transport and get everyone onto public transport, even if it does cost more in subsidies. The Japanese have almost come to a standstill, except for their bullet trains, and most other places its all getting pretty chaotic.

So one view of the future is that we stagnate into a world of massive transportation gridlock. There's not enough gas to go anywhere or it's too expensive, the roads are full of single occupancy cars, public transportation investment doesn't happen, and the wealth of nations so afflicted tumbles. We go back to living, working and socializing in our local communities, using bicycles to get around, and only ever travelling in the virtual world – e-communications reigns supreme.

But let's not be apocalyptic. People need to travel to work and play. Corporations need employees and goods to move around. Governments want us all to move so that they can tax it. The future of transport must be user-driven. What does the customer want? I suggest that the following set of requirements succinctly defines what people and businesses want for their ground transportation:

- Increased capacity, today and tomorrow, for carrying both people and freight, without degrading the satisfaction of other requirements.
- The shortest possible door-to-door journey time.
- An environment conducive to work, rest and play whilst travelling.

- To travel at the time of choice.
- To allow travelers to choose whether they travel alone, with a group of their choosing, or in a public conveyance shared with strangers.
- To allow passengers and freight to reach as many possible destinations without changing vehicles.
- To provide a choice of costs for the same journey, dependant on the needs of exclusivity of travel, and overall journey time.
- To avoid congestion and blockage wherever possible, but in the event that it does occur, to re-route vehicles with the minimum delay and failure.
- To maintain the highest possible levels of safety, without compromise.
- To lower transportation costs.
- To reduce pollution levels caused by transport. (I'm sorry America, one day you're just gonna have to use less fuel than you do today)
- In crowded areas, to make maximum use of existing rights of way.

Present transportation systems do not meet all these requirements. Using a car (outside of a major conurbation) may be convenient and cheap, but it is relatively dangerous and polluting. Rail travel may be safe and non-polluting, but it is rarely convenient, and sometimes expensive.

Automation offers some distinct possibilities. Already there are test systems where cars are automatically guided, driving almost fender-to-fender, to remove the random fickle finger of the human driver and make better use of road space. Rail signaling is becoming more sophisticated, enabling a greater throughput of traffic.

I think this is the area that offers the most scope for realistic future transport. Cars already have loads of automation, electronic engine control, cruise control, intelligent alarm systems and so on. This will extend into the driving of the vehicle itself. On roads open to all road users, including bicycles and pedestrians, it will be a long time before there are computers and sensors sophisticated enough to cope with all the risks that present themselves on such roads. The human mind is best equipped to cope with all that. What is a reality is speed control. Link a GPS to a speed limit device, and you can enforce 30 mph or 15 mph school speed zones.

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# The RPG Corner (Vol. 1.2): Why Role-Play?

by Doug >|< Roper of Epic Gaming

Last month I tried to answer, in as basic a manner as I could, the question of what a Role-Playing Game was. This time, I'd like to look at an aspect of the whole genre that is something I am interested in exploring more myself. An answer (insomuch as a question like this is can have an answer) to the question, "Why Role-Play?"

Below is a list of categories that charts the reasons people may role-play. It isn't by any means comprehensive, but I think it covers the bases pretty well.

- **Pure Recreation** - The most obvious reason to Role-Play is as a recreational activity. After all, it is a game and people play games to have fun. By taking on the role of a character in a fantastic setting, you become free to cut loose and blow off steam through that character. Many, many players take the opportunity presented by Role-Playing to indulge in activities in which they could not possibly participate in over the course of their real lives. This is escapism, and the satisfaction of the Id before all else. If the player has a bad day dealing with authority, he can achieve release by enjoying success with his character. Have you ever daydreamed about clobbering the dirty bum who cut you off in traffic? Imagine if you had the chance later on to clobber someone in the fantasy game who had wronged you. Sound petty and trite? It is, but it is also very relaxing and above all, fun.

