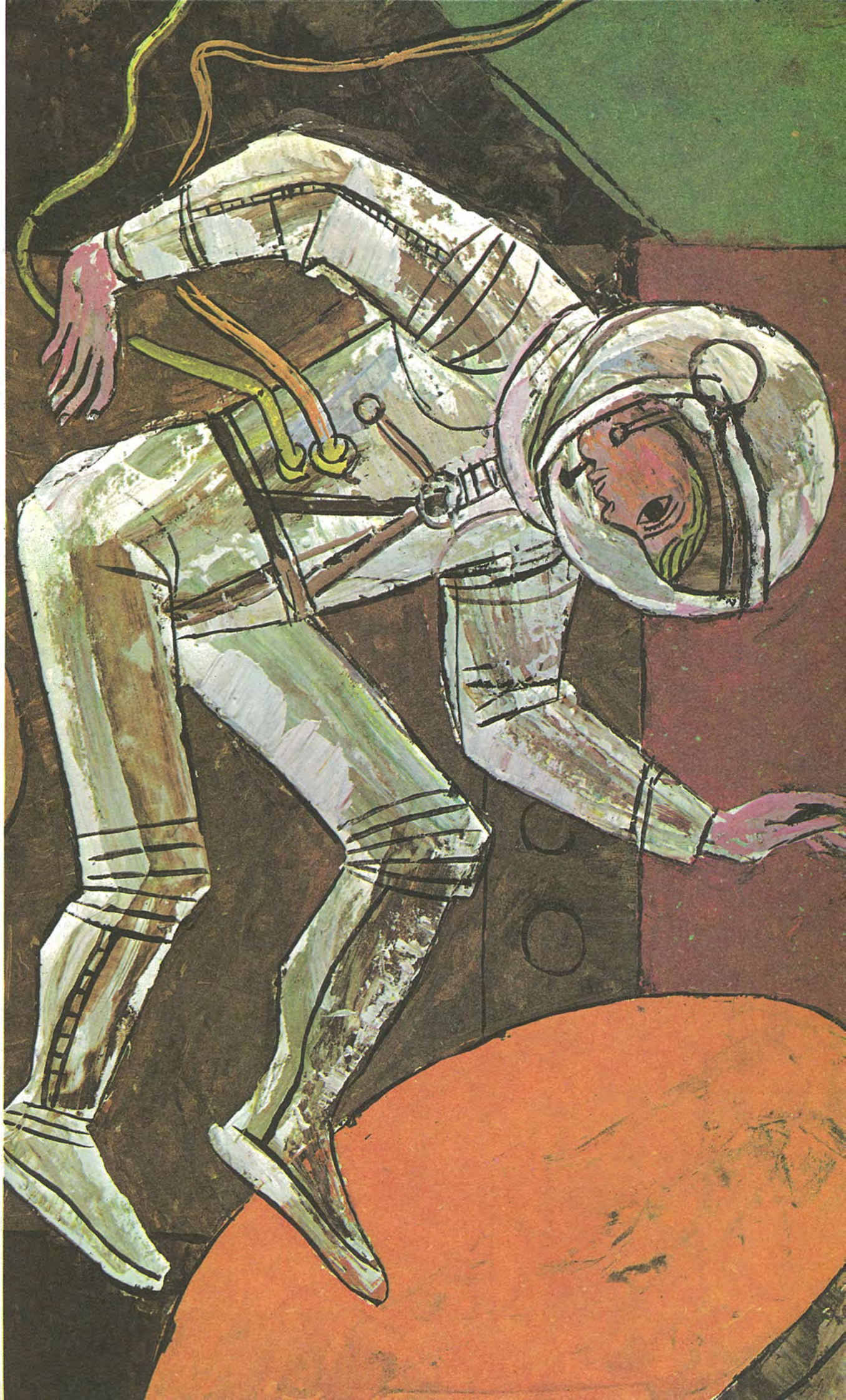


SCIENCE FICTION AND COMMUNISM  
CONFERENCE, MAY 25-27, 2018



AMERICAN  
UNIVERSITY  
IN BULGARIA





# SCIENCE FICTION AND COMMUNISM CONFERENCE

MAY 25-27, 2018

## PROGRAM

May 25

GALLERY ONE (14 IVAN VAZOV STR.)  
SOFIA

7.00 p.m.

