

# NIEKAS

## SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

"The \_\_\_\_\_ Fanzine"

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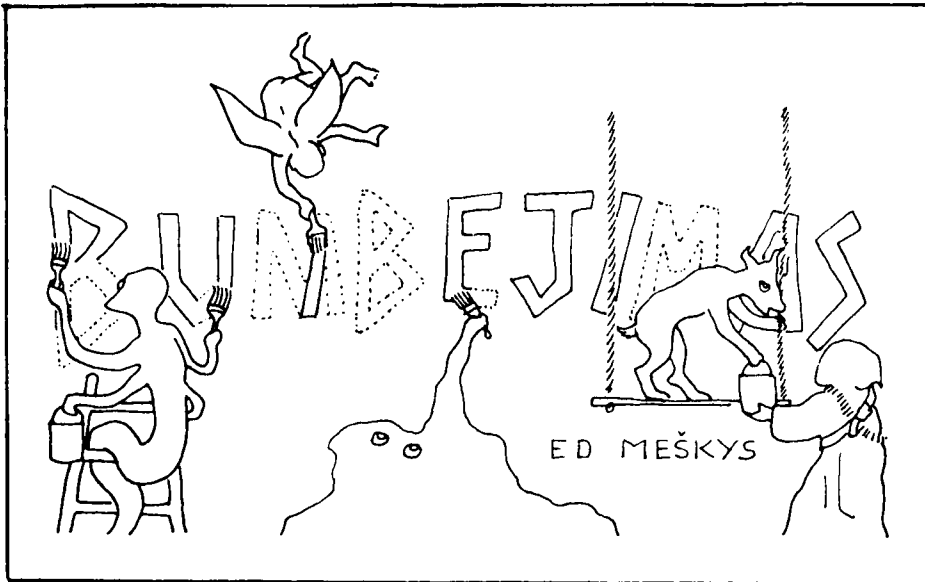
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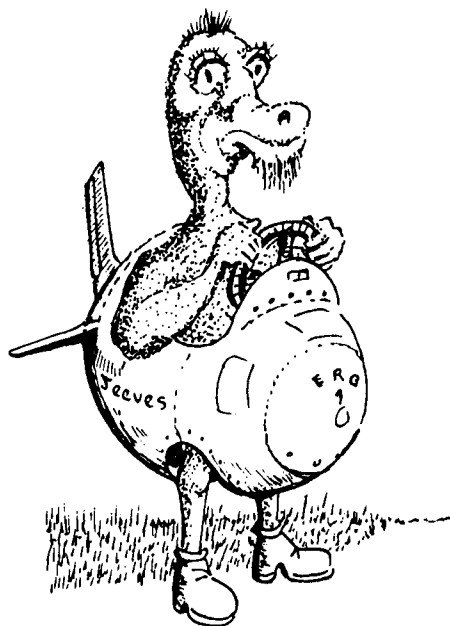
### The Mad Blink of Moultonboro

I fulfilled my dream of the last six years and went out West again this summer. Noreascon II was the first world SF convention that I made since Torcon in 1973, and I had such a good time at it that I was determined to resume attending worldcons again on a regular basis, so help me Cthulhu! Since I moved from Livermore, California to New Hampshire in December of 1965, I visited the Bay Area in 1968, 1969, and 1975. The last visit had been unexpectedly cut short after only two days due to forces beyond my control, and before I had gotten to see most of my friends in the area. So with the worlcon in Denver and the National Federation of the Blind Convention close to home (in Baltimore, hence costing little money), I decided to make a Grand Tour.

I flew from Boston to San Francisco on Friday, August 21st. I went out on American Airlines but my next three legs were to be on United. It did not help to read while on the plane in the latest BRAILLE MONITOR that United Airlines had just refused to carry a blind person with a guide dog on a flight from Monterey to Los Angeles.

Airline personnel have somehow gotten it into their heads that blind people with guide dogs can only sit in the first row of seats, the so-called bulkhead seats. We object to this policy on several grounds. First of all, the bulkhead seat generally does NOT have more leg-room than the other seats. Also, there are no spaces there for carry-on luggage. Thirdly, some airline personnel get the idea that we CANNOT travel in any other seat and refuse to allow us on board if all the bulkhead seats are already

taken. Finally, we regard this sort of segregated seating much as the blacks regarded the same on southern buses of a generation ago. American, like most airlines, had preassigned me to a bulkhead seat but at check-in I was firm and got it changed to a regular berth. Then, after I had boarded, gotten my hand luggage stowed under the seat, and gotten my guide dog all settled, another passenger came along who was assigned to the same seat. They insisted on moving me up front and not the late arrival. I was very angry with the personnel of American Airlines and was tempted to make a scene but chickened out. When this sort of confrontation occurs between blind passengers and airline folk, the



flight is often delayed by a half hour or more and I was anxious to get going. Also I was at a disadvantage because I had lost my boarding pass with the seat number on it. "Wait till next time," I muttered to myself. This is exactly the kind of second class treatment Negroes had received in the South. I suppose I should have insisted on my rights and not allowed myself to be pushed into the "nigger seat."

Despite the air controllers' strike, the plane was only 5 minutes late getting into SFO. Diana Paxson met me at the airport as I was staying with her family at Grayhaven. The household normally has about nine permanent and semi-permanent residents, not to mention frequent transients like myself. Of the people present, I interacted mostly with Diana, Paul and Tracy Blackstone Zimmer, and Chalinder.

One goal of this trip was to see old friends not seen in many years. Unfortunately I had a rather low batting average. Poul and Karen Anderson and Charlie Brown were in Pasadena for the Saturn flyby, Walter Breen was in New York, and Marion Zimmer Bradley was in Europe. I was especially disappointed that I didn't get to see Felice Maxam. She was out whenever I called and never called back. I did have a half hour talk on the phone with her husband Blake, though. I wanted to see Liz Lokke, now Warren, and her mother Grace Warren, but could not get phone numbers for them or specific addresses. Dana and Grace Warren apparently still reside in Livermore but have an unlisted phone, and Liz was in Stockton or Sacramento.

Others that I missed included Mike Ward who was out of town during much of my stay, Lauren Exter who I didn't know how to reach, and Lou and Cynthia Goldstone, Emil Petaja, and Joe Rolfe who I simply didn't succeed in reaching.

I did speak with Ray Nelson on the phone just before he left for Los Angeles for his son's wedding. I also talked to Alva Rogers on the phone for two hours. Dialogue was also achieved with several NFB people in the Bay Area, especially Jim Willows, a vice-president of the Western Division who is a computer programmer at the Lawrence Radiation Lab and somewhat of an SF enthusiast. I also got to see several non-fan friends such as Genia Pauplis, a friend from the Bay Area Lithuanian community, and Jean and Balasz Rosznyai who I know at the Radiation Lab.

Saturday night, Grayhaven had a party for me to see old friends and new. At it, Don Studebaker (AKA Jon de Cles) read his newest story which was outstanding. Also at the party



were Mary Anne Dole and Lyn Saunders, two blind members of the Mythopoeic Society from San Francisco, and their driver. They are starting a taped fanzine of their own, REVEL, the first issue of which appeared about a month after I met them. A future issue will include Don's reading which they recorded during the party.

The number of taped fanzines seems to be growing. I do several: both original like FANZINE, ATTIC, and ANTHOLOGY, or recorded versions of standard inkprint zines like SF REVIEW, STARSHIP, and NIEKAS. These, like REVEL, are done in the special compressed format which can be played on machines only available to the blind community. SF FI SEE is published in standard format by Mary Lou Lacefield of Louisville, KY, but is aimed at blind SF fans. The only recorded fanzine for the general public with which I am familiar is UNCLE ALBERT'S ELECTRIC TALKING FANZINE.

Diana suggested the creation of a new taped magazine to be recorded in standard format so as to be accessible to the sighted community. It could start, like my taped fanzines, as one which is loaned free to the blind but it would also be sold to the sighted. It would consist of authors reading their own fiction, poetry, and articles. Hopefully it could eventually become self-supporting. Diana's thoughts on this grew out of the monthly "Bardic Circle" meetings at Grayhaven where people read aloud their own poetry and fiction. She said that much poetry is designed to be heard rather than seen. Also she thought it would be an interesting challenge for authors to write fiction with no visual imagery but relying only on the other senses. The economic viability of this project, however, was thrown into doubt by the apparent disappearance of Hourglass Tapes from Los Angeles (their interview with Fritz Leiber was reviewed in NIEKAS 23). But if we could start small and not require a large initial capital investment, perhaps the scheme could work. It would also depend on how much time various people could put into it.

Sunday afternoon Grayhaven had one of its periodic High Teas with most of the food prepared by Adrien Martine Barnes. The food and society where outstanding. One of the people present was Clint Bigglestone, often referred to by Felice in the old NIEKAS. He was one of the five adolescents who had arrived on Felice's doorstep 15 years ago and for awhile played a big role in NIEKAS. Clint and I talked over old times and discussed the whereabouts of other members of the Terrible Five. One had been Johnny Chambers, an extremely talented cartoonist who did such marvelous strips as THE LITTLE GREEN DINOSAUR and LIZARD OF LEMURIA in the old NIEKAS. Clint said that several years ago Johnny decided there was more money in plumbing than in cartooning and moved north to train to be a master plumber. He and Clint exchanged communications very infrequently but it has been close to two years since the last letter. Clint heard an unverifiable rumour recently that Johnny had been killed in a car accident a few months ago.

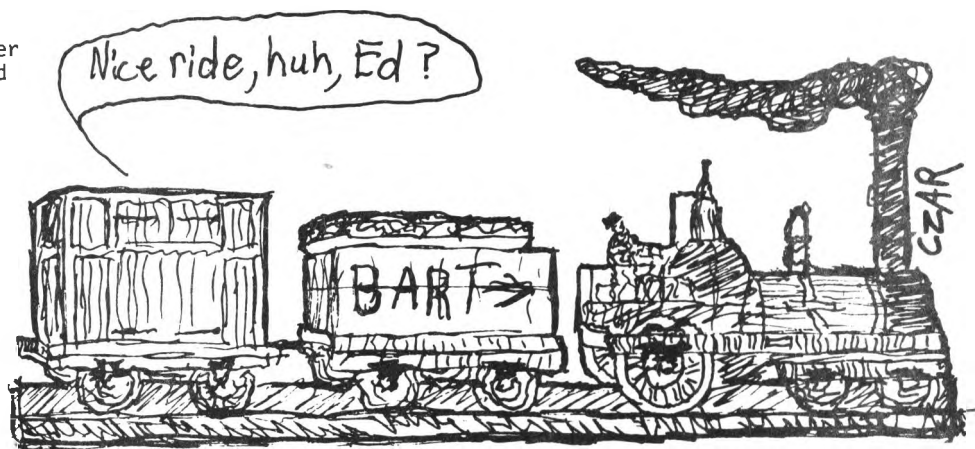
Clint played for me a cassette of songs sung by Diana Galligher, a California L5 type who recorded them herself and was selling tapes at Westercon. These are powerful ballads carrying the theme of the L5 society, about man's colonizing of space. The songs are excellent and as soon as I can get my own copy of the tape I will do a review for NIEKAS. Clint's major interests now are military strategy and wargaming and he has promised material for NIEKAS.

Tuesday I had lunch at the Claremont Hotel with Jean and Balasz Rosznyai. This had been the site of the 1964 worldcon. The luncheon menu was very meager and the service was abominably slow. Afterwards they left me at The Other Change of Hobbit bookstore on Telegraph Ave. where I arranged for the store to carry NIEKAS.

Tuesday afternoon I went out to the home of Jim and Joyce Quigg in Pleasant Hill. They had been on the fringes of fandom for many years and had gone to college with Lin Carter, Dave van Arnam, Bruce Pelz, and Joe and Felice Rolfe. Jim, an engineer, took a job at the Radiation Lab while I was still working there and we had become very good friends. After they moved to the Bay Area they belonged to the Little Men for a while but eventually dropped out. They still keep in touch with both Joe and Felice and their new families. They share my interest in Gilbert and Sullivan, and Jim is a railfan like me...only more so.

I stayed over night and Jim took the next day off from work to show me BART and the new Muni subway. I was very impressed! The BART trains are quiet, even when doing 70 mph in the Bay Tunnel, smooth and comfortable. The floors are carpeted and the seats soft. There is negligible graffiti and vandalism. BART had been in operation at the time of my last visit, but because that had been cut short, I never had an opportunity to ride it. Unfortunately, when they designed and built it, they had gone a little beyond the state of the art and the computerized controls have had a number of breakdowns. It is very expensive to ride, too, and just has not received the needed public acceptance. Originally a very extensive network had been planned and only 25% built but with one small exception no extensions are likely before the next century. Land is owned almost to the edge of San Francisco Airport and the line will probably be extended there in the near future.

The Market Street Muni (Municipal Railway) subway had just opened a short time ago. The special articulated trolley cars built for San Francisco and Boston by Boeing can be boarded from either high platforms like an ordinary subway or by steps from street level. We rode



the train to the other end of the Twin Peaks tunnel where we stopped to have lunch. Underground there are high platforms for fast boarding, but at the end of the tunnel the trains operate as ordinary street-cars. Unlike BART, the Muni subway has achieved high rider acceptance, ridership is way above expectation and insufficient rolling stock was available.

Boston and San Francisco had placed a joint order for a total of 200 trolley cars with Boeing. The specifications were a bit different for even in the subway, the platforms are low level in Boston. Boeing had no previous experience with transit vehicles and the first ones were sent to Boston. The results were that the defects were so many that Boston cancelled the last 20 cars on its order and Boeing was stuck with them. In the meantime, they had perfected their techniques and the cars delivered to San Francisco were virtually glitch-free. Now SF has bought from Boeing half of the rejected Boston cars and is having them modified for high-platform use.

That night, the Quiggs and I had dinner with Genia Pauplis and her friend David at Brennan's Restaurant in Berkeley. In the old days, the Little Men used to hold half of their meetings at the home of Ven Stark and afterwards go to Brennan's for a late supper and drinks. They now meet at the Other Change of Hobbit bookstore and go to a pizza place across the street apes. Anyhow, I do not think I have been back to Brennan's since I left the Bay Area in '65. Their food was as good and as inexpensive as ever, and their Venetian Coffee was as superb as I remembered it. (This is like Irish Coffee but with Brandy substituted for the Irish whiskey.) I had four of them before we were done and was feeling no pain. After dinner David and I went to Genia's apartment in Walnut Creek where we had fresh fruit and Grand Marnier.

Thursday was a quiet day spent at Grayhaven. John Chalinder read onto tape for me Varley's story "Peripheral Vision" and some of his own poetry. I think I will do a piece for a future NIEKAS on the treatment of blindness in SF. That evening we all went to Petrouchka, a very nice Russian restaurant in Berkeley. That night Diana and I talked to the wee hours about NIEKAS, fandom, writing, the nature of fantasy and reality, the place of mysticism and PSI, etc. She read to me some excerpts from forthcoming novels and short stories.

Next morning I flapped my wings and flew on to Phoenix. United used the old terminal so the baggage claim

area was outdoors. I arrived in the middle of a record-breaking heatwave of unusual duration--it lasted until the day I left. Daytime temperatures ran around 113° and nighttime around 90°. Fortunately EVERYTHING was air-conditioned and the humidity was low for the brief periods spent out of doors.

I had not seen Anne Braude since a Modern Language Association meeting in NY, 10 or 12 years ago. We had a lot of catching up to do. We had a glorious six days talking about NIEKAS, fantasy, SF, politics, religion, science, and all the problems of the universe.

On Monday we visited John Myers Myers and his wife in Mesa. It was a very enjoyable afternoon spent talking about literature and people. He has an unpublished novel-length narrative poem which he wrote several years ago. He has also just finished writing another novel. The new one published by Starblaze Books is not a sequel to Silverlock, but is an unconnected book which would appeal to the reader who enjoyed Silverlock. [see review n.56]

Wednesday we had visitors: M.R. "Hildy" Hildebrand and her husband Bruce Arthurs. She is the convention fan and he the fanzine fan of the family. He publicizes a zine (I forget the title) and she promised to tape the latest issue for me. We had a great time talking about SF, fantasy, and fandom. They were to put on Coppercon in two weeks and had several very interesting panels scheduled. Anne does not like to go to conventions so Hildy was going to tape the programs for her and me.

Hildy pointed out that as fandom gets larger and the number of conventions grows, we are having more and more trouble with hotels. Fandom is no longer a closed community where everyone knows everyone else, so out internal discipline is disappearing and we are no longer as attractive to hotels. Our business is not that large and the per capita damage rate to hotels is becoming comparable to the other groups. Several times now, cons have been cancelled at the last minute because hotels have gotten offers from better-paying clients and have dumped SF cons. Clint Bigglestone had made the same complaint about wargaming conventions. One hotel had decided to close for remodeling and had never notified the con committee that it would not fulfill its contract.

Anyhow, Hildy said that while some fans are lawyers and might work for free on an important case, there are still many other costs in bringing

a suit against someone. Cons which make a profit ought to establish a special legal fund for suing hotels that renege on contracts.

Hildy was much more loquacious than Bruce, but both were delightful company and I was glad to meet them. I am looking forward to reading their fanzine. A large portion of our conversation consisted of all four of us saying, "...and have you read...?" There was a very strong overlap in our SF and fantasy interests.

Of course, Anne and I talked a lot about NIEKAS and related matters. We are really concerned that a major fantasy novel, Duncton Wood, has not achieved the notice it deserves. Anne has only read about a seventh of it to me so far but even that little bit shows me that it is a memorable novel of the talking animal subgenre, like Watership Down. Anne says it is even better than WD. We want to do our bit to correct the situation and for the next few issues will run the Molepoll to help focus attention on the book. [See Anne's Announcement at the end of this issue.]

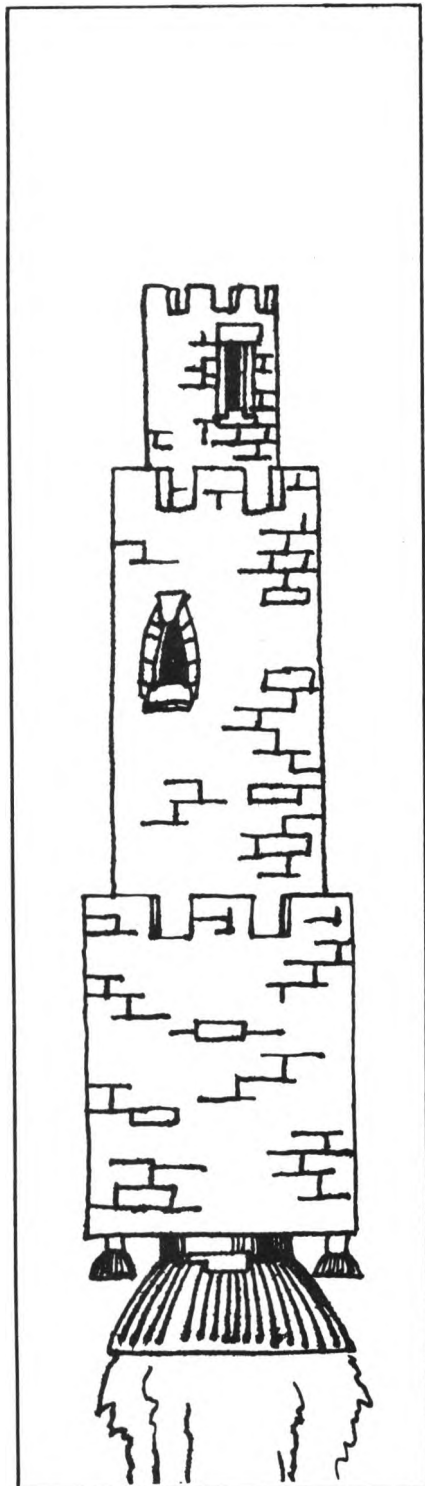
Reading a short poem by Diana Paxson has given Anne the idea of having a special section on Dragons in a future issue. I like the idea and we worked out some of the details. It will appear in NIEKAS 30, our 20th anniversary issue. There will be full page art, illustrated and illuminated poetry, and perhaps essays, and short fiction. [Again, see the announcement at the end of this issue.]

Anne had just bought a board game version of Dungeons and Dragons and Wednesday night we decided to give it a try. Neither of us had played any version of the game before. The board game includes special instructions for a simplified version to be played the first few times until the neophyte is familiar with the operation of the game. The object is to plunder a series of treasures, each in a room guarded by an ogre, and be the first to get back out alive with a specified amount. The rooms are divided into six levels. The further down you go the more treasure is to be found in each room, but also the fiercer the ogre.

I gather that in the original version of the game, one person takes the part of "Dungeonmaster" and determines the treasure and ogre of each chamber as well as the location of other obstacles and traps. Experienced dungeonmasters have evolved idiosyncratic dungeons which they use in game after game. In this version, however, all these things are determined by the game board and by "chance cards" like those in Monopoly. Thus you do not need an

experienced dungeonmaster in order to play the game. And when you are playing the introductory version, you leave out the 5th and 6th levels and all cards referring to them.

It was rather interesting and I now have a far better appreciation of the game. We played twice and both times Anne was killed by an ogre before either of us had accumulated enough treasure to win. In each conflict with an ogre, the roll of



one die determines who wins the fight. If you are against a weak ogre there is a very small chance of your losing the fight, a strong ogre and you have a correspondingly small chance of winning. If you lose the fight, the ogre takes away one of your treasure bags and adds that to his collection. However, occasionally the ogre not only defeats you but kills you which knocks you out of the game. We finally quit around 2 a.m. I had to get up VERY early next morning to catch a 7:40 plane.

I guess D&D can be insidious. While I enjoyed the game and would not mind doing so again, I am not a game addict. But this game can become compulsive and destroy all conversation at a club meeting. At one Mythopoeic Society branch, a few people started playing the game after a group discussion and it slowly sucked in everybody, like a black hole, and wiped out all attempts at socialization and conversation. When the leader organized a new chapter she banned D&D from the meetings. She mentioned at Denvention that in her area there are commercial D&D parlors where people can go to play the game. She felt that any members of her group could always find other places to play if they were so inclined and she was not going to have her new chapter destroyed by the game.

Everything went wrong with the next leg of my trip. I had to appear on a panel at Denvention Thursday at 3 and United only had flights early in the morning and about noon. The latter would not allow me to arrive in time, so I reserved the former. United Air Lines cancelled the early flight about a month before I left and rescheduled the passengers for the later flight but this did not show up on my travel agent's computer terminal when I had them reconfirm my trip the day before I left. Tuesday Evening I called the Phoenix office of United to reconfirm again and they told me of the switch. Fortunately, they were able to find me a slot on Continental for an early morning flight at 7:40 a.m.

But that didn't end my difficulties. I made a reservation for a limo to the airport because I was leaving way too early to expect a ride out there. I went to the pickup point and no limo. I tried phoning the service and got no answer. I finally got through a half hour before my plane was to leave and they said they had no record of my reservation but would send a car immediately. Well, I missed my flight by about 5 minutes. Later I learned that they had made the reservation for Friday instead of Thursday and I honestly cannot say whose fault the error was. I might have accidentally said

Friday when making the initial call, or the clerk could have accidentally written it wrong. [In fairness to service people everywhere who are constantly harrassed by unfeeling and demanding clients, I must report on some intelligence that I became aware of in re: to this matter. A certain contributing editor of this magazine--she shall go nameless--who was present at the time Mr. Meskys made his call reserving his ride, overheard him in at least one instance, ask for this service for a Friday. Now, I'm not saying that Mr. Meskys is intentionally being less than honest in this case, but I must confess that I haven't read literary hopscotch like his last statements since ABSCAM. Note to Whoever Reads This to Ed: Don't read this to Ed.--mike]

The people at Continental were also very helpful. They checked their computer and found that Frontier had a flight at 10:30, so they phoned over to see if there were any openings. Frontier had no low-fare rates comparable to my original ticket price but would accept my existing ticket without surcharge if I flew standby. I had a leisurely breakfast in the airport restaurant and made my own way through security and to the loading area. What I do not understand is that since I was flying standby how they were able to pre-board me and put me in the nigger seat. But I consider myself lucky to get on board at all and didn't request any change.

I had the impression that Frontier was a small airline using small planes and was expecting to fly in something like a Twin Otter, but they used a 737. Also, I did not expect a meal on such a short flight (700 miles) but they handed out sandwiches. I was amused that the sandwiches were excellent sliced ham on a bagel.

Frontier is still a relatively small airline and their gates are way out at the very end of the building in Denver. The flight attendants wanted to get me an electric cart to take me to the luggage area. There was a woman in a wheelchair on my plane who would have used the same cart. However, I am perfectly capable of walking and Ned and I took off down the corridor at full speed. I guess they were afraid that I would get lost for one of the flight attendants just happened to be walking my way at the same time. I am afraid she ended up out of breath trying to keep up with Ned and I.

I arrived at the Denver Hilton a bare 40 minutes before the panel was to go on so I went straight to the assembly area.

[continued after Laiskai]

# PATTERNS & Notes from Elfhill

by Diana L. Paxson

## CONVENTION-GIVING AS A TRAHHATIC DRAMATIC ART...

### A Welcome...

*Here is the land behind the secret door,  
Here is the country of the heart, and more--  
Here is the hidden hall beneath the hill,  
Here is the place the parting mists reveal.*

*How have we come here? Who can map the way?  
The Gate you see was not there yesterday--  
Between two breaths the world has been made new--  
Hold out your hands to wonder, and come through...*

*Here there be dragons; here are unicorns,  
And elven harps and distant, wistful horns--  
All who have heard that call are welcome here;  
Where joy can flower from the heart of fear.*

*By day the sun may bless the world with light,  
The moon lay paths across the lake at night,  
And show us beauties that we cannot name,  
But never what is sordid, or the same.*

*So dance-- the bending trees will join your round;  
Sing, and hear the elven pipes resound;  
Laugh, for here is neither pain nor care--  
While we are joined, rejoice... all will be fair!*

Diana L. Paxson

Two years ago it seemed like an excellent idea... Now, almost two months after the event, I can dimly foresee a time when it might seem like a good idea again. The intervening period was an extended trauma which culminated in the drama of Mythcon XII at the beginning of August of this year.

Some of you may recall the ad for the convention which Ed was kind enough to run in NIEKAS last spring. I suppose this column might be considered a Con Report from the point of view of the Chairperson/maid of all work. It was an interesting experience.

For those of you who have never attended one, "Mythcon" is the annual conference of the Mythopoeic Society which was founded in the sixties by Glen Goodknight to study Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and the other Inklings. Some members participate in discussion groups which meet monthly, while others participate through reading and writing for the Society's Journal, *Mythlore*. When the Society started holding Mythcons, most of the members were students or academics, and Mythcon resembled a literary conference in form (except for the tendency to dress like elves or hobbits given any excuse at all). As Society members discovered fandom (and vice versa), certain other activities, such as the showing of films, have crept in, so that nowadays Mythcon is a unique combination of traditions, including some that are all its own.

This year, it was the ambition of the Mythcon Committee to put on the "Perfect Mythcon", an event which would



have everything, and in which everything would be specifically and delicately focused to contribute to a composite memory of Mythcon which would live in the memory as a weekend spent in another dimension-- the Otherworld to which we are transported by fantasy.

To achieve such an effect, we had, in addition to a dozen or so years of experience attending Mythcons and other conventions, the lessons learned from working at the Renaissance Pleasure Faire and the Society for Creative Anachronism, both of which are largely based on the need to convince participants that they are actually visiting Elizabethan England or whatever. The essence of the technique is a coherent vision, a rigorous attention to detail, and maintenance of a determination to include those things (and only those things) which contribute to the total effect desired. The realization of the vision was a creative act, like the production of a play in which the audience themselves become actors.

There is no more magnificent "high" than to see and hear with mortal eyes and ears what one has envisioned in the prison of the brain.

But the parts must be chosen carefully to result in such a whole. Therefore the setting, Mills College in Oakland, was chosen most carefully. The campus is a succession of green lawns and groves of eucalyptus trees which in the wasteland of Oakland hardly seem real even without further attention. The buildings are medieval mediterranean in style, and the Student Union in which the major events were held (quickly renamed the Revelhall) is completely paneled in redwood with huge fireplaces and crossbeams.

Our Guests of Honor were Elizabeth Pope and Joe R. Christopher. Dr. Pope, in addition to being the author of The Perilous Gard (a version of the Tam Lin legend set in Tudor times), has for many years taught a course in Basic Myths at Mills, and could be depended on to give us an opening speech which would be both witty and directly on-target for our theme. Dr. Christopher is a poet as well as a Lewis scholar, and in his closing speech was able to relate the theme of Faerie to the main interests of the Mythopoeic Society.

In addition to handling publicity, Paul Edwin Zimmer put together a number of panels, the most memorable probably being the one on the topic of "Faerie" which featured Elizabeth Pope, Evangeline Walton, and Patricia McKillip. Mythcon members contributed to the program with papers on topics ranging from

"A Preliminary Investigation into Certain Aspects of Selected Flora of the Northfarthing with Occasional Incursions into the Southfarthing and Other Regions" by Elizabeth Harrod (about tree images in Tolkien) to "Feasts of Fantasy" by Adrienne Martine-Barnes.

But papers and panels are not what gives such a unique flavor to Mythcons. It was the other events, beginning and ending, happening in and around the regular scheduling, which were most instrumental in transporting people to another "world".

The Welcome Party Friday night, which turned into a Bardic Revel with harps and sweet singing and tales of the land behind the secret door... The Opening Procession, at which Jon DeCles put to use his training as Parade Master for the Faire to turn a motley assortment of splendidly costumed people and banners into a procession which wound through all the more scenic areas of the campus, attended by elves and fairies, until it entered the Revelhall... The splendid feast (including a salmon pate formed into a mythological sea-beast with sliced almond scales) at tables on the green... the games and Quest for the Unicorn... The additional Bardic circles which sprang up spontaneously Friday and Saturday and continued far into the night...

The Art Show (the Garden of Bright Images) featured work by Mark Roland, Lynn and Bill Teeple, Bonnie Goodknight, and many others-- as an impressive a collection as I have seen at a small convention (or at many much larger ones). The Dealer's Room (Goblin Market) had a good selection of fantasy books, jewelry, games and magazines. Films shown included Tam Lin, Darby O'Gill and the Little People, and Midsummer's Night Dream.

And then there were the evening events... Marion Zimmer Bradley ran our Masquerade and entertained with the Rivendell Suite during the judging. The Grand Prize was won by Adrienne with the Japanese Dancing Demon costume with which she later took 3rd prize in the Master Class at Worldcon, and the others gave her real competition. I had a shock, however, after the Masquerade when two beefy Oakland policemen bounced up the steps. When one of them tapped his handcuffs and announced that his fantasy was leather and chains I was really confused. It took me some time to believe him when he told us that he and his buddy were interested in science fiction, and had seen some of the costumes, and just wanted to find out what was going on... Apparently they la-

ter got together with a girl who was wearing an Elfquest outfit and took her in to the Station as an elf whom they had picked up wandering around. All she would do was whimper at the touch of the cold iron handcuffs, and I am told it took the Police Captain awhile to catch on as well.

For me, the high point was The Feast of the Fisher King, a blank verse play based on the Grail legend which I wrote several years ago in hopes that it might someday be produced at a Mythcon. Lynx Crowe's lighting turned the Revelhall into the Hall of the Fisher King, and the acting of Jon DeCles, Tracy Blackstone, Kelson, and Sally Eaton made the words live. By the time the white-clad Grail procession paced through the Hall, the audience was still with that kind of attention that comes when beyond hope or prediction the thing works and the magic is there. To me it was a special reward to show Dr. Pope, whose student I was twenty years ago, that I had heard what she had to say...

Remembering-- the fears that nothing would work, that no one would come, that we would all be bankrupt soon, begin to fade away. The treasurer's report is almost done and all the bills are paid. I have caught up on my sleep at last. Several blind fans who were at Mythcon are planning a taped fantasy magazine using (among other things) material from the Bardic revels and authors' readings. Many of the papers which were presented will be printed in Mythlore over the coming year.

Eric and Bonnie Rauscher, who were among the staunchest of our committee members, are talking about having another Mythcon at Mills some time. I think I will let them chair it, but I am no longer waiting quite so loudly, "Never again..." I remember my son Ian's elfin face as he pops, clad in tunic and tights, from behind a tree. I remember, in the darkness, the distant echo of voices tuned in song. I remember the shimmer of light on Bonnie Goodknight's hair, flowing to her ankles as she turns to lift the Grail...



Next year, Mythcon XIII will begin on August 13th at Chapman College in Orange (Southern) California. For information, write Chairperson Lisa Cowan, Box 5276, Orange, CA 92667. Lisa is also an officer of the Mythopoeic Society, and can provide information on its activities and publications.



THEY'RE still going on! We did indeed resort to chemical warfare to try yet another method of wiping out the buttercup patch that ate our lawn. We got a bottle of some stuff called Tumblewee, diluted it according to the instructions and watered half the lawn with it (all that one batch would manage). Then we sat back and waited to see what would happen. Three days later the dregs of the lawn started turning yellow and dying. The buttercups obstinately stayed a healthy green. We went on hoping. About a week later, to our great delight, the buttercups started showing the first signs of giving up, and two weeks after that we had half a garden of assorted dead brown stuff. Eddie and I were ecstatic. A large patch of dead brown may not be everyone's idea of gardening heaven but it suited us real well.

Now all we needed was a few dry days so we could get out there, uproot the mess, and start putting in stuff we really wanted. We didn't get them! England had the wettest spring on record for about 50 years and, as a sort of insult to injury deal, the weekends were getting the bulk of the rain. This wasn't just paranoia on my part. The weird and exceedingly crummy weather patterns actually made the news headlines on a couple of days. Despite all this, from April to June I managed to get about half the dead patch cleared (dead buttercups come up pretty easily, roots and all, unlike the live ones which are exceedingly stubborn) and Eddie followed along planting things in the cleared patch patch. We had planned from the time we first moved into the house to take out half the lawn and try our hand at growing vegetables and now we were finally started.

And then, about two weeks ago, I got whisked off to hospital in the middle of the night with a suspected ruptured appendix (it turned out to be fine but a couple of others bits of me had gotten into rather a nasty mess and if the National Health Service hadn't acted with incredible efficiency Ed would be looking for a new columnist now and you wouldn't be reading this). And last night, during visiting hours, Eddie brought me the dreadful news... Whole patches of buttercups were springing up in the half of the dead patch I hadn't yet cleared and a few were even sneaking up among the newly sprouting snow peas and such.

I am incredibly peeved and tremendously fed up! Also, I'm stuck here in hospital for another eight days and even when I get home I won't be fit to do anything in the garden for weeks. I have this very depressing feeling that the buttercups have won for another year. If anyone out there knows any good ways of getting rid of buttercups, will they please pass the information along? There must be some simple system that Eddie and I just haven't heard of yet. Mustn't there?

#####

Ed's comments on the inevitable and, at this point, almost traditional discussions on ways and means of limiting the size of conventions reminded me of something that not too many people outside of England are aware of. One convention, Novacon (the annual Birmingham Group con, traditionally held at the beginning of November) has now adopted a size limitation policy: 500 members, membership sold on a first come, first served basis and that's it. The only additional memberships sold are

when a con member advises the committee he will definitely not be attending. This policy has not been put into effect simply for the sake of being arbitrary or because the Brum Group have strong feelings on conventions being too big. It is a matter of simple necessity. The Roylea Angus Hotel, where Novacons are held, cannot legally accommodate more than 500 people in their public rooms. This is a matter of fire and other assorted safety regulations. The other hotels in Birmingham have been investigated and at the present time the Royal Angus still remains the most suitable, so it looks like the size limitation will be in effect for the next couple of years at least.

The new policy was first implemented at this last Novacon and did cause a certain amount of aggro but mostly the fans over here have accepted the situation as what it was, a matter of necessity. Of course, the fact that local cons have started springing up like mad here during the last couple of years, offering people some other alternatives, has undoubtedly helped.

#####

BBC Radio 4 is currently running a 26 episode dramatization of The Lord of the Rings. I don't know whether news of this has filtered over to the States yet, or even whether some U.S. radio stations may have already picked the series up and started running it. (It took longer for Hitchiker's Guide to the Galaxy to get to U.S. radio but I assume LotR will get over fairly quickly since it starts with the advantage of being famous already.)

I've now heard well over half the series (20 episodes) and, by and

large, I'm quite favorably impressed. Twenty-size half hour episodes sounds like a lot but still doesn't really give enough time to do justice to something the size of LotR. Thirty-six would have been better but the BBC tends to operate in multiples of 13 for long projects. I suppose it is something to do with the four seasons. A couple of the incidents they've left out I'd take issue with, particularly the encounter with the barrow wight, and I don't like the treatment of the character of Boromir, but on the whole they're making an excellent job of it.

The character of Gollum is quite perfect in a slightly revolting way and Michael Hordern makes an excellent Gandalf. The hobbits are all very good, Gimli is adequate and Legolas is a bit underwhelming. Aragorn was the real surprise for me. It took a couple of episodes for me to get used to the voice of the actor playing the part (largely due to my own preconceptions about how he should have sounded) but at this point I'm probably happier with him than with any of the others except for Gandalf and Gollum. Those characters who only appear for a relatively short period such as Theoden, Faramir, Galadriel, etc. (not to mention assorted orcs and things) are generally of a very high order as well. All in all, LotR fans should definitely make a point of listening to the series if it gets picked up by your local radio station.

Among the things which are highly unlikely to get picked up by U.S. radio stations is "Hordes of the Things," a curious and frequently amusing send-up of fantasy in general and LotR in particular. This peculiarity ran on Radio 4 in four episodes about two months before the start of the LotR series. Sadly, and unusually for the BBC, the sound quality is quite poor and a number of jokes were probably lost totally as a result. Those jokes which were audible were mostly funny and some of the puns rose to heights of inspired atrociousness. Taken as a whole, however, the series just didn't hold together very well. I felt about it somewhat the way I felt about Marty Feldman's movie THE LAST REMAKE OF BEAU GESTE. Viewed (or listened to) as a series of one liners it was brilliant, but taken as a whole it just didn't stand up.

#####

Every once in a while I waste a bit of time envying people like Anne Braude who produce the sort of book reviews and pieces of literary criticism I would like to be able to produce and almost never can. (About once every 3 or 4 years I turn out something I'm happy with but that isn't an awfully good average.) But

I don't often waste my time in this way since Anne's opinions of books seem to be in accord with mine a great deal of the time, which means that the kind of reviews I'd like to see written about books I've enjoyed (or been interested in or exasperated by) are being written by someone, even if it isn't me.

However, I must disagree to some extent with her opinions regarding Patricia McKillip's adult fantasy novels. I enjoyed the Riddle-Master trilogy very much. It is certainly a more complex and ambitious work than The Forgotten Beasts of Eld. Despite this, I consider Forgotten Beasts to be a much better and more successful book. The test of a book for me is how well it does what it tries to do, not how much it tries to do. By that standard I consider Forgotten Beasts to be damn near perfect (I don't claim perfection for anything, not even LotR) and the Riddle-Master trilogy merely exceptionally good. I felt that the third volume was the weakest of the three (or possibly merely the most irritating) because in it she let her tendency toward obscurity and being cryptic run a bit too free. Since I had worked out early on who Deth had to be, I found the cryptic bits annoying rather than mystifying. Also, though people may consider it to be pretty niggling on my part, every once in a while her choice of a name for a character jarred terribly. Tristan was the most notable of these. I don't mind an author using existing names, or invented names, or a mixture of the two, but using an existing male name for a female characters for no reason is the sort of thing that does irritate me. It is particularly annoying when the author has as much talent as Miss McKillip does. I'm a lot less critical of authors for whose work I have less regard.