Recreational gamers may or may not play regularly, and the person who plays for pure recreation really doesn't care about advancing their character or becoming involved in vast, far-reaching plots. He wants instant gratification and a vanquished villain before dinner. For the purely recreational gamer, the trials for the character should be challenging, but not overly so or the game runs the risk of losing it's one and only appeal: it is no longer fun. More likely than not, there will be next to no in depth Role-Playing at all. Character concepts tend to be weak and one dimensional with this type of gaming, since they aren't necessary for having fun.

- **Hobby** - When one become a little more involved in the continuation of a particular game, one crosses into the realm of the Hobby Gamer. In the same way that an airplane modeler takes his time building his model, the Hobbyist spends time nurturing the character and building him up. Advancing the character, as it is commonly called, is a system of rewards for both the character and the player. The way characters advance is unique to the system and rules that are used to govern the action of the game, but they advance as a result of succeeding in tasks and sometimes by failing them as well. Characters advance by growing stronger, wiser, more proficient in

different skills, and so on. In a way, they become quantitatively better; that is, their statistics grow higher meaning it is easier for them to succeed in the future. (It should be noted that I do not believe a character is either bad or good based on the skills or attributes he or she possesses. I believe that a character's worth lies in the character itself, but that will be talked about later.) In addition to attaching more affection and spending more time on the character, the Hobbyist will be much more likely to have a regular gaming schedule.

A Hobby gamer will usually be receptive to longer and more involved plots set forth by the Gamemaster and will not balk if a challenge seems momentarily insurmountable. There may be more actual Role-Playing, since the Hobbyist has spent more time developing the concept of the character, but interaction with other people or NPCs (Non Playing Character, or a character controlled by the Gamemaster and not another player) probably isn't the primary focus. They may still be flat, but it is here where you begin to see quirky and eccentric additions to characters; players who spend a lot of time gaming together will display characters with their own sense of history, and more complex relationships between characters are likely, but mainly gaming is done to have fun, blow off some steam, and have an excuse to get together with friends once a week.

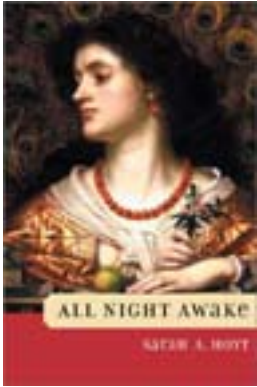
- **Actor** - In this category, the player is primarily concerned with finding the character he wants to play, and doing his best to become that character in the game. Most of the energy of the player is spent in acting as close to the imagined character as possible. The concern here is the creation of a believable persona, and sometimes this will come at the expense of group dynamics. For example, the shifty thief, if he is being played to the hilt, will be just as likely to rob his traveling companions as strangers that he happens upon. While this may be fun in the beginning, and lead to opportunities for some role-playing, it is usually repeated so many times that it becomes a running gag.

With an actor, there is little character growth or change because the primary focus is placed on being that character, and less effort is spent on thinking about how that character evolves or changes over time. For the actor, satisfaction in gaming is all about being the best character you can be at the moment. Character advancement here is usually centered around improving skills that already exist. The fighter wants to be a better fighter; the wizard wants to be a better wizard, etc. It is rare for the true actor type to suddenly decide that his policeman character wants to learn all there is to know about forestry, simply because it falls outside of the primary skills and abilities of the quintessential policeman.

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# Reviews

## All Night Awake Sarah A. Hoyt



Ace, Oct 2001  
\$21.95, 304 pp.  
ISBN 0441009735

Review by Harriet Klausner

The heart of the fairy kingdom is Arden Grove near Stratford-On-Avon. There, the malevolent Sylvanus once ruled all of the fey after he tricked and usurped the regal authority of his brother Quicksilver (see *Ill Met By Moonlight*). But his sibling, with the aid of

William Shakespeare, defeated him. Sylvanus is now fated to live eternity as one of the Hunter's dogs with no chance of reprieve.

