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If #MeToo Came True: Author Marleen Barr and K-B Have a Chat

What might the world look like if sexism didn't exist, if we lived in egalitarian societies, if the hopes of the #MeToo movement came true?

That thought might frighten some. Other folks might think it an unrealistic fantasy. But Marleen S. Barr explores the possibilities of such a future in the literary realm of feminist science fiction.

Marleen, who teaches at City University of New York, is an award-winning feminist science fiction (FSF) scholar and author, with a penchant for satire. She has a new collection of short stories that parody the Trump presidency in a "revenge fantasy galaxy." *The Feminist Science Fiction Justice League Quashes the Orange Outrage Pussy Grabber: Political Power Fantasy Fiction* will be released by [B Cubed Press](#) in April, and Marleen seems to have as much fun describing the book as she did writing it.

I use every science fiction trope that I can think of to make fun of Trump. I have feminist extraterrestrials land on the White House lawn. I lock Trump up in the Phantom Zone, where the villains from the planet Krypton were locked up. What I wanted to do, in summary, is send him to a galaxy far, far away from us.

Mel Brooks said that he used humor to make Hitler look ridiculous. And, of course Trump is not Hitler, but I am of the generation after Mel Brooks, and Trump is the horror leader of my time, and I wanted to use my writing skills to make him look ridiculous. So I'm trying to use humor as a weapon like Mel Brooks did.

John Kenneth Galbraith suggested that humor can grab the reader's attention, and it's fun for the person using it, "but it has no persuasive value at all." So, I ask, why humor?

I am not trying to change anyone's mind. I'm not trying to do a conversion for someone who's a Trump supporter and try to change their mind so they'll become a liberal. This would be science fiction mission impossible.

What I'm trying to do is reach people who think like me and to try to entertain them and provide a coping mechanism. For myself, I tune into Stephen Colbert most every night of the week and listen to his monologue, which is hysterically funny. At the end of every one, it makes me feel better; it helps me get through this time.

Humor based on Trump's many failings is popular among progressives, so who is Marleen's Colbert?

The protagonist is Professor Sondra Lear, and Sondra is me—except for the fact that she's always in her 30s and she's thinner than I am now. Sondra has powers and abilities that are far beyond those of Marleen S. Barr. I created her as a power fantasy. Science fiction at

its inception was a power fantasy for young boys, like the creator of Superman. He was a Jewish man and Superman was his power fantasy vision—Jewish men were not seen as *he-men*. So, Sondra can do things that I can't, such as speak with the feminist extraterrestrial who has landed in her academic office. And the extraterrestrial finds Sondra because she's a feminist science fiction professional—who else would they go to?

I started writing this during the campaign, and whatever Trump did that aggravated me, I exaggerated it—I have a big imagination. But it's all rooted in reality.

Reality, with a whopping dose of Marleen's sense of the absurd and hope for a more egalitarian future. While many count down to impeachment, she helps us cope with the disaster that is Trump as she delivers him to feminist aliens, an alternative history in which Hillary wins, and an unpleasant metamorphosis—"and that's on a good day."