#####

Among the more interesting vagaries displayed by our local book stores is the touch of randomness that the local branch of W.H. Smith (the largest chain of bookstores and news stands in Britain) shows when arranging paperbacks. Mostly the paperbacks are arranged by category: science fiction and fantasy together, mysteries and thrillers together, historicals in one section, nonfiction in another, etc. But every now and again someone arbitrarily places something in a totally different category, for no discernable reason. Probably the funniest of these random placings, at least to my mind, was the locating of James Branch Cabell novels in the middle of the shelves of Mills and Boon slushy romances (the U.S. equivalent of these are the Harlequin romances, beloved of sweet little old ladies and bored housewives). Much to my

surprise, the novels slowly vanished and since no one but Mills and Boon fans ever look at those shelves, I can't help wondering what the readers of Mills and Boon slush made of the works of Cabell. I suppose it is one of those things I'll never find out.

The most usual random locating or mislocating of things seems to occur in the historical trash section (high quality historical novels are usually put in the general fiction section). In the last year I've found Phyllis Eisenstein's The Sorcerer's Son, three Marion Zimmer Bradley Darkover novels, and the four Evangeline Walton Welsh fantasy novels in that section. I can't quite decide whether there is an SF/fantasy fan among the staff of the local Smiths who is hoping to convert readers by stealth or if the staff are simply mostly illiterate and just look at the picture on the cover and decide on the basis of that where it goes.

Every once in a while I have to admit that they would have a problem in trying to accurately categorize something. Back in May, I picked up in the historical section a copy of a book called Crown of Horn by Louise Cooper (Hamlyn, £1.25) not because either the cover or the blurb made it sound particularly exciting but because I recognized the author as having written a couple of reasonably entertaining fantasy novels. The blurb actually made the book sound like a historical gothic of the sort where all the supernatural bits are explained away at the end. Happily, the book itself turned out to be nothing of the sort. It reminded me a bit of Alan Garner's Owl Service in that it concerned modern individuals caught up by ancient forces and finding themselves forced to reinact something which has occurred in the past and which is only known of in the present as a legend. The book did not have quite the impact of Owl Service for me, though this may be because I know a lot more about mythology than I did when I read Owl Service and so was less in the dark about what was occurring in this book. What makes this book particularly interesting and not just a rehash of Owl Service (using different legends) is the reactions of the two main characters who are both intelligent adults who are trying to find out what is going on by whatever means they can, including such prosaic things as checking in the library for information on local myths and legends that might tie in with peculiar happenings. It isn't a great fantasy novel, but it is a good entertaining and quite readable book and worth picking up, particularly if you like a mixture of myth and modern day.

# MATHOMS



by Anne Braude

## RINGLORE

IT may be true, as Robert Giddings and Elizabeth Holland have claimed, that there has been a dearth of serious critical attention to Tolkien's work in England; elsewhere it is another matter, as I hope to show in this column, which is a fairly random survey of Tolkien-related materials of the last decade or so. I say "random" because, with the exception of the Isaacs and Zimbardo volume, which is a review copy, it consists of the books I have happened to pick up in various bookstores since I moved back to Scottsdale. Omitted, therefore, are anything I bought prior to moving, anything that I passed up, and anything that didn't appear in the rather limited stocks of the bookstores I frequent.

The relatively small quantity of material here may be depressing to devotees when compared to what has been published in the same time span on, for instance, Shakespeare; but the quality is quite respectable. Two factors must be taken into consideration: first, although he is increasingly being taken seriously by the literary/academic Establishment, Tolkien remains, for the present, a minor figure in English literature. Even Shakespeare, though admired in his own time, was not regarded by his contemporaries as the greatest of English poets; three hundred years from now (barring *The End of Civilization As We Know It*), Tolkien's status may

have risen considerably. Secondly, though there has been a fair amount of writing on Tolkien in both amateur and academic publications, very little of it has been serious literary criticism. There has been a great deal of adulation, ranging from graceful tributes to disgusting drivel; and there has been a quantity of scholarship, ranging from philological exploration in the author's own vein and the compilation of glossaries and indices to endless notes on his sources, from Anglo-Saxon vocabulary to Saxo Grammaticus and Snorri Sturluson. (Many of these so-called articles could be more accurately described as footnotes suffering from elephantiasis.) The garnering represented here would probably compare quite favorably with, for example, John Webster or Gerard Manley Hopkins.

The most selective gleaners here are Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo, whose *Tolkien and the Critics: Essays on J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings"* (Notre Dame, 1968) included much of the most perceptive Tolkien criticism of the preceding decade. In their new volume, *Tolkien: New Critical Perspectives* (The University Press of Kentucky, 1981, \$10.50), they give us the cream of the crop of the last dozen years. The editors state that the majority of the essays deal with *The Lord of the Rings*; but in fact the emphasis is rather on Tolkien's criticism and theory, as stated in "On Fairy-Stories" and "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," with exemplars drawn from LotR. This is understandable, as Tolkien criticism is still, unfortunately, largely a slash-and-burn operation, hampered by the necessity of clearing the ground of what Northrop Frye calls "the representational fallacy"--the commitment to the novel as the only valid form of prose fiction--in order to deal with LotR on its own terms as a valid work of the imagination. Tolkien's essays discuss three of the most valuable approaches to his own work: the literary and mythological heritage of our racial past, the use of archetypes (in a sense relevant to both Jung and Frye), and his personal commitment to Incarnation theology, which underlies his theory of Sub-Creation, his conviction that the eucatastrophe is fundamental to history as well as Story, and the concept of Christian heroism, which takes the form of suffering, obedience, and humility rather than pride, conquest, and the pursuit of personal glory.

The articles reprinted here are in general intended for an academic rather than an amateur audience, but they are much more accessible for a general audience than the

usual run of academic writing. Neil D. Isaac's introductory essay, a general survey of writings on Tolkien for the past decade and a half, is a useful guide. Two of the pieces are generally sound but fail to prove their stated points: Rose Zimbardo discusses LotR in terms of the medieval and Renaissance concept of *discordia concors*, harmony and balance among unlike or opposing elements, in order to buttress her claim that God Himself is the Lord of the Rings referred to in the title; and David L. Jeffrey, arguing that the philological allusions in the names of the characters are a form of Recovery, assumes a far greater familiarity with Indo-European philology on the part of the average reader than is actually the case. Lionel Basney analyzes Tolkien's technique as the realization of myth in history, and Paul Kocher displays the realism of his "imaginary" world. J.S. Ryan concentrates on explicating *Tree and Leaf*, while Daniel Hughes looks at the structure and the imaginative ramifications of LotR, seeing it as ultimately more classic than romantic.

The three remaining essays dealing with LotR are in my opinion more valuable and significant. Two of them deal with myth and archetype: Verlyn Flieger's study of the concept of the hero as displayed in Frodo and Aragorn, and Patrick Grant's Jungian analysis of the story, combined with a discussion of Christian heroism. Henry Parks, in an inversion of the usual order of things, defends Tolkien against a myth critic, in this case Northrop Frye. This is one of the more technical and abstruse essays, but well worth struggling through.

The remaining three essays deal with Tolkien's other writings. Lois Kuznets demonstrates that despite the author's disclaimer, *The Hobbit* is solidly in the tradition of children's fiction, with roots in Carroll, MacDonald, and Grahame. And there are two reviews of *The Silmarillion*: Joseph McLellan finds it superior even to LotR, while Robert M. Adams (the anthology's token Orc) takes a patronizing neo-Wilsonian view.

This is a very valuable volume for anyone who is seriously interested in Tolkien's writings as artistic creations, who wants to know what is going on in the books at a level deeper than that of simple narrative. The essays, as I stated earlier, are more scholarly and technical than the usual fannish writing, but not so much so as to be inaccessible to the average intelligent reader who has had some exposure to the serious study of literature. (The book's one flaw,

by the way, is the failure to give the credentials of the writers--an item which is always of interest, if not absolutely necessary.) The Tolkien cultists may not be interested, but I strongly recommend Tolkien: New Critical Perspectives to all serious readers of Tolkien.

A Tolkien Compass, edited by Jared Lobdell (Ballantine, 1980 ((1975)), \$2.50), collects the work of fans; but this is a distinction without a difference, as most of the fans represented are graduate students or full-fledged academics. The articles are less academic in tone than those in Isaacs and Zimbaro, but this probably represents not a less scholarly orientation but the fact that they were originally prepared for oral presentation (at the First, Second, and abortive Third Conference on Middle-earth). They are generally interesting but not world-shaking, even the less appealing theories, like the Freudian interpretation of *The Hobbit*, being expressed in a balanced and well-reasoned manner. The items of most interest are

Bonniejean Christensen's analysis of Tolkien's revisions of the "Riddles in the Dark" chapter of *The Hobbit*, in order to assimilate the character of Gollum to the role he will play in *Lord of the Rings*, and Tolkien's own "Guide to the Names in *The Lord of the Rings*" prepared for the use of the translators, which contains some fascinating philological lore and gives some insight into the workings of his creative imagination.

*The Tolkien Scrapbook* (ed. Alida Becker; Running Press, 1978, \$7.95 softbound) is primarily a fannish production, over half it being devoted to the likes of fan poetry and fiction, folksongs, recipes, and puzzles, reprinted from various fanzines (including NIEKAS). There are a survey of Tolkien fandom and bibliographies of fannish and scholarly works on Tolkien, as well as a list of fanzines. There are a portfolio of color art by Tim Kirk (from the 1975 Tolkien Calendar) and mostly very good black-and-white illustrations by Michael Green. The first or "scholarly" portion of the

book consists of a brief biography, a totally superfluous "chronology" which is actually a plot summary of *The Hobbit* and *LotR*, and literary evaluations by divers hands including W.H. Auden, Edmund Wilson (that essay has more lives than a Balrog), and Colin Wilson (the only person in the English-speaking world, other than myself, to confess publicly to reading Jeffery Farnol; his suggestion of Farnol as a possible minor source for Tolkien is entirely plausible). Longtime Tolkien fans may already have a lot of this material in other forms; those to whom fandom-in-general is an unknown realm will be introduced to some of the best of it here. (Warning: The binding of this book is designed to self-destruct at the impact of the first eyetrack.)

Paul H. Kocher's *Master of Middle-earth: The Fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Ballantine, 1977 ((1972)), \$1.95) belongs to the category of "Reader's Guides": those volumes, usually so titled, which introduce in general terms a major author such as Spenser, Milton, or Chaucer. He deals with all of Tolkien's fiction published at the time of writing (pre-Silmarillion), naturally devoting most of his attention to *Lord of the Rings*. He treats it almost as if it were a realistic fiction, analyzing the depiction of cosmic order and the nature of evil, the characteristics of the Free Peoples, and the character of Aragorn, without delving into the more literary aspects such as symbolism, structure, and sources, and touching very lightly on the question of theme. This is a good first book for the Tolkien reader who wants to enhance his understanding of Tolkien's fiction, and a useful handbook and summary for the Tolkien scholar; the latter will, however, be interested also in the areas Kocher excludes. The discussions of cosmic order and of evil are particularly valuable.

*Tolkien's World* by Randel Helms (Houghton-Mifflin, 1974, \$3.95 softbound) is usually paired with Kocher's book, as it is a study of myth, symbol, and structure in Tolkien's works, particularly *LotR*. One of the most interesting things Helms does is to show the interrelationship between Tolkien's critical essays and minor works and his problems with creativity, most notably the "dry spell" of 1938-1939. His discussion of mythopoeia in the modern age is also very good; and he has one of the best readings of "Leaf by Niggle" that I have come across. I'm not sure that I'm willing to buy all his symbolic interpretations, but the book is in general both perceptive and intelligent in its readings of Tolkien.



J.E.A. Tyler's The Tolkien Compass (Bell, 1976, \$12.95) and Robert Foster's A Guide to Middle Earth (Ballantine, 1971, \$1.50) are not meant to be read at all: they are for looking things up in. A quick skimming indicates that they are of about equal value: Tyler gives more attention to the Elvish language and sometimes has longer entries; Foster (whose book first saw the light of day in these very pages) gives textual references, which Tyler omits. Both books have post-Silmarillion revised editions; and since there may be still more Tolkien material to be published, necessitating further revision, I would recommend the Foster book because it is less expensive, as well as for the cross-referencing, without which the utility of a concordance is considerably reduced.

Lord of the Elves and Eldils: Fantasy and Philosophy in C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien by Richard Purtill (Zondervan, 1974, \$1.50) is more successful than the usual theological discussions, especially those of Tolkien, primarily because it seldom resorts to attempting to find explicit Christian doctrine in the fiction. Purtill is interested in defending the authors both from secular critics who find their Christian ideas repugnant--and who tend to see theology where only story is intended--and from Christian critics who find the books doctrinally inadequate. Purtill's own arguments are drawn from philosophy (to illustrate the sloppy thinking of the modern secularists) and from the theory as well as the practice of Tolkien and Lewis, especially the latter's Experiment in Criticism. There are extended discussions of the nature and uses of fantasy, the Christian intellect, and what Lewis called the baptism of the imagination. The book is aimed at a general rather than a scholarly audience and is very well written. The argument is lucid and generally compelling, though Purtill does get into trouble when he attempts to find explicitly religious ideas in Tolkien (a snare that few have escaped, including Tolkien himself). At the time of writing--and still, as far as I know--Purtill was Professor of Philosophy at Western Washington State College; he has more recently published a couple of fantasies of his own, which resemble neither Lewis nor Tolkien but rather Thomas Burnett Swann or Andre Norton: The Golden Gryphon Feather (praised in the first Mathoms) and a somewhat inferior sequel, The Stolen Goddess.

Like Tolkien's own appendices, most discussions of the languages of Middle-earth tell us more about

philology than we really want to know, but Ruth S. Noel's The Languages of Tolkien's Middle-earth (Houghton Mifflin, 1980 ((1974)), \$4.95 softbound) is more general in its appeal, of interest to those who want to know more about his "linguistic aesthetic," who want to write love letters in Quenya, or who just want to find a nice Elvish name for their cat. The first part discusses the various languages (fourteen in all) and their roots, pointing out how they were chosen to represent their relative archaism with respect to modern English, which is used to render Westron (i.e., the languages of Hobbits and Rohirrim are derived from dialectal and Old English, that of Dwarves from the somewhat more remote Old Norse). Tolkien's choice of Finnish as a base for Quenya is especially effective, as Finnish is not an Indo-European language or one of the root tongues of modern English, so its sound and structure are appropriately exotic. (Noel does not discuss whether the vocabulary is drawn from Finnish, or only the structure.) There are vocabulary and name lists, with their roots, for all but Elvish and the Black Speech, and an English-to-Elvish glossary. There are also a guide to Elvish grammar and discussions of pronunciation and of the runes. The second half of the book is a complete Tolkien Dictionary, with names and words in all languages, their meanings, and references to their appearance in the books. (Noel is also the author of The Mythology of Middle-earth, which I have been unable to obtain but have seen favorably mentioned in references by others.)

The Individuated Hobbit: Jung, Tolkien and the Archetypes of Middle-earth, by Timothy R. O'Neill (Houghton Mifflin, 1979, \$8.95), is one of the very best books on Tolkien that I have yet read. Jungian theory, as I have remarked on more than one occasion, is one of the most fruitful methods of approaching Tolkien; and O'Neill has here provided something I have been wanting for years: a concise and lucid exposition of Jungian psychology (not limited to the archetypes and their functions, like so many similar discussions) followed by a detailed application of them to The Lord of the Rings. He is thoroughly familiar with the writings of both Jung and Tolkien, and sensitive to nuances and implications. While avoiding doctrinaire identifications, which would result in a form of Tolkien's detested allegory, he successfully demonstrates the applicability of Jung to Tolkien in terms of theme, symbol, and imaginative construct, arguing persuasively that Frodo's

quest is one for the Self--actualization not only of one lone hobbit but of the West itself. His theory that the One Ring represents the Self, which seemed absurd at first, is well buttressed, though I still think it is off target.

The author of this remarkable work is, of all things, an Assistant Professor of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership at West Point. (Maybe there is hope for the Military-Industrial Complex yet.) His military background does occasionally surface in the book: what other author would give us a discussion of Smaug considered as an area weapon? But his prose is astonishingly free of the jargon we associate with both the military and the behavioral sciences: lucid, witty, and often poetic, it is a joy to read, except on the few occasions when it inevitably becomes clogged with technicalities of explication. The illustrations, drawn by the author, are useful as well as ornamental.

O'Neill states his purpose in the concluding paragraph of his book (p. 166):

Perhaps, after all, there is room for speculation on the writing of good fairy tales, as long as the tales themselves are not damaged in the process (as I believe that Tolkien's work will somehow survive the present critique more or less intact). The secret is, I suppose, in breaking the white light and examining its magnificent spectrum to see what it is made of, then being careful to put it back together. I have tried to do just that. Whether I have succeeded or not is for the reader to conclude.

He has succeeded beyond all hope--not unlike the two small hobbits toiling wearily up the slopes of Mount Doom.

## Attention!

NIEKAS Publications is now accepting stories for an unusual sort of chapbook. The working title for it is Fifty Extremely SF\* Stories (\*Short Fiction). How short? Fifty words or less--title not included--with a ten-word-or-less bio. by the author. Themes can deal with SF, fantasy, horror, or the bizarre.

Each published person will receive two special contributor's copies of FESF\*S and several ounces of dry ecoboo.

Send submissions to 70 Webster St., Laconia, NH 03246. (Multiple entries accepted.)



HORROR fiction cuts across genres to a certain extent. Certainly there are science fiction horror stories, which would include many invasions from outer space, mutants, and such. Murray Leinster wrote several including The Monster from Earth's End, Creatures from the Abyss, and War with the Gizmos. Wyndham's Out of the Deep, Finney's Invasion of the Body Snatchers, and Brunner's Double Double also come immediately to mind, not mentioning dozens of inferior SF horror stories. There are also mainstream, or non-fantasy horror stories, perhaps the most significant of which is William Goldman's superb Magic. There are a number of novels as well that give the impression of being horror novels (or at least of having supernatural elements) but which are all rationalized in the final chapter. Among the better examples of these are Hillary Waugh's The Shadow Guest, Hake Talbot's Rim of the Pit, and Lou Cameron's Beyond the Scarlet Door.

But for the most part, when we think of horror fiction, we are concerned with the supernatural. In his non-fiction book, Danse Macabre, Stephen King breaks down all horror stories into four main categories or archetypes: the Ghost, the Vampire, the Werewolf, and the Thing Without a Name. These are general descriptions;

Mr. Hyde counts as a werewolf, the body stealers in Jack Finney's novel are vampires, and the Thing Without a Name is pretty general in itself, but there is a certain validity to King's thesis. What I hope to do in this and the next column is break the field down into additional categories and examine a few titles in each, hopefully to provide some general knowledge of the shape supernatural horror fiction is taking. Just as in the science fiction field, the style of writing and the subject matter of the supernatural is fairly static; there are rarely genuinely new ideas, just new versions of the old. But just as imitative novels in SF are frequently superior to those they imitate, so it is as well in the horror genre.

The categories I propose to cover are somewhat the same as King's. We'll look at vampire stories, werewolves, ghosts & haunted houses, and monsters of various types. We'll also see what is getting to be almost a self-parodying genre, the ecology-gone-mad story, as well as witchcraft & magic, demonic possession, clairvoyance (often used in science fiction as well, a distinction we'll look at when we get there), ancient curses, and some odds and ends.

Some ground rules first. Since the purpose of this column is to exhort you to go out and read books, I will not reveal surprise endings or spend too much time on plot summaries; the exception is that really stinko books are fair game, since I hope that you won't go out and buy them. Second, I will mention paperback publishers of each novel (if any) that I call attention to from here on, although in many cases these

titles may be out of print. Since a large proportion of books are purchased second hand, I do not feel compelled to restrict myself to titles still in print; in most cases I have no way of knowing which are which in any case, or how the situation may have changed by the time you read this. I would like to think that the really outstanding titles will be reprinted frequently, but since the complete works of Sarban are currently unavailable except second hand, I accept that this is unlikely. Readers interested



in more specific information about individual titles or authors or whatever are welcome to address question either to me personally or through this fanzine.

With that out of the way, let's take a look at vampires, shall we?

Vampirism is probably the most frequently used horror theme in films, though less frequently in novels for some reason, possibly because the vampire is in many ways an erotic horror, more adaptable to the screen than the printed word. If you doubt the essentially sexual nature of the vampire, then ask yourself how many times Christopher Lee, Bela Lugosi, and company attacked other males instead of females. Contrarily, werewolves in films are at least as prone to attack men as women.

The novel that dominates the genre is Bram Stoker's Dracula (various publishers), not the first vampire novel by any means but certainly the most popular, the one against which others are measured. Earlier works, Polidori's The Vampyre or Varney the Vampire (both from Dover) are rarely read even by fans of the genre. There has as well been a recent trend to domesticate the vampire, turn him from the evil force of

nature of Nosferatu (novelization by Paul Monette from Berkley) to a positive force for good. The most successful of these in commercial terms was Anne Rice's Interview with a Vampire (Ballantine), but the best written is almost certainly the series by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, consisting of Hotel Transylvania, The Palace, and Blood Games (all from Signet). The foremost in particular is a first class historical novel. Yarbro's vampire hero is a dashing, competent, sympathetic character arrayed against a variety of human evils. Fred Saberhagen has done a more superficial but still entertaining series along similar lines, including The Dracula Tapes and An Old Friend of the Family (Ace).

Perhaps the lowest level to which the vampire has dropped in fiction is a series by Robert Lory for Pinnacle Books, a series which mercifully died a few years ago. A pair of crime fighters, cashiered from conventional forces because of their tactics, decide to use the ultimate weapon against organized crime. They locate the sleeping body of Count Dracula and install a pacemaker, fitted with a tiny wooden stake. By means of a radio control device, they can incapacitate the

vampire within a few seconds, and thereby effectively control him. Now they can set out on their personal vendetta against the Mafia. Sic 'em Drac. As a spoof, this device might have worked for one book. It went on for several, and was not the slightest bit humorous, at least not intentionally.

There have also been a number of novelizations of vampire movies, including The Brides of Dracula by Dean Owen (Monarch), Lust for a Vampire by William Hughes, and The Scars of Dracula by Michael Parry (both from Beagle), The Hounds of Hell by Kenneth Johnson (Signet), and numerous novelizations of the DARK SHADOWS television series (Paperback Library). With the possible exception of the Dean Owen book, none of these are of particular interest; essentially they are purely derivative of the screenplay with no inherent stature as fiction.

This is not quite true of The Night Stalker by Jeff Rice (Pocket) which had been written before the television movie and subsequent series although not published until afterwards. Rice is not a terrible writer, and the story has a certain degree of momentum and suspense to it, but a very similar and far better novel is Leslie Whitten's Progeny of the Adder (Ace), a very good vampire story, though still quite conventional.

Historical vampire novels seem to be getting more popular as well. In addition to those by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro mentioned earlier, there is an unambitious but quite interesting look at Dracula's childhood in Gail Kimberly's Dracula Began (Popular Library), easily the best thing she has written. Les Daniels, who seems to have gathered quite a following among hardcore horror fans, has written another in which the vampire is a sympathetic character in The Black Castle (Berkley), but unfortunately I thought this one was overrated as a horror novel, though some of the characters are drawn quite well.

Other conventional vampire novels well worth your time are Stephen King's Salem's Lot (Signet), perhaps the ultimate vampire story, certainly one of the best suspense novels ever to appear. An understated but fascinating story, now out of print for the second time I believe, is Doctors Wear Scarlet by Simon Raven (Avon & Berkley). DAW Books recently started publishing straight supernatural novels, and Curt Selby's Blood County is an interesting story, more straight adventure than supernatural horror, with an entire mountain community knowingly cooperating with its vampiric overlord ("Curt Selby" is

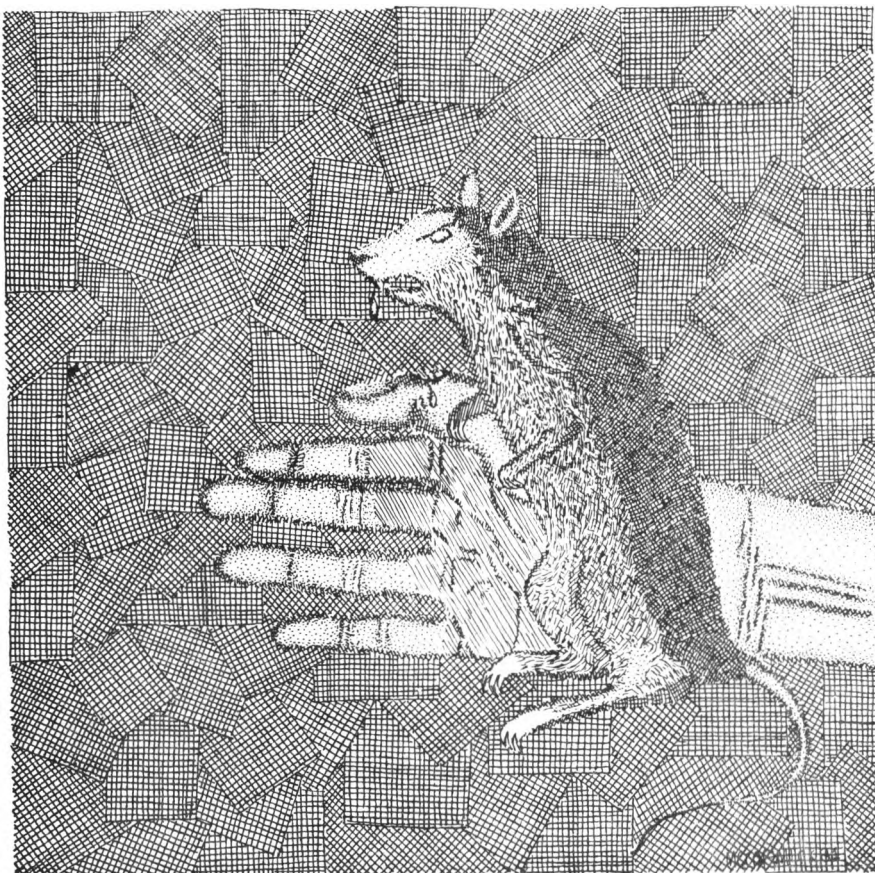


a pseudonym of Doris Piserchia). To be avoided are Robert Myers' ponderous and clumsily written The Virgin and the Vampire (Pocket) and Jory Sheridan's The Vegas Vampire (Pinnacle), a terrible installment in a series that has occasionally been quite interesting.

There are occasional unconventional vampires as well, and an earlier, far more successful novel by Jory Sheridar is a good example. The Bamboo Demons (Pinnacle) is one of the earliest in the "Chill" series, an investigator of the supernatural who faces a different menace in each volume. The demons of the title are actually semi-corporeal creatures of the Phillipines who insinuate their tendrils into houses and attack sleeping people, drinking blood from their throats. It is quite well done. Theodore Sturgeon's Some of Your Blood (Ballantine) is a non-supernatural vampire novel, and I'm not going to tell you a thing that might spoil this superb psychological study. The Legacy (Berkley) by John Coyne is a kind of supernatural vampire, who doesn't need to actually drink his victim's blood but absorbs their lives as they die. Coyne is an interesting writer who doesn't quite succeed, at least in his first couple of horror novels, but who is worth watching for his potentialities.

The second most popular supernatural monster (ghosts aren't monsters and Frankenstein's monster isn't supernatural) is the werewolf. The werewolf hasn't fared as well in popular fiction, which surprises me a bit. As mentioned, the sexual connotations of the vampire are absent, but there is another archetype here, the release of the suppressed inner feelings that one might imagine would be quite popular, particularly with teenagers. There's little doubt in my mind that the popularity of the Dirty Harry movies and the Bonnie & Clyde imitation shoot-the-cops films is derived from these feelings. But the fact is that the conventional werewolf novel is very rare, limited to well written but undistinguished pieces like The Wolf in the Garden by Alfred Bill (Centaur) and less well written but still imitative adventure stories as Jay Callahan's Night of the Wolf (Belmont-Tower).

There have been some attempts to do original things with the werewolf concept; for example, Robert Arthur Smith's The Prey (Gold Medal), a longish historical with a secret cult of werewolves dominating a young man's life. Smith seemed to be actively attempting to write in the fashion of Walpole, M.G. Lewis, and Charles Maturin, which does impart a historical flavor, but which also



bogs the reader down in the melodramatic prose and frequent breast-beating. I don't recommend this to people not fond of Victorian novels. Vercors (Jean Bruller) did a sentimental and totally unhorrific version of this in Sylva (Crest), in which a young lady transforms herself into a fox, derivative of David Garnett's earlier Lady into Fox (Penguin/Signet). Leslie Whitten, mentioned earlier, wrote a werewolf novel as well, Moon of the Wolf, which is nowhere near as successful as his vampire novel, particularly as the result of an unsatisfying ending which I will not tell you about.

Two original approaches to the werewolf theme have appeared recently, and move in two totally different directions. Whitley Streiber has written a really excellent suspense novel, The Wolfen (Bantam), which posits that werewolves actually exist, but not as men transformed.

Instead, they are a separate race, wolflike, as intelligent as we, with a separate secret society that has managed to exist undetected for centuries. Considering the events that take place in this novel, the secret existence of this race is a

bit implausible, but the story itself is otherwise fascinating, and would probably make an excellent film if it were done properly. The second is a series of three novels by the late Robert Stallman, only the first two of which has so far been published: The Captive and The Orphan (Pocket). This time we have the werewolf portrayed in favorable terms, but this is a werewolf like no other we've seen. The beast is a giant golden creature, almost like a bear, a creature driven by animal passions but which can still remember and communicate with a variety of human alter-egos it picks up during the course of the first two novels. Stallman's death is a colossal loss to the field, as these first two novels alone would be a fitting climax to the career of many another author.

The books mentioned above exhaust neither category, of course, and we will in subsequent columns be looking at further examples, and at individual authors at length. Next time, we'll take a look at witchcraft, possession, and clairvoyance, all of which have figured significantly in the bestseller lists in recent years.

# ON THE SHOULDERS OF

# VANGUARD

Harry  
Andruschak

THIS is being typed 15 September, as the flood of data from the Voyager Two Saturn Encounter starts to slow down. Now comes the evaluation after the first quick looks. SCIENCE magazine will publish the articles as usual, after which bland versions will appear in the popular science magazines. I suppose I could do a summary of the findings in this column, but that would be too much like bragging.

As far as public relations go, I think JPL did an outstanding job. Carl Sagan and his Interplanetary Society hosted a PLANETFEST in Pasadena. On 23 August, the lad had an open house. And all week saw Von Karman Auditorium filled with the mass media reporters. Mixed with them were the SFWA, including Hal Clement. KCET TV ran a one hour special every night that week, sending it out to PBS stations all over the country.

But readers of this column will know that all is not well. Now comes a long drought in the history of the US Planetary Program. The next scheduled encounter is Voyager Two at Uranus in 1986, with a possible extension of the mission to Neptune in 1989. And that is all. And this has to be done with an ailing spacecraft. There is a problem with the Voyager Scan Platform, probably as a result of getting hit by dust particles as it crossed the ring plane.

Voyager was launched in 1977 and Pioneer-Venus in 1978. There have been no further launches, and I am beginning to doubt if there ever will be. As I sit here in my nightgown and peignoir, I hear the dull chop, chop, chop of the Ray-Gun budget axe. I look around my apartment for my

copies of AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY (from which I crib most of my fanzine articles and columns from). They make very depressing reading.

Project Galileo remains our shining hope. But can we launch it in 1985 as now scheduled? The fourth shuttle, Atlantis, is scheduled for delivery in December of 1984. This leaves very little time to check it for the launch window to Jupiter in April. And we need the Centaur upper stage. McDonald-Douglas has filed a complaint with OMB that the contract for this upper stage be handed out by bidding, which would cause bad delays, and most certainly postpone the launch to June of 1987.

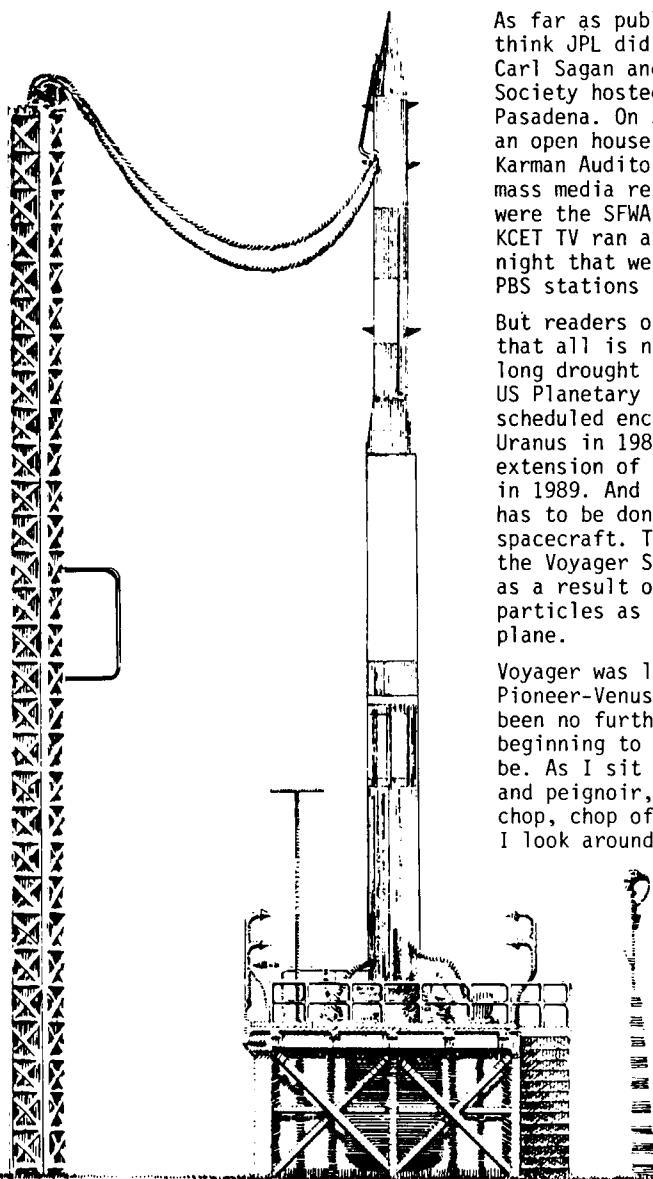
The future of the International Solar-Polar mission also is in doubt. Can it live through the next couple of years with more budget cuts? Same question for the Halley Comet Intercept Mission. And for the Venus Orbiting Imaging Radar. All of JPL's pet projects are in bad trouble.

I apologize to the NIEKAS staff and readers for the brevity of my column this time around. The layoffs are coming, and in fact have started. Half the operators on the IBM 360 systems have been given two weeks notice. Maybe I will be one of the lucky ones to stay on. If so, I promise the next NIEKAS column will be longer but probably as uncheerful as this one. Even if I don't lose my job, a lot of my friends will.

The Voyager team was just that...a team. It was the greatest of them all

## The Starprobe

Well, here it is, 23 September. Tomorrow night our President will broadcast his latest budget cuts over TV. I have a very sick feeling about all this. The odds of getting Galileo to Jupiter in 1985, or the 1988 Venus Radar Mapper, seem to grow longer and longer. Some of you may wonder what JPL is doing about all this.



There is one group planning the next mission, believe it or not. It will be called Starprobe. This is the new name of what used to be called the Solar Probe. Since we may have some new readers to NIEKAS since issue #26, perhaps a brief outline will be helpful.

Solar Probe/Starprobe is a spacecraft designed to come within three solar radii of the Sun's surface, to make direct measurements of the corona and indirect measurements of the interior. To get this close fast enough to prevent the spacecraft from burning up, it will first be sent to Jupiter. Using the gravity well of the planet it is whipped around and aimed at the sun. The whole mission will last a little over three hours.

For the first time, we will map the gravity field of the Sun. The Deep Space Network (DSN) will track the craft and notice how its path is altered. From this we can deduce quite a lot about the interior structure of the sun, of which we know very little at the present. The DSN engineers are doing studies, and first results are that there should be no problems with radio interference from the sun. General Relativity experiments will be held. Theory says that the signals from the Sun's gravity well should be altered. This will be measured to see if the actual results agree with the predictions.

Also along will be the usual array of particle and field instruments. These will be protected by a special heat shield being researched by Ames Research Center, the same place that gave us the Venus Probes and will be managing the Galileo Probe. This is an especially tricky problem as the radiation to be encountered will be 3000 times more intense than it is in Earth's orbit.

Starprobe thus becomes the next JPL project after the Venus mission. It displaces Chronus, the Saturn Orbiter and Probes. The reason for this is that Starprobe can be launched with the Shuttle Orbiter/Centaur Upper Stage combination. Chronus needs the Solar Electric Propulsion System, or SEPS, and friends, that is way down the line. Also, it is felt we have a better chance getting Starprobe since it breaks new ground, or at least more than the average Congressperson would think that Chronus would. And it is Congress which holds the pursestrings... tightly..

publications, and to save time from answering all the letters here is the information.

First, send a letter or postcard to UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C., 20402. Ask to be sent Subject Bibliographies SB-222 and SB-257. In a couple of weeks you will receive these two catalogues, complete with order forms. Then you use the order forms, and that's all there is to it!

May I suggest that as one of the first books you buy, send for Vanguard, A History.

Project Vanguard is a paradox in the history of rocketry. Rocketeers like myself know that Vanguard was an overwhelming success. The overage American remembers it as a failure. How does this happen? Well, the book explains most of it...a sensations seeking mass media, the need for a scapegoat other than Eisenhower ("We Like Ike"), and the fact that the average U.S. citizen is a shithead.

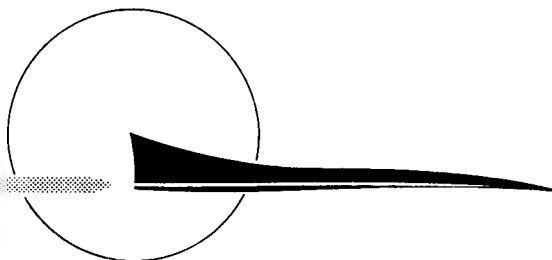


Do you know that Vanguard is still flying today? Yup. Only it is called the DELTA. Still flying after over 20 years, and probably will be flying for another 10.

## TO FLY :

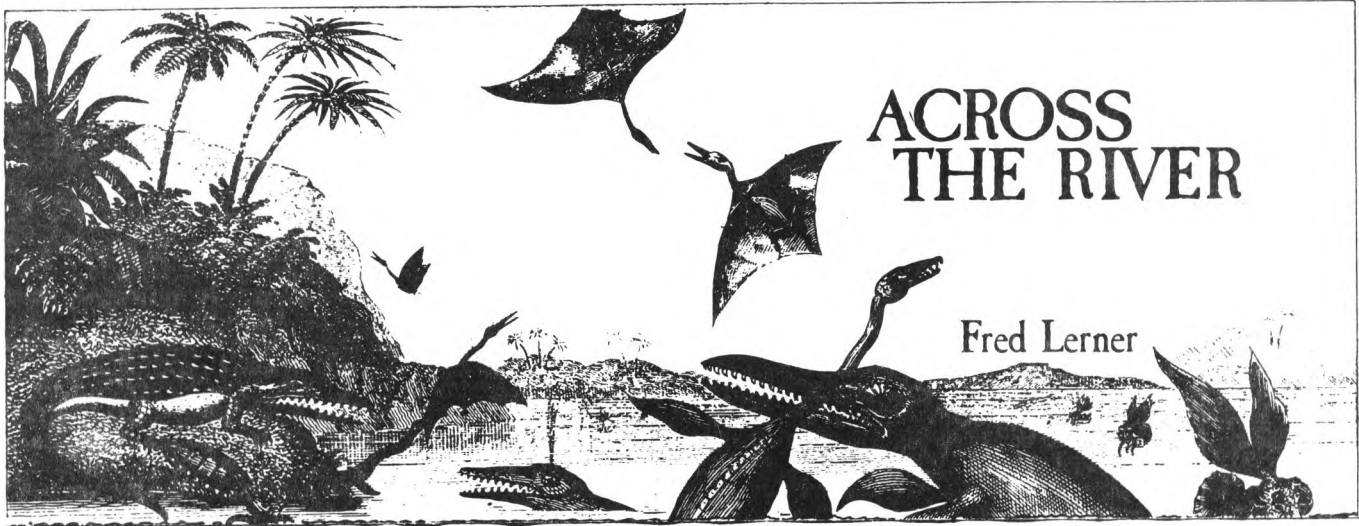
THE SILVER SHIP, RAISING HER VOICE IN JOYFUL SONG  
TURNED HER BACK INDIFFERENTLY UPON THE CONCOURSE.  
WATCHING THROUGH THE GLASS, MY HEART SKIPPED  
AND MY SOUL CRIED LONG  
THE TURBINES ECHO.