However, Sylvanus is not one to sit quietly. Using chicanery, the evil elf smoothly persuades Quicksilver, now King of the Elves, that he has learned his lesson and has changed for the better. Wanting desperately to believe his sibling, Quicksilver agrees to use the power of the fairy hill to free Sylvanus from his bondage.

Quicksilver quickly learns that the former "dog" remains as evil as he ever has been. Sylvanus journeys from the Stratford area to London, leaving gore, death, and disease wherever he goes. Seeing what he has wrought, a distraught Quicksilver knows he must rectify as best he can the damage he caused when he liberated his blood. The only way to restore the natural order of the world is to follow Sylvanus to London and defeat him.

Quicksilver, journeying as Lady Silver, locates his human partner from the previous battle with Sylvanus, Will Shakespeare, to warn him that those marked by the fairy are at risk as Sylvanus will manipulate them like puppets to accomplish his loathsome agenda. Shakespeare has other problems he must contend with: Queen Elizabeth I's courtier, Kit Marlowe, has decided that Shakespeare is a perfect dupe to sacrifice as a traitor. To Sylvanus, Marlowe is a perfect instrument to begin his master plan of destruction.

As she did with last year's delightful *Ill Met By Moonlight*, Sarah A. Hoyt leaves her audience believing that not only does the land of fairy exist, but that Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Court are impacted by the elven squabbles. The story line of *All Night Awake* is an extraordinary mix of historical knowledge and fantasy mythos that cleverly turns into an exciting tale. The cast provides two key elements to this novel besides the obvious good vs. evil battle represented by Quicksilver and Sylvanus (though virtuousness is relative to the beholder and not as obvious as malfeasance). The ensemble makes the era come alive, especially with the intrigue of Her Majesty's Court and an insightful look at the great Bard, while leaving no doubt that Arden Grove is the "authentic" center of the kingdom of fairy. Few authors, if any, can place an adult fairy tale inside a powerful historical perspective as well as the fantastic Ms. Hoyt has done. This wonderful writer has accomplished this difficult merging not just once, but twice, proving that her talent has to come from meeting Lady Silver on one of the elf's earthly visits.

## The Gathering/In the Beginning Babylon 5 DVD



Warner Bros. Home Video  
2001

\$14.95

Review by Doug Roper

*The Gathering/In the Beginning* DVD release was a test, to see whether or not the market was there for Babylon 5 on DVD, and as such, it lacks a lot of what makes DVDs great (like extra features). In fact, the disc is featureless (I don't count subtitles and extra language tracks as extras),

but the conversion of the source material is superb.

The Gathering is the series pilot and lays the foundation for the show by introducing the major characters and races inhabiting Babylon 5. It revolves around an assassination attempt on the most mysterious of the alien ambassadors assigned to the space station, while at the same time setting up a key mystery for the series (one that isn't solved until the middle of season 3) and the version

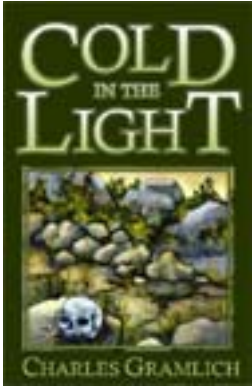
included on the disc is the "directors cut," with some additional footage reinserted into the movie, and a new score by Christopher Franke. However, *The Gathering* is not in widescreen.

*In the Beginning* was a movie produced by TNT after it acquired Babylon 5 between the fourth and fifth seasons, and it was a way for new fans to get caught up on the back-story of the series. This movie is presented in widescreen, and is as much a treat for followers of the show as it is vitally important for those new to Babylon 5. I should insert a spoiler warning. If you plan on watching the show from the beginning at some point (which I emphatically recommend), avoid watching *In the Beginning*, as it reveals several of the great mysteries of the series. *In the Beginning* predates the series and follows the principal characters from the show during the Earth-Minbari War, an event that helps form the current state of the universe, and gives the primary reason for the creation of the Babylon Project.

