Saturday, September 24, 2:05-3:05 pm

**The Essentials of World Building: Key Points**

**David B. Coe**

**I start with a map. Why?**

— Physical world helps to shape society, religion, culture, economy, relations among people and nations, and pretty much everything else.

— Creating a place and naming features on our map leads to story opportunities, allowing us to develop our story voice, deepen our understanding of the world we’re developing, and market the resulting short fiction to get a head start on establishing our authorial bonafides.

**Develop a list of questions: Things we need to know about our world before we write.**

— This keeps world building from becoming a rabbit-hole from which we might never emerge. (And BTW, it also works for research — another rabbit-hole.)

**Speculative Fiction: Magic (for fantasy) and tech (for SF) should follow certain rules**.

— It should be as consistent and constant as our natural laws of gravity, inertia, etc.

— It should be limited in power and scope, to prevent it from taking over our story.

— It should carry a cost, again to prevent it from dominating our narratives.

**Most important: Remember that world building is a process not just something we do at the beginning of our writing process.**  
  
 — The language we use in our writing, our imagery, our analogies, metaphors, and similes, as well as our dialogue should all reinforce our world building.

— We should avoid at all costs any language, any words, any expressions that do not fit with our world building, that might harken back to the world in which we live, rather than the one in which we’re writing. Avoid anachronism as well. Learn *when* words entered our language and make wording choices accordingly.

**Avoid “Data-Dumps.”**

— Instead, think in terms of the “Data IV,” a data-drip. Give information on a need-to-know basis. Tell readers no more or less than what they absolutely must know.