WORDS AND ART BY DAVID WAALKES



## How to Order NASA Publications

Many times I have been asked where and how the average fan can buy NASA



Like most science fiction fans, I enjoy speculating on the consequences that might arise from technological or social changes. Being married to a schoolteacher is making me more conscious than I used to be of schools and their role in American life. And naturally I've done some thinking about the alternatives to the way things are done nowadays.

There has been a lot of talk lately about tuition tax credits, educational vouchers, and other ways of making private schooling available to a wide range of American families. It is frequently urged by supporters of these programs that the public schools will be strengthened by the necessity of competing for money from the public purse; and other proponents of public funds for private schools maintain that parents would be able to choose among schools to select those whose philosophies, programs, and facilities best met the needs of their children.

Some extremists maintain that government has no more business running schools than it does running churches. These people--and I am one of them--would abolish government-run schools altogether, and leave the management of educational institutions of all kinds entirely in private hands. In order to speculate on some of the consequences of removing formal education from the activities of government, let us assume that one or more states have decided to abolish public schools, and that neither centralist legislators nor overreaching judges have blocked this decision.

How would education be financed under such circumstances? That would depend, of course, on whether the responsibility for educating children, and paying the associated

costs, were assigned to the parents, or assumed by the state. There are sound arguments for holding parents responsible for paying the costs of educating their children. Their more basic needs--food, clothing, and shelter--are parental rather than state responsibilities. And, more importantly, since the state has no control over the number of children born, and thus no control over the number it must pay to educate, the principle that authority and responsibility should be congruent would place the burden of educating children upon those who choose to bring them into the world.

To this would be opposed the philosophical argument that the education of the young is one of the basic reasons for the existence of human societies, and the pragmatic one that Nature does not limit the ability to produce children to those responsible enough to see to their proper education. A democratic polity and an ignorant electorate being incompatible, it therefore becomes necessary for the state to serve as ultimate guarantor of access to education.

Let us assume that the provision of education to the young remains the financial responsibility of the commonwealth. What changes might we expect to see if the state paid for education but did not run the schools?

One of the most important changes has nothing at all to do with education. In most parts of the United States, local governments (towns, cities, counties, or school districts) operate the schools, and pay most of the costs from taxes levied on local property. Thus communities find it in their interest to maximise the value of ratable property within their jurisdictions,

while minimising the number of school-age children, or even of young couples who might someday produce school-age children, within their borders. Because school costs represent a substantial (sometimes an overwhelming) fraction of the cost of local government, all else becomes subordinate to this. The resultant zoning ordinances and land-use policies pit town against town, and subordinate regional interests to narrowly parochial ones.

There is often a wide disparity between the tax funds available to a community and the costs it must bear to educate its children. But if local governments were not operating schools, there would be no need for the costs of education to be paid at the local governmental level. Under the U.S. Constitution, education is a responsibility of the states, which need devolve it upon local jurisdictions. If public funds for educating children were paid either to the schools or to the parents, both the raising and the disbursing of the funds involved could be done on a statewide basis.

The leading source of local government revenues is property taxation. This could be reduced substantially were the costs of education transferred to the state governments. Even if a state property tax were used to raise funds for education, disparities between tax rates in nearby communities would be reduced, if not almost eliminated. There would be less incentive for local governments to discourage or prohibit the construction of multi-family housing, or to encourage otherwise inappropriate industrial or commercial construction. Some of the pressures on undeveloped rural land would be eased, lessening the conversion of farmland to housing tracts and shopping centers.

Families would have more options open to them in choosing places to live. Not only would there be fewer zoning restrictions on the construction of cheap housing, but the location of one's home would not dictate the schools to which one could send his children.

What about the schools themselves? What alternatives to present school systems might arise?

At the present time we have public school systems and nonpublic schools; these latter are usually classified as private or parochial. Private schools include ivy-covered preparatory schools in small New England towns, as well as day schools set up by Southern bigots to keep their children out of racially integrated classrooms. Their student bodies range from bright youngsters being groomed for Ivy League colleges to severely retarded children who are being trained rather than educated. The number of private schools is increasing, as parents in many parts of the United States become convinced of the failure of state-run schools.

The largest parochial school enterprise in the United States is that operated by the Roman Catholic church, but there are also Lutheran and Seventh Day Adventist school systems. In addition, many private schools operate under religious auspices: Jews, Episcopalians, and Fundamentalists are especially active. Parochial schools often have a wide range of denominational support, both financial and administrative, available to them; and in such areas as teacher training, curriculum development, and production of instructional media, there is a helpful synergy.

I would expect a third type of school to emerge if public schools were abolished. In addition to private schools operated by their trustees or their faculties, and parochial schools operated by religious denominations, there would be community schools, operated on co-operative principles by the parents of their students. Like present-day school boards, the supervisors elected by the parent-cooperators would engage the staffs and oversee the day-to-day operation of the schools in their charge. These community schools, along with newly-founded or expanded private and parochial schools, would probably buy their physical facilities from the local school boards. In many cases, especially in small towns, two or more independent schools might share one building.

Indeed, sharing of facilities and

other forms of cooperation would probably be necessitated by the facts of economic life. Transportation systems, testing services, and special educational programs would be too expensive for individual schools to maintain on their own. Specialised facilities such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, laboratories, shops, cafeterias, and libraries might be shared among schools which were adjacent geographically or philosophically. In some regions, like-minded schools, linked formally or informally, might undertake joint projects. And in many towns all or several of the local schools might be located in a central campus, greatly reducing transportation costs while providing maximum access to special programs.

I imagine that most schools would find it advantageous to belong to some national or regional association which would accredit schools and teachers, produce or endorse educational materials, and provide a corps of specialists who could consult and advise on particular problems. These associations would most likely be formed on religious or philosophical lines, ranging from the most dogmatic of Fundamentalists to a liberal-humanist coalition which might include Unitarians, Quakers, Ethical Culturists, Reform and Conservative Jews, and some of the more liberal Protestant denominations, as well as the avowedly agnostic. Other groupings would probably emerge among ethnic groups, especially those with a linguistic heritage to maintain.



In many places, the public schools are a major focus of community life. This would obviously change; but the changes might not be so striking as one might expect. Community recreational, athletic, and cultural programs would probably replace many of those formerly provided by the public schools, as private schools would often be too small to duplicate them. The sphere of the school would be restricted to the purely

educational; and a growing pluralism in this sphere would help to offset the homogenising forces pervading American culture.

With the dismemberment of a monolithic public school apparatus, there will be considerably more variety in the qualifications expected of teachers, and in the ways in which teachers are trained for their duties. We might expect to see opportunities for people to move in and out of teaching, and more emphasis on the recruitment of teachers who had meaningful experience in the real world of agriculture, commerce, and industry. There would certainly be much less of the civil-service mentality that corrupts much of American education today, and more opportunity to reward merit rather than seniority.

This will help to bring a different type of person into teaching. But so will other social factors: the increasing variety of career options open to young women, the reversal of the Depression-era perception of civil-service jobs as the ultimate in security, and the increasing tendency of middle-class couples to start their families in their thirties. We might see many women take up teaching in their forties, after ten or fifteen years in another field, and five or six years at home with their children. And we might see a growing number of part-time teachers, people whose worklife combines two or more separate jobs: for example, someone who worked at a computer-oriented occupation for twenty hours a week and taught a few classes at one or more local schools. When each school is free to make its own policies, the opportunities for flexibility are endless.

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When the automobile became a common feature on American roads, very few people troubled to think about some of the long-range consequences it would have for American society. Nowadays we can look back and see how American housing patterns, sexual behaviour, racial tensions, and governmental structures were shaped by the automobile. As we speculate on the future, we would do well to remember that technological and social innovations can have consequences reaching well beyond the narrow spheres in which they are expected to operate. I've touched on one or two of the possible consequences of liberating education from government operation: I don't doubt that there will be many more that go far beyond the classroom.



# Isn't it Romantic

by Anne Braude

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IN one of the first pieces I wrote for NIEKAS Redivivus, a review of Robin McKinley's *Beauty*, I remarked that that book would appeal to lovers of romance in general. At this point a Demon of Definition, who lurks in my subconscious and emerges only to make trouble, popped up and inquired, "Precisely what do you mean by that?"

"Surely that is obvious," I replied loftily. "Everyone knows what romance is."

"Indeed," replied my tormentor. "The Romance of the Rose, The Royal Road to Romance, The Blithedale Romance...Harlequin Romances?"

"But those are all different," I protested feebly. "The Romance of the Rose is a medieval allegory about courtly love. The Royal Road to Romance is a travel book, supposedly non-fiction. The Blithedale Romance is a novel about a philosophical experiment that didn't work--Brook Farm. Beauty isn't like any of them."

"Ah, then you mean it would appeal to readers of Harlequin Romances."

"No, that is not what I mean."

"Well," said the Demon with a hideous grin, "would you mind explaining just what, if anything, you do mean?" Whereupon he whipped off his clever plastic disguise, revealing himself as not a Demon but a daimon of literary inspiration, and pointed an imperative forefinger in the direction of my typewriter.

\* \* \*

As indicated in the preceding dialogue, the term "romance" has a wide variety of meanings, extending from the philological classification of a family of European languages to the publisher's designation of a series of popular love stories. In the following essay, I shall endeavor to pick my way through this minefield of meaning, pointing out in passing the origins of the various connotations and denotations of the word. I shall begin with a historical survey extending roughly from the Dark Ages to the French Revolution, followed by an extended examination of the phenomenon of romantic love, the most familiar--and perhaps the

least understood--usage, first in terms of its twelfth-century origins and then in its development to the present day. Finally, I will discuss romance as a literary genre, one which is particularly relevant to modern fantasy and science fiction.

I

The source of the word "romance" is the French word roman, which originally designated the language spoken in that part of Europe known as Gaul, after it had ceased to be recognizably Late Latin and before it had transformed itself into recognizable Old (i.e., medieval) French. The root of the word is, of course, "Roman"--philologists designate as romance languages the tongues that descend from Latin, the speech of Rome: French, Italian, Spanish, Provençal, etc. There is not much surviving literature in roman, unless you count the Chanson de Roland, which is generally regarded as Old French. But just as the English did



not suddenly, in 1066, cease to speak Old English and start to speak Middle English, the term roman continued to be used to refer to the vernacular and, by a logical transition, to the sort of thing that was written in the vernacular--namely, fiction. Latin was still the medium of choice for serious intellectual or theological discussion, but for popular entertainment, whether at the courts of the mighty or at dusty, brawling country fairs, songs and stories had to be in the language that the people could understand. Thus was born the vernacular narrative fiction--the romance. (French being the conservative language that it is, the modern word for "novel" is still roman.)

What were these romances like? Milton, who as a young man was very fond of them, described them well in Il Penseroso: tales "Of turneys, and of trophies hung,/ Of forests, and enchantments drear,/ Where more is meant than meets the ear." For most of us, who are not literary scholars, medieval romance means just one thing--King Arthur; but the Matter of Britain, the Arthurian mythos, was just one of the four great Matters of the poets of the Middle Ages. There were also the Matter of France, the legends surrounding Charlemagne and his Twelve Peers, of whom the most notable was Roland; the Matter of Troy, based not on

Homer but on the legendary, pro-Trojan "histories" of Dares Phrygius and Dictys Cretensis, the finest example being Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde; and the Matter of Rome the Great, a catchall term for all romances based on classical stories other than that of Troy, such as Chaucer's Knight's Tale and the fantastic adventures attributed to Alexander the Great. There was a more localized, and usually less literary, Matter of England, including the tales of Guy of Warwick and Bevis of Hampton. These were generally aimed at a common rather than a courtly audience and it is often difficult to tell where narrative romance leaves off and popular ballads begin: the tales of Robin Hood are typical.

These stories were, as previously stated, in the vernacular; they were also in rhymed verse, another medieval invention. Classical poetry did not rhyme; in fact, an accidental rhyme was considered a flaw. Rhyme entered medieval Latin by way of the hymns of the Christian Church, and proved a useful mnemonic device in a largely illiterate society. The verse form most common in Middle English romances is the ten-syllable line with the rhyme scheme aabbcc, etc., also called open couplets. (In the closed couplets of Dryden and Pope, each pair of lines represented a complete thought; in the medieval couplet, the sense could continue indefinitely, as in the following example from the Prologue to The Canterbury Tales:

A Knyght ther was, and that a worthy man,  
That fro the tyme that he first bigan  
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,  
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.  
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,  
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)  
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,  
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.)

The French equivalent was the twelve-syllable line, also rhymed in open couplets, which is still called the alexandrine from its use in the Roman d'Alexandre.

These poems also had certain common themes and topics which came to be regarded as characteristically "romantic." First and foremost, of course, is love, which requires a separate and extensive discussion; here I will only mention that the love story is also a medieval invention. Passionate love--"romantic" love--was regarded in classical times as a form of mental illness; on the rare occasions when

it is depicted, as in the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus or the love of Dido for Aeneas, it is a fatally destructive aberration. For the medieval poet, it was a highly desirable experience and of endless psychological interest.

But just any old love affair would not do; even for an audience of common folk, the story had to be about the love of a knight for a lady--the bluer the lovers' blood, the better. Andreas Capellanus, a sort of medieval Dear Abby who wrote a semi-official rulebook called The Art of Courtly Love (De Arte Honeste Amandi), prescribed in detail how lover and beloved should proceed in their affair, as determined by their relative social standing. If a gentleman loved a lady of the higher nobility, he might have to wait years for a kiss; if he loved a peasant girl, Andreas advised rape, which shows how far our modern notions of "chivalrous" behavior have come from the realities of the Age of Chivalry.

The means by which the knight of fiction obtained his lady's favor was an exploit of chivalric heroism, generally the achievement of a quest. The quest is the theme of the greatest of medieval romances, the Grail cycle, and is the usual theme of modern fantasy, the direct descendant of that form, as exemplified by The Lord of the Rings and Lloyd Alexander's Prydain cycle. Two elements of the quest-story are particularly relevant. One is its form, which was frequently not a straightforward account of the hero's adventures but rather an interweaving of several narrative lines, such as the hero's exploits, the experiences of the lady, and perhaps a subsidiary adventure of a helping character, or an account of events in a story that frames the actual quest itself. This last often occurs when the knight originally sets off to perform some mission for King Arthur, on the successful fulfillment of which important matters at court may depend. This entrelacement is a conspicuous feature of The Lord of the Rings.

The second important trait is the presence of the marvelous. This may take many forms: the black magic of a wicked enchanter who must be defeated by the hero, sometimes with the help of the white magic of a good wizard like Merlin or a well-disposed inhabitant of Faerie; the miraculous intervention of God, as in the Grail legends; and sometimes the presence of a mysteriously magical fountain or forest, whose enchantment is neither good nor evil but merely part of its nature. Magical swords, rings, and beasts belong in this category.

Thus, by the end of the Middle Ages, romance meant a vernacular narrative in verse, dealing with the heroic adventures of a knight endeavoring to win his lady-love, and usually involving magic. All these are exemplified in the last great medieval romance (which was actually written in the Renaissance), Spenser's Faerie Queene. But even before he had finished, Spenser's friends among the Renaissance humanists were chiding him for wasting his time on an obsolete genre. Under the influence of the New Learning--the recovering of classical texts, including Aristotle's Poetics--and of voyages of discovery, the dominant form became the national epic, which dealt with real historical events in a form modeled more or less on Homer. Romances were still written, often in prose now, but they were no longer in the literary mainstream: their writers were literary hacks, who told preposterous stories badly. From the heights of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and the Queste del Saint Graal, romance had fallen to the level of junk food of the mind--the kind of stuff that turned the brain of poor old Don Quixote.

A victim of the vicissitudes of literary fashion, romance disappeared from the literary scene for the next two centuries. Occasionally a poet would write something romantic, but the form had fallen into such obscurity that he himself would be unaware of it; thus we have the "romantic period" of Alexander Pope, which lasted, according to one of my professors, for about two weeks. Milton's youthful romantic period lasted rather longer, and he even contemplated writing an epic about King Arthur; but he decided that the subject was unworthy of a high and serious endeavor and wrote Paradise Lost instead. It was not until the latter part of the eighteenth century that romance was resurrected--only to suffer yet further sea-changes in meaning.

Literary historians frequently date the Romantic Age, for convenience, from 1798--the year of publication of the second edition of Wordsworth and Coleridge's Lyrical Ballads, containing their literary manifesto. This overlooks two important points: (1) hardly anyone actually read the book; and (2) the popularity of the romantic was sparked rather earlier by the poems and novels of Walter Scott, perhaps the first poet to become rich and famous while yet alive. These new poets, like their successors Byron, Shelley, and Keats, were in revolt against what they saw as the aridity of the neo-classical poetry of the Augustan Age, with its rigid verse form, the heroic couplet,

and its insistence that poetry should deal only with the general, the universally true--which in practice all too frequently meant the trite. In their search for other literary mentors, they rediscovered Chaucer, Spenser, and Malory. It was because of their revival of these exemplars of medieval romance that they themselves were termed the Romantic poets. Scott, of course, set many of his poems and novels in the Middle Ages. Coleridge's Christabel is an imitation of medieval romance, with particular emphasis on the supernatural. Even Wordsworth produced a turgid romance about the Pilgrimage of Grace, a Catholic uprising in the North of England during the reign of Henry VIII: The White Doe of Rylstone, which is read today only under protest by graduate students of English literature.

But the so-called Romantics were interested in many subjects besides medieval romance. And, just as their interest in medieval poetry had brought them the designation "Romantic," these other topics, from being associated with these poets, also were termed "romantic."

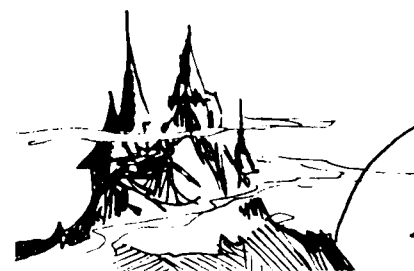
First may be mentioned the primitive. The polished Augustan poets regarded their medieval predecessors as rude and simple, so that an interest in them was by definition an interest in the primitive. This was a value judgement, and false at that; but the Romantics were indeed interested in primitive popular literature, such as the ancient ballads, many of which were collected and published by Scott. Such an interest went along with these poets' revolutionary definition of Nature, which to the neo-classicists had meant the general rather than the particular. They wrote of universal truths and did not seek to number the streaks on the pied gillyflower. For the Romantics, Nature meant the individual, the particular, the concrete. They were the first poets to be seriously interested in real landscapes, to describe their personal sensations at the sight of Mont Blanc or the pounding waves of the Atlantic rather than to be conventionally awed by "lofty heights" or "mighty deeps." In rebelling against the correct in art, they rediscovered the sublime.

They were concerned with the primitive and the particular in human nature, too. Wordsworth wrote of ordinary country folk, shepherds, children, vagrants, and others who had been considered too "low" to be fitting subjects of poetry; he even wrote a poem about an idiot boy, upon which the verdict of history has been that he should have quit while he was ahead. And they explored the thoughts and feelings of the

individual. Where Pope wrote an Essay on Man, the Romantics wrote of men--and particularly of those most interesting men, themselves.

We seldom recognize what a real revolution in literary consciousness this is. Poets had not been in the habit of appearing in person in their poems. The poetic voice they adopted was that of the rational man, celebrating the standards of classicism or criticizing deviations from them, or else a conventional literary persona adopted for the duration of the poem--the lover, the mourner, the patriot. Originality had been regarded as a fault, like rhyme in classical poetry, so that even poets who were being original felt obligated to disguise the fact--for instance Chaucer, who pretended that Troilus and Criseyde was a translation from a non-existent Lollius. Even the passionate sonnets of Sidney and Shakespeare, which ring with such sincerity that they must reflect personal experience, presented themselves to their audience as art, not autobiography. But Wordsworth's longest poem, The Prelude, is in fact an autobiography, and the "Byronic hero" of that nobleman's poems is really a fancy portrait of Byron himself. Prior to the Romantic era, poets believed that what they had to say was of interest only insofar as it reflected the common experience of man; the Romantic poets were convinced that their most personal and particular experiences were the most important things they could talk about.

There was an inherent contradiction here: while they regarded the ordinary man as a proper subject of poetry, they regarded their own feelings and ideas as of interest because they saw themselves as extraordinary. Poetry has from its very beginnings made the conventional claim that it is divinely inspired, something more than merely human prose. Thus the Muses were invented. Milton, writing a Biblical epic designed to justify the ways of God to man, believed that God had inspired him. Such conventional claims also appear in the works of the Romantics, but it would seem



that they really felt that the glory was their own--that they were somehow not as other men. They believed that they saw more clearly and felt more deeply than those who were not poets. From this mind-set emerged a new concept of the heroic: not the conventional great man performing a great action, whose behavior was subject to the laws of poetic justice, but the unique and extraordinary individual, striving to fulfill his personal aspirations--beyond good and evil, and sublime. Here art was very much influenced by history, in the person of Napoleon, whose greatness was admired by the poets even when they condemned him as the enemy of England. They were passionate admirers of political freedom, which thus also became "romantic": Wordsworth ardently supported the French Revolution until it turned into the Reign of Terror, and Byron died fighting for Greek independence from the Turks.

Oddly enough, the love element of the medieval romances did not have very much influence on the Romantics. They wrote of love, of course--were there ever poets who did not?--but their attitude is more or less summed up by the oft-quoted epigram of Byron: "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart; 'Tis woman's whole existence"--almost an exact reversal of the medieval view, in which courtly love was well-nigh the whole existence of everyone who mattered. Keats' *Eve of Saint Agnes* is an imitation of a medieval love-romance, but the poet's attention seems to be on everything but the lovers' feelings.

The supernatural element had more appeal for them, sometimes as a tale of the marvelous, like Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and sometimes in the form of "Gothick" horror, inspired in part by German ballads such as "The Erl King." The Gothick was everywhere, as part of the reaction against classical rationalism--in architecture, in landscaping, in the novel. One very popular work of fiction of the time was *Vathek*, an exotic oriental fantasy involving demons by William Beckford, who built Fonthill Abbey, one of the most famous of Gothick residences, with the proceeds.

The exotic was another interest of the Romantics, perhaps deriving in part from the enchanted realms of medieval romance. Coleridge and the later poets all used exotic, faraway settings, Byron in particular. His first literary sensation, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, described his own wanderings to some of the remoter corners of Europe and the Mediterranean world as well as his visits to the more popular stops on

the Grand Tour. It is only in comparatively recent times that foreign travel for pleasure has been available to the ordinary citizen; prior to the age of the package tour, tales of travel in distant lands were surrounded by a shimmering halo of romance. Thus Richard Halliburton, writing in the early twentieth century, called his account of his travels in Asia *The Royal Road to Romance*. (Halliburton, who has been accused of terminological inexactitude, strove to live up to the ideal of the romantic hero: he once wanted to swim through the Panama Canal, and asked that the locks be opened and closed for him as for a ship. When asked how he proposed to pay for this, he replied that he would pay the same way that ships did--by tonnage.)

A final topic that became "romantic" because it interested the Romantic poets is speculative philosophy, especially that of the German metaphysicists like Kant and Fichte. Coleridge was the only English poet who seriously delved into the subject, but Goethe's *Faust* was profoundly influenced. Their contemporary, the German author Novalis, was greatly admired, and imitated, by George MacDonald, who in turn inspired C.S. Lewis.

At this point we seem to have rung all the possible changes on the term "romantic." There are other kinds of literature, such as science fiction, and life styles, such as the hippie movement, to which the term will be applied, but these are extensions of the definitions of earlier ages rather than the emergence of really new ones. The major innovations of later ages are to be seen in the changing concept of romantic love, which is my next topic.

## II

Romantic love was the biggest thing to hit Europe since Christianity, to which it proved a formidable rival. It originated in southern France in the twelfth century and swept across Europe, permanently altering not only literature but even the psychology of Western man. I cannot hope to deal with it adequately here; for those who desire a more thorough knowledge of the subject, I recommend my own principal sources: C.S. Lewis's *The Allegory of Love*, which deals with courtly love in literature; and Denis de Rougemont's *Love in the Western World* (*L'Amour et l'Occident*), which deals with its influence on history, psychology, and ideas as well. Both authors write from the point of view of committed Christians, which affects their attitude, since courtly love was in fact a heretical

doctrine. One must especially beware of de Rougemont, who tends to make sweeping categorical judgements: I think it is rather excessive to blame World War I on courtly love, though that conflict did indeed seem romantic to its contemporaries--until reality caught up with them.

In considering love as a literary phenomenon, we find ourselves on relatively safe ground; the poems, after all, do exist. Insofar as it was a theology, it is obscure. Since the doctrine was an esoteric secret, its adherents rarely wrote down their beliefs and usually destroyed any manuscripts as soon as possible. Furthermore, it was extirpated by a full-scale crusade which wiped out not only the works of the Albigensians but the Albigensians themselves. The literary history is fairly straightforward: In the twelfth century the court poets of the southern part of France, whose language was not French but its cognate Provençal, introduced a new theme and many new forms into vernacular poetry. These *troubadours*, many of whom were themselves great nobles, generally wrote lyric poetry, for which they invented new and highly complex metrical schemes, such as the *sestina*, the *villanelle*, the *rondel*, and the *sonnet*, to mention only the forms that still survive. The sonnet, in fact, became the dominant form of European lyric verse. These poems spoke of the utter and abject devotion of a lover to a lady, sometimes addressed as *mi dons* ("my lord"), apparently as a serious parody of the concept of feudal allegiance. The lady was invariably unobtainable and usually cold or indifferent to her lover; nevertheless his passion was the dominant force in his life, to end only with his death. (A possible historical basis for this is the theory that the troubadours usually had as audience noble ladies whose menfolk were away on a Crusade; they were therefore available as love objects--and no doubt prepared to reward handsomely a minstrel who so depicted them--but they could not, in reality, be won. If such a lady did indeed grant her lover the favor he craved, she was threatened with severe punishment by both feudal law and the strictures of the Church.)

Raised in this literary atmosphere was Eleanor of Aquitaine, one of the most fascinating and influential women in history. She was the richest heiress in Europe and the product of one of its most civilized courts, and beautiful and clever as well. She married first King Louis VII of France and then King Henry II of England; two of her sons, Richard the Lion-Hearted and John (the less than leonine signer



of Magna Carta), became in their turn kings of England. Before Eleanor came north, both England and France were bastions of feudal boorishness, where uncouthness was practically a cardinal virtue and noblemen boasted of their illiteracy. Eleanor created courts, and the lords and ladies learned how to be courtiers. She brought troubadours in her train, and the northern poets (*trouvères*) learned from them to write of courtly love, though not in the same modes. The French and English poets wrote narrative verse, blending the legends of the heroic past with the themes and values of courtly love to create the medieval romances.

Romantic love is called courtly love because it existed for those who dwelt in courts--it was the avocation of what passed for the leisure class in that day. It became fashionable to have a court poet to entertain at banquets and great ceremonial occasions with his latest composition: the most famous of Arthurian poets, Chrestien de Troyes, had as his patron Eleanor's daughter Marie, Comtesse de Champagne. Great ladies would even hold formal Courts of Love where the tenets of *l'amour courtoise* were debated and judgement solemnly pronounced.

We have encountered one of these tenets already: total commitment to love on the lover's part. Another was that courtly love was invariably adulterous--the beloved had to be married to someone else. As we have seen, this may reflect an actual historical circumstance; or it may embody the requirement of convention

that the lover could not hope to gain the object of his desire. Or, as we shall consider later, it may be based on a heretical religious doctrine. One Court of Love delivered the formal opinion that true courtly love was impossible between man and wife, because the essence of such love was that it had to be freely given, and love between man and wife was commanded by the Church. The Court was considering the case of a lover who had finally managed to marry the lady he had loved par amours, only to find himself disqualified on a technicality, so to speak.

As a logical outcome of its inherent adulterousness, courtly love was also required to be secret. Stolen kisses were the sweetest, and lover and lady must never betray in public their feelings for one another. The lover could of course express himself in poetry, but the identity of the lady must be disguised by an appellation such as *mi dons* or by a pseudonym. There may have been another reason for such secrecy: the fear of being persecuted by the Christian Church for heresy. This aspect of courtly love is discussed in depth by de Rougement, and I shall try to summarize briefly his theories.

What was this heresy? Where did it come from, and why did it suddenly appear at this time and place? There are no absolutely certain answers, but some speculations have a high probability. The form taken by the Albigensian heresy was dualism--the very ancient belief that the world was created by two equal and opposite powers, a god of light and goodness and a god of darkness and evil. As Manichaeism, it was widespread in the post-classical world; St. Augustine himself was a Manichee until converted to Christianity. As Gnosticism, it is one of the oldest and most persistent of Christian heresies. (In speaking of the Albigenses, it is perhaps loading the dice to use the term "heresy": they considered themselves adherents not of a deviant form of Christianity but of a different religion altogether. But they were the losers, and the choice of terminology is part of the victor's spoils.) The dualistic concept of human nature is that of a radical antagonism between body and soul. The soul, a creation of the power of light, is trapped in the gross material body which is a creature of darkness; it constantly strives to escape from the physical world into the realm of the transcendent Spirit, where it will be absorbed into the divine force. This escape, which in the physical world takes the form of death, is in spiritual terms the

achievement of life eternal.

The seeds of the heresy were thus present in Christianity in its beginning; in fact, Christianity at its most ascetic has at times been indistinguishable from Manichaeism, although the orthodox Christian doctrine is that both body and soul are good, both being creations of the One God. Another possible source suggested by de Rougement, but not as widely accepted, is the ancient religion of the pagan Celtic peoples, which was also dualistic in nature. This theory lacks supportive evidence, but it is true that these beliefs were most widespread in the parts of Europe settled by Celtic peoples.

The most likely cause of the emergence of the Catharism, as the faith of the Albigenses was called (from a Greek word meaning "pure"), at this particular time and place was the influence of Arab mysticism, emanating from Persia and other parts of the Near East. Islam, a fundamentally more ascetic religion than Christianity, was a fruitful soil in which such doctrines could flourish. Some of these ideas reached Europe by way of the Balkans, but the principal source was the Mediterranean Arab world--the Moorish kingdoms of North Africa and Spain. And the natural geographical route for them to follow led straight to southern France. (Spain itself might seem even more logical; but the Spaniards, engaged in constant warfare against the Islamic invaders, were not very receptive to their enemies' beliefs. And Spain has always been the home of a stern and militant commitment to Catholic orthodoxy. The lords of fair Provence were at once on easier terms with their infidel neighbors and more Laodicean in their own beliefs; paganism had persisted there long after much of the rest of Europe had been Christianized.)

Whatever the source of its doctrines, Catharism flourished, so that by the late twelfth century it was to all intents and purposes the established church of Provence. The dismayed defenders of the Catholic Church painted the Cathars as monsters of wickedness, but they were in principle, if not always in fact, profoundly ascetic--a natural result of their rejection and condemnation of the body. While the Church shuddered at the sight of a successful rival, the lords of Spain and northern France cast envious eyes on the wealth and luxury of the South. The inevitable consequence was open war. In 1208 Pope Innocent III proclaimed the Albigensian Crusade. Provence was sacked and reduced to an appanage of the French crown. Most of its people were

exterminated; and in order to keep the survivors in line, the Inquisition was invented. Catharism, as a church, ceased to exist; but the literature that it spawned proved immortal.

What was the connection between this ascetic, dualistic religion and the passionate poetry of the troubadours? The doctrine of courtly love expressed by the poets is believed to be a disguised, encoded rendering of the beliefs of the Cathars. Thus the unattainable lady symbolizes the divine; the fact that the lover could never enjoy her represented the impossibility of achieving in this life the mystical union between soul and Supreme Spirit. The total commitment to Love was to be interpreted allegorically as the devotion of the Cathar to the ascetic disciplines of his faith. Passionate love, regarded heretofore



as a form of mental illness, became the symbol of the soul's thirst for the transcendent and thus the supreme preoccupation of man in this world.

It is not necessary to suppose that every poet who wrote a romance or a love song was a devout Cathar. While the greatest troubadours, some of whom were also the greatest lords of the area, were indeed of that faith, the lesser minstrels who sang the songs in the courts of Provence, and later in those of France and England, may not have been aware of the doctrine concealed beneath the surface. Love songs and chivalric romances were popular, so they provided them; they were professional entertainers, not missionaries. Even stripped of its heretical significance, courtly love was regarded as a threat by Church and society alike. With all

this propaganda about adultery in the air, it was inevitable that it was going to be put into practice; and this was a danger to feudal order, which rested on the orderly inheritance of property by legitimate descendants and regarded marriage as a politically useful institution. The challenge to the Church was even more basic: not only was adultery a mortal sin, but passionate devotion of this sort was properly directed only to God Himself, not to a merely human love. To add insult to injury, the adherents devised a Church of Love which was a precise and blasphemous parody of the institutions of the Catholic Church, with its own theology, sacraments, and saints. This is in itself strong evidence of unfamiliarity with Catharist doctrine, which stressed secrecy and concealment of its tenets from the uninitiated.

It is time to examine in depth the actual depiction of this sort of love in the romances, and to try to understand it in psychological rather than theological terms. I will follow de Rougemont in taking as my exemplar the story of Tristan and Iseult, the supreme literary manifestation of romantic love and one of the most enduringly popular.

The first characteristic that we notice is that the love affair follows a pattern of frustration: any time the lovers do manage to get together, they must be separated again within a few pages--or there would be no story. "And then they got married and lived happily ever after" can be followed only by "THE END." In order to keep his narrative going, the poet must keep on devising one obstacle after another to the lovers' union. In the Tristan story, the principal obstacle is of course Iseult's husband, King Mark; and this development illustrates the principle perfectly. In the first part of the story, Tristan receives a poisoned wound in a fight with an Irish champion. Since no one at home can cure him, he goes in disguise to Ireland, where he is healed by the Irish princess Iseult and her mother. When his real identity is revealed, he is forced to flee for his life. Thus the first encounter cannot result in union because of the enmity between Ireland and Cornwall.

Later, King Mark falls in love with Iseult, having heard descriptions of her fabulous beauty, and vows that he will wed no other. He sends Tristan, his nephew whom he has brought up, to win her. Tristan slays a dragon that is devastating Ireland and is rewarded with the hand of the princess. But they cannot marry: Tristan has a duty to

bring her to his uncle--another arbitrary obstacle. So far, Tristan and Iseult have had two chances to fall in love with at least the possibility of marriage, but they are as yet indifferent to one another.

Before they set sail, Queen Iseult entrusts to her daughter's handmaiden a magical potion to be drunk by Iseult and Mark on their wedding night in order to ensure lasting love. In the course of the voyage, Iseult and Tristan drink the potion by mistake and fall madly in love with each other, thus becoming romantic lovers only at the point in the story where the obstacles to their union have become insuperable. The rest of the story is a series of clandestine meetings, separations, flights from the jealous Mark and reconciliations with him--one barrier after another. The greatest barrier--since Mark is easily gulled--is also arbitrary and created by Tristan himself: his marriage to Iseult of the White Hands. The conclusion of the story is well known, if only from Wagner's magnificent music; the dying Tristan sends for Iseult to heal him once again; his jealous wife tells him that the returning ship has black sails, indicating that Iseult of Ireland has refused to come; Iseult does come, only to fall dead upon the corpse of Tristan.

One earlier episode is particularly illustrative of the principle that frustration is essential to romantic love and must be induced whatever the threat to plausibility. It occurs at a time when the lovers have fled from Mark once again and are living together in the forest. Mark, out hunting, comes upon them sleeping in a glade. They are lying side by side, with Tristan's naked sword between them. Impressed by this proof that their love is really chaste, he promptly forgives them. There is no logical reason for the naked sword; it is simply one more proof that if obstacles do not exist, the romantic lover has to invent them. (In the version of Thomas, a later and rather cynical poet, the lovers are indeed adulterers and the sword is only there by chance.)

The point of all this frustration is that the story is not really about lovers: it is about love. Paradoxically, in view of the fact that it is inevitably blocked from fulfillment, this love is seen as absolutely irresistible, overwhelming all other desires, commitments, and moral values. Once one has fallen into romantic love, nothing else matters. Queen Iseult's magic potion is an appropriate symbol; the lovers do not choose to

love, they rather fall victim to the passion, which is conceived of as something external to them--a force of nature rather than a psychological manifestation. This supreme striving, never to be fulfilled in this life, can easily be seen as symbolizing the Catharist belief in the trapped soul's thirst to escape from the material world into the realm of pure spirit.

This notion of love as a thing in itself is also manifested in the psychology of the romantic lover. During one of their forest idylls, Tristan and Iseult encounter a hermit who attempts to reform them. Each of them in turn has long discussions with the holy man, explaining and justifying their passion. Tristan's conversation reveals that he is not really interested in Iseult, the person; he is interested in his own feelings about Iseult. Romantic love gazes in fascination not upon the face of the beloved, but upon its own face reflected in a mirror. The psychological element in romance consists of a continuing anatomization by the lover of his own sensations, like a fever victim who is constantly taking his own pulse and temperature. Tristan and Iseult repeatedly declare that they have not chosen this passion, that it is ruining their lives--and that they wouldn't give it up for anything. The romances depict love on the one hand as an irresistible primal force, and on the other as a series of exquisite emotions--but not as a real relationship between two persons.

This too may be a result of Catharist influence. If the secret identity of romantic love is the desire to escape completely from this world, then it is a concealed death wish. Not marriage but extinction is its ultimate goal. (One of the more curious practices of the Cathars was the custom of suicide, preferably by starvation--the absolute rejection of the material world.) By its very nature, Tristan's passion cannot be slaked by the possession of Iseult, because it is not really a passion for Iseult: it is a thirst for the transcendent. It should be pointed out here that Catharism conceived of the soul's union with the divine as analogous to the absorption of a drop of water into the ocean; it was the extinction of individuality. In the teachings of Christianity, however, the soul never loses its identity, and God and man are ultimately joined not by a merging of essence but by the mutual love of person and Person. "Real life is meeting."

Such was the nature of romantic love in the twelfth century. Some of its



elements are still present in what we today call romantic literature; others have perished. My next topic is the changes that have occurred during the past eight centuries in the concept of romantic love.

### III

Romantic love has remained an enduringly popular literary theme from the days of Eleanor of Aquitaine to the age of Barbara Cartland; but these two ladies would by no means agree on the meaning of the term. What in the world has happened?

Christianity, for one thing. The cult of romantic love was so extraordinarily attractive that the Church could not hope to suppress it entirely, so it did the next best thing: it co-opted it. The taming of this wild passion began in the very century of its origin, with Bernard of Clairvaux, the great Cistercian abbot and saint. With his Christian belief that such extreme devotion should properly be directed only toward God, he saw that with very little alteration, the conventions of courtly love could be adapted to express adoration of the true God, Who is also Love. Bernard wrote poems and meditations in which Christ is depicted as a knight, jousting with the Devil in order to win His beloved, the human soul. This image became popular; there is a typical poem in Middle English called "Christ's Love-Awnter"

(awnter = adventure). Its subject is the Crucifixion. Bernard was also a major figure in the rise of the cult of the Virgin Mary, which became so intense that its critics referred to it as Mariolatry. Mary was addressed in devotional poems in exactly the same terms used by the courtly lover. It is often impossible to determine from internal evidence whether a medieval love poem is actually addressed to a lady or to Our Lady.

Once it had achieved respectability through conversion, romantic love was tolerated even in its purely human manifestations. But its code of values was greatly altered. Adultery was of course out, as was its concomitant secrecy. Nor could the world be well lost for love any longer; rather, love was seen as an inspiration to do one's duty, as defined by the Church and feudal society, in order to earn the hand and heart of the beloved.