All in all, the movies are a good mix of action and character development, and succeed in their primary purpose, to entertain and to lay the foundation for one of the most spectacular sci-fi programs ever.

# Reviews

## Cold In The Light Charles Gramlich



Invisible College Press, May 2002  
\$14.95, Trade Paper, 330  
ISBN 1-931468-05-2  
Review by Bret Funk

*Cold in the Light* has it all: conspiracies, hidden agendas, alien intelligence, and a frightening monster—and that's the first twenty pages!

The story revolves around an escape of Whoun—an alien species held at an 'Institute' in the Ozark mountains of Arkansas. The Whoun are a marvel of science—strong, fast, and intelligent—divided by genetics into two groups: the friendly and Typical and the aggressive Warkind. Within their genes lay secrets the military hopes to exploit.

Among the escapees is Raina, the Mother, a pregnant Whoun; and Wharn, her mate, another Typical. Fleeing through the forest, pursued by the military, the two Whoun are separated and stumble upon some civilians investigating the strange events in the mountains. Injured and frightened, and seeing no other option, the Whoun warily accept the strangers' help.

Desperate to retrieve the Mother before their secret is revealed, the conspirators release the Warkind, hoping their instinctive protectiveness will lead to Raina's quick return. But one war-band is placed under the command of Kargen, an intelligent and half crazy Warkind fixated on the Mother. He hopes to win Raina for himself, and he'll stop anyone who gets in his way.

The story, told from a variety of perspectives, follows several distinct groups: the escapees and their Human allies, Kargen and his Warkind cell, the insane Colonel Hammond, and Mike Russo, the betrayed chairman of the Whoun project. Each chapter jumps from character to character, giving the story an intense, real-time flow. But it's the characters themselves who make the story come alive. They have a depth, a completeness, that makes the reader want to explore their pasts almost as much as see what happens next.

Gramlich's work is captivating. If he occasionally waxes grotesque, sacrificing suspense and (the reader's) imagination for macabre imagery, it can be forgiven. The simple tones and easily-understood motives make *Cold in the Light* a quick read. In fact, the novel ends far too quickly, leaving the reader wanting more and wondering...

...Which species is truly the monstrous one?

## Invasion of the Body Snatchers DVD Review



Republic Studios  
Directed by Don Siegel  
\$14.98  
Review by Bret Funk

Something's wrong in the town of Santa Mira, but it certainly isn't this movie. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, circa 1956, is a science fiction classic. Tame by today's standards, at least in the realm of special effects, the movie must rely on the more basic concepts of

plot and suspense, and it succeeds brilliantly, creating a masterpiece of alien invasion.

Dr. Miles Bennett, well played by actor Kevin McCarthy, is a lovable and respected small town doctor who returns from a medical convention to discover a strange malady sweeping through his town. Residents have been suffering from a strange form of paranoia: they believe their family and friends are imposters, though there is no evidence to support their claims. Though quick to dismiss the problem, Dr. Bennett is forced to reevaluate his opinion when the 'disease' reaches epidemic proportions.

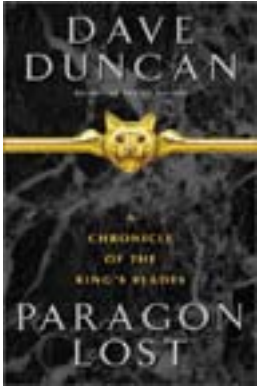
Aided by the lovely Becky Driscoll (played by Dana Wynter), an old flame recently returned to Santa Mira, Dr. Bennett's investigation uncovers not a infectious agent, but an alien invasion. Rather than attacking Earth outright, the aliens are stealing the bodies of honest Americans, replacing their consciousness and attacking America from within.