### Opening party

To celebrate the start of the conference, we are hosting a cocktail party at a downtown gallery in Sofia. Meet and greet with local academics, as well as science fiction experts, writers, and enthusiasts. The gallery is also a welcome point – where you can drop off your luggage upon arrival any time after 11 am on Friday, May 25 (those of you arriving earlier – please contact Ralitsa Konstantinova).

Beside fine foods and wines, you will also be able to see the current exhibition entitled “Fantastika in a Time of Communism” displaying archival and artistic Sci-Fi works from the socialist period in Bulgaria.

9.00 p.m.

### Organized Transport Sofia - Blagoevgrad

Courtesy of AUBG, a bus will take the conference participants and their companions from gallery ONE and will transport them to Blagoevgrad within 70-80 min.

You will be assisted with finding your accommodations.

# SCIENCE FICTION AND COMMUNISM CONFERENCE

May 25-27, 2018

May 26

BALKANSKI ACADEMIC CENTER  
AUBG, BLAGOEVGRAD

- 8.00 – 9.00 a.m.** **Breakfast and registration at AUBG campus**  
You can purchase breakfast at the America for Bulgaria Student Center, across from the Balkanski Academic Center.
- 9.00 – 9.30 a.m.** **Opening remarks from the organizers**  
**Setting goals for the conference**
- 9.30 – 11.00 a.m.** **Science Fiction East and West: communication or divide?**  
Chair: **Emilia Karaboeva, Sofia University, Bulgaria**
- The views on communism in the science fiction novels by Wells, Tolstoi and Bulgakov*  
**Iren Boyarkina, University of Rome Tor Vergata**
- New-Age Elements in the “Psychological Scientific Fantasy” Novel “Master and Margarita”*  
**Sergey Al. Ivanov, American University in Bulgaria**
- Red Planets*  
**Martin Carter, Sheffield Hallam University**
- 11.00 – 11.10 a.m.** **Break**
- 11.10 – 12.40 p.m.** **Soviet Science Fiction**  
Panel Chair: **Veselin Tonchev, Sofia University**
- The Right to Misery in the Literary Slavic Dystopia*  
**Helena Gosילו, Ohio State University**
- Anarchy as Access to Space: Language, Imagination, Technics*  
**Eugene Kuchinov, Russia**
- Ideologies of the Future: Soviet Science Fiction from 1953-1991*  
**Laura Hendrickson, Columbia University**
- 12.40 – 1.40 p.m.** **Lunch break**  
You can purchase lunch at the restaurant on the third floor of the America for Bulgaria Student Center, across from the Balkanski Academic Center.
- 1.40 – 3.10 p.m.** **Space Conquest in Communist Children’s Literature**  
Panel Chair: **Charles Sabatos, Yeditepe University**

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*Youth Oriented Literature – Bulgaria’s Gateway to Science Fiction*

**Ralitsa Konstantinova**

*To the stars! Space Exploration and Futuristic Visions in Late Soviet Science Books for Children*

**Jessica Valisa, University of Bologna**

*The Peculiar Case of “The White Deluge”: Young Adult Science Fiction as Social Commentary*

**Ivana Damjanovic, Belgrade University**

**3.10 – 3.20 p.m. Break**

**3.20 – 4.50 p.m. The Film Perspective**

Chair: **Maciej Peplinski, Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe**

*Ideology and Dress in the Early Social Science Fiction Novels: A Comparative Analysis of Bellamy’s “Looking Backward” and Morris’s “News from Nowhere”*

**Elif Tekcan and F. Dilek Himam, Izmir University of Economics**

*Science-Fiction and the Italian Avant-Garde*

**Maurizio Cinquegrani and Angelo Cioffi, University of Kent**

*Arbiter of Games: Włodzimierz Borowski and the Art of Prognosis*

**Eliza Rose, Columbia University**

**5.00 – 6.30 p.m. No God in Cosmos**

Chair: **Rossitsa Guentcheva, New Bulgarian University**

*Zer0 Department: Fringe Theory & Performative Conspiracy at the Outer Limits of Romanian SF*

**Stefan Tiron, Art University Bucharest**

*Science Fiction and the Production of Alter-Metaphysics Behind the Iron Curtain*

**Ion Dimitrescu, Art University Bucharest**

Followed by discussion on Atheism

**End of the conference program for May 26.**

**7.30 p.m.**

**Dinner party hosted by AUBG**

Dinner will be served at the restaurant (floor 3) at the America for Bulgaria Student Center, across from the Balkanski Academic Center.