This is a fundamental reversal. The original romantic passion, as we have seen, could not be satisfied in life; its happy ending was in fact death. The histories of such romantic lovers are invariably tragic: Tristan and Iseult, Launcelot and Guinevere, Abelard and Heloise, Romeo and Juliet --and, in the only attempt I know of offhand to portray such a passion against the backdrop of geopolitical reality, Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. But now marriage, fulfillment in this life, replaced the tragic ending, with the lovers living happily ever after rather than dying in each other's arms. Chrestien de Troyes attempted such a synthesis in his poem Erec et Enide, but he was a little ahead of his time. More successful were the very popular Aucassin et Nicolette and Spenser's Faerie Queene.

Thus "romantic love" now came to mean what it means today: still a masterful passion, still endlessly fascinated with its own sensations, but no longer defiant of social conventions and very much at home in this world. Indeed, any love story can now be described as "romantic" --even Robin McKinley's Beauty, which inspired this discussion, though it is a retelling of the fairy tale of Beauty and the Beast and not about passionate love at all. It is, however, a tale of love and courage, rich in enchantments, and thus has strong affinities with the medieval form of romance.

The notion of a love thwarted by obstacles but powerful enough to overcome everything in its path appears today as the Cinderella theme, where the barriers are false social distinctions about birth and breeding and wealth, which are

swept away by true love. This is not the self-absorbed passion of medieval romance but a true recognition of soulmates. The Prince loves Cinderella because she is herself worthy of his love, and hence deserves to share his royalty. Love does not so much confer value on its object as recognize the value that is already there. Where the obstacles of medieval romance are required in order to permit romantic love to exist, the barriers in the Cinderella story are present only to be overcome. The most famous of modern exemplars of this theme comes not from fiction but from real life: the love of King Edward VIII of England for an American commoner, Mrs. Simpson, for whom he gave up his throne--an event that H.L. Mencken called "the greatest news story since the Resurrection." It is not a perfect happy ending--Cinderella is supposed to join the Prince on his throne, rather than his having to step down to meet her--but love did indeed win the day. (Whether the ever-after of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor was indeed happy is debatable; but then, real life is like that. Those who are as fascinated as I am by their efforts to live by the rules of romantic love are urged to read *The Windsor Story* by J. Bryan III and Charles J.V. Murphy, a warts-and-all portrait of the Windsors now available in paperback.)

Perhaps the most influential purveyor of the idea of romantic love in our century has been the Hollywood film, with the pulpier forms of popular fiction running a close second. The all-time champion among romantic films is generally conceded to be *GONE WITH THE WIND*, which ranks with the Tristan legend in providing obstacles to true love. Rhett and Scarlett are separated by everything from Rhett's social unacceptability to the War Between the States. But it is difficult to see how the film could show true love surmounting these barriers, since the hero and heroine are not in fact in love with each other. Rhett's feelings for Scarlett seem to be a combination of lust and tolerant amusement, and she is for most of the story passionately in love with Ashley Wilkes, the husband of her cousin Melanie. When Melanie dies, Ashley turns to Scarlett, who now realizes that it is Rhett she really loves. She rushes home to declare herself, only to find Rhett on the point of departure. He raises the final barrier with the most famous exit line in all fiction.

Frankly, my dear readers, I don't give a damn about *GONE WITH THE WIND*. I found both the novel and the movie entertaining, but far from fascinating; and neither Rhett

Butler nor Clark Gable has ever made my pulse beat faster. So I have difficulty comprehending why this is the great love story of the age. It offers neither the happy-ever-after fulfillment of the conventional love story of our day nor the ecstatic immolation of the medieval type. I feel more at home discussing popular fiction, which I shall now proceed to do.

Judging by success, the principal purveyors of romantic love today are the English novelist Barbara Cartland and the Canadian publishers of Harlequin Romances. Cartland has written some 300 novels--at the rate of two a month--which is not as much of a feat as it sounds, since all of them are exactly alike. Though the settings range from Elizabethan England to the present, all the books feature a young, pure, and innocent heroine whose beauty attracts the (generally lecherous) attention of a rich, handsome, titled rake, who then finds that he is hopelessly in love and that his intentions are honorable after all. The requisite obstacles are usually provided by one or both of the following: the hero's sexy but malevolent mistress, who schemes against her rival; and the Wicked Seducer, who lusts after the heroine and plans for her a fate worse than death. Barbara Cartland is the world's most successful romantic novelist; she is also possibly the world's worst writer. However dubious her art may be, one is forced to admit that life does imitate it: Cartland is the step-grandmother of Lady Diana Spencer, the young, beautiful, and innocent bride of the Prince of Wales. Imagine how history might have been altered if only Dame Barbara had been called in as a consultant by Wallis Warfield Simpson!

Harlequin Romances exhibit more variety, because they are by divers hands, but they too follow a consistent basic pattern. The typical Harlequin heroine is a young, inexperienced, and sexually unawakened girl (not a woman) who meets a rich, handsome, powerful, arrogant, domineering, and sexually magnetic older man. There is usually instant mutual antagonism, often caused by misunderstanding. (Five minutes' frank conversation between the principals would totally demolish the plots of 90% of these stories.) Despite her hostility, and his frequently brutal behavior towards her, she soon finds herself hopelessly in love. Her feelings are described in minute detail and are not unlike the symptoms of a mild bout of malarial fever. Sometimes at this point the two contract a marriage of convenience, with the

understanding that it will be a marriage in name only. The hero alternates between abusing the heroine and making passionate love to her; and just how far he gets provides a useful barometer of conventional sexual morality. Back in the fifties and sixties, he stopped short at burning kisses; but things loosened up considerably in the course of the last decade. We may follow his progress button by button through the seventies; in some recent novels it has gotten to the point where the poor girl is left without a stitch to cover her. Whether she is then Taken Advantage Of usually depends on whether or not they are already married; if not, the hero's better self triumphs at the last possible moment and he takes himself off to the nearest cold shower, leaving her to quiver her way to the end of the chapter. Very occasionally an unmarried couple do go all the way; but under no circumstances does the book end without them being firmly betrothed at the very least. In the majority of the books, after treating the heroine with cruelty and contempt throughout the course of the story, the hero suddenly reveals, usually about the third paragraph from the end, that he adores her and wants nothing more than to marry her and spend the rest of his life catering to her every whim. In this type of story the falling of the final barrier is symbolized by the mention of the magic word: marriage. The emphasis on frustration and the passionate preoccupation with one's own sensations, characteristic of medieval courtly love, have been revived; but the resolution is that of the modern, socially conforming love story.

Why are these stories so popular? What psychological needs of their audience do they gratify? With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to answer these questions in the case of medieval courtly love: it provided color, excitement, and vicarious emotional satisfaction for women who despite their high social position were in fact little more than pawns in the game of feudalism, who were often raised in convents and married off in their early teens to boorish and frequently brutal strangers for political and dynastic reasons. The poetry of courtly love reflected to the noble lady a far more attractive image, one in which her superiority was recognized, her favor craved, and her lightest wish regarded as having the force of a divine command. It is no wonder that the ladies of Provence and France sought to bring the world of romance into actuality with their Courts of Love. The men who lent themselves to this playacting were usually not the

great lords to whom these ladies were married but minstrels, younger sons, and others whose lack of wealth and lands deprived them of status by the feudal system of values. The art of poetry and the game of courtly love were for them alternative routes to prestige and satisfaction.

The appeal of modern romantic fiction seems to me to be based on very similar grounds. The audience aimed at by Barbara Cartland and the Harlequin authors is apparently composed of women whose social status is at best middle or lower-middle class and who are seldom educated beyond high school. Such a woman may have spent her entire life in subservience to dominant males: first her father, then her employer in what is at best a semi-skilled job, and finally to a husband who expects to be loved, honored, and obeyed--especially the last. She is not likely to marry above herself, which means that even if she is happily married, her life will contain more hard work and fewer luxuries than the affluent lifestyle she sees depicted in films and television. Romantic fiction offers her a double benefit. By identifying with the heroine, she can enjoy vicariously a life of luxury in exotic locales (Harlequin) or in the highest aristocratic circles (Cartland). And the wounds inflicted on her psyche by life in a male-dominated world are salved by the spectacle of an arrogant, dominant, and even brutal male in thrall to a heroine who is usually not unlike herself in status.

When feminists attack this sort of fiction as dangerous, they are often derided; what harm, after all, can an innocent love story do? The answer is that it can mould the expectations of an inexperienced young woman so that she dreams of such a man as a mate, only to find when she gets him that the dominance, and often the brutality, are real, all right, but that the subjugating power of True Love is imaginary. Anyone who doubts that this happens has only to read the accounts of battered wives explaining why they remained with their abusive spouses.

Feminists and other critics of romantic fiction are prone to the error of lumping it all together--particularly, of failing to distinguish between the novels of Barbara Cartland and those of Georgette Heyer, which may permit this sort of vicarious emotional gratification but are in fact intended to provide a very different and more sophisticated pleasure. Heyer's stories are social comedies performed in the context of a fully realized literary subcreation, the

world of Regency England. Their plotting is deft and their characterizations plausible, but the main source of delight is the opportunity to experience a fictional world which is nearly as vivid as contemporary reality itself. This effect is possible because of Heyer's exhaustive and detailed knowledge of that world, based on a lifetime of research. The pleasures afforded to her readers are not those of vicarious passion detailed down to the last swoon but the delights of inside knowledge of which of the patronesses of exclusive Almack's is likely to prove the most obliging in the matter of vouchers for a debutante, when it is permissible to waltz in public, and how to fend off the advances of an amorous Prince Regent if one is unlucky enough to find oneself alone with him in the conservatory at Carlton House. In the novels of Barbara Cartland, on the other hand, the fictive background is rudimentary; and plausibility and even common sense are ruthlessly sacrificed so that the reader may wallow in the exquisite sufferings of romantic love. Germaine Greer, in The Female Eunuch, put Cartland and Heyer in the same category by choosing to analyze the one Heyer novel that does in fact have a ruthless and domineering hero, Regency Buck. But one has only to compare it with any Cartland novel to see that the authors are in reality worlds apart. More typically, Heyer's heroes are attractive because they possess more humor and more intelligence than other men, and they are attracted to the heroines by their possession of similar qualities. Both hero and heroine are also distinguished by more profound interests than the amusements of fashionable society. Even the most frivolous of Heyer heroes is at least a responsible landlord to the tenants of his estate and frequently keeps a paternal eye on a younger sibling or cousin. In society, he is a member of the Corinthians, who were interested in boxing and other athletic pursuits, rather than the dandy-set. His insouciant manner may conceal a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars or an astute advisor consulted by the leaders of government. The heroine is a girl or young woman capable of appreciating these virtues in a prospective husband and not dazzled by the superficial attractions of wealth and rank; she also possess a sense of responsibility. (In Arabella, the blasé hero, bored to extinction by the attentions of pursuing debutantes, begins to be seriously attracted to the heroine when he comes upon her defending a chimney sweep's climbing boy from his brutal

master. In Frederica, the heroine is so busy trying to make a good match for her beautiful younger sister that she does not realize that she is in love with the hero until he points it out to her.) And Heyer never forgets that she is writing comedy. It is difficult to live vicariously emotional lives through her characters at the same time as we are laughing at the scrapes they have gotten themselves into.

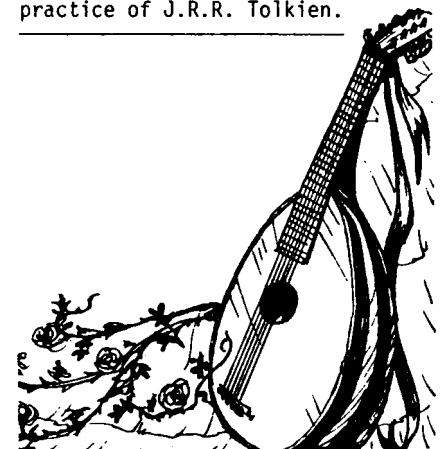
I conclude my examination of the evolution of the concept of romantic love with a glance at a very curious recent development. Last year Dr. Nathaniel Branden, a fairly well known psychologist and former disciple of Ayn Rand, appeared on the television talk show DONAHUE to discuss his new book, The Psychology of Romantic Love. In explaining his views to the audience, he made the following statements:

If you don't know who the person is, it's ridiculous to say you love him.

Of course there are conflicts . . . . The idea that you just move from ecstasy to ecstasy is absurd.

Here we find, presented as defining characteristics of romantic love, qualities that are the very antithesis of that love in its original form. It is increasingly obvious that the term has undergone such radical transformations that we can no longer assume that it has an essential meaning on which we may agree. "Romantic," once a term of precise significance, is well on its way to becoming a trite and empty value-word like "nice."

So much for romantic love. What of the other aspects of romance--the marvelous, the exotic, and the rest? And what of romance as a literary type? Does it still exist in prose forms such as science fiction and fantasy? In the concluding portion of this essay [NIEKAS 29], I will attempt to answer these questions, drawing upon the critical theories of Northrop Frye and the literary practice of J.R.R. Tolkien.





another passion

## by Philip K. Dick

ALL the people who read my recent novel Valis know that I have an alter ego named Horselover Fat who experiences divine revelations (or so he thinks; they could be merely hallucinations, as Fat's friends believe). Valis ends with Fat searching the world for the new savior who, he has been told by a mysterious voice, is about to be born. Well, Fat has had another vision, the one he was waiting for. He got me to write this as a way of telling the world--the readership of NIEKAS, more precisely--about it. Poor Fat! His madness is complete, now, for he supposes that in his vision he actually saw the new savior.

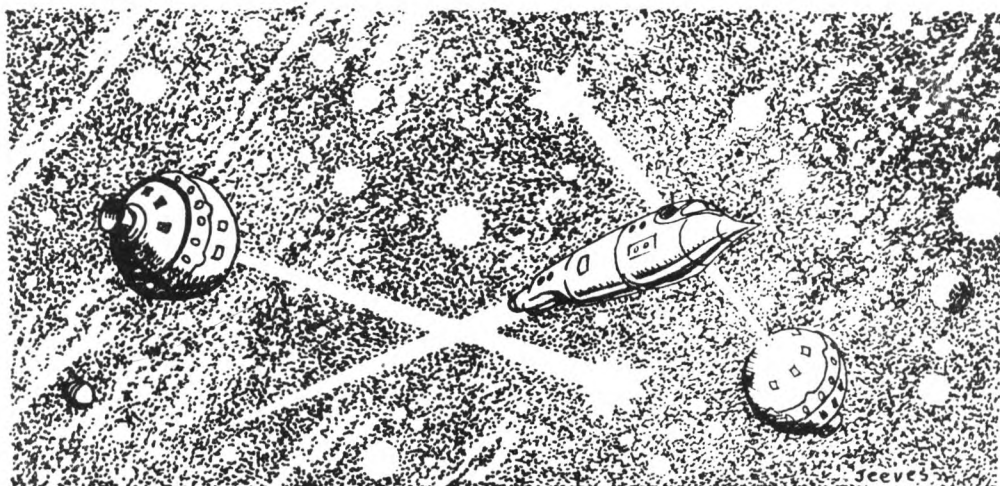
I asked Fat if he was sure he wanted to talk about this, since he would only be proving the pathology of his condition. He replied, "No, Phil; they'll think it's you." Damn you, Fat, for putting me in this double-bind. Okay; your vision, if true, is overwhelmingly important; if spurious, well, what the hell. I will say about it that it has a curiously practical ring; it does not deal with another world but this world, and extreme is its message--extreme in the sense that if true we are faced with a grave and urgent situation. So let 'er rip, Fat.

The new savior was born in--or now lives in--Ceylon (Sri Lanka). He is darkskinned and either a Buddhist or Hindu. He works in the rural countryside with an organization or institute practicing high-technology veterinarian medicine, mainly with large animals such as cattle (most of the staff are white). His name is Tagore something; Fat could not catch his last name: it is very long. Although Tagore is the second reincarnation of Christ he is taken to be Lord Krishna by the local population. Tagore is burned and crippled; he cannot walk but must be

carried. As near as Fat could make out, Tagore is dying, but he is dying voluntarily: Tagore has taken upon himself mankind's sins against the ecosphere. Most of all it is the dumping of toxic wastes into the oceans of the world that shows up on Tagore's body as serious burns. Tagore's kerygma, which is the Third Dispensation (following the Mosaic and Christian), is: the ecosphere is holy and must be preserved, protected, venerated and cherished--as a unity: not the life of individual men or individual animals but the ecosphere as a single indivisible unitary whole, a life-chain that is being destroyed, and not just temporarily but for all time. The demonic trinity against which Tagore speaks--and which is wounding and killing him--consists of nuclear wastes, nuclear weapons and nuclear power (reactors); they constitute the enemy which not only may destroy the ecosphere but already, as toxic wastes, are destroying it now. So again Christ acts out his role of vicarious atonement; he takes upon himself man's sins. But these sins are real, not doctrine sins. Tagore teaches that if we destroy the ecosphere much more, Holy Wisdom, the Wisdom of God (represented by Tagore himself) will abandon man to his fate, and that fate is doom.

Tagore teaches that when the ecosphere is burned, God himself is burned, for the Christ has invaded the ecosphere and invisibly assimilated it to himself through transubstantiation--which is the great vision Horselover Fat has in my novel Valis. Thus Christ and the ecosphere are either one or rapidly becoming one--much as Teilhard de Chardin describes in The Phenomenon of Man. The ecosphere does not evolve into the Cosmic Christ, however; Christ penetrates it, which is exactly what Fat saw

and which so amazed him. Thus Christ now speaks out--not just for the salvation of mankind or certain men, "the elect"--but for the ecosphere as a whole, from the snail darter on up. This is a systems concept and was beyond their vocabulary in apostolic times; it has to do with the indivisibility of all life on this planet, as if this planet itself were alive. And Christ is both the soma and psyche (the head) of that collective life. Hence the ultimate statement by Tagore--expressed by his voluntary passion and death--is, He who wounds the ecosphere wounds God, literally. Thus a macro-crucifixion is taking place now, in and as our world, but we do not see it; Tagore, the new incarnation in human form of the Logos, tells us this in order to appeal to us to stop. If we continue we will lose God's Presence and, finally, we will lose our own physical lives. The oceans especially are menaced; Tagore speaks of this most urgently. When each canister of radioactive wastes is dumped into the ocean, a new stigma appears on Tagore's terribly burned, seared legs. Fat was horrified by the sight of these burns, the legs of the savior drawn up in pain. Fat did not see Tagore's face, only his tragically burned body, and yet (Fat tells me) there was an ineffable sweetness about Tagore "like music and perfume and colors," as Fat phrased it to me. Burned as he is, wounded and dying as he is, Tagore nonetheless emits only loving beauty, absolute beauty, not relative beauty. It was a sight that Fat will never forget. I wish I could have shared it, but I had better things to do: watch TV and play electronic computer games. All that good stuff by which we fritter away our lives, while the ecosphere, wounded and in pain and in mortal danger, cries out for our help.



## NOSTALGIA-STAGE LENSMAN

by Terry Jeeves

WAY back in the winter of '37-'38, I was on my regular weekly circuit of the second-hand magazine stalls in search of pulp magazines. The trade in these delicacies was brisk; hardly did they appear in the remainder box, than some connoisseur of true literature would snap them up.

This time, it was my lucky day: no less than SIX consecutive issues of my favourite...good old ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION stacked blushing in the box alongside dime detective, Shadow, and horror magazines. At three (old) pence each, they represented a total outlay of 1/6d or, at the then-current rate of exchange, about 30 cents.

Blowing a week's allowance at one go was no easy thing for a 15 year old...but what the Hell. Live dangerously like G-8 and his Battle Aces. I bought the lot. It was only on the way home that I discovered what a glorious purchase I had made. That small stack of magazines contained all six installments of E.E. Smith's Galactic Patrol.

I vanished from human ken for that weekend. An uninformed onlooker might merely have seen a youngster with his nose in a pile of pulp magazines. In reality, I was off in deep space in my non-ferrous speedster, Delameter on hip, and Bergenholm humming softly below decks as I sought out the Boskone pirates. Many good yarns have come along since these far-off days...

but nothing has made the impact that the Lensman series did on that pre-war teenager. Science and science fiction have grown up since then. In some ways that is a pity, as along the way we seem to have lost some of the exuberance and joy we used to get from the genre. I'll admit that nostalgia plays a great part in such ideas...but it IS nice to be nostalgic now and then. It is not so nice to deny any value to the process.

Doc Smith and his space operas belonged to a different era; before paperbacks and TV loomed on the horizon and everything was overwhelmed in a wave of anarchy, anti-everything, and an iconoclastic throwing down of idols.

I presume that today's youngsters drooling over their first STAR TREK episode or empathising with Luke Skywalker must have pretty much the same feeling that I, and thousands of others, shared when Doc Smith was at his peak.

During Doc's lifetime, writing, corresponding, and attending conventions, he was appreciated by all who met him. With his death, the vultures were quick to gather and deride what he had written. In recent years it has become almost a cliché to denigrate Doc and his writing...which is a damned great shame!

Dickens, Verne, Wells, etc. wrote

for their times...not ours. Judge them by current standards and the yarns are slow, long-winded, and even dull. Despite this, they were correctly regarded as 'greats'. Doc Smith may not have reached their level, but by gum he did please thousands of his readers in the thirties. Put yourself back into those times and in the same circumstances...little money, no TV, war on the horizon, and--to clinch the deal--look at the sf being written by the vast majority of writers in those days. Without any doubt at all, Doc was head and shoulders above 90% of his contemporaries. The ONLY reason so many of his detractors ever heard of him is the simple fact that his tales had so much life in them that they are still appearing in print and still have a wide, appreciative audience. Ham, maybe; weak on dialogue, yes, that as well--but full of action and ideas. How many of the Smith-bangers have read or heard of John Russel Fearn: pot-boiler par excellence? Ray Cummings, Charles Willard Diffin, Nathan Schachner, Donald Wandrei, Capt. S. P. Meek, and others?

If you want crud writers, don't dig back in the thirties, pick up any current sf. Some eight times out of ten you'll have landed a clunker. So IF you want to judge Doc Smith, read a bucketful of contemporary material before sticking your neck out.

In the years that followed my fortunate encounter with Kimball Kinnison, I extended my collection of ASF and other books and magazines so that I acquired a full collection of Doc Smith's yarns. Among them the Skylark series and an in-between tale of the spaceways, Spacehounds of IPC. Taking pride of place among my hardcovers are SKYLARK THREE endorsed, "To Terry Jeeves, with sincere regards, E.E. Smith PhD" and The Vortex Blaster which bears a similar handwritten endorsement.

With the Skylark series, Doc followed the adventures of Seaton and Crane as they fought off big business and toured the Galaxy...always meeting new friends and staving-off hordes of unpleasant aliens. These yarns were stereotyped but gave Doc the groundwork for later stories. In the Skylarks, the women were very much bits of background scenery...there to cry over their men before, during, or after a battle...or else to be captured by the enemy.

With the Lensman series, that changed.

Clarissa McDougall started out as the red-haired nurse who gave Kinnison as good as she got by way of vituperation. She graduated to his wife and even to becoming the first Lenswoman...and at no one time did she descend to the standard syndrome of wandering off to be Caught By The Enemy purely to allow the hero to come galloping to her rescue. Nowadays, the heroine still tends to perform that function.

To be fair, in Spacehounds of IPC, which sees Steve Stevens and Nadia Newton marooned on Ganymede, the heroine repeatedly wanders off and gets her neck in a knot...but we are so busy watching Stevens trying to invent science by working forwards from a stone age environment that we quite welcome Nadia's adventures.

Entertaining as such tales were, Doc really hit pay dirt when he crafted Kimball Kinnison. Here was a hero who got in there and fought tooth and nail. A character who could (it was hinted) employ savate, mayhem, and

killing if it were needed. By bringing in mental powers of the Arisians and letting Kinnison acquire them, the yarns not only foreshadowed the later spate of psi stories, but also made it even more fun to empathise oneself into the near--but not quite--omnipotent character of Kinnison.

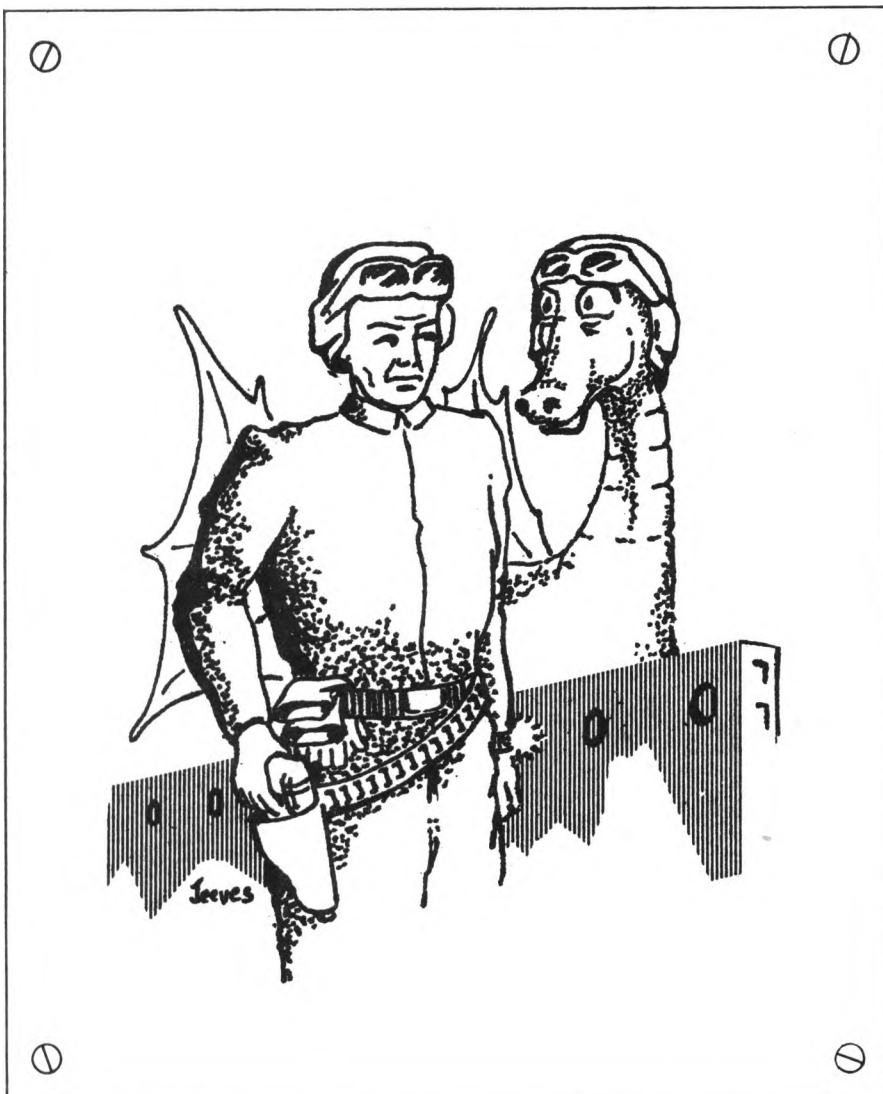
Then came Grey Lensman...and if the fans had enjoyed Galactic Patrol, they went mad over this new installment of the saga. Smith developed more new characters than ever before...and all equally credible. His adventures escalated yet never grew boring. weaponry too, followed a pattern of bigger and better. Negaspheres, Q-bombs and helices, primary beams, tractors, pressors, inert planet nut-crackers, and many many more. When I compare the size of the literary canvas that Doc Smith handled with some of the more modern epics, I often wonder how he managed to keep everything in order without a computer.

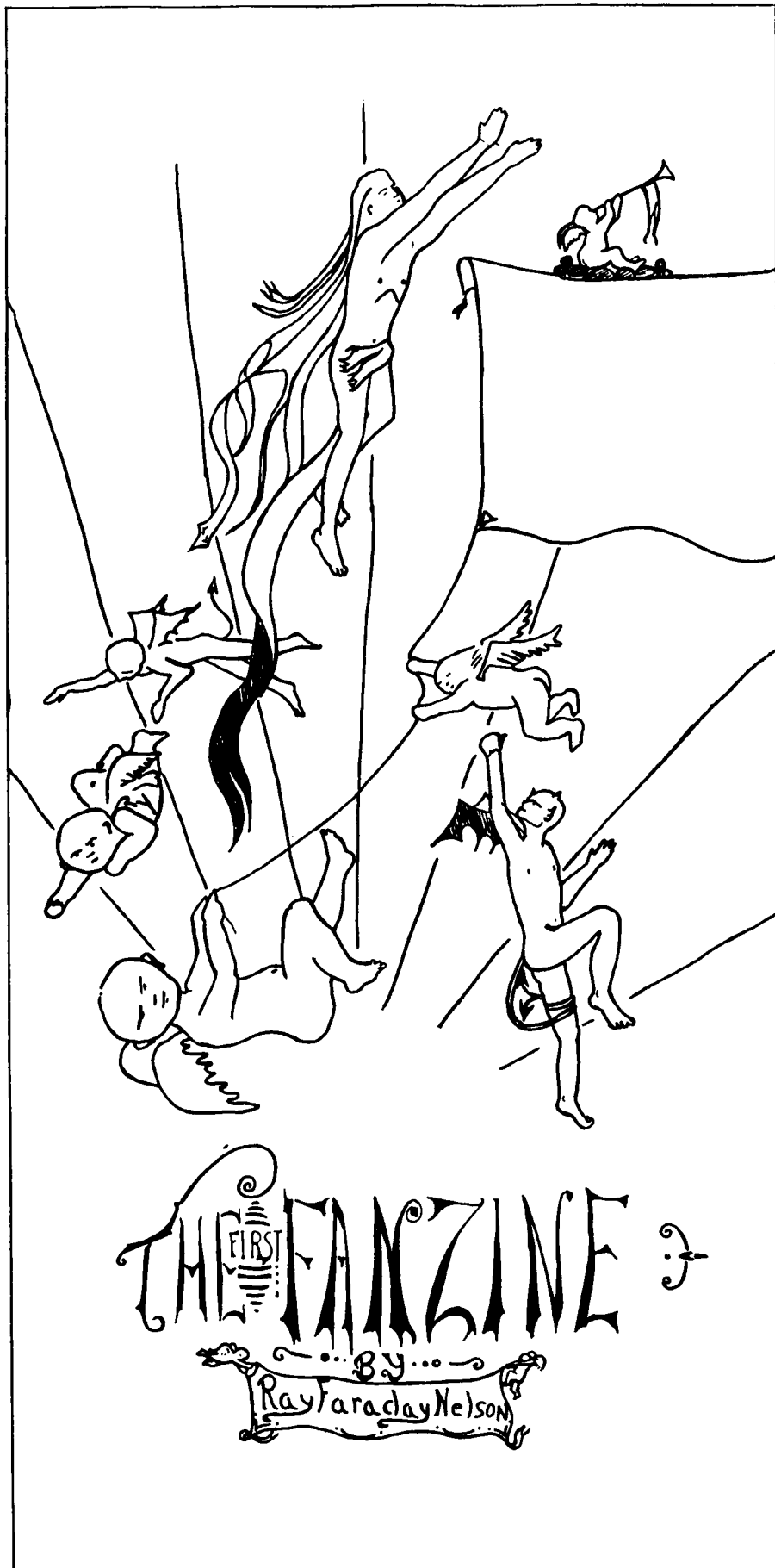
Great as Doc's inventions were, without doubt his greatest was the concept of the Bergenholm and inertialess flight. Oh, I know it can't be done...but as a fictional concept, I claim unequivocally that there has been no other single sf 'invention' to touch it. Not only did Doc come up with the idea, but he also explored its ramifications: matching intrinsics either by retrofiring or in the spring-mounted 'sack' for the quick killing of smaller intrinsics. He used "free" planets as a giant planet smasher and introduced many other facets of the basic idea. If the Bergenholm had been Doc's single contribution to sf he would have deserved to be remembered for that alone.

But there was more. In addition to works of fiction, he produced quite a few science articles. Doc attended conventions, signed autographs without demanding a private room in which to recover...while drinking panhandled booze. He corresponded freely with fans and I had the pleasure of several letters from him just before his personal Lens lost its light.

Characteristically, one such letter ends, "...or, for the edification of whatever non-cognoscenti as may perchance see this...." Oh yes, and the return address was 'Skylark Mobile Home Park'.

Put me down as a nostalgia-ridden old-timer, but don't knock the Doc in my presence. He was that rare and delightful mixture of writer, fan, con-goer, and correspondent...and a good friend.





FANTASY fandom was founded in February of 1781 by a ghost named Robert.

In life Robert Blake was a promising artist of nineteen living with his brother Bill on Poland Street in London, a few doors away from the Old King's Arms Tavern where, in 1781, the Ancient Order of Druids had begun meeting. I've seen one of Robert's drawings, an ink and wash study of Oberon and Titania reclining on a blossom watching a ring of fairy folk dance above. The curving lines, flat patterns of light and dark, and the dominance of floral motifs all suggest a premature Art Nouveau style, and considerable talent.

When Robert fell ill, his brother tended him affectionately throughout a lingering sickness, and during the final fortnight watched continuously by his bedside, almost without sleep. At the moment on death, Robert was seen, according to his brother, to ascend heavenward through the ceiling, "clapping his hands for joy."

The surviving brother fell into a deep sleep of exhaustion for three days and nights. Robert visited him in a dream and revealed a new printing technique.

Printing from moveable type with engraved illustrations had become quite commonplace at that time, and Robert's brother made a profession of converting drawings into such illustrations. This new method would permit the use of color, the combining of drawings with writing, and, best of all, the production of very inexpensive publications, since only a minimum of equipment was required.

Upon awakening, Robert's brother sent his wife Kate out with half a crown, "all the money they had in the world," to buy the few simple materials needed "for setting in practice the new revelation."

Here is the process:

First, you soak a sheet of paper in a solution of gum arabic and allow it to dry. Second, you make your writing and drawing in etcher's ground on this paper. Third, you spread the paper face down on a heated copper plate and rub it down with the back of a spoon. Gently peel away the paper (wetting it as needed).

Fourth, place the copper plate, which will now have the design in reverse on it, in a bath of nitric acid for eight hours. The acid will eat away the metal, leaving the design standing out in low relief. Fifth, wash the plate.

Sixth, ink the plate in one color or

several and print with it by rubbing bookpaper against it with the back of a spoon.

Seventh, touch up and color the print with watercolors.

Thus instructed by a phantom voice, William Blake began the work that earned him little fame and less money during his lifetime, but which has now earned him a place among the immortals.

After a few small, practice projects, William Blake quietly created the world's first fantasy fanzine, entitled "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell." Only nine copies of this one-shot have survived, and most commentators believe the copy count never went much higher than that. If you want to look at it, however, it is currently in print in an Oxford University Press edition in paperback for \$7.95, in facsimile.

I call it a fanzine because William Blake made no attempt to sell it through regular commercial channels, even though his employer, the radical publisher Joseph Johnson, owned a bookstore, even though Blake's commercial artwork appeared regularly in large editions. Instead, Blake sold "Heaven and Hell" one copy at a time to his personal friends at a price that barely covered his expenses. Indeed, it appears that Blake never exactly "ran off" the zine, but produced single copies to order, no two exactly alike.

I call it a fantasy fanzine because of the content, which we will presently examine.

To this day the word "fantasy" has an uneasy definition. My Funk and Wagnalls Dictionary lists musical and psychological meanings for it, but says nothing about it as a literary genre. The new Encyclopaedia Britannica mentions no literary meaning, but does mention masturbation fantasy. Edgar Allen Poe felt there was a kind of empty hole in the English language when it came to naming the kind of writing he specialized in. He said, "I use the word fancies at random, and merely because I must use some word; but the idea commonly attached to the term is not even remotely applicable to the shadows of shadows in question." College texts habitually lump fantasy writers with Romanticists, in spite of wide differences even a college professor can see. My friend, the jazz singer Marcia Frenkel, put it perfectly when she said, "The genre you write doesn't exist."

Before William Blake there were tales of distant times and places, of King Arthur, of Alexander the Great. The state of California takes its name from Queen Calafia, a negro

amazon from a sixteenth century Spanish novel, The Deeds of Esplandian. Was this a fantasy novel? I think not. From its style, dry and factual as any straight travelogue, I think it was meant to deceive, that the author was not writing a fantasy but a lie. Some Spaniards believed the story enough to actually come looking for Calafia's "island." Likewise the stories of Arthur and Alexander were treated by early writers as serious fact, not fiction.

Before Blake, the same thing could be said of religious stories; they were intended to be believed. Indeed, "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" is, first and foremost, a special kind of satire of these religious stories. William Blake's parents were followers of the "visionary" Emanuel Swedenborg, a man who claimed to have visited Heaven and come back to tell about it. Blake and his wife were also sometime members of the Swedenborgian Church.

In "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell," Blake attacks Swedenborg's book Heaven and Hell, accusing Swedenborg flatly of having "not written one new truth" and more, of having instead "written all the old falsehoods."

Swedenborg wrote of "Memorable Relations." Blake writes of "Memorable Fancies." It is here, in this hairsplitting distinction, that modern fantasy is born. It is here that Imagination usurps the throne of Faith, that between True and False a new state of being appears that is neither but has qualities of both. Like Swedenborg, Blake takes us on a tour of The Other World, not Heaven this time, but Hell, and shows us "enjoyments of Genius, which to Angels look like torment and insanity." The Hellishness of Hell is shown to be strictly in the eye of the beholder.

In this limited edition one-shot, then, fantasy rebels against its parents, occultism, and creates a new attitude toward reality. Soon, as we shall see, fantasy in turn gives birth to science-fiction.

Who were the members of the true "First Fandom" of fantasy? They were William Blake's personal friends, in particular the circle of radicals that congregated around the publisher and bookseller, Joseph Johnson, William Blake's employer.

For reasons of space we will here touch on only two of these, Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin.

Mary Wollstonecraft was an early and ardent feminist, one of the first to write on the subject of women's rights. William Godwin was also a

writer, and a philosopher of freedom, a personal friend of Thomas Paine, and a utopian anarchist. Historians would give a lot to know what was said at the weekly dinners at Joseph Johnson's home at No. 72 St. Paul's Churchyard where Blake crossed swords with these revolutionaries...only verbal swords, of course.

Godwin and Wollstonecraft met in 1796 ("The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" was first printed in a complete version in 1794.) and, though neither believed in marriage, they were wed on March 29, 1797, probably for the good of the child which must have then been on the way. In September they had a daughter, and Mary, perhaps because of her weakened condition after childbirth, died on Sept. 10, 1797.

The child, also named Mary, was thus raised by her anarchist father and his friends, including William Blake and his wife Kate, who had no children of their own.

Young Mary grew into a remarkably bright and beautiful girl, far better educated than even those of her sex who enjoyed what education was offered to women in those days.

On Oct. 4, 1812 a wild and handsome young poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, quite as radical as Godwin in spite of his upperclass background, cultivated Godwin's friendship and, on May 5 or 6, 1814, met Mary Godwin at her father's home. Though Shelley was already married, it was love at first sight. Throughout what remained of his short life, he was seldom long separated from this remarkable woman.

Fleeing from the scandal caused by their unconventional union, Percy and Mary made their way to the shores of Lake Geneva where they fell into close friendship with another victim of wagging tongues, the moody George Gordon, otherwise known as Lord Byron, and his menage of assorted lovers whose mutual relations were so complex the Guide Through the Romantic Movement felt obliged to publish a chart of them.

This was the famous "wet, ungenial summer" of 1816 when, according to Brian Aldiss', science-fiction was born out of a friendly ghost story contest between Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, Byron, and Dr. John Polidori. Mary Shelley wrote the immortal Frankenstein, or at least began it. Percy Shelley and Byron both wrote fragments which, though later published, were never finished. Polidori wrote The Vampyre, the first vampire story in the English language, according to Christopher Frayling, and a clear predecessor of the famous Dracula of Bram Stoker.

Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is, as many have commented, more a fantasy than a science-fiction story, but another hairsplitting distinction similar to the one that sets Blake's work apart from occultism also set Frankenstein apart from its fantasy forerunners, including the alternate-reality fantasy underlying William Blake's later poems. The monster is created, not by magic, not by faith, but by science.

When I read Brian Aldiss' argument in favor of making Mary Shelley the Mother of Science-Fiction, I found it pretty convincing except for one thing: Frankenstein is too polished, too finished. Something new is always awkward and ugly, not yet formed into such a slick, commercial form. I had a hunch something odd and obscure had to come before it, and I think in Blake I found it.

I felt the same way when I read

Imaginary Worlds by Lin Carter. Carter nominates William Morris as the Father of Fantasy, and I believed him until I read the books Morris wrote. Once again I found something that clearly had already undergone a long period of development. The roots of the genre had to be earlier.

I started digging.

I found that William Morris was part of a fandom, a small group of artists and fantasy enthusiasts called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. The leader of this group, and William Morris's best friend, was one Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In reading Rossetti's biography, I came across a name that startled me by its familiarity.

Polidori.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti's mother was Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori. Could

she be any relation to the Dr. John Polidori who, that stormy night in Switzerland, took part in the famous ghost story contest? I dug some more.

Indeed, Dr. John Polidori was Frances Mary Lavinia Polidori's brother. Their father, Gaetano Polidori, had been close to the Rossetti family, had in fact published the poems of Dante Rossetti's sister, Christina, on his amateur press in 1847.

Like some lost Atlantis, a whole continent of forgotten fantasy fans seemed to rise up before me out of the seas of the past, a continent connected by clearly visible bridges to the fandom in which I now live.

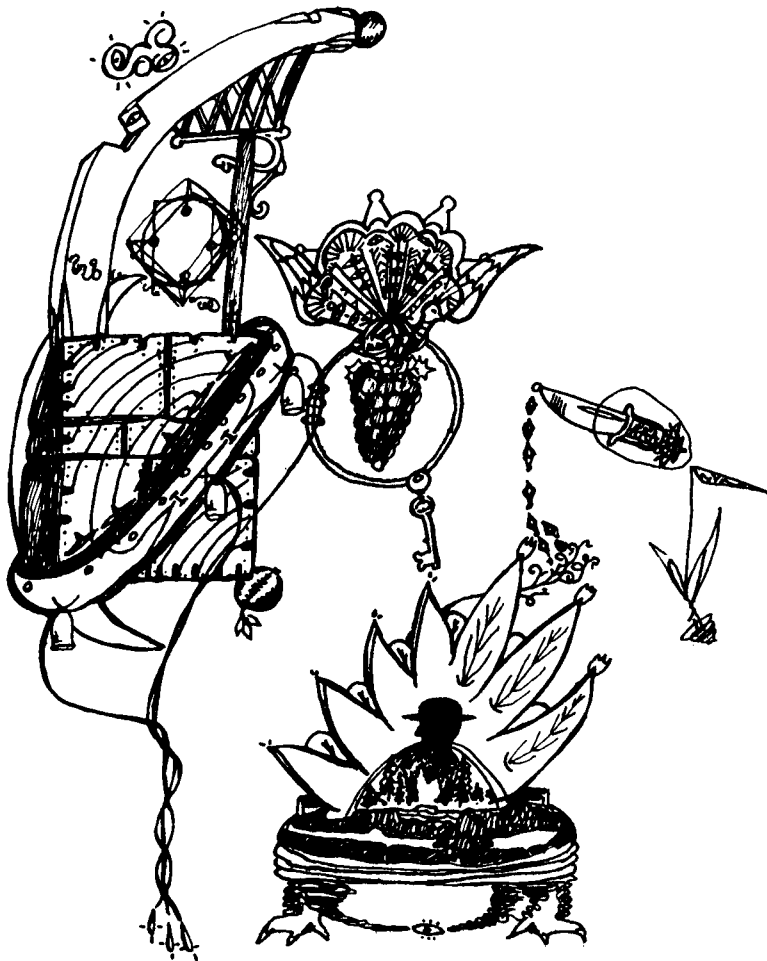
Did the connections cease here?

No, in the biographies of Dante Rossetti I read of a youthful incident that might before have meant nothing to me. In 1847, Rossetti was browsing through some books on sale at the British museum when he discovered a volume of miscellaneous prose, verse, and drawings by William Blake. (What is now called "The Rossetti Manuscript.") He bought it, took it home, and read it with vigorous enthusiasm. He particularly approved the diatribes Blake had written against Joshua Reynolds, the painter the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood called "Sloshua." In fact, Rossetti sat right down and wrote a lampoon in the same style against ultra-respectable painter Edwin Landseer, whose reindeer picture, "Monarch of the Glen," now serves as trademark for so many dairy companies, insurance companies, etc.

In 1850, Dante Rossetti's brother Michael became art critic of the influential SPECTATOR magazine and began to champion the art of William Blake, beginning the slow climb to respectability for Blake's work that continues to this day.

I continued my digging, and have since found connections between Dante Gabriel Rossetti's circle and such American fantasy writers as Ambrose Bierce, the poet George Sterling, and the poet, fantasy writer and artist Clark Ashton Smith.

Harry Warner Jr. begins his history of fandom with Clark Ashton Smith and the Lovecraft circle, among other "near-miss" fans. I can no longer see these fantasy fans of the WEIRD TALES era, of the United Amateur Press Association and the National Amateur Press Association as pioneers, but only as part of a vast fannish river stretching back over the centuries to one tiny spring, the flowing imagination of William Blake...and a ghost named Robert.



# TRITE OLD MARS

by RAYMOND Z. GALLUN

DW1

SKYCLIMBER is my own subliminal exhortation toward getting a serious space program, intent on opening up the solar system to human use as well as to exploration, under way. Hence my deliberate choice of "trite old Mars" as the center of action--instead of some remote planet of a distant star--which would be too much, still, in the regions of dreams. Though I took care to hint at our ultimate star-goal too, in the fragmentary exofact--the broken chip from some extra-solar artifact of great intricacy and unknown purpose, thrown away on Mars ages ago, presumably by some transient interstellar visitors. Though, under test, the exofact can still produce a single phrase of unknown meaning, that no human vocal equipment can quite duplicate. Thus perhaps a lingering and intriguing mystery?

Mars has been an almost lifelong fascination of mine. Recent discoveries about Mars--some of them very tentative and incomplete, since they were made only in two tiny areas among many millions of square kilometers--have stripped the Red Planet of its capacity to serve as the scene for much-overblown romancing. But--look again!--there Mars still is, not unmanageably harsh, with an earthlike day, probable abundant resources, including a unique energy source in the seasonal deposit and subsequent evaporation of heaps of frozen carbon-dioxide at its poles, plus enigmas of a suggestive though non-blatant sort: dry riverbeds, clusters of three-sided pyramids, a curious formation called "The Inca City", and a strangely active soil-chemistry. And who knows what else? Yes--there Mars still is, within our present reach, and waiting. A challenge.

It would take a certain type of person to want to go to Mars, and to last, once there. But throughout

history, such eager pioneers have always been adequately numerous. I am sure that at least a little of their particular quality is in all of us.

The characters in Skyclimber are by no means super-folk; they are merely tough, earnest, interested, industrious, good-humored, well-balanced people, dedicated, and maybe "a little mad", as they readily admit. I have known their approximate equals as actual, living people around me--lacking only the chance to go out beyond the Earth.

So there are Frank Gotch and Marie Manning--even she perhaps a bit feminist-macho in her pride and delight at belonging to the first pair to land on Mars. So, marooned by sabotage, they struggle to survive through 25 months, being almost inadvertently led into the dramatic game of promotional publicity, in accordance with human psychology and media methods...

So ten more couples are sent out, among them Skyclimber Timothy Davis Barlow's prospective parents, who extend the game individualistically further--to their own sudden deaths, and young Tim's (He shall be great!) survival, in a sealed, life-supporting crib.

And the playing of the publicity game continues: A firstborn child on harsh, terrible Mars--a little baby? He must not be allowed to die!... But if a contraband infant--later, also a girl, Agnes Frost--can be born on Mars, can it really be such an unlivable place?...

Throughout Skyclimber, I have tried very hard to present Mars exactly as it is known to be, with only minor extensions that might easily be true: residual macro-plantlife, the gelucipulae, adapted to their rugged environment; the winnowing of gold-dust and nuggets in a long-waterless

streambed--Goth's Martian substitute for taking young Tim fishing...

In all the characters I try for human--even homely--realism: John Tenaka, volcanologist; Tony Mancuso, roughly humorous meteorologist; Deva Corliss, dedicated teacher... Vigorous all, they toil and try and grouse; they are much less than perfectly strong. Occasionally one will break: Aldo Carlyle, overcome by grief, goes out into the desert night. There he scratches matches, one by one, from an antique matchbook found among the effects of his dead mate. The match-heads, supplying their own oxygen, flare momentarily, but the matchsticks can't burn... Still kidding bitterly, Aldo says, "See? Dead... Dead old Mars!..." Before his friends can reach him, he removes his airhood.

As young adults, of course Skyclimber Tim--the central publicity showman--and Second-Born Agnes, are fetched to Earth, supposedly to complete their educations. They are eager yet frightened. And they carry on the effort of exhortation toward accomodating space to human needs and urgings.

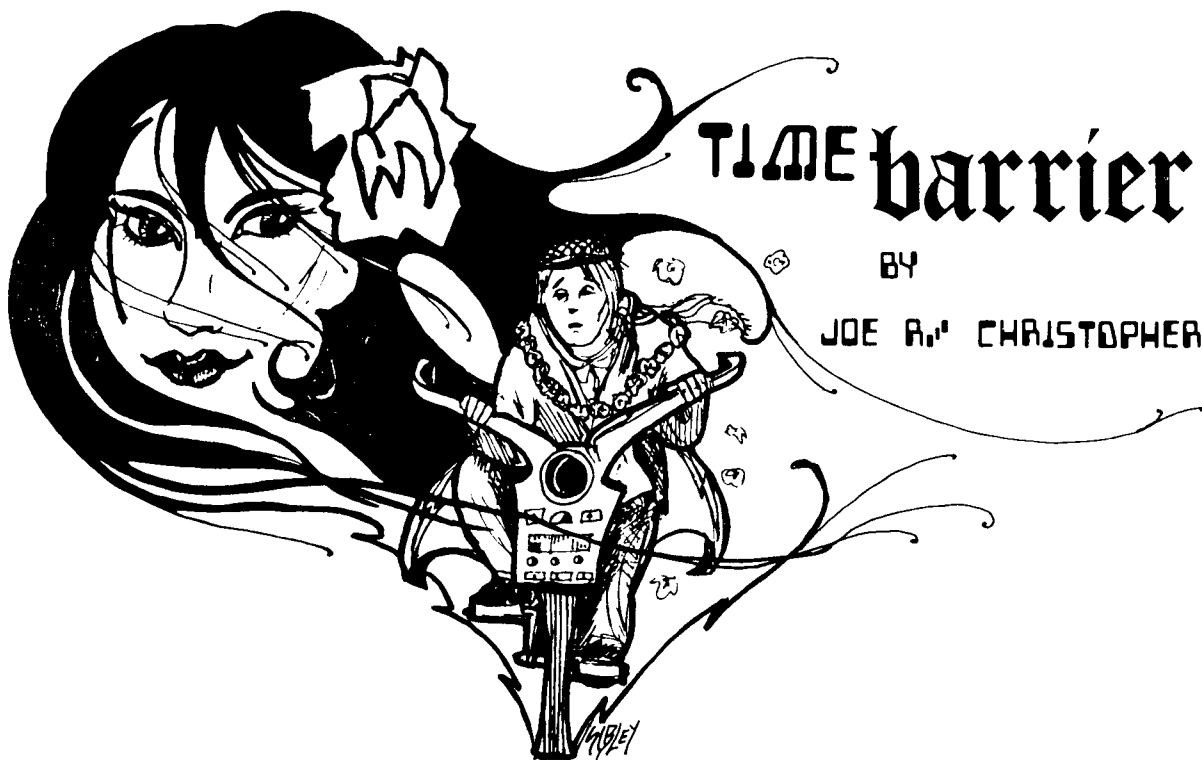
One of them stays, ever enchanted by the beautiful if confused Earth. The other, frustrated by circumstances in which full adjustment becomes impossible, goes home to Mars, the future of which is at last assured.

Maybe something like this will actually come about during the next century. I surely hope so. We are challenged; we have the reasons, the need of a new frontier, the means, and the guts.

Meanwhile,

Tzzarr-richh-het?

((see also Don D'Amassa's review of Skyclimber in NIEKAS 27))



IN A.D. 2473 the Neo-Fascist government in the United States, which had even regularized the English verb system in its efforts to achieve stasis, discovered time travelers with their varying social norms were quietly visiting America. Horrified, the Fascists reworked and distorted a time machine they had captured in order to create a barrier against any further visitors--and, indeed, to change the past so that no travelers from the future could have visited the. When it was put into operation, immediately several hundred visitors from the past, who could go no further into the future, appeared around the world.

Most of these travelers had various problems--including John Brent in the United States whose adventures have been told by another chronicler. But the situation was different in England which still retained (unlike most of the English-speaking world) many personal freedoms. It was, of course, an England very different from that pictured in the past. The period of the influx of dark-skinned citizens of the British Commonwealth in the twentieth

century had been succeeded by the brief but fascinating World Island Hegemony of the twenty-second, during which time many Polynesians moved to England also. (This was the period in which a number of the pure Anglos--meaning Stone Age-Celtic-Roman-Anglo-Saxon-Danish-Norman French crossbreeds--established a government in exile in Canada; later, after the union of Canada and the United States, it was Dyce-Farnsworth, of this group and by that time of the Anglo-Physical Church, who proclaimed the Stasis of the Cosmos.)

The most primitive of the time machines which was halted in England was a modified bicycle, coming from the late nineteenth century, on which the traveler pedaled his way into the future. This visitor--a small Londoner with a rather Cockney accent--took one look at the bare-breasted, brown women (who kept to their traditional costumes in the domed cities of that era); leapt from his bicycle, crying, "Victoria, forgive me!"; and indeed was not found again for several days, the Polynesian ladies having kept their

traditional hospitality, if somewhat modified with contraceptive and anti-disease practices.

When the exhausted traveler was located and put back on his re-set bicycle, he could barely sit upright and would surely pedal more slowly back to his era. "Never, never, never," he muttered to himself, "never can I explain this to my period--I had hoped the Puritanism would be gone--but such freedom, such friendliness . . ." He seemed almost numb with his shock--or for some other reason.

Then, in a farewell speech, he was told by the King of Great Britain, Kamehameha XII (whom the visitor did not recognize as important at all), that he was sorry the traveler had missed the luau the rest of the guests had enjoyed before being sent back to their proper times.

"Aloha, Mr. Wells," said the king to the Tei-bedecked traveler; "more luck next time."

And from the corridors of time came the weary traveler's voice, echoing the king's words, "Alloy" (or perhaps it was "eeloy"), "more lock,"

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# WHISPERS FROM ALCALA

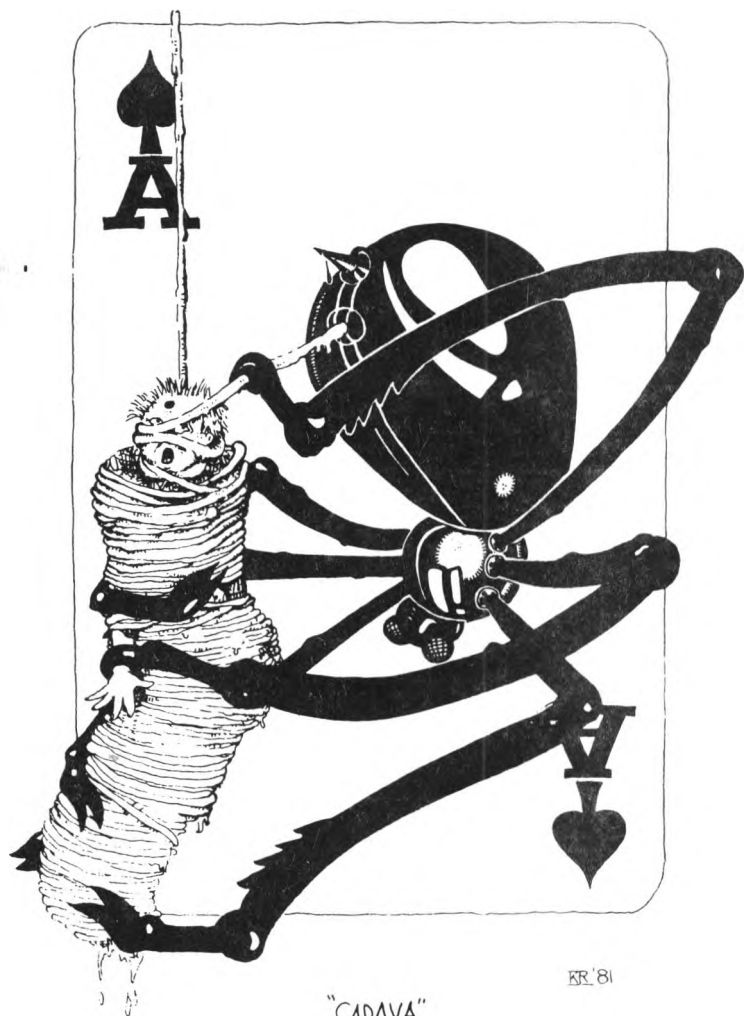
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by  
rod walker

art by kurt reichel

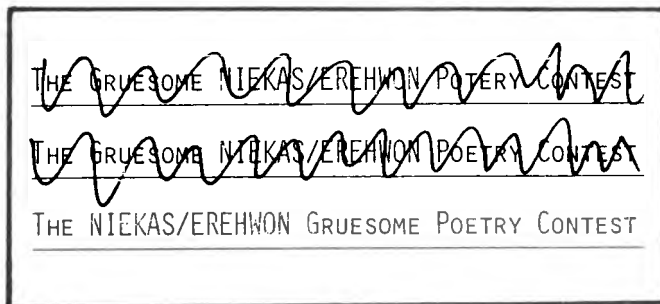
## "ARKHAM TRIPTYCH"

- I. MOONLESS APRIL NIGHT:  
DIM SHADOWS, ANCIENT TREES, AND . . .  
ONE GLOWING EYE.
- II. SPRING RAIN AT SUNRISE  
WASHES AWAY THE BLACK SLIME  
FROM WIDE DEAD EYES.
- III. EARLY MAY COCOON  
HANGS OVER A NEW-MADE GRAVE.  
IN EACH, SOMETHING WAITS.



"CADAVER"

KR '81



## Introduction

NIEKAS and EREHWON, a poetry 'zine, are co-sponsoring a contest in macabre short poetry, using two forms developed by Rod Walker, the editor of the latter publication. Cash and other prizes will be awarded, and winning (and honorable mention) poems will be published in both 'zines. Prizes are partially listed above and in EREHWON 104 (October 1981), but others may become available later and will be awarded accordingly.

## Contest Rules

1. There will be 2 categories: cthulhic & nooce (see below for details).
2. There will be an entry fee of \$1

per category entered. This entry fee is waived if you are a current subscriber to either publication. ("Current subscriber" is defined as having a subscription to NIEKAS which ends not earlier than #32, or to EREHWON which ends not earlier than #106.)

3. Entry limit is 2 poems per category. In the cthulhic category, you may enter 2 individual poems or one sequence or cycle of up to 4 parts.

4. Each entry must be submitted in 4 copies. There must be one original and 3 carbon or photocopies. The original must have, in the upper left-hand corner, your name and address. This must be omitted from the other 3 copies. Entries must be on paper 5½" high by 8½" long, and single-spaced.

5. If you wish your originals returned, or wish a list of contest winners at the end, please enclose SASE with your entry. In any event, the 3 copies will be destroyed at the close of the contest.

6. The decision of the judges will be (what else?) final.

7. Deadline: Entries must be received by 1 March 1982.

8. Mail to: NIEKAS/EREHWON Contest, c/o Rod Walker, "Alcala", 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024. Make checks payable to R.C. Walker.

9. All poems must be original and unpublished. Submission is considered ipso facto the author's permission to print the said poems in both publications. Copyright is retained by the respective authors.

## Categories

### 1. Cthulhic

This is in essence a perversion of the haiku. It has the same form. It is a 3-line poem of approximately 17 syllables, arranged 5-7-5. The poem may have fewer (but not more) than 17 syllables, and may have fewer (but not more) than the stated number in each line. However, the relationship of short-long-short must be preserved.

Occidental poetic techniques must be avoided. Rhythm is irrelevant and rhyme is a no-no. Also inappropriate: alliteration, onomatopoeia, allegory, simile, hyperbole, metaphor, &c. Language must be plain, simple, direct.

Like haiku, the cthulhic is a seasonal poem and uses the kigo (season-word). This may be the name of a month or season, but is preferably the name of something which relates to a season...such as crocus for Spring, pumpkin for Fall, snow for Winter...any bit of flora, fauna, weather condition, or whatever which denotes a season or time of year.

The cthulhic should not consist of a single complete sentence. More properly it is at least two sentences, and in fact incomplete phrases work better.

An important element of haiku is the sadness but inevitability of time's passing. In the cthulhic this is replaced by the mordant fear that time will continue to move forward; by the implied wish that time would stop.



FIRST PRIZE: \$10.00 PLUS A TWO YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO NIEKAS AND EREHWON

SECOND PRIZE: A TWO YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO NIEKAS AND EREHWON

THIRD PRIZE: A ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO NIEKAS AND EREHWON

A sequence of cthulhics consists of 3 or 4 in which the month or season changes, but may be otherwise unrelated. A cycle would have 3 or 4 cthulhics which, although each stands alone, might be read together as an implied story line. Individual cthulhics are never titled. Here are two example sequences from AMANITA BRANDY 1 and WEIRDBOOK 15. (A cycle, "Arkham Triptych", appears on page 39.)

LITTLE COUSINS OF THULHU

- I. Wary dragonfly--  
Tongue that snares it in the swamp:  
Black, and ten feet long.
- II. A Flight of herons?  
Red-stained feathers and black beaks  
Holding strings of flesh.
- III. Clumps of summer grass--  
Between grow pallid fungi:  
The first from Yuggoth.

ARKHAM SEQUENCE

- I. Cold Spring drizzle--  
Last month's suicide still hangs:  
But does not decay
- II. Summer pond-lillies--  
Amid them, flexing slowly:  
White claws, long and sharp.
- III. Autumn funeral--  
Eyes stare out, not wholly blank:  
From the cracked coffin.
- IV. Winter snowstorm--  
Dim shambling shape leaves red drops:  
Blood, but not its own.

Note that cthulhics, like Lovecraft himself, tend to find horror in relatively mundane and ordinary surroundings, in keeping with the plain language.

2. Nooce.  
The plural of nooce is nice. Correct usage here will prevent a nocturnal visit from something you'd rather not meet. "Nice", by the way, must be pronounced to rhyme with the French city, or with "lease" or "police". Anyone guilty of pronouncing it to rhyme with "mice" or "lice" will be locked in my dungeon and forced to listen to 1000 repetitions of my recording of Roddy MacDowell reading Lovecraft's "Psychopompos". At high volume... high enough, in fact, to drown out your screams.  
  
The nooce is a shaped poem of strict meter and scansion. It has exactly 19 syllables in 6 lines, distributed 1-2-4-6-4-2. Line 1 should consist of a stressed word. Lines 2-6 must be in iambic meter (da-DAH, da-DAH, &c.). The lines are centered so that the completed poem should look, roughly, like a rope that means business. The poem must be titled.

Rhyme (internal or external), alliteration, onomatopoeia, and all that may be used if the poet feels like it. But sparingly, please.  
  
The nooce should build up to a climax, to some degree unexpected, which occurs in the last 6 (or even last 2) syllables. It should bring the reader up short, like the aforementioned rope. Essential to the best effect of the nooce is a degree of grim, macabre, dark, utterly perverted humor, or perhaps irony. The humor of, say, Sweeney Todd or LOVE AT FIRST BITE (but more the latter than the former). Here are three examples; the first two from NIEKAS 27, the third previously unpublished.



TOO CLOSE TO NATURE

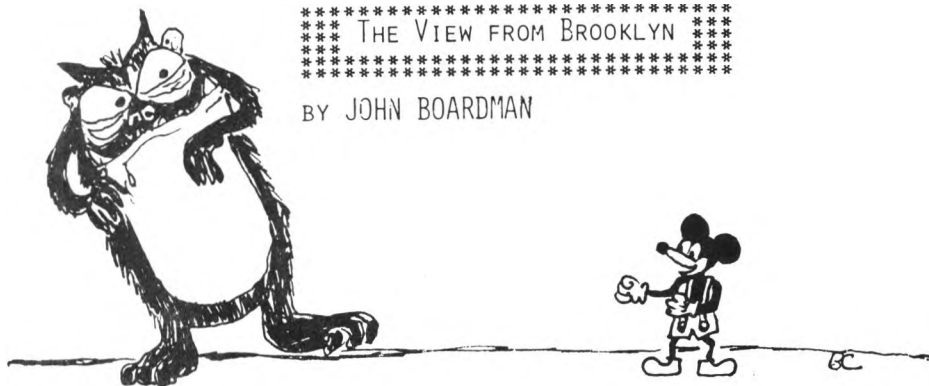
There  
are trees  
nearby that move  
without a wind. I wish  
I had not seen  
their teeth.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Jobs  
are hard  
for me to keep.  
I always quit the school  
after I eat  
one child.

O GRAVE,  
WHERE IS THY VICTORY?

There  
he lies,  
transfixed by sharp  
spikes driven in his hands  
and heart and throat,  
and waits.



\*\*\*\*\*  
 \*\*\* THE VIEW FROM BROOKLYN \*\*\*  
 \*\*\*\*\*

BY JOHN BOARDMAN

### Is Taz Overrated?

The first white settlers in Tasmania found that their chickens and sheep were the prey of a small, blood-thirsty marsupial carnivore, which they called the Tasmanian Devil (*Sarcophilus ursinus*). This animal, once also found on the Australian mainland, occupies the same ecological niche as the weasel or badger among mammals of the rest of the world.

The ferocity of this creature has probably become best known through the introduction of one as a minor character in the Bugs Bunny cartoons. "Taz" appears as a grey hurricane of danger to the other cartoon characters, though he is always prevented from doing them any serious harm.

A few years ago, biologists at the University of Tasmania decided to see whether the Tasmanian Devil deserved its reputation. Nineteen of the beasts were separately each confronted with a live rat. Only 11 of the Tasmanian Devils killed their rats, in a manner that was "generally clumsy and unconvincing" and took about 20 minutes to do it. The other eight carnivores displayed fear; some cowered in a corner of the cage. Nor did familiarity breed contempt; some of the Tasmanian devils were dismayed to find that the rats were capable of biting back. Sometimes, when they did nerve themselves up to snap at the rats, they missed. The *NEW SCIENTIST* of 13 May 1976, which reported this disillusioning result, tartly remarked, "We may, of course, have been underestimating the Tasmanian lab rat."

### Off the Beaten Track

Often, proponents of off-beat scientific ideas, or those that challenge widely accepted views, claim that they cannot get a hearing for their views. The scientific journals will not print their papers, or the conferences will not allow

them to speak. Sometimes claims are made that a "scientific orthodoxy" is trying to stifle the spirit of free inquiry by keeping these theories from a public which would otherwise adopt them enthusiastically.

The American Physical Society, at least, does not set up its meetings as roadblocks. Almost every meeting has a section vaguely entitled "General Physics", in which highly eccentric papers are read by people listed from street addresses rather than from institutions of research and teaching. An attempt to resuscitate the aether theory of light, or to overthrow relativity, is read, and no questions are asked, and no attention is paid. A few years ago, the late Dr. (of psychiatry) Immanuel Velikovsky actually was invited to give a paper about his implausible theories on the development of the Solar System, following which he was shot down in flames by Carl Sagan.

$$E = MC^{2.5}$$

MB

In 1978, Dr. Bill Honig of Australia decided to set up a journal in which these homeless exiles from "orthodox" science could publish their views and get a hearing. *SPECULATIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY* began publishing offbeat ideas, and is now put out by the highly respectable publishing house Elsevier. However, Dr. Honig has had continual trouble with his contributors. In his fifth issue, he criticized poor preparation of the papers being submitted to him. A few issues later, he particularized, writing that these submissions were "heavily flawed with confusions, emotion, and ignorance". By Volume II, Number 4, he had to warn his contributors about the Columbus Fallacy. ("They laughed at Columbus, and he turned out to be right; they're laughing at me, and so I'm right just like Columbus." It is not

recorded that Columbus ever sailed west from Spain and reached Asia.)

Despite these pleas, things kept getting worse. Finally, in 1980, Dr. Honig had to lay down the law to his stray lambs. "We must now explicitly state," he wrote, "that we are not able to act as father figures and advisors to authors whose submissions are marred by many self-serving remarks, chaotic presentations, and ignorance of relevant details."

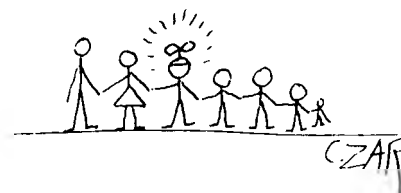
(*NEW SCIENTIST*, 1 January 1981)

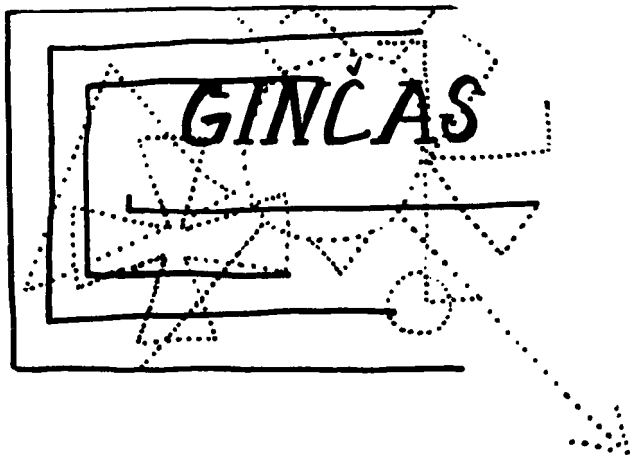
### The First-Born

Science-fiction fans sometimes claim that first-born children are greatly over-represented in their numbers. If this statement is made at a gathering of fans, a check is instantly made, and invariably turns out to verify the claim. Practically all of the American astronauts were also first-born.

Professor Bonnie Casher of the Department of Physical Education of Brooklyn College has, however, found one activity which the first-born are under-represented--dangerous sports. "The proportion of athletes in dangerous sports increased as birth order increased, from first-borns in dangerous sports (41%), to second-borns (45%), to third-borns (76%," she observed. Furthermore, "First-borns from all sizes of families were less likely than later borns to participate in dangerous sports."

This may arise from the fact that the first-born child is the one on which the parents practice, and they are therefore more protected than their younger siblings. By the time later children come along, the parents have a better idea of what children may safely be allowed to do, though they risk cries of, "You didn't let me do that when I was that age!" First-borns don't need to 'prove' themselves in real or imagined competition with elder siblings. But younger children seem to feel more of a reason to please people--elder siblings, coaches and team captains, or anyone who seems to know what he or she is doing. This makes them better material for organized athletics. It also causes them to get along with others better than do eldest children, who seem by contrast to be a headstrong and independent lot.





[This section of NIEKAS contains excerpted comments from various readers on certain items in the last issue.]



### "INSTRUMENTS OF DARKNESS"

...Felt a pang of guilt, Jane Yolen has been gracious enough to invite me to speak of women and speculative fiction at Smith College. Since I'm doing that anthology on witches, would I please speak on sorceresses. Gladly. With thanks, abject ones. I went to Mount Holyoke, just a few miles down the road, and this invitation fulfilled a fantasy that I thought I'd have to give up when I left teaching: of going back to what is all but home to me as a lecturer. And then Anne Braude came up with that wonderful article about witchcraft, and I wondered if Jane and company hadn't invited the wrong medievalist. Anne, that was wonderful, especially the parts in which you trace the early history. I think I'll take it to Smith with me and show it too.

Susan Schwartz

...enjoyed NIEKAS 27 very much, especially Anne Braude's article on the alleged history & practice of witchcraft. I'm a bit confused by the last part of her article, though, where there is a kind of debate about the possibility of the actual existence of witchcraft.

If witchcraft is not possible, then there are about 50,000 or so people in the U.S. alone who are practicing a nonexistent art.

Witchcraft, (probably from the Anglo-Saxon root word 'wic' or *AK*, meaning "to bend") the craft of bending reality, is alive & well.

When a Witch practices her other

Craft, she may use one or more of many arts; divination, scrying, ritual magick, herbalism, knot magick, candle-burning, hands-on or long-distance healing, sympathetic magick, or a zillion other techniques which qualify as witchcraft. She may invoke a God or Goddess to bless or aid the work. Unless he or she is a Satanist rather than a Witch, the Deity invoked will not be the Christian Devil as the Christian Devil is untrustworthy, malevolent, undependable, a liar, a cheat, and He smells bad.

The Christian Devil is not among the pantheon of gods Witches generally worship. After all, if we don't worship the Christian God, (pardon the pun) why in Hell would we want to worship their Devil?

As far as "Witches' Powers" go, a good definition of magick is that it is applied psychology. So's witchcraft, no matter what methods are employed.

Anyway, as stated, I enjoyed the article and the artwork was really excellent, too.

Anyone seriously interested in witchcraft and paganism today would do well to read either or both of the following:

Drawing Down the Moon, Margot Adler, Viking, 1979

The Spiral Dance, Starhawk, Harper & Row, 1979

For those interested in the Salem "witch trials", a book titled Salem Revisited presents a new view of why the whole mess came about, including a rather complete socio-economic look at Salem Village.

In closing...How many witches does it take to change a lightbulb?

That depends on what they're changing it into.

Astryd Hoeschstetter  
Pope KOALUS I  
Chapel of the Mad Bear  
The Wholly Atlantean Grand-motherly Wiccan Temple of the One Truly Astrally Initiated Primal WOMBAT, Reformed  
A Subsidiary of the 1st Intermediate Church of LOKI  
Kent, OH

...Also notable in [NIEKAS 27] is Anne Braude's excellent article "Instruments of Darkness." This was extremely informative for me, and I am impressed with the evident care with which this article was researched. Anne's conclusion as to the true nature of witchcraft, which is that the 3 main hypotheses, that there are witches who make pacts with the Devil, that there are no witches (beyond a few frauds), and that there are witches who are a remnant of the Old Religion, are all true, is daring. It is not easy to assert 3 sets of data all of which are mutually contradictory; indeed, few would have the intellectual courage to attempt it. Anne makes her case well, and in this instance, I will relax my usual antipathy for logical contradiction. My own observation on the state of witchcraft today is that most witches are people who are at least attempting to carry on the traditions of the Old Religion even though there may be no true historical continuity between what they are doing and the authentic Old Religion. (This is pretty much

in line with Wayne Shumaker's analysis.)

David Palter

The Evil Speller struck again in "Instruments of Darkness," omitting part of a sentence and making my already murky argument even more obscure. On page 28, column 2, paragraph 3, the second sentence should read: "Once you have admitted the existence of one spiritual being, you have acknowledged at least the possibility of others--including the Devil." My argument of course presumes, rather than trying to prove, the theistic position--but then, committed atheists or materialists are not likely to take the slightest interest in the question of witchcraft anyway. I am, after all, dealing with the idea of witchcraft and the witch as it appears in the popular imagination of western Europe, not making a serious argument for or against its truth.

Anne Braude

...And she didn't even thank me for all the words that I got right.

The Evil Speller

## "REALITY HAS ARRIVED"

...First of all, in determining just what the philosophy of Libertarianism is, there is no one indisputable answer. Libertarianism has many exponents each of whom has their own particular view of the subject although certain general tendencies are apparent; there is no one Libertarian authority so respected that his/her opinion on the subject would be considered definitive throughout the movement. Ayn Rand is the most influential thinker in the development of Libertarianism and she is, as you know, not considered a Libertarian. Thomas Jefferson, who of course greatly predates anything recognizable as Libertarianism, is probably the earliest source of basic Libertarian ideas (and indeed, it would be fair to describe Libertarianism as a revival of Jeffersonianism). Probably the most broadly applicable description of Libertarianism would simply be: a political philosophy which seeks a drastic reduction in government activities (which is in accordance with Jefferson's famous statement that "that government governs best which governs least"). But how much of a drastic reduction? Here we will have no unanimity of opinion.

Ed Meskys reports that Ed Slavinsky, a rabid Libertarian, wants to abolish government completely. Well, perhaps Ed thinks that this is the ideal of Libertarianism but in my own opinion the complete abolition of government is more accurately described as anarchy and is not true Libertarianism since it carries the ideals of Libertarianism past the point of being workable. (This means that, in my view, what Jefferson should have said is, "That government which governs the least while still retaining the truly indispensable functions of government, which are to provide protection against crimes against life and property and against foreign aggression, governs best.") While it is true that Libertarianism regards liberty as the highest political good, and it is true that anarchy provides the greatest degree of freedom from government interference, it is also true that there are too many people who are not capable of a sufficient degree of individual responsibility to deal with that degree of liberty. Hence, as a matter of unavoidable practicality, some government must be retained. Those who believe that people can live in peace and harmony in large groups without any government whatsoever, have, I fear, not been very acute observers of human nature and behavior. (It might be pointed out that even with government we are hardly living in peace and harmony, but it is pretty clear that without any government things would be a lot worse.)

Another opinion I will take issue with is that of Roger Stewart who claims that the intention of Libertarianism is to get government out of the way so big business can take over. That political philosophy is properly known as plutocracy, and again is not true Libertarianism. In a truly Libertarian society, an individual still has protection provided by the small but still existent government, against violent crimes; big business cannot simply put together their own private police forces and armies and force their will on the public. They can, of course, use their money and resources to further their interests (just as they can today, in our relatively non-Libertarian society) but the individual who objects to any particular big business or for that matter big business in general, remains free to do business with small businesses instead or even with no businesses if he is sufficiently independent. In other words, people are free to do what they want as long as they do not infringe upon the freedom of others. Some people may want to cast their lot with big business, which is their privilege and which is not

necessarily a bad thing to do (not all big businesses are as unethical as, for example, Marxist mythology would have us believe. Some are, of course, but if they engage in criminal acts they can still be curtailed in a Libertarian society). There is no doubt that in a Libertarian society big business would find it much easier to flourish. However, the same is true of small business and of individuals. Everybody benefits from the removal of excess government. Perhaps the most widespread myth about Libertarianism is that it is plutocracy in disguise, and indeed I have not doubt that there are plutocrats who find it convenient to support Libertarianism. Nonetheless, there is a difference. Libertarians seek increased liberty for everybody, rich or poor.

I will admit that there is a real danger that in the event (which presently seems unlikely) that the Libertarian Party rises in power in the U.S., plutocrats who have infiltrated the party will take over and turn Libertarianism to their own, much less desirable purposes. Rather than rejecting Libertarianism for this reason, I would merely favor vigilance on the part of true Libertarians to guard the integrity of Libertarian politics. It might be said that Libertarians in this country are faced with two tasks, both of which are nearly if not actually impossible, these being to gain control (democratically) of the government, and to preserve the integrity of Libertarianism. We certainly have a difficult job ahead of us. We probably will never do it, but I for one will never abandon the dream.

(Incidentally, a conflict exists between Libertarian principles of government and massive government spending on space. What I really would like is a Libertarian government and a privately financed space program. But since I do not have a Libertarian government, and at current taxation levels the private sector can't afford its own space program, I therefore favor a government finance space program.)

David Palter

...Ed's column reminds me that the Ayn Rand disciples at UC Berkeley when I was there billed themselves, incongruously enough, as the Society of Individualists. They had a brief moment in the spotlight when they got into a semi-violent confrontation over control of a loudspeaker with some pro-Black Studies agitators. I once saw Rand on DONAHUE, where she impressed me only by her almost

unbelievable rudeness to any questioner in the audience who presumed to suggest, however tentatively and politely, that she just possibly might not be 100 right about everything.