*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is more than a sci-fi movie; it's a social commentary. The emotionless, near-identical alien personas exemplify the 50's era communist, and the entire movie is a poorly-hidden criticism of the McCarthy (Senator Joseph, not Kevin) era. A few more-than-obvious plot holes exist in the film, and both the opening dialogue and ending sequence (added in post-production for 'ease of understanding' and to give the movie a more uplifting ending) weaken the overall story, but not enough to make this movie anything less than a classic.

The DVD unfortunately, does not live up to the film's standard. With few extra features (theatrical trailers and an interview with Kevin McCarthy), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* may not top the list of must-have movies. But from a cinematic perspective, it is a necessary addition to any science fiction fan's collection.

# Reviews

## Paragon Lost Dave Duncan



Eos, Oct 2002  
\$24.95, Hardcover, 368 pages  
ISBN 0380978962  
Review by Harriet Klausner

Monarchs of the kingdom of Chival know they can depend on the King's Blades to protect them from any danger as each member of the unique unit is bound by a secret magical spell that forces him to give up his life to keep his liege safe. Actually, the loyalty spell goes even further, as the ruler can bind his Blades to others.

Most of the current King's Blades agree that Sir Beaumont is the most talented of the group, and though King Athlegar respects his skilled Blade, he also detests the master swordsman because his plans always work. Though he wants no one hurt, King Athlegar would like to see Beau fail just once to prove that he is human and to take him down a notch or two.

Still, he needs his top gun on a potentially deadly mission, so King Athlegar binds Beau and a few other Blades to the aging, loyal Wassail and sends them on a dangerous trek to Skyrria, ruled by a maniac, Czar Igor. Wassail must escort a princess from Skyrria to Chival to become the bride of King Athlegar.

Though everyone realizes that Igor is a lunatic, no one knows how far the insane monarch will go to learn the binding spell that obligates the King's Blades to their

majesty. Igor's obsession forces Beau to use several ruses to prevail in his quest of safely bringing the princes to his liege. Instead of being grateful to his Blade, King Athlegar shockingly fires his swordsman. Another Blade, bound to the brother-in-law of Czar Igor, heads to Skyrria, led by misguided loyalty that, if unchecked, might prove dangerous to the Chival kingdom and its ruler.

The events of *Paragon Lost* happen several years after the *Tales of the King's Blades* series, and this novel is easily a stand-alone story though several characters, much wiser and older, from the previous books are included. The exciting story line provides the audience with an enthralling swords-and-sorcery fantasy that makes spells seem almost mundane in that the magic feels real. Readers will appreciate Beau's skills, but also understand why he irritates King Athlegar with his always being right.

The rest of the cast provides a feeling of reality so that the audience believes in the magic, in these kingdoms, but most importantly in the conflicting loyalties confronting a Blade bound to divergent individuals. This concept is cleverly developed so that the tale contains a philosophical paradox that the audience will find quite fascinating and interesting. Skyrria appears to be a Rasputin-czarist Russia with spellbound dogs killing Igor's enemies. The people fear to whisper criticism of the ruler, for death becomes imminent not long afterward. The strong characterizations and the realistic political climate of Chival and Skyrria make this a triumph for sword-and-sorcery fans. There will be a demand from sworn loyalists for Dave Duncan to provide a future Blade tale while newcomers will want to catch up on the action of the previous trilogy.

## Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos Video Game Review



Real Time Strategy  
Blizzard Entertainment  
\$49.99

Nowadays, real time strategies are a dime a dozen. Most of them play off the same tried and true formula of kill or be killed, and let's face it, they don't have much of a choice. Real time games like *Settlers* and *Caesar*, which revolve more around micro-management and ensuring the happiness of your population, are far less entertaining than good war games. But with so many games to choose from, a good game has to offer more than the ability to slaughter foes, it has to make you a part of the story.