# SCIENCE FICTION AND COMMUNISM CONFERENCE

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May 27

BALKANSKI ACADEMIC CENTER  
AUBG, BLAGOEVGRAD

**8.30 – 9.30 a.m. Breakfast**

You can purchase breakfast at the America for Bulgaria Student Center, across from the Balkanski Academic Center.

**9.30 – 11.00 a.m. Narrowing the Dialogue: Case Studies**

Chair: **Ralitsa Konstantinova**

*For a Classless Train. Capitalism, Efficiency and Beyond*

**Paweł Kaczmarcki-Koronkiewicz, University of Wrocław**

*Zones in the Science Fiction in the Eastern Bloc: Geography and Ontology of Spaces Beyond Human Understanding*

**Konstantin Georgiev, New Bulgarian University and Alexander Popov, Bulgarian Academy of Science**

*The Common and the Blue Brain: Garland's Ex Machina and Its Literary Predecessors*

**Miglena Nikolchina, Sofia University**

*Mysterious Events on Futra: Allegory and Apology in the Science Fiction of András Hegedűs*

**Niklas Wittmann, Central European University**

**11.00 – 11.10 a.m. Break**

**11.10 – 12.40 p.m. Science Fiction and Ideology**

Chair: **Miglena Nikolchina, Sofia University**

*"We are the Robots": Bulgarian Computerization, Utopias, and the New Laws of Robotics*

**Victor Petrov, European University Institute**

*Communism and Science Fiction—the Quotidian Utopia of China's Lian Huan Hua*

**Virginia L. Conn, Rutgers University**

*Marxist Science Fiction Criticism and the Realities of a Communist State*

**Katie Stone, Birkbeck, University of London**

**12.40 – 2.00 p.m. Lunch Break**

You can purchase lunch at the restaurant on the third floor of the America for Bulgaria Student Center, across from the Balkanski Academic Center.

# SCIENCE FICTION AND COMMUNISM CONFERENCE

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## 2.00 – 3.00 p.m. **Key Remarks by Dr. Darko Suvin, F.R.S.C., Professor Emeritus, McGill University**

**Darko Suvin** is a Professor Emeritus at McGill University, Canada, a cosmopolite by spirit and biography. He is one of the most prominent figures of the science fiction studies' development. He has published extensively on the subject and is most known in the science fiction studies field for his notions "novum" and "cognitive estrangement" as well as for being an editor of the Science Fiction Studies journal up to 1980.

## 3.00 – 5.00 p.m. **Utopia, Communism and Science Fiction**

We want to use the opportunity of having so many specialists on the topic, with so different perspectives and backgrounds, to conclude the conference with a discussion and a workshop session which aim to forward the theoretical language with which we approach the various interfaces between science fiction and the politics of futurism evident throughout the socialist regime. The workshop will be moderated by Emiliya Zankina and Ralitsa Konstantinova with Professor Darko Suvin, Professor Miglena Nikolchina, Helena Goscilo and Emiliya Karaboeva as discussants. This session relies on everyone's active participation.

**Helena Goscilo** is Professor and Chair of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures at the Ohio State University. Most of her scholarship has focused on gender and culture in contemporary Russia, the topics ranging across art, music, graphics, gesture, gender politics, celebrity studies, and film.

**Miglena Nikolchina** is a professor in the Department of Theory and History of Literature, Sofia University, and a science fiction author. She has focused on the interactions of literature, philosophy, political studies, and feminism. Nikolchina has a lasting theoretical concern for Utopianism, the (para)human as process and transformation, and the artificial being as an artistic and philosophical challenge.

## 5.00 p.m. **End of conference**

AUBG is generously offering an organized transport back Sofia after the conference. The ride will take a little bit over an hour. Those who prefer staying Sunday night in Blagoevgrad, please contact Ralitsa Konstantinova to assist you with scheduling your return on Monday.