Anne Braude

...I enjoyed reading the look at Rand. Like any other too-bright kid growing up feeling put-upon and unappreciated, I read Rand. I don't think I was ever cut out to be an Objectivist; Cheryl and Eddie always broke me up in Atlas Shrugged. They'd have done very nicely together. The thing I noticed much later on, after I decided that Galt's Gulch wasn't going to adopt me, was just how sexist Rand is. Dominique in Fountainhead is essentially raped by Howard Roak (and no, I don't buy that stuff about "how she really wanted it." Maybe she did, and maybe she didn't. I reads like rape.) Ditto Dagny and Hank Reardon: Dagny's Lovers seem to have all the finesse of cougars in rut, if cougars go into rut, which I don't know. And Gaea in Anthem is nothing at all. Probably the most heroic woman in Rand's work is in We the Living. Still, I don't condemn my enjoyment of her books, and I still have an especial love for trains derived from them. And whenever I'm listening to music, I wonder, "Could Richard Halley have written that?"

Susan Schwartz

### "STARSWORD, MISTFIRE, DRAGONWIND, AND SHADOWQUEST"

...The phenomenon Terry Jeeves notes among book titles is not restricted to fantasies. Romance novels, especially the bodice-ripper genre, make great use of buzz words like SAVAGE, DESIRE, LOVE, DAWN, FLAME, PASSION, DARK, DESTINY, BRIGHT, BLACK, TORMENT, BURNING, TOWERING, and SHINING, to name a few. The title Dawn of Desire has been used at least twice. A recent article in TV GUIDE discussed buzz words for TV movie titles, revealing that DIARY, RAPE, and HIGHWAY were biggies. ("Don't miss 'Diary of the Rape of a Highway,' a searing story of winter salting on the Mass. Pike!")

Kathy Godfrey

...My favorite item [in NIEKAS 27] was Terry Jeeves' column, since I am a word freak of long standing. But how did he manage to omit EMPIRE and SILVER? His story of the unsuccessful petrol company, MURCO, reminds me of a fairly nice lemon cologne, "Love's Fresh Lemon," which was introduced a few years ago with

the rather self-defeating slogan, "I picked a lemon in the Garden of Love." It has always amazed me that any advertising company could get as far as launching a national campaign without somebody saying, "Hey, fellas, a lemon is a dud automobile!"

Anne Braude

### "MICHAELMAS AND ME"

...I found the most interesting feature of this issue to be Algis Budrys' article "Michaelmas and Me" which certainly gives a view into some aspects of the science fictional creative process which are rarely seen. The reality of what is involved in writing SF professionally turns out to be quite different from anything I would have expected, at least in the case of Algis Budrys. I have, unavoidably, been aware of the terrible difficulties, the injustices, and yes, the insanity which has troubled my own life, and the lives of many others, yet I have often imagined that for the Olympian beings who write SF, those masters of imaginative prose whose work displays such brilliance, things would be different. But no. Another illusion is lost. I greatly admire Algis Budrys and his writing, and while I am distressed to hear of the suffering of his early career, I am relieved that at least he has now apparently overcome those earlier problems and is now doing well, as he should.

David Palter

...I was fascinated to read Algis Budrys' article. I've often wondered what happened to A.J. as a fiction writer after Rogue Moon, and at last I have the explanation. Readers who just see novels or stories appearing --or failing to appear--usually have little conception of the true pressures and difficulties living a writer's life. I don't know what the cure is, short of a total reordering of the priorities of our society. But something is surely wrong when Budrys can write--The panic came from having spent the better part of a decade being one of the world's best science fiction writers and having nothing to show for it but debts it would take me years to repay..." That strikes a chill in my heart. Has Budrys lost twenty years of a brilliant writing career because the only editors prepared to buy his work were cretins who wanted only to change his titles and pay him peanuts?

Alexei Panshin

### "READING ABOUT ROBERT HEINLEIN"

...All the published commentary on Heinlein is proof that he is a writer with pronounced ideas, the kind that naturally draws comment. However, I do not understand the tendency for the critics to inject so much of themselves into their writing on RAH, with the result that feelings about Mr. Heinlein are highly polarized. I find Mr. Heinlein's recent fiction silly and self-indulgent, but I have appreciated many of his essays as a fresh approach to his subjects, even if I don't always agree with his conclusions. What does annoy me is his recent depiction of women, and Spider Robinson's passionate defense of same. If intelligent women do spend a lot of time worrying over being "whiff" like D.T. in "The Number of the Beast--", I certainly don't know any of them, and I resent Mr. Robinson's implication that Heinlein knows more about this than I do. I don't pretend to know the deepest thoughts and motivations of men; why should I assume Heinlein's prescience about women over my own observations and experience?

Kathy Godfrey

...reading Fred Lerner's survey of various studies of Heinlein--including mine--leads me to wonder whether I have wasted a dozen years of my own hypothetically brilliant SF writing career. I've spent this time reading history, philosophy, mythology, mysticism, psychology, science, and intercultural studies in an attempt to figure out what is really going on in SF. I've written essays on SF rather than writing SF stories. If I were to believe Fred, it has all been a waste. I've simply spent the last twelve years being silly. So silly that Fred is embarrassed to read what Cory and I have written.

It is one thing to be one of the world's best science fiction writers and be in debt for it. I think I could stand that. But to have spent a dozen years trying to find out the inner secrets of SF, and then be accused of just being silly, wow, that is a tough one to take.

I can recoup a little. I think that it is possible to answer the specific points that Fred raises. For instance, it is out suggestion that "The Number of the Beast--" is intended to undercut the metaphysical veracity of the Future History stories, and hence to undermine modern science fiction. Fred calls this a non-issue. He says that Heinlein has simply noticed that the Future History has been overtaken by events and has decided to jettison it. Beyond that, he says that "The Number of the Beast--" is only a story, and we must not take that seriously.

My answer is that I do take "The Number of the Beast--" seriously. I don't like the book, but I do take it seriously. I take science fiction seriously. Cory and I took up SF study and criticism because we wanted to find out what SF meant. There was a great gap between what we had been told science fiction was, and our own reading and writing experience of it. We wanted to resolve this discrepancy. The only way to do it was to take SF seriously and examine it with the aid of the best resources that we could locate.

Our comment on "The Number of the Beast--" was based on a number of observations. One is that modern science fiction derived much of its original power from its claim that it did present a portrait of the way that the future would be. Another is that this claim was largely based on imaginal structures like Heinlein's Future History and Asimov's Galactic History. As I have been fond of pointing out, modern science fiction has been conceived and written within the shelter of these frameworks. For Heinlein to deny the reality of the Future History now, for him to place it on the same axis of "never was" as the Oz books, has to have consequences for our understanding of SF, which for so long made its way in the world by saying, "This is the way the future will be, and you'd better believe it, brother!"

Heinlein was not merely jettisoning the Future History in "The Number of the Beast--". He pretty much dropped that series a long long time ago. What is interesting and significant to me is that he should deliberately bring the Future History into "The Number of the Beast--" and then kick it to pieces. In fact, as anyone who has read "The Number of the Beast--" and not quite out of boredom or a surfeit of cuteness can tell you, what the book is about is the relationship between reality and the imagination. Fred Lerner may not like the fact that "The Number of the Beast--" is a headfucker, a set of conundrums within conundrums, and a kind of algebra of the imagination. But there it is, that is what the book is. And it has to be met on those terms.

It seems to me strange at the very least to accept and love Heinlein when he appears to support one's political position, but to ignore and dismiss him otherwise. If Heinlein has been as important to science fiction as has been assumed, then the fact that his last novel is a set of puzzles about SF cannot be ignored. It can't be sufficient to say, "The only reason that Robert Heinlein writes is to be amusing and buy groceries. And in this last novel

he wasn't amusing." That is neither fair to Heinlein, nor respectful of science fiction. Nor is it very gutsy. I mean to say, Heinlein has thrown down a challenge. Are we such wimps that we can't even acknowledge that? Is it inherently silly to take Heinlein's book on its own terms?

Somehow I feel that it is Fred who has failed here, and not us. Heinlein is playing an elaborate game in "The Number of the Beast--", and I don't see any reason to be pooh-poohed out of trying to play that game and win it. For one thing, it is fun. For another, it is dangerous. For a third, the inner meaning of SF is at stake, and that is worth playing for.

It seems to me that Fred has a filter through which all his perceptions are passed. Fred is a Libertarian, and it seems that he judges what he reads, both by Heinlein and about Heinlein, by how well it agrees with Libertarianism as Fred understands that. Reading either "The Number of the Beast--" or Cory's and my essay, "The Death of Science Fiction: A Dream", from a fixed standpoint as a Libertarian seems to me about as appropriate as reading Alice in Wonderland from a political point of view. You can do it, but a lot gets left out.

Humor, for one thing.

The thing is, Fred is in a whole peck of trouble. He is smackdab in the middle of a metaphysical war. Heinlein is out to get him. Heinlein is out to bring him down. We Panshins are doing what we can to protect Fred, and us, and all of you out there. And God help us, Fred thinks that Heinlein and he are on the same side, and he's shooting at us. Wow, that's weird!

I mean, if Ajay Budrys can get discouraged, and I can get discouraged, think about how discouraged Heinlein must be to have had forty years of effort wasted on a bunch of ignorant boobs... It astounds me that there is anyone in the vast audience of Heinlein readers who hasn't tumbled to the fact that Heinlein has declared psychic war on them and reduced them to mere figments of his imagination.

Apparently, they all think that he is talking about somebody else, but not them. Fred, ain't no Libertarians gonna survive if what Heinlein keeps saying is true really is true. Only Heinlein and Mellrooney. And how many times does they have to say it before you believe they means it?

Look, there it is at the beginning of Expanded Universe: "The probability (by a formula I just now derived) that either I or this soi-disant civilization will be

extinct by 2000 A.D. approaches 99.92%. ...But do not assume that I will be the one extinct." Heinlein has written one solipsistic story after another. Why will you not believe that he means it? And if he does mean it, then what consequences does that have for science fiction?

For me, it is my hope not to wink out of existence before Cory and I have finished writing Masters of Space and Time: The Story of Science Fiction. It follows the historical development of the central concepts of SF. It is a very funny book because the development of SF has been funny. And it may, just may, stave off cosmic doom.

In any case, Fred isn't going to get to first base with it unless he does some homework. Until somebody follows out the bibliography in SF in Dimension and does their study, for sure there ain't nobody, Fred Lerner nor anyone else, gonna know for sure what cards we are really holding.

But the biggest joke of all is this. Not only did I vote Libertarian in the last presidential election, but I am an inner secret master of Libertarianism. SF in Dimension is, in fact, a Libertarian book. Fred, at this rate, you are never going to get out of the outer outer circle.

Alexei Panshin

## "ACROSS THE RIVER"

...Fred's article on magazines was an amusing look at one man coping with the modern information explosion. My own "system is to keep up with pro magazines, but to let fanzines pile up until dealing with them becomes a matter of survival (i.e., a table is about to collapse). Then I read too many at once and O.D., producing only a few letters of comment. Since I feel that it's the responsibility of a true fannish reader to LoC what s/he reads, this incurs sporadic pangs of guilt. Unfortunately, time being finite, I see no way to solve this problem.

Kathy Godfrey

...Fred Lerner asks, "If a writer had something really important to say, would he consign it to a quarterly?" But I read the rest of his column anyway. (After all, if I had something really important to do, would I be reading fanzines?)

George Flynn



Frodo and Gollum struggle at the Crack of Doom: What did they really seek?

# A REALIST COMMENTS ON THE LORD OF THE RINGS

BY  
JOE R. CHRISTOPHER

Oh come now, a three-volumed fairy tale?  
The Brothers Grimm knew best, so keep them short!  
Better a trail of breadcrumbs than lembas stale!  
Why weigh it down with new-made terms as sport?

For one whole year there's no one who moves his bowels!  
Gulliver loosed the pressure that inward stalks:  
Poor Gollum scowls, in torment growls and howls--  
Poor Frodo, on Mordor's plain, can barely walk.

And women, where are they? The Entwives left,  
Tired of their husbands' jabber sans end;  
So now the Enyd sing how they're bereft--  
As endless as their talk, so that's no mend.

Galadriel there is, but she's in charge--  
Her husband's but a Caspar Milquetoast king;  
On women in phallic trees I won't enlarge  
(But Elrond in a ditch has found his thing!).

With sex roles all confused the elves will dwindle;  
And I suspect the female dwarves with beards--  
Oh such declining gene pools, a case for Mendel,  
But vigorous growth such chance has defin'tely queered.

Yes, much in Tolkien's art has obvious flaws,  
But most of all, a Blood-shot Eye for evil--  
Was Sauron up too late? drained usquebaughs?  
Some droplets of Murine might cure the Devil!

# Marlak the Wizard

by Jane Sibley  
©2011

AH, THIS LOOKS LIKE  
A PROMISING RECIPE...



GOOD... ÎLTARI IS OFF  
CATCHING WEREMICE!  
I CAN WORK IN PEACE!



LESSEE..."FILLET OF A FENNY SNAKE,  
IN THE CAULDRON BOIL AND BAKE...."  
NOW, IS THAT A WATER MOCCASIN OR  
A SEA SNAKE?...



OH WELL, I'LL THROW  
THEM BOTH IN...



"EYE OF NEWT AND TOE OF FROG,  
WOOL OF BAT AND TONGUE OF DOG..."  
HOPE POODLE WILL DO!

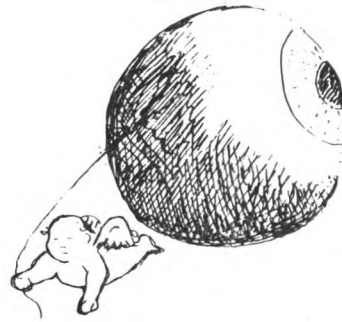


**YUCK!** WILL MAY  
HAVE BEEN  
A GREAT MAN, BUT HE  
WAS NO COOK!



♪ ♪ HERE, KITTY ♪  
♪ NICE ÎLTARI! ♪  
DIN-DIN!





Piers Anthony  
Mike Bastraw  
W. Ritchie Benedict  
Dainis Bisenieks  
Anne J. Braude  
Don D'Amassa  
Sherwood C. Frazier  
Beverly Kanter  
Patricia Mathews  
Edmund R. Meskys  
Nan C. L. Scott  
Susan M. Shwartz  
rod walker



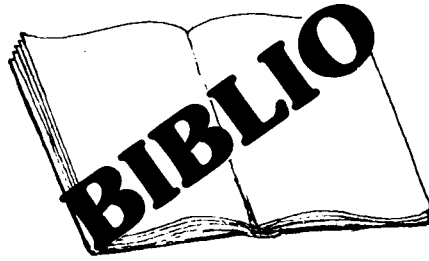
R.I.P.  
REISS SMART 1981

The Curse of the Pharoahs, Elizabeth Peters, Dodd, Mead, 1981, \$10.95

In my review of Elizabeth Peters's The Love Talker several NIEKU ago, I mentioned that I regarded Crocodile on the Sandbank as her best book. I am therefore delighted that she has written a sequel, a delight that I am sure will be shared by all admirers of the indomitable--and inimitable--Amelia Peabody Emerson and her irascible archaeologist spouse.

Having foiled, in Crocodile, sundry sinister types including an apparently reanimated ancient Egyptian mummy, Amelia and Emerson are now engaged in dealing with an even more severe trial--their formidable offspring, "Ramses." They are rescued from this Herculean task, and from the appalling curse of rural English domesticity, by the ancient Egyptian curse of the title. It has already claimed the life of Sir Henry Baskerville (!!!), a wealthy amateur Egyptologist who had discovered an apparently undisturbed royal tomb in the Valley of the Kings. When his widow asks Emerson to take charge of the excavation, he and Amelia leap at the chance. Amelia, armed as ever with steel-shafted parasol and dagger-keen wits, is also determined to solve the unexplained mysterious death of Sir Henry, which she is convinced is murder. Is the culprit the seductive widow? The missing archaeological expert? The rich American (who talks like the improbable Americans in vintage English thrillers, with expressions like "Holy shucks!") who coveted the tomb...and Lady Baskerville? The pestiferous Irish journalist who apparently invented the Curse out of whole cloth? Or is it the appalling Madame Berengaria, who is convinced that Emerson was her lover in a previous incarnation? Meanwhile the Curse--or the murderer--continues to strike, and Emerson is sufficiently annoyed to start investigating himself.

Peters has obviously borrowed her plot almost intact from the events surrounding the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamon in 1922, and the subsequent sudden death of Lord Carnarvon, one of the leaders of the expedition. (In fact, although she has transposed events back to the 1880's, she is so bemused by her source that she inadvertently changes her victim's name to Lord Baskerville midway through the proceedings.) This book is not quite as good as its predecessor: the plot is complicated to the edge of total confusion, and the protagonists of the subordinate romantic plot are neither as attractive nor as



interesting as their counterparts in Crocodile. But Amelia and Emerson are once again in splendid form, as interesting--and as hilarious--as before. I shudder to think of the fate of the villains (not to mention the innocent bystanders) in possible sequels to come, confronted not only with this redoubtable couple but with their reinforcements in the form of Ramses and the cat Bastet. Highly recommended--but read Crocodile on the Sandbank first if at all possible.

ajb

Dragonslayer, Wayland Drew, Ballantine, 1981, 218 pp., \$3.25

Movie adaptations are one of the hardest types of books to review. If the movie is any good you don't particularly want to read the book --the visual imagery is too strong. If you read the book before you see the movie, you will think of the characters and events in terms of your own imagination and wonder why the movie was such a flop in conveying the message (at least in your own opinion--perhaps someone else would disagree). I had a distinct advantage in this respect as I have not yet viewed the film and had no idea of the plot line from reading of coming attractions.

Notwithstanding the above, I still was chary about this novel when I learned that it is based on a screenplay jointly engineered by Paramount Pictures and Walt Disney Productions. It has taken years for Hollywood to get around to science-fiction and especially the sword and sorcery novel. I remember the high hopes the SF community had for THE BLACK HOLE which turned out to be something less than a rousing success in terms of box office appeal. With the recent debut of EXCALIBUR and the supernatural splash of the board game "Dungeons and Dragons," it was apparent months ago that S&S had to be the next big trend in the movies.

The jury is still out on the movie, but judging from the color inserts in the book, it does look very strong in the production values and special effects department.

Now, as to the book, it is an adequate adaptation and can stand on its own as a novel. However, I could only groan at the opening scene with the old sorcerer Ulrich and his young apprentice Galen. It kept conjuring up visions of Mickey Mouse and the brooms in FANTASIA, THE SWORD AND THE STONE, Tolkien, and even Luke Skywalker and Obi-Wan-Kenobi. You are on dangerous ground when you start with a cliché. It appears that the old man is soon going to die; he is the last full-fledged magi in the neighborhood. The local kingdom has a problem however. They have a dragon to remove and Ulrich is the only one who knows how. It appears that the Middle Ages had no sense of ecology and did not regard the dragon as an endangered species. The king, Casiodorus, and his henchman Tyrian (short for tyrannical?) want the dragon to stay mainly because it enhances their power, and they fear the consequences should they give Vermithrax (the dragon) his eviction notice. A priest who quite properly regards the creature as something "from the pit" meets his end in a particularly horrifying way (no telling what the sequence will look like on the screen). The villagers keep the dragon relatively happy by sacrificing a local maiden to it through the means of a lottery (this is how the mother of Valerian--the girlfriend of the hero, dies). Add to this magic spells and amulets and you have the stuff of the typical fantasy novel.

As such, I found it an interesting read but relatively routine, as there are so many writers (McCaffrey, Zelazny, and even Silverberg) who are into the same thing. I realize that writers use archetypes and patterns when dealing with this genre, but why, friends and neighbors, can they not inject some new life into them. (STAR TREK--THE MOTION PICTURE faced the same problems: too many old stories cobbled together in an effort to come up with something new.) I will give the Disney organization credit for trying to convert its approach into a more adult mien, but it takes time and several failures to do so. If they just drop one genre and pick up another in such a cavalier fashion, they will never achieve the smash they are hoping for.

All in all, an adequate diversion, but the connoisseur of fantasy fiction must look elsewhere.

wrb

## THE NOVELS OF MIKE SIROTA

### 1. BERBORA

- a. Berbora, Manor, 1978, 202 pp.
- b. Flight from Berbora, Manor, 1978, 237 pp.

### 2. REGLATHIUM

- a. The Prisoner of Reglathium, Manor, 1978, 240 pp.
- b. The Conquerors of R., Manor, 1978, 237 pp.
- c. The Caves of R., Manor, 1978, 272 pp.
- d. The Dark Straits of R., Manor, 1978, 236 pp.
- e. The Slaves of R., Manor, 1978, 255 pp.

### 3. SHADZEA

- a. The Twentieth Son of Ornon, Zebra, 1980, 151 pp.

### 4. BORANGA

- a. Master of Boranga, Zebra, 1980, 317 pp.
- b. The Shrouded Walls of Boranga, Zebra, 1980, 288 pp.
- c. Journey to Mesharra, Zebra, 299 pp.

Edgar Rice Burroughs had had, and has, his imitators: notably Lin Carter these days. Probably real ERB fans will not accept imitations, but those who simply like the kinds of fantasy-adventure stories he spun will be glad to have the newer ones from other pens.

Another writer very much in the Burroughs tradition is Mike Sirota. I thought I'd do a sort of collective review of all his books I know of to date rather than doing them one at a time. The Manor paperbacks may, by the way, be a little hard to get. They are not being printed and distributed at the moment, insofar as I'm aware, owing to a legal tangle between the author and publisher. But I've seen the Reglathium books still on new-book shelves on occasion and all of the Manor books seem readily available used. The Zebra books are more recent and also seem to have been more widely distributed; at least I saw them in more places.

The two Berbora books were to be a trilogy, but the third book was either never written or at least never published owing to the aforementioned legal difficulty. So, in a sense, the story stops 2/3 of the way through. These are probably the least Burroughsian of Mike's novels, being more in the line of the Conan sword-and-sorcery genre. There are all sorts of monsters and death on rather a large scale. (Mass mortality is typical of Mike's books; he is definitely much rougher trade than the comparatively genteel Burroughs.) If you like this style of

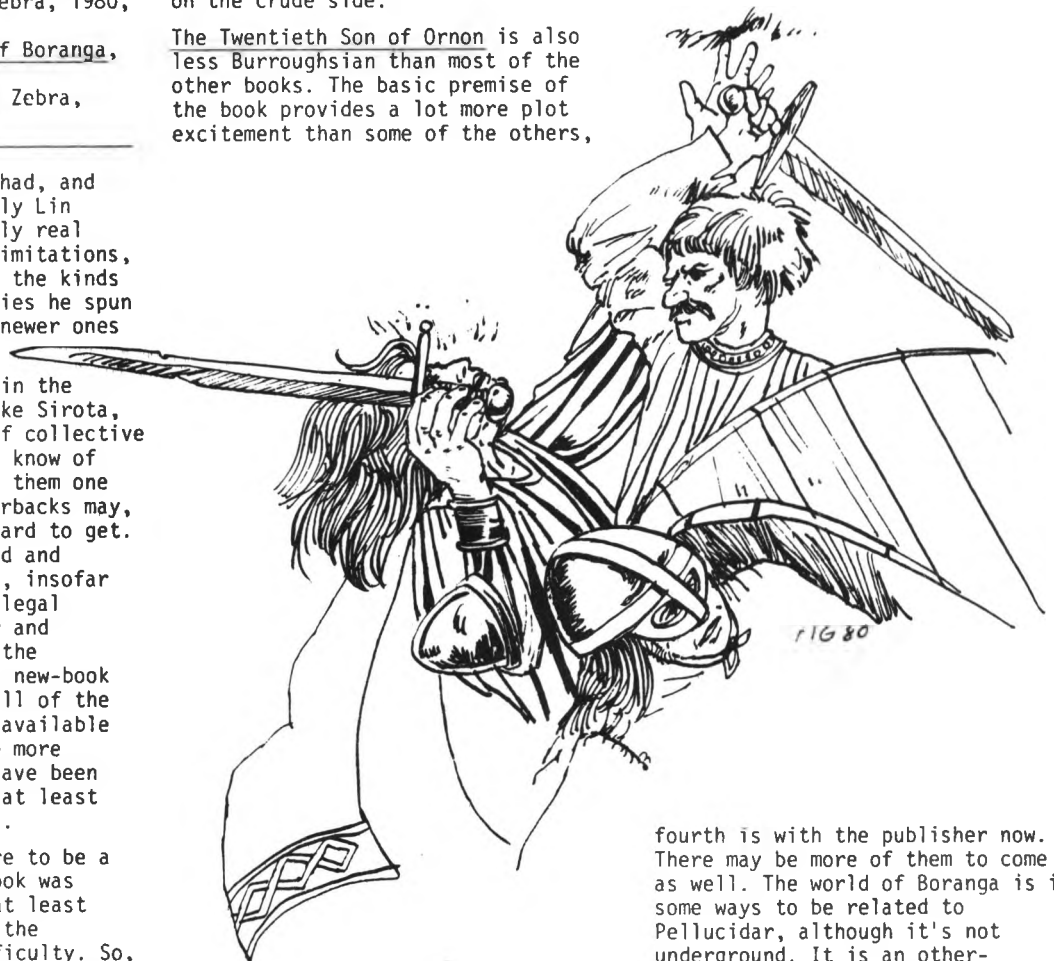
story, here's still more in the genre.

The Danuus novels, set on Regulathium, constitute Mike's "Barsoom." Reglathium is inhabited by both human and nonhuman intelligent species, and he uses a favorite Burroughs device, astral projection travel, to get his hero there. Reglathium is a world of several medium-sized continents, and Mike's characters are beginning to travel among them when the series breaks off after the 5th novel. And of course there's killing and gore sufficient to satisfy the most lurid blood-lust of a crazed Thark. There are maps with the Reglathium books ...actually Mike's sketches which had been sent so that the publisher could have a more professional artist do maps for the books. The originals got in instead. They are historically interesting but a little on the crude side.

The Twentieth Son of Ornon is also less Burroughsian than most of the other books. The basic premise of the book provides a lot more plot excitement than some of the others,

survivors are pitted against each other in a gladiatorial duel to the death. The lone survivor now becomes sole heir to the throne and upon his accession the whole thing begins all over again. Fun, huh? Anyway, of course there's all sorts of hanky-panky going on, a plot to guarantee one of the 20 the accession and another son who's obviously the good guy, who should win, and so on. The ending plot twists are just a little on the *deus ex machina* side but they are acceptable in the same way we accept the same devices in a Gilbert & Sullivan operetta (although not for the same reasons). The ending of the book leaves the way open for a sequel.

There are already three Boranga books (or the "Ro-lan" books, named after the main character), and a



too. Basically, the ruler of Shadzea must, in a very short time, get a lot of women pregnant. The first twenty sons to be born of this business become jointly his heirs. Then as they grow up they are put through various tests and competitions which are invariably deadly to some of them. Finally, at the end, the

fourth is with the publisher now. There may be more of them to come as well. The world of Boranga is in some ways to be related to Pellucidar, although it's not underground. It is an other-dimensional world reached by sailing out into the middle of nowhere near Hawaii. Apparently it consists of a number of large-sized islands, of which Boranga and Mesharra are two. Here the syndrome of mass slaughter comes back; oh, boy, does it! In graphic detail, yet. By the end of the 3rd book the entire island of Boranga has been depopulated by a psi-powerful madman who seems to

enjoy this sort of thing and has sailed off to take his peculiar notion of fun & games elsewhere. I suppose that in the sense of having a bunch of islands, this world might also be thought of as equivalent to Amtor (Venus). Anyway, the story moves very rapidly...has to, considering how fast people get killed off, so the fantasy-adventure lover won't be bored. There is lots of action.

In case anybody is keeping track, that's 7 3/4 linear inches of material. I've just finished reading all of it for a special issue of PELLENNORATH [available through Rod at 1273 Crest Dr., Encinitas, CA 92024] in which we will do maps for the books, assisted by Mike who will go over my results when I finish them. Just waiting for some spare time to do them and to read the 4th Boranga book....

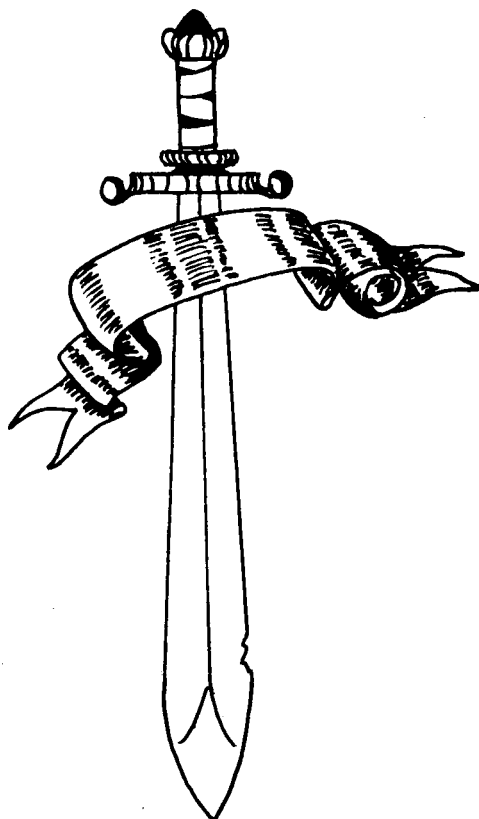
rw

#### The Shadow of the Torturer, Gene Wolfe, Timescape

This book came to my attention in devious and coincidental fashion. I am a busy writer and a slow reader, so that one SF or fantasy novel per month is about all I can read, at about 10 pages per day during interstices between more important things. I am thus fairly choosy about the fare, and generally I read for education rather than entertainment. Upon occasion the two combine, and this is gratifying. I read reviews, and do make decisions based on these, but this means my reading is seldom current.

Publishers can be slow and incomplete on reports of the sales of an author's novel, and slower yet on payments of royalties, and sometimes they falsify such reports or omit them entirely. This bothers me more that it may some other writers, for every one of my novels earns out its advance and pays royalties ranging from a few dollars to quintuple the original advance. If those royalty reports are wrong, my income suffers (publishers seldom make errors in the author's favor)--but even a formal auditing of the publisher's accounts do not necessarily produce truth. For this reason I pay close attention to things like the LOCUS list of genre bestsellers. Such a list owes nothing to the publisher's system of creative bookkeeping, and gives me an alternative perspective on the true success of my works. Such lists hardly tell the whole story, as there may be sizable sales in mainstream markets not reflected in the specialty stores, but they certainly help.

My first adult hardcover genre novel (I had a juvenile HC some years back) was Split Infinity. It started in fifth place on the LOCUS list, dipped to 6th, then dropped to 10th where it clung by the teeth of its skin for four months before being borne away by the dread tide of



anonymity. I interpret this to mean that the first two months a number of people bought the novel because of my reputation, while in the later months word of mouth spread, generating a continuing but not spectacular interest. At this writing, almost a year and a half after publication of that novel, I have yet to see any report from the publisher on its sales, so that LOCUS listing is all I have to suggest whether the novel is a success or a flop, but I think it is a success. I suspect other writers suffer similar paucity of information with similar bad grace. Back in the late 1960's I had the temerity to demand the proper accounting owed me from this same publisher; as a result they black-listed me for six years. Nowadays I am a trifle more careful. For one thing, the management has changed, and I have no reason to believe the present management is doing anything untoward, so it is easier to be tolerant. The situation was otherwise a dozen years ago.

Now of course there are a number of titles on the LOCUS list, and they bobble about, generally starting at or near their high points and dropping with varying velocities off the list. I tend to notice those titles that nudge up against mine, as if I am standing on the DOWN-escalator and looking about at the people traveling with me. Some walk down the moving stairs, in a hurry to get off. If I ever saw a person traveling up the down escalator, I would take notice. Well, one of those other titles did something like that. It started out below mine, but dropped more slowly, so that soon it was standing a step or two above me. All right; these things happen; the sales of novels do not exactly parallel the travels of people. After a tour of six months it also dropped off the list, probably having sold about the same number of copies mine had.

But after a month, this other novel returned to the list. Now this is like a man rising from the dead. I may happen, but it is unusual. This was no fluke, in this case; that novel remained on the list, rising until it stood higher than it ever had in its first life. If my novel had hung on a while because the earlier readers told others about it, what then was I to make of this other one? The novel was The Shadow of the Torturer, by Gene Wolfe, and I decided I had better investigate this personally.

It is a fascinating book, neither fish nor fowl, called fantasy though there is no fantasy in it. It is a beautifully written tale of an apprentice torturer who fails to make the grade for quite human reason, is banished to the hinterland, and along the way encounters assorted other odd and human characters. The background society is revealed in quiet stages, with the impression of depth and tantalizing mysteries. Wolfe is a nearly flawless stylist, literate without being obnoxious. He has a very special insight into the perplexities of reality. In one place I had to note an exclamation of admiration in the margin. I can't quote the passage because of the strict wording of the copyright, but it's on page 123 of the paperback edition and covers the concept of layers of reality lying like archaeological artifacts beneath the reality we perceive, using the whole as an aspect of characterization of a particular character. I was amazed not only at the quality of the book, but that the readers should appreciate this level of writing enough to restore it to the genre bestseller list. In certain respects the general readership is like a

herd of swine, rating the most appalling junk above the most exquisitely crafted literature. Too often, the success of a given novel seems inversely proportional to its merit. I speak as one who has capitalized on this phenomenon, using the tricks of the trade to generate consistent sales appeal, while being unable even to sell superior material. In *Torturer* I perceived that rarity, a quality narrative with commercial success.

And then it ended, guillotined unfinished. This was disappointing and infuriating. You see, I am of the old school. I believe a novel should have a clear beginning, development, climax and resolution. If that word climax suggests a sexual parallel, perhaps it is valid. An act of sexual love proceeds with deliberate speed to a mutual climax that is highly satisfying to the participants, and I think it is not surprising or unreasonable that this pattern is emulated in fiction. There are unkind terms for people who deliberately work up others to high sexual expectation, then cut it off short. Those terms should also apply to those who present fragments as complete novels. In the case of *Torturer*, the development is so smooth and consistent that I am sure the author is proceeding towards a truly splendid climax--but the publisher must have cut it off, almost it seemed in mid sentence, at a convenient length for publication. Publishers do that; again I know from experience. Some publishers literally do not care whether a novel has a climax or meaning; they will castrate it on the altar of a fixed number of pages. Maybe some day we shall see a new line of books: PROCRUSTIAN PUBLICATIONS. Procrustus, according to Greek legend, was a robber who placed his victims on an iron bed, and either stretched them to fit, or cut off what overlapped to make them fit. Whatever the name, this is too often the current practice for novels. I think it is a shame that a fine writer like Wolfe has been treated this way.

Whatever the esthetic merit of the system, it seems to be a winning tactic. As I write this, the sequels to my novel and Wolfe's book are on the LOCUS hardcover list, running respectively third and second. I would judge from this that the readers like both the conventional format and the fragment format, and regard Wolfe as a better writer than Anthony. In this they may be correct. I suspect that when the time comes to judge the best genre series of the 80's, Wolfe's series will be the one to measure against. I do recommend it.

pa

#### Your Erroneous Zones Pulling Your Own Strings, Dr. Wayne Dyer

These two books, published in 1976 and 1978 respectively, are part of the genre of self-help books, what the Dewey Decimel System used to classify as "sermons." Other books in the genre, not as good, are Norman Vincent Peale's *The Power of Positive Thinking* and Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. I liked Dr. Dyer's books better because they give more emphasis to the readers' free choice instead of being filled with society-serving prescriptions for "success." As examples of his kind of success he includes Thoreau and Gautama Buddha, anarchists both. But his is a gentle form of anarchism, free of the vituperation of Ayn Rand.

He seems to have gathered his wisdom from his own experience and those of his group-therapy patients. I say "seems" because the publisher omits the customary biographical data, including only the titles of his three earlier books on group therapy. I would like to know Dr. Dyer's professional credentials but he apparently thinks they don't merit inclusion. In *Pulling Your Own Strings*, he advises the reader not to analyze, explain, apologize, or think--to simply act. Then he does just that. He says his wisdom is only common sense.

The books are written in a smooth conversational style. I became so engrossed I couldn't put them down; I read each 250-page book in one sitting, only stopping to eat and sleep. Most of his advice I adhere to one hundred percent. What impressed me was how Dr. Dyer learns from criticism. The first book completely ignored Feminism and mentioned as good examples to follow many WASP men and one WASP woman--Katherine Hepburn. He describes a couple trapped in a traditional marriage but not the changes Feminism is now making. On the other hand, in the second book, he says, "It intrigues me that football coaches believe God has so little to do she is concerned about who is coaching what teams." Later in the book, he mentions several U.S. feminists as examples of successful striving. He thinks Feminism--people joining in groups to change attitudes towards women--is at least as valuable a development as jogging, holistic medicine, and do-it-yourself home and auto repair.

I have three areas of disagreement with Dr. Dyer. First, he ignores the value of psychotropic drugs in turning a sick or obsessed person's thinking around. I remember my

father's hyperactivity--how he would rush through the house yelling and kicking doors; how every time he watched television he would change channels whenever a commercial came on, every five minutes, completely ignoring the others who were trying to watch with him. And yet, if asked, he would say, "I'm just keeping busy." I also think of a former BNF who was trying to write a story for ANALOG who used to smoke one joint after another until he died in an accident. Both men needed a psychiatrist and tranquilizers. I take heavy tranquilizers, and my only regret is that I wasn't steered to a shrink sooner.

A second objection I had to the good psychologist is the advice he gives about refereeing quarreling children: "Corrine can teach her children with behavior rather than words, or she can use words followed up by action. When the children ask her to be a referee, she can simply disappear. Yes, I mean physically leave and allow them to work out their own disputes. She can go to the bathroom and lock herself in, go for a short walk (if the children aren't too young to be left alone in the house), and so on. Or she can just say, 'You settle it yourselves this time,' and ignore their complaints about it."

I think I know more about children than Dr. Dyer. I raised my younger sisters and babysat extensively, and I say a parent figure is irresponsible if she leaves children under twelve for more than an hour without planned activities. Children get bored with reading and television and pick fights with each other to break the monotony. They don't need an adult to play with them all the time, but they do need one to start them playing Monopoly or cleaning house. Otherwise you can expect hospital bills.

The most important objection I have to these otherwise excellent advice books is the authors sidestepping of the problem of people who have experienced a severe loss in their lives, say from their family being wiped out or from a physical handicap. These books are really intended only for middle-class mildly neurotic people. As part of a course in Jewish literature I reread the Book of Job and the books of the Nazi Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Remember how Job is stricken with boils after his children are killed? I wrote, "Job's boils are analogous to Elie Wiesel's near-fatal accident. In both cases, the survivor's body turned traitor on him. After a great loss comes anomie, which is the Soul not wanted to rebuild the fallen city or accept new love but only to

die and return to the womb. The road back to a full life is difficult and painful. Many prisoners of war die shortly after they are repatriated."

For four long years after I left my family home, I called on my last strength to survive doing unskilled labor. Then my father drove a child's bicycle under the wheels of a truck on the freeway and other events convinced me that my family would only abuse me unless I made a clean break. From my internal conflicts, I got six years of psychosomatic illness. If I had read Dr. Dyer's books or any self-help books in those years, they wouldn't have helped me. They wouldn't have made any sense. You don't give common sense to someone whose home just burned down, you offer him food, you put your arms around him and weep with him. There is such a thing as a long-term psychological breakdown and necessary suffering. Dr. Dyer denies this.

It is in his description of Man's existential aloneness that the author is at his best. In a description of a patient whose wife "didn't understand" him, he says, "He still recalls that moment in his living room as one of the most important of his life, because not only did it get him into counseling and give him the freedom to halt his lifelong, albeit futile, effort to have his wife and children feel what he was feeling, it also gave him the strength to be himself in a more powerful and positive way. He still believes that no man is an island who can function as an antisocial hermit, but he now know, by virtue of having experienced it, that internally we are islands unique unto ourselves, and that coming to grips with that idea will help all of us build bridges to others, rather than building barriers by being upset when we see that others are not like us."