*Warcraft III* does just that.

In previous editions, the campaigns were exclusively Orc vs. Human, and though they looked different, there was little true difference between the armies. In *Reign of Chaos*, there are four campaigns and two new races, the Undead and Night Elves. The campaigns follow a single storyline, allowing players to play all four races while remaining interested in the story. The races themselves have enough differences to make each a unique experience. The undead, for instance, regain health by eating corpses, and the Night Elves are invisible at night.

Heroes, as in *Warlords Battlecry*, play a more prominent role in Warcraft as well. By training their skills, the player is able to add bonuses or magical powers to his army's repertoire, a valuable asset in the later scenarios.

All in all, the game is enjoyable, but several scenarios drag on, and the AI needs work. At \$49.99 it's a little pricey; your average gamer would finish the campaign in a matter of days, but the true draw is multiplayerability. After all, who wants to kill Orcs that aren't led by a Human?

**(The RPG Corner (con't))**

- **Immersive** - In this model, the player is motivated to become part of the game. This includes creating a character, and also creating a substantial part of the world immediately surrounding the character. With this form, the primary motivation is the creation of the overall story or plot in which the character participates. Firstly, creating the character and learning to play him is the primary motivation. Developing traits that can be acted out and selecting abilities go hand in hand, as the character is usually designed around a concept for a person, and not a generic stereotype as in the actor model.

However, once that is done, the player will be concerned with helping to create the plot and environment of the game. Instead of focusing primarily on his personal character, the emphasis is on the game itself. Players in the immersive method will often role-play heavily, creating plot for themselves by way of their interaction. In addition to the overall plot for the game in which they play, players tend to work with the gamemaster to develop plots for their individual character. The enjoyment of the game comes from providing a memorable experience and memorable character for the entire group, not just the individual.

- **Internal Exploration** - This method combines the previous two in some ways, and yet departs from them in others. In this model, role-play is used to explore one's own thoughts, feelings and desires more than complete a scenario or achieve a particular end. When creating a character, the player will look at an aspect of himself that he finds interesting, let's say for example, an exaggerated guilt complex or a deep rooted fear or love of religion. The player will then design a character, different from himself, but sharing that interesting aspect. By doing this, the player is able to use the character, the role-playing and the game situation to examine and test those aspects of himself that he has incorporated into his character. The bottom line for a person in this model is not to win the day or even to succeed all that often. After all, what do you learn about yourself and how you handle defeat, if you never lose?

In using this method, a player commits to using the game like a tool, to focus his awareness inward, by placing the subject of that attention out in his character. Games in this vein tend to deal with much more dramatic issues than a purely recreational game. Plots often revolve less around actions and deeds than around people and the events that affect them. It is the interaction between characters that becomes one of the primary methods of exploration within the game, and self-discovery the primary reward.

This method, I think is the most difficult to do correctly right off the bat, but it has the potential to be the most rewarding of all the forms, since it can provide insight into yourself as a living, thinking, feeling human being, and usually without too much danger or grief. How would you react if you were on a sinking boat? If you don't care to try your luck on the real thing, a role-playing adventure on the ocean could potentially put you in a situation where you can find the answer to that question.

These methods that I have described here are not static. They do not exist independently of one another. Any game you play in will have elements of all five models scattered about. And oftentimes, a new group will evolve from one of the earlier forms into one of the latter, as age and tastes begin to mature, and the wants and desires change from the satisfaction of immediate needs and superficial changes to the resolution of long term dreams and hopes and exploration of deeper issues.

Why people game is as individual as each game itself, but I feel that every gamer can look at this list and find some kind of combination that describes why they play. Understanding your reasons for doing something has the potential to make the overall experience more enjoyable as well, since by recognizing why you play concretely, you can move yourself either deeper into the model, or choose to expand into more methods in your character or game.