I entirely agree. And I think these books entirely deserve their #1 Bestseller status.

bk

Elsewhere; Tales of Fantasy, edited by Terri Windling and Mark Alan Arnold, Ace, 1981, 366 pp., \$2.75

There are books I wish I had written. Elsewhere is something new: a book I wish I had edited. Windling, whose sinister and lovely drawings decorate this anthology, and Arnold have chosen poems and stories both from mainstream and speculative fiction authors and come up with a sure winner. Here are songs by William Gilbert, and Monro's lovely "Overheard on a Saltmarsh," as well

as reprints from John Gardner's works, LeGuin's, Grave's, and many others.

For me, much more interesting are the stories by new writers. Several --Ellen Kushner, Gillian Fitzgerald, and Janny Wurts--appear for the first time in this book, and their stories are more than fit to stand with the works of C.J. Cherryh, Jane Yolen, and Michael Moorcock.

Among my favorite stories, Kushner's euphuistic treatment of a world like Moorcock's *Gloriana*, "The Unicorn Masque," and M. Lucie Chin's sad and lovely "Ku Mei Li." Turning from Celtic islands to Brittany, Cherryh and Evangeline Walton give us stories that combine Celtic melancholy with a feeling that Emily Dickinson once described as "zero to the bone." Gil Fitzgerald's "Pooka's Bridge" presents the playful side of Celtic legend; these other stories show its potential for violence. Moorcock has produced an elaborate send-up both of his Elric and of his Jherek Carnelian series which had me laughing, yet wondering at the possibilities for more glittering confusion which he raises.

Anthologies like Elsewhere tend to have one main problem: a certain sameness of tone. This one is no exception. Many of the stories are elegiacal: people love, adventure, lose, and vanish into time; or they suffer and are pulled from the world by the gentle magic of the stories and their authors. There are many Celtic stories, several unicorns, and a dragon and a cat...the much-beloved apparatus of a lot of modern fantasy. None of which I begrudge the authors or the editors --especially since there are also stories with different backgrounds: Chinese, Japanese, and just plain otherworldly. In short, this book is to be read, savored, reread--and saved. In it are the sorts of stories you'd like to read to wise children, or share with friends.

With great perceptiveness, the editors include Yeats' Hosting of the Sidhe. "Away, come away!" they cry. And so does Elsewhere. Now, at least, we all know where they've gone and how to get there.

sms

The Ring of Allaire, Susan Dexter, Ballantine, 1981, 232 pp., \$2.50

After his master is killed, a slightly incompetent sorcerer's apprentice must rescue a princess and remove the spell of Nimir, a spirit that brings blight and cold upon the land. Inevitably, readers of fantasy are going to think of Galen, in Dragonslayer. Tristan, the

down-at-the-heels hero of Ring of Allaire, a first novel by a most promising writer, also slays a dragon. He too meets one princess and loves another and is accompanied by some of the strangest people on his heroic quest.

There is, of course, nothing new about such Quests. As Peter Beagle says in The Last Unicorn, they are for heroes who know about order. Prophecies must be fulfilled, spells must be broken, and the happy ending cannot come in the middle of the story. The charm lies not in finding out what happens next but in how the old, wonderful pattern will work itself out this time. What new changes will the author ring? Susan Dexter has quite a few: a marvelously idiosyncratic cat, a magical and aristocratic horse, a descendant of kings who gambles, drinks, and punches the hero out, and a city in which magic is practically the medium of exchange.

Certainly Tristan is worthy to take his place near Galen and Lloyd Alexander's Taran as foundlings-come-to-power, but he is not Ged yet: Susan Dexter has a certain magic and grace in her style, a facility with invention, and her spells hold--but I'm waiting for subsequent novels.

sms

Their Majesties' Bucketeers, L. Neil Smith, Ballantine, 1981, \$2.25

Would you believe Sherock Homes as a furry pseudocrustacean? Or a bilaterally symmetrical (that's three of everything, including sexes) Lord Peter Wimsey? If so, you're ready for Mav, Extraordinary Inquirer for Their Majesties' Bucketeers, and the other lamviin of the Empire of Great Foddu on the planet Sodde Lydfe. The Bucketeers are the Empire's department of public safety, with the primary responsibility of firefighting but charged also with criminal investigation; and Mav, aided by his faithful Watson the paramedic Mymy, is in the process of inventing scientific detection. The culture of the Empire resembles Victorian England but is in the throes of a geometrically expanding industrial revolution; every character in the book seems to be inventing something, ranging from the "internal conflagration engine" to the digital clock. Society is naturally showing signs of strain, culminating in a perfect locked-room murder, the victim being the planet's equivalent of Charles Darwin. At the end of a rollicking concatenation of chases, confrontations, and conundrums, Mav and justice triumph.

There are so many good things about this book that I hardly know what to describe first. For one thing, the alien culture (there are no humans at all) is well imagined and vividly conveyed, though the author does not bore us with excessive and irrelevant details just because he went to the trouble of thinking them up. One always has the feeling that he could tell you just what is happening three streets away at any given time if the information became necessary. Plenty of detail does creep in: sexism (Mymy, a summale--the third sex--is a libber), religion (Mav's favorite oath is "Bu the twenty-seven legs of God!"), colonial expansion (if the natives attack, form the wagons into a triangle), and of course political and social mores, not to mention romance. By the end of the book, these queer-looking creatures have become persons that we like or hate. The pace is rapid, the plot well structured, the humor successful, and the ideas provocative. (Smith is a member of the Libertarian Party's national platform committee. I don't know if Libertarianism accounts for the views presented in the novel, but the novel certainly accounts for the party's lack of power: nobody who writes this well is ever going to make it in politics. I mean, Gene McCarthy was a poet, and look what happened to him!)

This is not an ambitious book, like those vast and sprawling epics that garner the Hugo and Nebula nominations. But it is perfectly crafted on its own scale, and I'll take a well-carved cameo over a botched monument any day. Their Majesties' Bucketeers is a very enjoyable read, and I hope there will be sequels.

ajb

Messengers of Deception: UFO Contacts and Cults, Jacques Vallee, Bantam, 1980 (rev. ed.), \$2.95

Did I ever tell you about my UFO experience?

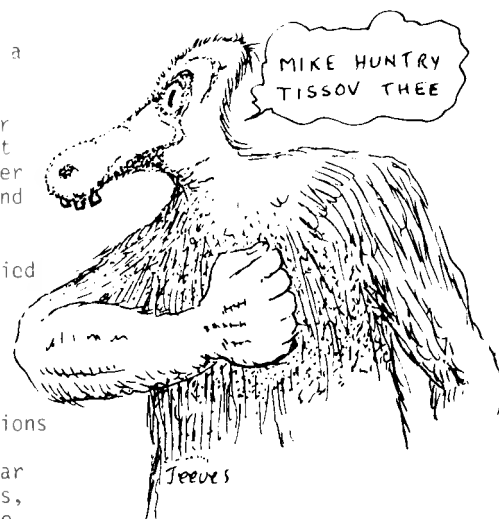
I was walking home one clear December night a few years ago, admiring the brilliance of the stars in the desert sky, when I suddenly noticed this strange cigar-shaped object floating along in absolute silence at a fairly low altitude. The bottom was covered with flashing lights, which seemed to be spelling out some sort of message; in fact, I could make out the message... "Merry Christmas"....

It was the Goodyear blimp, on its way home to its permanent mooring in Goodyear, Arizona, just the other side of Phoenix.

Obviously my UFO became an IFO in a good deal less time than it has taken to tell about it, and most UFO's suffer a similar fate sooner or later. Mine only fell into that category at all because I had never seen the blimp at night before, and it is therefore rather typical. Bright planets, weather balloons, and the like are promptly identified by those familiar with them. But there remains a residue of unexplained incidents; and the military and scientific

Establishments only make fools of themselves with official explanations that involve experienced pilots suddenly misinterpreting a familiar phenomenon on their regular routes, or the planet Venus taking evasive action when approached by a patrol car. No one seems content to let UFO's simply remain unidentified: every book claiming to explain them away as natural phenomena is matched by two claiming to prove that they contain visitors from outer space. But Jacques Vallee is different. His thesis is that it no longer matters whether or not they are real, or where they emanate from; it is the social phenomenon of belief in them that is significant now, and it is already too late for any scientific explanation to overtake or alter this.

I mentioned in passing, in reviewing Holroyd's Alien Intelligence, Vallee's previous book Passport to Magonia, which demonstrated remarkable parallels between the stories of alleged contactees and the accounts of meetings with Little People or their equivalents throughout world history and folklore. He has written several other UFO books, including The Invisible College (about a network of scientists privately investigating UFO's, of which he was a member). Trained as an astrophysicist and computer scientist, he is a prizewinning sf novelist and the model for "Lacombe" in CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND. In Messengers of Deception, he sets out to examine the consequences of a belief in flying saucers, and comes up with some pretty disquieting results. Statistics indicate that a majority of people in the western world accept the reality of UFO's, with varying levels of conviction. (Jimmy Carter reported seeing one in 1973; and Jack Parsons, a founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and of the Aerojet Corporation, claimed to have met a Venusian in the Mohave Desert in 1946.) In looking at the more organized and ambitious UFO cults (H.I.M., UMMO, the Urantian Foundation, etc.), he noted some disturbing political and social implications. Politically, many such



groups have more or less covert ties to occultist organizations, the intelligence community, and to some extremist political and religious groups. Socially, they have a definite program involving world government, the abolition of democracy and of all monetary systems, and--most ominous of all in its implications--the notion that we can expect all our difficulties to be solved for us by benevolent Cosmic Masters, if we will only BELIEVE! (This latter carries along a concomitant theory that the Cosmic Masters are already here, that some among us actually are such superior beings, or are descended from them: in other words, a Master Race.) Although such groups today are for the most part firmly located on the lunatic fringe, Vallee gloomily foresees a replay of events of the late Hellenistic era, when the Greeks lost all faith in reason and science (and the social/political institutions based on them) and rejected them in favor of mysticism and blind faith. His worst-case scenario is a little improbable, but there are signs and portents: look at the way that the extreme anti-nuke movement firmly refuses to engage in dialogue with their opponents in science and government, unable to believe that they could have anything to say that is worth listening to. The failure of science, government, and religion to lead us anywhere is a constant theme of the contactee groups--a complaint we are accustomed to hear from more rational and respected spokespeople. But the UFO groups don't just have a complaint--they have The Answer. And a lot of people are apparently ready to listen to them.

Vallee does of course have his own theory of what UFO's really are, and no less than three theories of where they come from. Pointing out that they cannot be extraterrestrial spacecraft because they disobey the known laws of motion, the accounts of them are mutually contradictory,

and there are just too darned many of them, he theorizes that they are actually psychotronic devices, objects capable of inducing hallucinations and manipulating the unconscious minds of those who encounter them, and that there is nothing in their supposed technology that rules out a source right here on earth. He points to experiments in this area by the Russians which might be based on captured Nazi technology, citing the mysterious "ghost rockets" of 1946. (This is what scientists like to call an elegant theory, because it accounts for all the intractable data.)

The first of his three theories of origin is a supposed "Martian Conspiracy," referring not to Little Green Men but to the nickname of Churchill's secret counterintelligence operation responsible for providing the Nazis with disinformation such as the phantom divisions that convinced Hitler that the D-Day landings would be made elsewhere than Normandy. Such a group might have continued to exist after the war was over, incorporating members from other countries, and could be causing or manipulating the UFO phenomena in the belief that only a common extraterrestrial threat will ever induce all the nations of our planet to unite and work together. (If this is true, the official debunkings are decidedly disingenuous, like Project Blue Book reporting as "flights of wild geese" observations of the then-secret U-2 flights.) His second theory is rather similar, but the manipulators in this case would be occultist groups who have learned to use secret secret techniques of mind-bending. Vallee is not too happy with either of these hypotheses, primarily because they smack of conspiracy theories. I am not too happy with his third and favored theory, because I cannot comprehend it. His view, based on information theory and modern physicists' views on the relationship of information and entropy, is that our conventional notion of space and time as fixed dimensions is a distortion caused by the prevalence of a common artifact, graph paper; we may really be living in an "Associative Universe" which is organized more like a randomized data base than like a sequential library, and the UFO's would thus have their source in a reality next door. I have oversimplified his theory (naturally enough, since it is over my head), and I leave the evaluation of it to those who know more than I do about information theory, computer science, theoretical physics, entropy, energy, and graph paper. So far as I am able to grasp what he is saying, I find the significant parallels with Jung's

idea of synchronicity, which I used to disbelieve in until I found it happening to me all the time. This is a provocative, intriguing, and disturbing book; whether it is a valid one, only the Cosmic Masters know.

ajb

The Moon's Fire-Eating Daughter,  
John Myers Myers, Starblaze, \$4.95

It's billed as a sequel to Silverlock; not so. It is simply another story of a mortal translated to the realm where all the myths are true--which is not, however, the Commonwealth. He is a college professor gnawed at by discontent; and lo, the Goddess of Love appears to him and asks him to make a survey of the Road. Moreover, she asks nicely; how can he refuse? And off he goes, out of space, out of time.

The Road is, or signifies, the nature and lineage of story or epic. Our hero, as befits a tale of this sort, is taken down a notch or two (being addressed through most of the story as "It") and passes from ignorance to knowledge. He hobnobs along the way with many of the great makers of the Story--they're all on first-name terms--and learns in time to give a good account of himself and what he knows. Why, then, do I find the book somewhat disappointing?

The Pilgrim's Progress was not straight from Point A to Point B. Odysseus divagated. Now the Road, for "It," is by turns rocky, wave-tossed, and vertiginous. But it is on the whole straight and narrow. The Slough of Despond is nowhere along it. From the first, the hero takes everything with considerable aplomb. He is open to experience. He does not need to be wholly turned around; he does not have mis-adventures suited to his error. The tale is not structured with clear ups and downs and reversals. And the slangy first-person narrative style, seemingly a virtue, helps in this leveling. It does not reflect the mood of the bad incidents. It's all just one damned thing after another.

The alleged illustrations by Thomas Canty are decorations: a word publishers have forgotten. They seem to have been made for another work entirely.

db

Little, Big, John Crowley, Bantam,  
538 pp., \$8.95

This is the most captivating fantasy in years! It's as though Peter S. Beagle had totally rewritten a

Charles Williams novel. To illustrate it would take the combined talents of Edward Gorey and Maurice Sendak. Those who have read Crowley's earlier work (I am thinking chiefly of Engine Summer) know how sensitively, how beautifully he writes. But this is in every sense a larger work. When I had finished, I promptly started reading it again, and only after three readings do I feel sated. I still take nibbles now and then. The characters have become real to me; I feel a deep affection for them. I have favorite scenes and favorite prose passages (not wholly overlapping categories). I will now go on to give a cool and judicious account....

This is a story about a family (with its connexions) who find themselves fulfilling the mysterious purposes of Faerie. Smoky Barnable is caught up in the Tale when he marries Alice Dale Drinkwater (called Daily Alice) whose great-grandfather built the involuted house at Edgewood and married the young woman whose gift it was to have knowledge of that Other World. The gift, or some form of it, is inherited chiefly in the female line; the men suffer from it more, trying to come to terms with it.

The story moves forward, eventually to a time when a new generation has grown and yet others are caught up in the plot; and backward, picking up threads from the past. The whole is most cunningly woven; hardly a chapter does not look forward and backward until at the end the pattern stands whole, to be seen with a fuller insight on subsequent readings. I will not more than allude to these things so as not to spoil the pleasure of first reading; but one might pay close attention to what is said about Grandfather Trout, or connect up Smoky's given name & initial with some remarks on p. 6, or keep in mind what Sylvie was called as a child.

The time of action is the present, at first; then approximately 2000 (and flashbacks, of course), but present actualities--popular arts and manners, politics--are very carefully kept beyond the borders of the story. At most, one could discover that there was a World War (One; but not Two). It has pleased Mr. Crowley to assume a troubled future for the country, one in which a strange charismatic Lecturer can become President; but then, progress is so boring...

This is very much a story "about nothing but itself." The phrase is of course taken from Tolkien, whose tale has a moral dimension and a great one. It is fatally easy for a critic of Tolkien to speak of

nothing but that and forget that the story must work as story. Not so here. Nothing happens from which anyone could draw any moral whatsoever. The characters are loving, almost all of them; perplexed; at cross-purposes. "I thought I was separate from this fate," one ruefully admits towards the end. The story, as story, is humane: that is its whole moral, if one is to be sought.

db

Shadowland, Peter Straub, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc., 1980

Like Ghost Story, Peter Straub's popular and successful novel of 1979, Shadowland is a literate and civilized piece of supernatural entertainment for those of us who still prefer the traditional tale of terror to gore and ghouls. In Ghost Story it was Straub's avowed intent to take the classical ghost story as far as it could go, with a backward glance at American traditions in particular (it's no accident that his two elderly lawyer protagonists are named Hawthorne and James!), and the combination of long-running curses and shape-shifting apparitions with the contemporary New England scene recalled Shirley Jackson's The Haunting of Hill House for some readers.

In one way Ghost Story surpassed The Haunting of Hill House in its richness and complexity; in another it was less effective: according to Jackson, ghosts couldn't physically harm men, only work on men's minds to drive them to self-destructive acts. Plenty of such psychological manipulation was practiced in Ghost Story, but the fact that ghoulish Gregory could also kill and feed upon humans made him less scary even if more powerful, reducing him to the direct physical menace of a mugger. Moreover, loose ends weren't perfectly tied off, and this reader never felt satisfied as to why the whole town of Milburn had been selected for destruction.

Shadowland is a tighter, more careful, book, even though it never equals the stunning atmosphere of winter-besieged Milburn, closed in, snowed in, in a final claustrophobic terror. Here, men's minds--or rather, boys' minds--are again the designated victims, and there is no need for crude physical horror as a jealous, immensely powerful, aging magician brings all his dark gifts into a focus beamed at his adolescent nephew and the nephew's boarding-school friend, a lad of even greater latent talents for magic.

First in the enclosed world of an

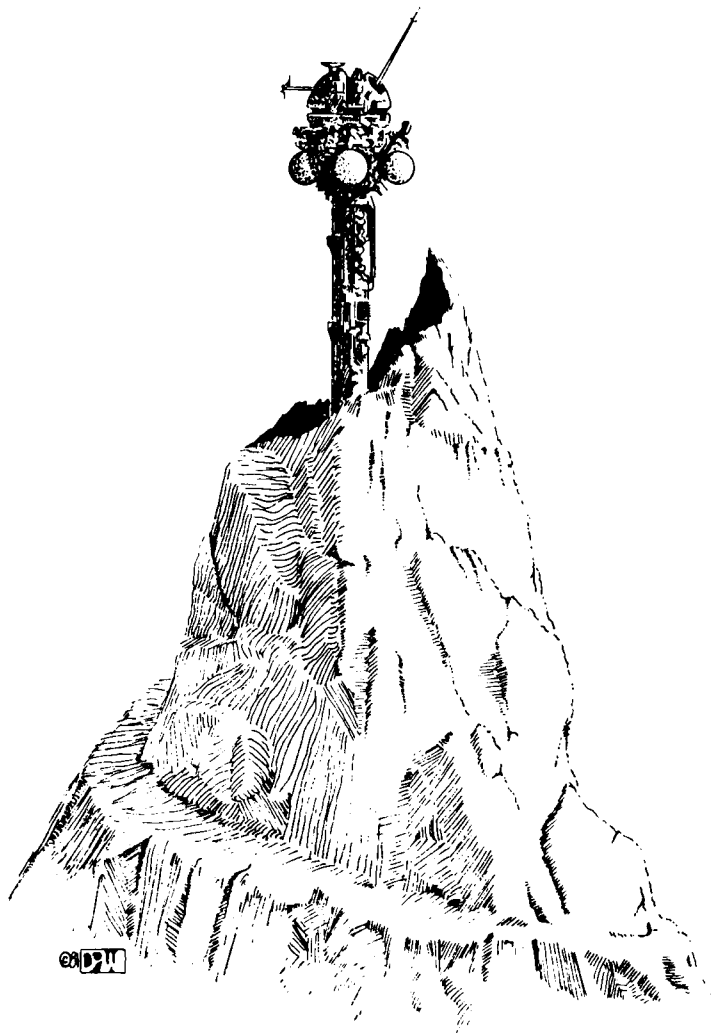
upper-class prep school for boys, where "Uncle Cole's" curiosity about and interest in a successor for Shadowland create a series of uncanny happenings, and later at Shadowland itself, his isolated mansion, where the two boys spend an increasingly terrifying summer, Straub is in control, offering us credible characters--especially the boys, settings that make our senses twitch, and genuine surprises. An especially aesthetic merit of Shadowland is the masterful use Straub makes of the Grimms Brothers' fairy tales as an underlying controlling metaphor, for "Shadowland" is both a house--and a state of being.

ncls

A Complete Manual of Amateur Astronomy: Tools and Techniques for Astronomical Observations, P. Clay Sherrod with Thomas L. Koed,

Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1981, hc \$24.95 pb \$10.95

When I see a book that contains the word "complete" in the title I'm leary as to the accuracy of its contents: not true with this book. When one is involved in a science or interest that is both exacting and extraterrestrial, the word "complete" can cause one to disbelieve quickly. The reason is rather obvious: how can one ever be expected to document a portion of, to say nothing about the "complete" manual of, something as vast as the study of the universe. P. Clay Sherrod has come very close to doing so; the reason is at first very simple but I'm sure it took a lot of thought on his part. Rather than defining astronomy and the various avenues it has taken over the years, Mr. Sherrod chose to present his material as one would teach it. (It is assumed that a basic knowledge of astronomy is



possessed by anyone purchasing this book.) Each chapter is treated as an exercise in observing the night sky. In some places one almost feels as if Mr. Sherrod himself is directing the alignment of the telescope.

The book begins at the most obvious place--with the instruments; how to chose them and, once chosen, how to maintain and set them up. Mr. Sherrod's explanation of the various types of telescopes, their advantages and disadvantages, and his recommendations could be very encouraging to someone who is just learning.

One of the most difficult and demanding sub-routines of astronomy is the set-up of the instruments. Chapter 2 covers all the problems one is likely to come across when setting-up; determination of the latitude and longitude, alignment, collimating, and the cleaning of the optics.

Of all the chapters, two stand out most in my mind: "Comets: A Guide to Observation, Photography, and Discovery" and Chapter 14 including the glossary, the appendices, and the index. Both these sections, in my opinion are worth the price of the book alone.

What has struck me most about the comet chapter is that Mr. Sherrod truly believes what he says in the opening sentence of that chapter: "The study of comets is an area in which the amateur can make quality, scientific observations." If only other amateurs in other sciences could recognize and seize such opportunities, can you imagine the scientific renaissance?

The final chapter, "Astrophotography for the Amateur Astronomer", again caught me on the first sentence and reinforced my belief in Mr. Sherrod's involvement and sheer enjoyment with his subject.

Finally, I must make a comment about the glossary, appendices, and index. The glossary is what I had expected: short and concise. The appendices are nothing short of super if you have any questions concerning universal time, coordinates for use with setting circles, colors and magnitudes of stars, and observing forms for meteors and comets, etc., the appendices are without equal. I have many text books on astronomy and none of them have as good suffixual information.

If you are interested in astronomy, have a basic knowledge, and would like to go on observing with a certain aim, this is the book to buy.

scf

Patchwork Girl, Larry Niven, Ace, 1980, 205 pp. w/ illos, \$2.50

#### "More Like a Victim--"

The solution to the mystery in Patchwork Girl is rooted in the difference between Belter, Lunar, and Earth customs, and in the psychology of the chief suspect, Naomi Mitchison. (Niven has caught the terminal cutesies here, unless he is trying to make some sort of statement too subtle for me.) Lunar customs determine who killed the delegate to the interplanetary legal conference; Mitchison's psychology determines the behavior that sends her to the holding tanks as a convicted killer, later to go to the organ banks. Yet it is an unusual psychology, and none too well explained. In his most perceptive statement in the book, detective Gil (the Arm) Hamilton comments that she is not guilty because she is "more the victim type." What does he mean?

He then claims, and several men echo the claim, that Mitchison "gets a charge out of inviting a pass, then slapping the passer down hard." We never see this. We see a woman, said to be of extraordinary beauty, who cannot understand why men want to take her to bed. We see a woman from whom an invitation to a cup of coffee seems to constitute an invitation in the eyes of the men around her. The air of victim's vulnerability, or just her physical appearance? Because Niven never shows her inviting a pass; only, several times, slapping the passer down hard.

There are teases who do exactly what Naomi is said to do; the female equivalent of the man who takes a girl to bed and then slaps her down, hard; with the same motives. Naomi shows neither meanness nor one-up-manship.

There are "teases" who start something, then get cold feet; adolescents, who don't know their own minds. Naomi knows hers, but is never sure she can stand by her decisions.

Neither form of "tease" is what Niven shows. Rather, he shows a woman who loathes sex and fears it, but who, if pushed, will submit; who cannot picture herself as a sexual being despite the highly sexual culture she lives in and despite her beauty and resulting male reactions to it; who finds the very invitation not only a threat, but an offense; who, most important of all, would rather go into the organ banks than tell what she knows. Her "secret" is simply not of organ bank magnitude by any of the laws or customs so far shown; why does she submit to death rather than speak?

We have four pieces that make up the pattern of the Patchwork Girl; let's arrange them in order.

(1) She cannot see herself as a sexual being no matter how much evidence she is given. Each pass comes as a surprise and a shock. Her self-image is as sexless as that of a latency-period child. Perhaps is IS that of a latency-period child?

(2) Sex is associated with terror and degradation, judging from her reaction to a pass.

(3) The threat of sex is met first with denial--"he doesn't really mean it"--then anger and even hysterics if the matter is pushed far enough--and then submission. Gil Hamilton, quite puzzled, commented that it was so like her to have a tube of jell in the drawer, though she was frigid. As if she knew she would, in the crunch, have no choice? A hapless victim again? Her night with Gil was an attempt to give this thing one more try, with an old friend, and buy a little human warmth; for all his trying, Gil was totally at a loss here.

(4) She feels, beyond reason, that to tell the authorities what she knows will mean certain death--or something far worse than death. In this case, what? No, there's an old, ingrained pattern coming out again. Has it happened to her before?

The picture is now complete. "What? sex, with me? You've got to be kidding, I'm not a...God, no, you wouldn't! How horrible! How dare you! No...No...Oh, God, I've got to...." and she tells the authorities. How she is greeted is shown in her frantic evasion of them later.

Somewhere on Earth, in Gil Hamilton's home town, there is a man who may be living in comfortable retirement, but who should be in the organ banks. He should have gone there twenty years ago. Because he did not, Gil Hamilton's murder mystery was vastly complicated. What the murder victim did twenty years ago caused his death. What this other man did twenty years ago nearly caused Naomi's.

Doug, call Gil Hamilton. Tell him it's the Kansas rape, incest, and child molesting unit calling with information about the chief witness in his murder case. Too late? Too bad.

pm

Somerset Dreams and Other Fictions, Kate Wilhelm, Harper and Row, 1978, 174 pp., talking book RC 12360

Of the eight stories in this collection, only two are

unquestionably science fiction. Seven are within our field if you broaden the definition to include stories of madness from the viewpoint of the insane person--such as in L. Ron Hubbard's classic Fear--and stories of psychic events. One story has the same essence as Harlan Ellison's "Shatterday" tho it is written in a totally different style. In almost all of the stories the protagonists are under a strain or have already broken. The one story with no element of fantasy or SF is "Symbiosis" about two girls, one whose mother goes mad.

In "Planet Story" a survey team lands on a perfect world. It is almost like the Garden of Eden but some mysterious force drives the crew members mad one at a time. After four have died, the rest leave cataloging the planet as uninhabitable. Is there a malevolent force on the planet, or is there something in the human psyche which drives him away from a paradisaical world...a sort of interior angel with flaming sword?

The other pure SF story is "Ladies and Gentlemen, This Is Your Crisis" about an ultimate weekend-long game show where four contestants are placed in different wilderness locations and must find their way out at risk of life and limb. The first to do so gains great wealth. All four are sent there as therapy by psychiatrists. The voyeuristic experience acts as a catharsis for the home viewers.

The title story (and longest one in the book) is about a woman MD who returns to her home town every summer. The town is cut off by a new dam and is dying with only 40 people, all over 60, remaining. The town casts a spell on her and a visiting group of dream researchers from Harvard, causing them to flee in terror at the end. This is rather Lovecraftian in its plot tho without the overwriting.

"Mrs. Bagley Goes to Mars" is pure whimsey. An unhappy housewife knows a secret way to go to Mars and flees there but finds it no better than Earth so she goes to Ganymede which is further away and more to her liking. Are the events 'read' or the impressions of someone who has cracked under the strain?

"The Hounds" are two beautiful dogs of indeterminate breed which follow a housewife home. They are very friendly to her and do nothing threatening, but something about them drives her crazy, making her act irrationally. She and her husband can find no way to get rid of them and one day while she is alone she shoots them and buries them behind the barn. When her husband and son return she

says they went away and they never speak of them again. Do the dogs have psychic power over her, or is she simply bonkers? In the preface Kate Wilhelm is quoted as saying she herself does not know what the story means.

The first story is "State of Grace" about a housewife who sees some 'little people' in a tree in her yard. Her engineer husband suspects she has something there and has many funny misadventures trying to discover what. The story ends on a sinister note as the creatures scare him off. In the meantime she keeps on making more and more elaborate offerings to these wee folk and this does seem to bring the family luck. Or is she hallucinating?

These stories, as you can see, are very moody. I did enjoy the book, tho. I do not remember having read anything by her before this, but I must have in my 30 years of reading SF.

erm

A Dream of Kinship, Richard Cowper, Timescape Books, 1981, 240 pp., \$2.50

This is the sequel to Cowper's extraordinarily good The Road to Corlay. Although it picks up directly where the first left off, the aura of magic and wonder has dissipated somewhere along the way, and we are left with a rather slow moving adventure story with nothing really notable to offer us.

The Kinsmen, followers of the gentle new religion of the bird and the Child, have gathered at Corlay, supposedly a haven for their religious beliefs. But the established church is not about to allow a new threat to their continued supremacy in the world, and the Falcons begin to ride once more, killing and intimidating. As one might expect, the plot to wipe out the followers of the White Bird is full of holes, leaks to the general public, and the backlash is sufficient to accelerate the very change the authorities feared.

Cowper is usually an excellent writer, even his minor novels are very entertaining, and this is no exception. I don't know if he plans any additional stories of Corlay, but I hope not. When Stuart Gordon wrote his very similar One Eye Two Eye Three Eye trilogy a few years back, he was able to sustain the mood throughout the series, building to a logical climax. Cowper seems not to have had an original climax in mind, and A Dream of Kinship is almost an afterthought, with no real life of its own.

dd'am

Tomorrow's Heritage, Juanita Coulson, Ballantine, 1981, \$2.75

As I explained to Ms. Coulson, I was more than a little apprehensive about her book when I saw that Ballantine was giving it the full hype treatment. I guess it was Dragon's Egg that really drove home the fact that extraordinary publicity does not necessarily mean an extraordinary product. It gives me great pleasure to announce that the publisher's estimation of this book is not misplaced.

This tale revolves around the discovery of an extrasolar probe heading for Earth from Out There. Todd Saunder, head of the largest communications system in the world, is the Prometheus and must find the best way to prepare a sure-to-be-aroused public for the coming of this alien artifact with its unknown mission. Vying for control of one of the larger power blocs is Saunder's brother, Patrick. It is this quest for power combined with Todd's discovery which could jeopardize it that provides most of the impetus for this yarn.

All this is played against a background world that has survived a "limited" nuclear exchange and is governed under unique new alignments of power. Earth of the early 21st century has much the same disparate combination of high technological achievements and low social development: personal flying transport, space colonies, and cryogenic human preservation systems coexist with starvation, urban decadence, and mob mentality. This is to me a realistic amalgam of what the future may hold for us. But intertwined with this depressing era are glimpses of human courage and questing for knowledge.

mb

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## ON NIEKAS 25 & 26

12051 Laurel Terrace  
Studio City CA 91604

August 26, 1981

NIEKAS  
RFD 1 Box 63  
Center Harbor, NH 03226

Dear Ed and all,

Thanks for NIEKAS 25, and my apologies for being so long in writing. It has been a summer, and much of my time has been devoured by locusts.

Today I am able to write courtesy of the demon which has infested the scan platform of VOYAGER II and thus cut off the unending supply of pictures of Saturn's system. A number of my colleagues--Poul Anderson, Jack Williamson, Sturgeon, Niven, Goldin and Skye, Greag Bear and Astrid Anderson, Hal Clement, Bradbury, and any number of others--have been out to JPL watching. Had NASA been as sensible about inviting science fiction people ten years ago, this wouldn't be the last mission for five years.

Anyway, I'd be out there if the scan platform were working, but since it pooped out I came home to try to deal with the archeological layers of mail on my desk. I also saw where you set your margins and I'll try to type this "camera ready" for you; interesting to see how that will come out.

Saturn remains enigmatic. Millions of ringlets. (Well, thousands, literally, anyway.) The photopolarimeter is an instrument that detects light, very sensitive; it doesn't image. Last night they aimed the PPM through the rings at

delta Scorpio, and as it winked on and off as seen through the rings they were able to get resolutions to about 20 meters. As detailed as they could see, Saturn's rings had finer detail; finer structure. And no one knows why! It was thought at one time that each ringlet had a pair of sheep dog moonlets herding it into place, but they can't find any moonlets.

And now the Enke division has in it rings, and one of them is braided and it's eccentric as well, and -- oh, what the hell, they used to think they understood celestial mechanics.

Re your review of INFERNO, you may take the book more seriously than we did... thanks for that, anyway.

Best wishes,

Jerry Pournelle

Heck, I forgot the point of the photopolarimeter story. Shows what haste will do. Anyway, last night we happened to be passing the labs as Brad Smith went by. Brad is an astronomer. Optical astronomer. He is also head of the imaging team. He likes to look at pictures of planets.

You can thus imagine how vigorously he opposed the photopolarimeter experiment: at exactly the best time for the highest resolution pictures of the rings, they were using all circuits for the PPM, which doesn't produce any images.

But the best image wouldn't have resolution better than a few kilometers.

So Brad was coming out of the lab, having seen the high resolution data from PPM showing unimaginable structure in the ring system; and he was muttering "Maybe it was worth the time after all..."

Stay wicked,

JEP

Harry Warner, Jr.  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

This letter should have been two or three letters, each of them written months ago. I'm sorry about the long silence. But I've been having all sorts of trouble the past few years getting locs written, partly because of outside circumstances, partly because of malfunctioning of my own psyche. Just in the past two months I've finally begun to write locs in quantity again. But during the long erratic period I had particular trouble with the big fanzines. NIEKAS, SFCOMMENTARY, SFREVIEW, and several others got put off until tomorrow month after month while I was able to write about some of the skinny and informal fanzines. I'm not sure why I behaved this way but tentatively, I've analyzed it this way: as they approach senility, some men can't control the urge to talk constantly, others become incontinent in certain bodily functions, but I had to be different in possessing less and less ability to control myself to a reasonable-sized loc. I can stop after two pages with a ten-page fanzine but when I face one that runs to six or so times that bulk, I have an awful temptation to write ten or twelve pages or more of comments on all the things in the fat fanzine that represented comment hooks to me. I just don't have the time to yield to this particular form of literary incontinence and so I find myself failing to respond at all for so long to most of the big ones. Now I'm determined to fight bravely and boldly the decay of my willpower. I wrote Bruce Gillespie the other day confessing all along these lines, tonight it's your turn, and before the weekend is over I hope to make amends as well as I can to Dick Geis or some other long sufferer.

Meanwhile, on the 25th issue which arrived in early March, he wrote with shame, I had trouble restraining myself from taking notes when I read [Ed's] account of New York City's fan organizations, past and present. This is exactly the sort of information in fanzines which I found so useful when I was doing research for the fan history books. I abandoned years ago any intention of writing any more extended fan history manuscripts but the note-taking urge seems to have become a conditioned reflex which survives long after the need for it has vanished. Mike's column reminded me of an old, impossible method I once figured out for reducing the chance of all-out war among major powers. Simply arrive at a covenant that all the world powers, capitalist and socialist alike, will make the production of materials for war as

much a government-run undertaking as the training and maintenance of armies. If war industry employees were drafted like soldiers and paid soldiers' wages, if the portion of a corporation's facilities needed for war materials were turned over completely to government control without profits accruing to stockholders, enthusiasm for war and giant military establishments would dwindle all over the world: most obviously in capitalist nations but also in dictatorships where today the average person still has some ability to decide whether he'll work in a war industry or somewhere else.

I haven't been in New York City for at least six or eight years. But the degeneration Fred Lerner describes there isn't confined to big cities. Yesterday I was in my home town, Chambersburg, Pa., for the first time in several months and I came home in an awful state of depression at how rapidly it is changing. Boarded-up windows of vacant downtown buildings, little clusters of ominous-looking loafers glaring at any passerby who has the appearance of not being on welfare, motorists stopping for red lights too far into the intersection for pedestrians to cross easily and with their radios blaring too loud for other drivers to hear an emergency vehicle's siren, a small boy lurking in the otherwise deserted comfort station who scared me to death: and even though Chambersburg is too small to suffer the instant famine which a catastrophe or planned coup could create in New York City, it's very possible that most of the town could burn to ashes if the toughs got together some dark night and planned an arson operation which the tiny police and fire departments couldn't possibly control. Times are getting tough all over.

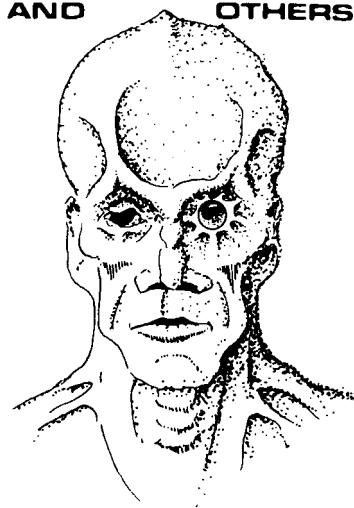
Anne Braude's article was fine except for one thing: the assumption that conversations among dolphins are a sure evidence of intelligence. My desk at the office is situated between women in both directions, all these women never stop talking, and I've heard nothing yet that causes me to think any of them has any intelligence. The Pholio 80 was a fine reminder of the almost extinct tradition of publishing lots of mimeographed full-page pictures in folio form for fanzines. Some of these pictures rely on techniques which handstenciling couldn't have coped with in the old days but others have the nostalgic look. I particularly liked the page of string quartet illustrations, reminding me of the hilarious drawings which used to appear on classical music releases of the old Crossroads label. Through some

miracle, I've actually read some of the books covered in this issue's Biblio section. The Shroud of Turin may or may not be the one I read, about the shroud mystery. The clue to the shroud's authenticity which particularly impresses me is the location of the wounds at the hands. The shroud shows the nails pierced the wrist, not the palm. An investigator experimented with fresh corpses and discovered that a nail through the palm will not work, because the body's weight will tear the bones apart, but a nail through the wrist will support dead weight. If the shroud were a hoax the creator would surely have followed tradition which always depicts the palms with the wounds. I didn't like the Niven-Pournelle Inferno, which seemed to me to be in the tradition of writings which seek to show that drugs aren't all that bad and murderers shouldn't be victims of prejudice and promiscuity is an unmixed blessing. This novel seems to reassure us that Hell isn't a bad place after all. As for the letter section, I'm sure you had dozens of locs pointing out to Anne Braude that the bowdlerization candidate in G&S she ascribes to IOLANTHE actually comes from TRIAL BY JURY. Gilbert would have been horrified to know how Americans would interpret the lines. I just encountered for the first time in an old book about G&S an anecdote I haven't seen elsewhere: aksed why he didn't use genuine Japanese words more frequently in THE MIKADO, he said people might imagine an improper rhyme for samurais. You can find the coarse words in the 19th century British literature but I doubt if they're much used today. Many theories exist about the origin of everyone jumping up at the Hallelujah chorus in "Messiah". The most pious explanation is that King George was so awed by its opening chords that he rose in admiration. But I think there's more probability in another variant of the legend which says the monarch didn't rise at that moment but a few bars later when he recognized an old liturgical melody to which Handel set "The kingdom of this world", perhaps at its start and perhaps a moment later when there is one of Handel's biggest strokes of genius, the sudden fortissimo after the melody's quiet beginning. Yet another story claims that the king suffered like most wealthy men of his day from gout, he had a particularly bad twinge in his foot during the performance, it happened to come at the Hallelujah Chorus, he jumped up to try to relieve the pain, and the audience imitated him without understanding his motive.