In addition to my models described here, Levi Kornelson also tackled the subject in an article (a much shorter article) that can be found here on RPG.net at the following address:

<http://www.rpg.net/realm/critique/7rpgtypes.html>

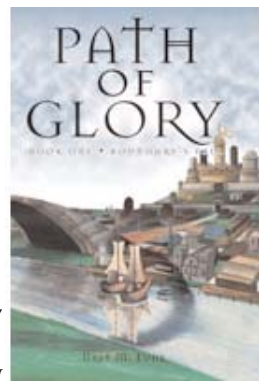
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**Path of Glory**

Book One • Boundary's Fall  
by Bret M. Funk  
ISBN: 0-9718819-1-X  
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## Flights of Fancy (con't)

What may well happen is the introduction of automated trunk roads: the freeways, autoroutes and motorways of the world will be turned into guided highways, the drivers being hands free of them, the road itself giving commands to the cars. Vehicles will be able to travel safer, closer, faster thus increasing road capacity. And as the vehicle approaches its exit a signal will be sent to the driver to wake them up – useful if they're taking the opportunity to have a nap! While travelling on these roads you could do almost anything – read, work, eat, make phone calls, have sex! Mind you, some people try to do that already while driving manually.

Railroads will become similarly automated, no longer requiring people in control centers to set the paths, nor drivers in the trains. With moving block signal systems, a greater frequency is possible. Indeed, rather than having one 12 coach train, there could be 12 single coaches going to different destinations, or 12 coaches an hour rather than one 12-coach train every hour. Much greater flexibility and customer appeal.

Have you seen where this is going? The railroads and the automated roads will become more and more similar sharing the same characteristics. Eventually it would be possible to join them into a unified system, providing a greater choice of route for public transport, and easier penetration of inner cities for private transport.

I reckon that's the next 100 years, beyond that, who knows? You might think of air cars, hover cars, monorails and what have you. In my opinion that's all the dream of the Hollywood storyboard artist...

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## Sci-fi Buzz

### Events

- October 19: Rocky Unbound's Vampire Ball  
Ocean Springs, MS
- October 26: Star One Delta Babel Banquet  
Baton Rouge, LA

### Movie Premieres

- October 11: Below
- October 18: The Ring
- October 25: Ghost Ship

### DVD Releases

- October 8: Jason X  
Jason Goes to Hell
- October 22: E.T. The Extra Terrestrial  
Hell Raiser: Hellseeker
- October 29: Eight-Legged Freaks  
Spiderman TAS (Return of the Green Goblin)

### Book Releases

- Abarat (Clive Cussler)  
Alexandria (Nick Bantock)  
Book of Vile Darkness (Monte Cook)  
Destiny's Way: New Jedi Order v.14 (Walter Jon Williams)  
Exile's Honor (Mercedes Lackey)  
Hobbit/Lord of the Rings Boxed Set (J.R.R. Tolkien)  
Monterey Shorts (Various)  
Narcissus in Chains (Laurell K. Hamilton)  
Paragon Lost (David Duncan)  
The Shadow of God (J. Gregory Keyes)  
The Thousand Orcs: Hunter's Blade v1 (R. A. Salvatore)  
The Way Between the Worlds (Ian Irvine)  
Transformers: End of the Road (Simon Furman)  
White Apples (Jonathan Carroll)

If you know of an upcoming event or release, and you would like to see it included in an addition of *The Illuminata*, please forward the appropriate information to: [EventListing@TyrannosaurusPress.com](mailto:EventListing@TyrannosaurusPress.com)

### Illuminata Update:

We are happy to announce that both the newsletter and its readership are growing steadily. We thank you, our readers, and ask that you spread the word. If you know anyone who would be interested in *The Illuminata*, please direct them to our website, [www.TyrannosaurusPress.com](http://www.TyrannosaurusPress.com)

## Scidiots (con't)

- *Farscape* is Sci-Fi's highest-rated series to date, with the exception of John Edwards (And he's not entertaining, let alone sci-fi!)
- *Farscape* has a vast and intelligent audience (Beat that, Bernie Mac!)
- *Farscape* has won numerous awards for both the show and its actors. (How many Emmy nods does *Stargate* have?)
- The show is critically acclaimed:  
"The best science fiction series on TV" (TV Guide)  
"TV's best space series" (USA Today)  
"The Year's Best in TV" (Newsday)
- It's just about the only original series on Sci-fi (and its *only* good one!) Most of Sci-fi's successful shows have been brought over from other networks.

Imagine my surprise when, near the height of its popularity and long before the shows lost their edge, the Sci-fi Channel announced plans to cancel *Farscape*, opting out of its scheduled fifth season.

Sci-fi offered numerous reasons for their decision, but they harped on the following two items most assiduously: rising production costs and declining ratings. While I can certainly understand the need for a network—a business—to make a profit, I can't understand their argument. *Farscape* has spawned a lot of buzz, has built a large and loyal fan base (perhaps not as large as *Trek's*, but the show *is* only four years old), and is the center of a multi-million dollar merchandising market. Doesn't Sci-fi own the franchise? If so, where has all the merchandising money gone? If not, then why aren't they negotiating for a slice of the pie? Wouldn't it be better than kicking themselves in the ass?

Regarding *Farscape's* declining ratings, I can only blame the network. Sci-fi has split the *Farscape* season into two halves, one airing in mid-summer, the other in early winter. While this doesn't bother me much, between seasons the series disappears. Sci-fi doesn't even bother to promote the show, at least, not enough that I've caught an advertisement between seasons. When the show comes back on, it does so without fanfare, and last season, it came back on at a different time.

When the only thing you watch on Sci-fi is *Farscape*, and *Farscape* disappears, what reason remains to watch the network? When it comes back

on, how are you supposed to know? No wonder the ratings were so low at the beginning of last season; if I weren't so devoted to the show, I might have missed it too!

Fans around the world are showing their support for *Farscape*, demanding that the network resume production, raising money to finance the show, and shopping for new networks to take on the series.

Raising money to finance the show! Now *that's* a fan base!

In the end, *Farscape* deserves to be saved, whether you watch it or not. Funny, original, innovative shows with strong casts and interesting plots don't come along every day, no matter what the storybooks say. If you want to help save the series, e-mail the Sci-fi Channel at [programming@scifi.com](mailto:programming@scifi.com). At the request of series star Ben Browder and executive producer David Kemper, keep your correspondence polite and professional. Furious people are 'fanatics,' but civil, intelligent, and well-spoken (or written) people are 'fans.' Networks listen to fans.

If writing letters is not your style, the good people at *Farscape Weekly* have a few other suggestions. They recommend sending in petitions supporting the show, contacting local media, putting pressure on the Sci-Fi Channel's sponsors (like Dell), and courting other networks with the idea of picking up the series (Showtime is the current favorite). The more industrious fan may want to travel to New York to join *Farscape* activists in an ongoing protest in front of the network's headquarters.

Whether you want to help support the show or not, as a fan of science fiction you should be watching. And since the series builds on itself (as do most sci-fi shows), watching from the beginning is recommended. Lucky for you, the series is slowly being released on DVD.

Pick up a copy. If you have *Farscape* in your collection, you won't have to violate your boycott of the network to watch reruns!

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## Writers Wanted

*The Illuminata* is seeking writers interested in submitting science fiction related articles, reviews (book, movie, DVD, etc.), and stories. Articles may be regular, monthly columns or one-time opinion pieces—we are open to suggestions and allow our writers to determine (for the most part) their own content.

Readers, we would like your comments, letters, and ideas as well. Interested parties should fill out the form at [www.TyrannosaurusPress.com/Newsletter/newsletter.html](http://www.TyrannosaurusPress.com/Newsletter/newsletter.html)