That brings me to the 26th issue which has been here little more than

three months, hardly long enough to feel at home. I took lots of notes about Coventry for fan history purposes. As I remember them, you have the course of events correct except that I don't think the Coventry crowd would have considered "game" the right word for their invention. It was more like an alternate reality. The local public library has just tackled a task which might interest Fred Lerner for his interest in library science and computers. It was obtained a grant large enough to start on the stupendous task of indexing Hagerstown newspapers' local news from the beginning of local journalism in 1790 to the present. This is incredibly thorough, involving every name that appears in print even in advertisements, a very exhaustive

**HUMANS !!!!  
(AND OTHERS)**



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variety of subject matters, and ample cross-references. It will have all sorts of usefulness to ancestor-hunters, social history students, authors hunting ideas for plots, and goodness only knows who else. But even if funding continues to be available, one library official estimates that it will take ten years to complete the index through the first 100 years, and that will be the easy century because almost all newspapers until near the end of the 19th century were weeklies in Hagerstown, and in the second century there are dailies which create six times as much work. It couldn't be down without computer help, of course; I haven't even had the ambition to tackle a simple indexing task by scribbling which would make *A Wealth of Fable* much more useful to readers. I admire the energy that the Write Now people have been displaying but I have doubts about the timing. The letters and telephone calls should have been made six or eight years ago and they should have been as spontaneous as the unorganized campaign that saved STAR TREK. Anything that appears to be inspired by an organization will be less effective. Government people have had it up to here with lobbyists and special interest groups.

I admire Frank Paul as an artist more than Terry Jeeves and most of today's other fans do. I still think he'll be discovered eventually by the mundane art world and will gain the same stature in the history of art as other primitives like Gaughan. Incidentally, when Paul's cover illustrations were being published, there were letter section complaints about the improbably colors he imparted to the sky, planetary surfaces, and other areas. I keep thinking how far ahead of his time Paul was when I see the same thing appearing in computer-enhanced photographs which the nation's space

program has made possible elsewhere in the solar system, in which the colors are deliberately altered to clarify details or make things look more dramatic. And I share Harry Andruschak's gloom over the state of the nation's space program. But I wonder if it could be the right time to try something different: work for more international cooperation on space exploration and technology. I'm sure the USSR wouldn't want to build spy satellites jointly with the United States. But there must be non-military, expensive projects which no one nation wants to finance but which joint financing and cooperative construction would make feasible.

The new theories about Tolkien's sources caused me to wonder how the Giddings-Holland methods would work with other fiction which has long been enjoyed by both young and old. I quickly discovered that one famous older novel is really a retelling of the New Testament. Consider its title: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. *Adventures* is an obvious reference to Advent, the time just before the coming of Christ with which the New Testament begins. Tom is a pun on the French word temps, symbolizing the fact that events twenty centuries earlier are being retold in a much later time. Sawyer is an old word for carpenter, which was Christ's trade. Mark Twain's name is generally explained as originating in an old steamboat navigating phrase, but its real significance is to be found in the fact that Mark is the second Gospel in the New Testament and Twain means two. The first words in the book are spoken by Aunt Polly, whose name is clearly meant to refer to anti-polytheism. See how easy it is? On the other hand, it was very good to see Ruth Berman again represented in a fanzine with a long article. Her subject matter seems to convey an unspoken message, about how children have changed. It's hard to imagine Shakespeare figuring in anything that interests most children today, as he did so frequently even within the lifetime of the most senior citizens of today. And Sherwood Frazier's summary of the shuttle payload plans cause me to realize how science fiction failed in one respect. Remember all the stories in which just a few pounds one way or another were the difference between success and failure of a space journey? No self-respecting prozine editor would have permitted a writer to commit such a scientific mistake as to describe pioneers on the moon carrying the extra weight of a golf ball along with them.

The NIEKAS art is splendid, particularly the covers. But I think

you're wasting some of the interior filler illustrations which are so fine in postage stamp dimensions that they really should be enlarged to occupy the amount of space which their excellency deserves.

Marsha Jones  
9 Cecil Rd.  
Prenten Birkenhead  
Merseyside L42 9PF  
England

Re: Ruth's description of Barrie's "Dear Brutus", BBC recently did a lovely production of it. I'd seen it a long time ago, I think of that lovely series *PLAY OF THE WEEK* and it made a very strong impression on me even then, though I hadn't remembered the author or the title. Perhaps seeing it performed rather than reading it makes the difference for while I agree with Ruth's reading of the character Lob, I didn't find the play tending to spill over into sentimentality. Possibly this was because of the very clear implication that not all of those who walked in Brutus Wood came back. A very very few followed their alternate path to wherever. It seemed to be Lob's function to assemble groups of people who had chosen one path at some point in their past to walk through Brutus Wood onto the path they would have taken if they had chosen differently and it seemed to me to be both his amusement and a sadness to him to see how few chose to stay with the alternate path, especially in the very rare instance where that alternate was better than their present life.

You're wrong about the genesis of Tricon, Ed. The three contenders didn't drop out and then come up with a joint bid to save the worldcon. The three groups were all very friendly to begin with and when it started to become obvious that the Cleveland bid had gained the advantage the other two dropped out in Cleveland's favor. After that, it was decided that the most sensible thing to do was for the three groups to merge their strengths to put on the best possible con, although the Syracuse bid probably helped that decision along. It was all very pleasant and friendly, unlike some of the bitter bidding rivalries that have cropped up since then. (Or it certainly looked that way from my point of view and I was pretty heavily involved with the Cleveland bid.)

Diana: I'd revise the question slightly and instead ask why do some people who lack the talent for any real literary achievement of their own feel that they have to try and drag someone else's achievement down

to their own level of mediocrity? What is it in people like this that prevents them from simply enjoying and appreciating another's achievement?

I don't think Wayne Shumaker need put too much time worrying about children being damaged by erroneous world views in books like the Madeleine L'Engle trilogy. The sort of children who read SF and fantasy seem to have no problem in keeping the world as it is distinct from the pretty pictures presented in the SF and/or fantasy novels. Most kids who read for pleasure seem to be pretty tough-minded that way.

Harry Andruschak's article was fascinating but depressing as hell. I knew the space program wasn't doing too well, but I had no idea it was doing so badly.

Assuming the Burne review accurately reflects the Giddings-Holland book, my first thought was that the two must be remarkably ignorant of the bulk of the writings of Buchan and Haggard. And I find the idea of referring to Tolkien as Tollers totally nauseating. Loved Anne Etkin's comments.

Robert Giddings  
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Bath BA2 4LR  
England

It was very good to see in NIEKAS 26 that there was so much vigorous critical attention paid to Tolkien and related matters, but I would beg leave to take some of your space to consider one or two of the points made by several writers who commented on Jerome Burne's SUNDAY TIMES article "Is This Where Tolkien Found His Stories". The first point to make is that this piece is a feature article and not a review, as our book, J.R.R. Tolkien-The Shores of Middle Earth is not actually published yet. It is not published until October 15th so at the time of writing it is still not on sale here. It might be the best plan if I were to take the points made by your authors one at a time, author by author.

Diana L. Paxson: many critics have maintained that Tolkien's sources are from the Nordic/Germanic/Celtic myths and legends--this is certainly the case put forward by Ruth S. Noel, and this is certainly urged by Humphrey Carpenter several times in his biography and most authorities seem to follow on in the best manner of Isaiah liii:5--Helms, Reilly, and the rest of the writers who have discussed his sources. Rider Haggard, by the way, was not a 20th century writer, King Solomon's Mines was

published first in 1895. Our case is not centred on where the plots come from, so much as with what Tolkien does with them. Yes, we have read Tolkien's essay On Fairy Stories and actually discuss it at length in our book. Yes, he certainly did read and enjoy Buchan, Haggard, etc. if we are to believe Carpenter and C.S. Lewis, just to name the most obvious authorities. We do not suggest that "a man who was one of the translators of the new Jerusalem Bible would need to go to a contemporary (sic) romancer for the name Moria." What we say is that the name was carefully chosen by Tolkien as a clue to the in-joke about the source book's being King Solomon's Mines and that this is basic in Tolkien's method--Buchan/Buckland, Moria/Moriah, Blackmore/the black mere, Wind in the Willows/Withywindle, etc. Nor do we criticise Tolkien for using such pop. fiction as the basis for his narrative--quite the contrary, it is a mark of his genius that he did so (cf. Shakespeare--apart from The Tempest not one of the plays is based on an original story of Shakespeare's). It did not take the literary establishment ten years to deal with The Lord of the Rings, it is our case that the book is yet to be properly dealt with--the quality press in the UK may have gone ga-ga over it, but that is quite different a thing from academic acceptance. She then goes on to say that "Tolkien's achievement lay not in his choice of sources and models... but in his use of them." Precisely. This is our opinion, too. Yes, the adventure quest does predate Buchan: in the book, we relate it to Mithras.

Lloyd Alexander: writes that it does not diminish Tolkien's achievement. He is right. He says it should make us admire him more. It does. And it should.

Anne Braude: accuses me of ignorance of literary terminology when I speak of turning an "existing story into an archetype. One does not create an archetype; it is there." She shows an unfortunate ignorance of developments in literary criticism herself, as the argument about a genius taking stereotype and turning it into archetype is commonplace enough cf. William Axton's essay on Dombey and Son in English Literary History XXXI 1964 pp. 310 and following in which he explores Dickens' use of Cinderella, Dick Whittington, the Arabian Nights etc. etc. in creating a modern archetypal myth--and George Santayana, Julian Symons, Earle Davies, Taylor Stoehr have developed similar lines of argument about the nature of Dickens' genius. Never mind Jung, the idea was understood well enough by the creative people--Dickens

again wrote: "...human dreams, far from being different and various, show a remarkable sameness...common to us all, from the Queen to the Costermonger..." (Letters edited Dexter Volume II p. 269.) See also his essay Night Walks (in All the Year Round July 21st, 1860 where he talks about dreams and dream symbolism. A pox on Plato.) To take her argument to its inescapable conclusion, by using existing commonplace material, is it not true to say that Shakespeare created in his character Hamlet an archetypal figure, who was, ultimately, good enough for Freud to theorize about? Hamlet was a source of great fascination to people long before "our age of Anxiety came along." She really should read her Schlegel carefully, and of course, old Coleridge, too. Gilbert Murray used to go on about these things long before the cliché about the Age of Anxiety became one of the Great Cliches of Our Time... Have a look at Murray's Classical Tradition in Poetry, published in 1927, long before old Jung became our intergalactic psycho-fantasy-guru. Even Charles Lamb (no trendy he!) was wont to go on about archetype--his phrase was coined to cope with those probable insights "into our antemundane condition, and a peep into the shadowland of pre-existence." (Witches and Other Night Fears 1823.) She has obviously not seen our book and has therefore not seen the evidence about the parallels between various elements of The Lord of the Rings and Buchan and co. We do not argue the case with reference to films, and in any case, according to a reliable source (John Grierson) Hitchcock had not even read Buchan's 39 Steps. There are not two versions of this story--there are three--Hitchcock (1935), Ralph Thomas (1959), and the 1978 version with Robert Powell and John Mills. She says that "the fact that the bare plot outlines of the two books can be made to coincide is rather like saying that a mole and a wolf are alike because they both have spines." It is not. And, in any case, we do not argue simply about plot similarities, it is the very close textual parallels which concern us. Nor is our case about Kenneth Grahame based just on Withywindle, I'm afraid, but on extensive textual echoes. As for punning, whether she finds them insipid or vulgar or not, I'm afraid the evidence is that Tolkien went through life punning wherever he went--as anyone at all familiar with his biography will know for themselves. Others found it deeply irritating, too, so she is not alone. We do not argue that because he read Buchan/Haggard/Grahame that this does "constitute

proof that they influenced his writing." The evidence we use is in the text of The Lord of the Rings, no in his reading habits.

Susan Schwartz: Yes, I call him Tollers. This was generally accepted as his nickname. I do not know what she means by "terminally...coy." Terminologically, perhaps? I would contest most vigorously that Tolkien didn't spend his life on puns and crosswords--he was intoxicated by them, and the evidence is quite overwhelming. We do not restrict interest to The Lord of the Rings/ King Solomon's Mines--the book discusses a very wide range of references, from Mithras to Malory, Tennyson, Shakespeare, the Indo-European languages, Hindu mythology, etc. etc. I hope she does have the sense to wait and see the book before, as she so poetically puts it, she "throws up." Although Susan Schwartz might well be surprised at some of the things which people who work for the BBC and who teach in technical colleges actually do not know, the Indo-Germanic link is known here, and, I would modestly suggest, given fairly hefty treatment in our book. What is said here about The Lord of the Rings not getting serious attention here is, in fact, true (and pity 'tis tis true). I know things are different in the USA (I used to teach college there) but in the UK, though it is widely read, The Lord of the Rings has had very very scant academic recognition (if any). I do not know any English scholar, apart from Tom Shippey who has devoted much intellectual energy to it at all. And as a research subject, why, it is hardly known here: the most outstanding work has been done by American scholars (Helms, Nitzsche, Petty, Noel, Kilby, etc.).

Poul Anderson: mistakes the article for a book review, which it is not. We do not pick and choose regardless of context. The whole case is rooted in a textual study of The Lord of the Rings.

Nan C. Scott: It was at one time my intention that the book be called THE SHORES OF MIDDLE EARTH. This was not because we could not spell, but because there was a deliberate pun there--Middle Earth Sea was the English name for the Mediterranean as late as the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. In the event the book by Elizabeth Holland and me was called The Shores of Middle-earth when it was published here, but when we gave the interview to the SUNDAY TIMES, the provisional title was The Shores of Middle Earth. We believe the real geography is to be located in the Mediterranean area, hence the title of our book. The documentary

evidence that she asks for is not in "letters, diaries" etc. but in the text of The Lord of the Rings. Tolkien, I'm afraid, was not too old to be influenced by a book written for children in 1908. The Inklings read it into adulthood, as Carpenter, C.S. Lewis, Walter Hooper, Roger Lancelyn Green all testify. The clue is not silly. Tolkien always offers clues like this--Moria/Moriah, Blackmore/black mere, Haggard rider/ Rider Haggard--throughout the book. Yes, of course we agree with her about Tolkien's ability--"transforming genius"--this is the main reason we wrote the book.

Robert Bloch: We agree fully with his comment that Tolkien might have patterned his book on childhood reading, but we agree even more with the "immensely individual conceit" he claims to see in The Lord of the Rings.

Andre Norton: We question the unsupported assertion that that it is far "more apparent that Tolkien was influenced by legends and older lore." This is one of the reasons we wrote the book.

Anne Etkin: this writer is a delightful humourist, but really our evidence is more substantial than the Peter Rabbit hypothesis. I can remember the guy who said that he could prove that Agatha Christie wrote Johnson's Lives of the Poets--and I recall Calvin Hoffman's case that Marlowe really wrote Shakespeare--but our evidence is more substantial, we think, than a vague gesture towards yet unearthed secrets in the Walsingham tomb. I think it would be a good idea actually to read J.R.R. Tolkien: The Shores of Middle Earth before actually pronouncing (or denouncing). It is all rather depressing to be sentenced, convicted, and executed without the evidence having been put forward and properly considered.

We both found the articles in NIEKAS very stimulating and a great deal of fun. It was good of Roger Waddington to bring the publication of them to our attention.

Archie Mercer  
Lyonesse, Rope Wk.  
Mt. Hawke TRURO  
Cornwall TR4 BDW  
U.K.

NIEKAS (pronounced NUKE US of course) No. 26 is to hand, so you may consider your various selves thanked as appropriate. Even the typos this time are better reproduced.

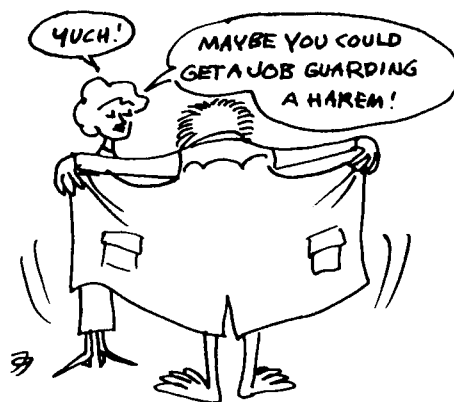
Diana Wynne Jones's stories seem to turn up sooner or later in Puffins (i.e., juvenile Penguins) over

here. Even so, Anne (sorry: I mean Dr. Anne) mentions several that I have yet to meet. Let's see. This household seems to have Power of 3, Cart & Cwiddier, Charmed Life, Eight Days of Luke (one she doesn't mention), and we seem to have discarded Wilkins' Tooth and The Ogre Downstairs.

Thank you for pointing out that L5 is a Lagrange earth orbital point. Next question: how can I tell a Lagrange earth orbital point from a dish of Yung Chow fried rice? (And do I have to?). Your (NIEKAS's) whole space-orientated sector reads, to me, something like: The ABC have prevented the XYZ from putting OPQ into UVW in time for the ZYX to RST the LMN at 2200 hours GMT. (I am, theoretically, in favour of space exploration on the grounds that the further-flung we are, the more likely some of us are to survive longer than the others. Beryl's even more in favour than I am. But unless the wrong thing goes off prematurely, it's something that's bound to happen and expand and go on happening and expanding, though it takes centuries/millenia to get anywhere really important.)

To Diana Paxson, I would say that I have on previous occasions realised that just because two phenomena are apparently linked, one does not have to be the cause of the other. They can just as well both be effects of the same cause. I suspect that Tolkien and Buchan/Haggard stand in that sort of a relationship. As Nan Scott points out, too, the Withywindle was not within the Shire. Anne Etkin has a couple of good clinchers, too.

Whilst I enjoyed Terry Jeeves's article about illustrating sf, I must point out that he writes from the point of view that stories should be illustrated. There is an alternative viewpoint, i.e., that stories should be able to stand on their own merits as stories, without any illustrations whatsoever. Suppose that there was a convention that every work of pictorial art had



to be accompanied by several thousand words of somebody else's text? It comes to much the same thing, really.

I like your small illo on the theme "Altered States" though!

## NIEKAS 27

Kathy Godfrey  
Box 87 MIT Branch P.O.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

...As Don D'Amassa says, Dean Ing's Systemic Shock is a marked improvement over his earlier work. The unpleasant but realistic picture he paints of WWIV society points up one problem I have with survivalism! I wouldn't want to live in the world survivalists foresee (some with great relish). I'm probably better off living where I will be incinerated by the bombing.

On the movie front: since my last letter to you, I've given NESFA a list of lesser-known SF movies to consider for Boskone programming. Next year's Boskone will devote much less time to films, but maybe they can make use of the suggestions.

George Flynn  
27 Sowamsett Ave.  
Warren, RI 02885

I'm afraid you've blown it again: next year's Boskone will be at the Boston Park Plaza (to the best of my knowledge there has never been a "Sheraton-Park Hotel" in Boston).

Other than that, I didn't find nearly as much to say about NIEKAS 27 as I did about #26; enjoyed it as usual, of course....

Marsha is quite right about the lack of foresight of '50s SF with regard to computers. Recently I happened to be looking at Heinlein's Starman Jones (1953), in which the astrogators of interstellar ships have to convert their observations into a form usable by the computer by looking in a table of logarithms! (By the way, del Rey's Outpost of Jupiter came out not in the mid-'50s, but in 1963.)

I've known some European graduate students with the title of "Doctorandus", which I guess is the equivalent of Anne Braude's "Candidate" status.

Terry Jeeves  
230 Bannerdale Rd.  
Sheffield S11 9FE  
U.K.

...Lovely cover. Interior artwork

was some of the best I've seen around, and it is an honour to appear among it...liked the idea of the collection of A in 83 cartoons.

See that Sherwood Frazier is a believer in the super carrier...well, I go along with him in the fact that they can carry an awesome amount of strike power...but the catch is whether or not they can use it...such huge craft must be sitting targets for guided or self guided missiles.. with a nuke warhead, even a near miss would take out a massive slice of the armada's strength at one blow. Oh, I like carriers and their aircraft, but I still feel they are vulnerable...all the eggs in one basket' syndrome. I know that Sherwood Frazier rates missile attack on a carrier as of low rated danger..but I still can't help wondering???? As



for those 'natural' lasers on Mars ...heh, heh...the little green men have camouflaged their weapon installations well haven't they?

Enjoyed the Algis Budrys piece..and Harry Andruschak...and am dieing/ dying? to hear what readers make of my semantics thing. [see Gincas] No doubt the Starsingers of Filkhorn near Mushhaven will be after my blood.

Excellent reviews, great lettercol, and all well illustrated...what more can I say than...ANOTHER GREAT/ TERRIFIC issue.

Joe R. Christopher  
English Department  
Tarleton State University  
Stephenville, TX 76402

The recent issues have clarified Anne/Nan Braude nicely, thank all of you. I wonder if she remembers (or ever knew) that back in the days she was Nan that she and I collaborated on a limerick? To wit: "A Limerick", MYTHRIL, 1:1 (Fall 1971), 14. (My title was "A British Limerick", but the editor changed it.) That is, at Mythcon I (I think it was) Anne told me a pun which I later versified. If I remember correctly, I sent it to MYTHRIL dedicated to Anne, not with a dual by-line, but I explained in my note to the editor how the limerick came about--and the editor thought (quite correctly) Anne deserved half the credit. (If credit is the appropriate word for a limerick based on a pun...) At any rate, among my various writings it is the only published collaboration (outside of a book-length bibliography...or two). Anyway, it's the only versified collaboration.

rod walker  
"alcala"  
1273 Crest Dr.  
Encinitas, CA 92024

...The front cover was particularly handsome and evocative, nicely conceived and with a lot of details to add to the overall effect.

I am delighted that Anne Braude liked my little gruesomes. I will return the compliment by noting that I have enjoyed everything of hers I've read in NIEKAS. Her article on witchcraft in #27 was concise, informative, and interesting, and just possibly the best thing in the whole excellent issue.

As Anne will learn this issue, those weren't haiku. They are deliberate nasty perversions of the form. But it is true that haiku are hard to write...or at least hard to write properly. I see a lot of little three-line poems--both coming across my desk and in other poetry 'zines--which aren't any more haiku than quatrains are limericks. They are just nice little occidental nature images pretending to be haiku. Sadly, the impact of occidental techniques and vers libre is now being felt in Japan, and one now sees haiku coming from the land of their birth which sound as if they had been written by some little old lady from Paducah (but more sophisticated, of course). I am not very good at haiku.

I suppose I will have to add my two shekels to the "religion in sf" business [in NIEKAS 25]. The f/sf

environment, it seems to me, is precisely the wrong place to be dogmatic. The absolutist "there is no God" is not a very scientific point of view and when you're dealing with fans of speculative literature, is wholly out of place.

It is my view that the idea(s) of "God" is not only an appropriate theme for speculative lit., but speculation on that theme is one of the most valuable contributions our field can make to humanity in general. Religious literature is in a sense not very speculative...that is, in the sense that the speculative horizon is always severely limited by certain "givens".

I can probably best contribute to this ongoing discussion by relating my own experience in the matter. In that sense the most important sf book I ever read was Clarke's Childhood's End. I read it many, many years ago and always thought it was one of the best books I had ever read. But many years later some of its themes clicked together with other material to form what is now my own conception of "God".

You know, what we read plants seeds in our brains that sprout up into (sometimes) the most unexpected forms at unexpected times. Perhaps it sounds peculiar to suggest that I built a theology out of such diverse things as the Clarke book and Marc Connelly's play THE GREEN PASTURES...but books can be as important for the concepts we derive from them as other books are important for the hard data we can obtain. Central to C.E., for instance, is the idea of God as a being which is organically part of the evolving universe, and not an omniscient/omnipotent creator which is essentially outside its creation. The more I think about that concept, the more striking I find it...and the more probable. (Which of course instantly raises the question whether there can be a multiplicity of these beings.)

This is a field which could be an even more fertile one for f/sf than it currently is. Some people who are hooked on dogmas get upset at speculations, but that's tough. All dogmas are just crystallized speculations, anyway. The notion that any religion has a handle on the Truth is laughable...and certainly none of the pretend-religions of this century are even close. Now there's dogma for you. I'd rather read a good novel.

Arthur Jean Cox's favorite computer joke was published years ago as a short-short, I forget by whom... Frederick Brown?...it was one of a series of one-pagers I saw in a collection of longer stories.

Anne Braude  
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...Although I have very little interest in Heinlein and none at all in horror fiction, I enjoyed Fred's article and Don D'Amassa's column very much. I don't read horror stories because of a very unfortunate introduction to Poe when I was ten years old, which left me with night terrors for three solid years. I still am subject to nightmares when I read the stuff, so I don't read the stuff. (I was probably the only college freshman in history to be terrified by the research for my Freshman English term paper, which I did on the horror story in order to cure myself of susceptibility. It didn't work.) One area Don didn't mention is the Gothic novel, which frequently has a supernatural element. Perhaps, like a lot of people, he considers the whole genre beneath contempt; but anyone who reads Ann Radcliffe can't be all that devoted to the high aesthetic line. The only author in that area that I read is Barbara Michaels, whom I have mentioned favorably before; one thing that makes her books interesting is that you never know beforehand whether the supernatural element is going to prove to be genuine or will turn out to be faked, a la Radcliffe, so you can have fun trying to outguess the author as in the more traditional mystery novel.

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...There is, however, an incidental remark in [Harry Adnuschak's] review of the state of the space effort, which I must disagree with. That is the claim that "FTL is a cheap plot device for lazy SF writers; there seems to be no support from modern physics for the idea." Here we go again. Everything I said in issue 27 about the use of telepathy and time travel in SF will apply equally well to FTL. To briefly recap, FTL may very well be impossible now and impossible forever. It is also quite possible that future advances in physics will someday make FTL possible. In the meanwhile the possibilities of SF plotting are greatly broadened by the assumption that FTL is possible, and so it is quite legitimate for SF writers to write from that premise, nor is this a cheap or lazy plot device. It is also perfectly good for those authors who prefer to work with the assumption of an inviolable speed of light limit, to do so and see what kind of stories can be thereby generated. The genre of SF recognizes no limits; if the writing is good no

speculation is taboo. SF is not (despite some of the early efforts of Uncle Hugo) intended primarily as a science lesson. Inadvertent scientific errors resulting from the ignorance of the writer are of course clumsy and objectionable. However, deliberate alteration of known scientific principle is a basic technique of SF and should not be objected to. SF, necessarily, does not write only about what is known to be possible, but speculates as well about what may be possible. That, by the way, is probably a good definition of SF. (If I may indulge in that fanish device, defining SF.)

As always, NIEKAS is graced with magnificent cover illos. My compliments to Steve Fox and Eddie Jones.

Nan C. Scott  
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I enjoyed Ed's demolition of Ayn Rand's wretched books. Be assured that there are many of us who regard her books and ideas with real loathing, not just critical distaste!

What a pleasure to read Anne Braude on the detective novel! I hope she'll continue this series. It seems to me that the past is a secondary world of sorts, and that the mystery novels I most enjoyed re-reading, even when I know "whodunnit", are those set in the London of the years between World War I and World War II. London as it was then, that vanished social milieu of Sayers and early Margery Allingham, is a world nearly as different from ours as Pern--and just as unreachable.

I've enclosed a short review of Peter Straub's Shadowland, although perhaps Don D'Amassa is planning to treat it at greater length in the future. It's a worthy successor to his Ghost Story, and I'm frustrated at finding that our local library hasn't any of his earlier novels. Does anyone out there know if there are the same kind of wonderfully scary stuff as his two latest books? Will D'Amassa's series go back as far as Shirley Jackson, or will be focus only on more recent writers? [see "The Haunted Library"]

Ed, I feel your review of The Borrowers sells that excellent children's fantasy short. "Their lifestyle," you say, "is cutesy," a word guaranteed to turn anyone off the book. But there is a lot more to the Borrowers' life under the floor than the kind of dollhouse miniaturizing that little girls like. Arietty is the eternal adolescent, yearning for wider horizons and a chance to explore her world, even at the risk of her life,

while her parents, especially her mother, want to keep her safe, no matter how narrow that world. In addition to the universal parent/adolescent conflict, Arietty's need for freedom is further threatened by Mrs. Driver, the cook, who is ready to exterminate the Borrowers merely because they are different and strange to her. Indeed, some critics see a parallel between Arietty, cooped up under the floorboards, her life at risk, and Anne Frank. As for "the natural consequences of something being that small," the Borrowers, especially in the sequels (Afield, Afloat, and Aloft), are constantly in danger because of their size.

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...I have talked with Anne Braude over the telephone, and she says she wouldn't want to tape Witch House, since she doesn't like horror stories. I wouldn't think of W.H. as coming under that classification myself, but of course that is the way it's been described in the latest ads. I'll have to send her a copy of The Cross and the Sword, my one historical novel, though I'll want it back, since the book is out of print and seems likely to remain so, for so far I've been unable to regain any rights to it. There was no remission clause in my contract, unfortunately. I hope I can get it back some day--it was the only book in which I've ever given one of the characters my own mind, thinking my own thoughts. A somewhat tricky experiment, however, since said character, being the hero, is naturally a man, not a woman. But I don't think there is anything effeminate about him, though I certainly would much have preferred my original title for the book--Dark Runs the Road.

Did I tell you the first volume of the Theseus trilogy is going to become a Pocket Books and/or Simon & Schuster book? Contract is all signed now, and down payment made.

## WAHFants

Amanda Carter, Neil E. Kaden (good luck in Texas), Alain Ridenow-Ardais, Sandra Miesel, Chester Cuthbert, Vera Chapman, G. Harry Stine, Roger Schlobin, Dawson France, William J. Upton-Knittle, Jr., Ph.D, Robert Bloch, James Ahearn (we need your address again), Paul Demzioquo, Joe A. Baltero, Jr., David Thiry, Jon Douglas Singer, M.A., Elizabeth Warren, Gary "I Knew Mike Bastraw When He Was Alive" Symington, Juanita Coulson, and

# Bumbejimas Cont'd.

The panel on Religion and SF was chaired by Connie Willis. Other panelists included F. Winplane McIntyre (a writer from Australia), George R.R. Martin, David Dvorkin (the token atheist on the panel), and Kimberly Hartman.

At the start of the panel Connie handed each of us a stone and a baggie full of gravel in order to defend ourselves. She kept a large stone in front of herself to lend to any panelist who felt the need for it.

(Alan Ryan, editor of the forthcoming anthology Perpetual Light dealing with SF of a religious theme, could not make it due to personal problems.)

Each of us gave a brief presentation. I started out with a short survey of religious SF, then McIntyre spoke about the Inklings and told several things about Tolkien that I hadn't heard before--such as the fact that Hobbits were originally viewed as little Hobgoblins and were evil, Martin spoke about why he writes on religious themes, Dvorkin spoke about the intrinsic conflict between knowledge and religion and why SF should debunk religion, and Hartman countered by giving the case for the compatability of SF and religion.

The discussion was then opened up to the audience. In reply to a statement from them, McIntyre quipped "Jerry Falwell is not a true Christian. Jerry Falwell is a Christian in the sense that a Trekkie is a member of SF fandom." The panel kept wandering away from the realtion of SF to religion to the nature of religion itself despite several attempts by the moderator to bring it back.

I also appeared on a panel Sunday afternoon during the special interest group meeting on Tolkien organized by Bernie Zuber. The panel was on the history of Tolkien fandom and each of us spoke on the parts we played.

Denver does not have adequate facilities for an event the size of a worldcon and the huckster room and art show were in a convention center about 8 blocks away from the Denver Hilton. The masquerade, Hugo awards ceremony, and special interest groups were there, too. While shuttle buses were provided, it did interfere with easy access to these events. And the special interest meetings were in a series of rooms that were almost impossible to find. I am glad that the Chicon committee was able to procure all of the facilities in a

single building.

In general I did not find as many program items at this convention which I wanted to hear as I had at Noreascon II. Several that did sound interesting I missed because of other commitments. There was an excellent discussion on the mining of the moon and asteroids.

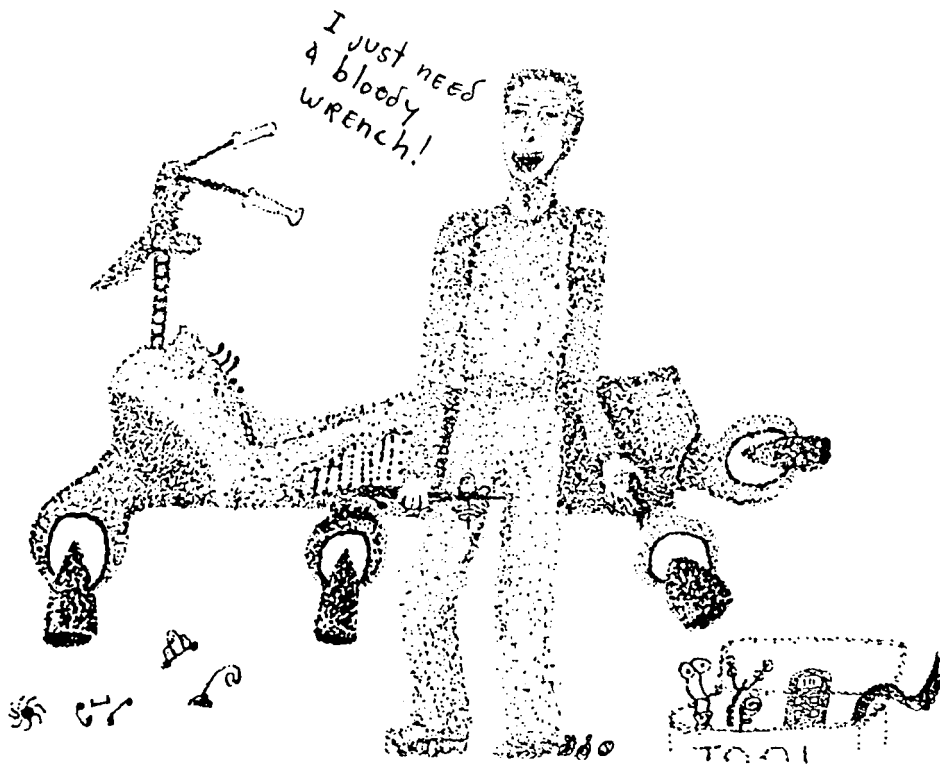
During the Hugo ceremonies the moderator read a telegram from Rep. Timothy E. Worth from the Colorado delegation. He said he has introduced a bill establishing as a national goal the construction of a permanent manned space station by the 1990s. I feel he is to be commended for his action and that he should get as many letters of support as possible.

I met many old friends and made several new ones. I saw Emil Greenleaf for the first time since Pittcon in 1960. Back then he had a fannish address on Mystery St. in New Orleans and now lives on Nova St. in Denver.

I had a good half hour talk with Nicholas Yermakov whom I had wanted to meet since I heard him read three of his stories at a New Jersey SF meeting last April. He had been introduced as a new Harlan Ellison which he said was unfair to both him and Harlan. He had read three stories which were really far out, strangely humorous pieces. These stories had the oddball humor that Harlan does display when he talks. Since then, Anne Braude read one of his stories from F AND SF, "Melponamie, Calliope, and Fred", which is about a Greek muse plagueing a modern writer. Anyhow, Mr. Yermakov explained that these humorous stories were unusual for him. He is more a novelist than a short story writer and his novels and shorts are down-beat. But he said that there is a good chance that his muse story would be picked up by a network as the basis for a TV sitcom. He does want to get into film work and plans to move to L.A. in the near future.

He was amazed to note that NIEKAS is printed in Laconia. He is a bikey and comes to the annual motorcycle races in Laconia every June and this year stayed at a motel across the lake from Sherwood. If he isn't in L.A. and comes again next year, he promised to look us up.

I went to many different parties put on by many different groups and individuals and had an excellent



time. I also spent a lot of time in the con suite where the assortment of beer was tremendous. Rumor had it that the committee had procured 50 varieties of imported beer. I did not see that many but there was a lot of good stuff. I enjoy dark beer and had Augsberger Dark and Anchor Porter for domestic beers. Imports that I enjoyed included common ones like Dos Equis from Mexico and Molson's from Canada, but I also had Moosehead from Canada, Red Barrel from England, and Tooth Sheaf from Australia.

There were many interesting fast food places near the hotel. At the Mongolian Barbecue you pick what you want from bins and have it customed stir fried. The Beef Bowl is a chain that originated in Japan and I had some good, inexpensive pork Teriyaki. It was one of only 4 items on the menu: the Beef Bowl itself and three kinds of Teriyaki. There was a Greek lunch counter only a block from the hotel where I had breakfast two times. While I am not particularly fond of Fedda cheese, it does make an excellent omelet. I also ate at a mexican place right near the convention center whose name I've forgotten. As is often the case the in-hotel eating facilities were just not up to handling us. Even at 9 PM on Monday when a few of us went into the Wicker Works for dinner we were told that we would have to wait over an hour for our food...and this with the tables less than half full!

The Trimble's had a table set up with paper, pens and typewriters to encourage people to participate

immediately in their "Write Now" campaign. They were also selling three "Write Now" t-shirts to subsidize the cost of their space advocacy program.

Bjo had found Kerry Kyle to help me explore the three dimensional art in the art show. She did an excellent job of helping me find the pieces and describing them when necessary. The quantity and quality of the work was staggering. I wouldn't know where to begin to describe it. I was surprised to find that the Taun Taun from THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK was a two legged animal. That does not strike me as a very practical beast of burden.

Speaking of EMPIRE, I was disappointed but not surprised to see it take the Hugo for best film. There is now a Lucas cult and I think he will get the award every year now. While STAR WARS broke new ground and richly deserved the award, EMPIRE was just more of the same. I had been rooting for Leguin's THE LATHE OF HEAVEN which did come in second.

And of course LOCUS took it again. These days the competition is only between the semi-professional magazines for they have the circulation and exposure. The only amateur magazine to even make it onto the ballot was FILE 770, a newszine. Charlie's Brown does a good job of producing and promoting LOCUS and its circulation is better than that of all the other semi-prozines, not to mention fanzines. Even when SCIENCE FICTION TIMES was taking its third Hugo in the 50s, fans were

bitching about it not being a real fanzine. Of course the fanzine fans' fanzine cannot have the circulation to seriously compete. That is why they have set up their own FAAN awards. Perhaps the Hugo category should be changed to reflect this fact and the category be renamed Best Semi-Professional Magazine.

I spent most of Monday evening with several people from Albuquerque including Pat Mathews. She was a lot of fun to be around. She also read me her short story "Girls Will Be Girls" submitted to Marion Zimmer Bradley for her next "Darkover" anthology.

The trip home had a few minor complications. The only flight available from Denver got into Boston at 5 PM, and I had to get downtown to catch my bus by 5:45. This was the last bus that would get me to my home tho I had anticipated possible problems and made alternate plans. There were buses at 6:15 and 8 which would go to Laconia and a friend was available to drive me home if necessary. Neither Mike nor Sherwood could do it because both were working second shift that day, but Sherwood brother-in-law, Sam Shepard, was available.

They closed the plane up on time but then the captain announced that he had to add more fuel which delayed us about 15 minutes and the wait for takeoff clearance delayed us another 15. We arrived in Boston a half hour late, 15 minutes before my bus. I still hoped to make the first one to Laconia, so Scott Green, a poet from Manchester who had been my roommate and was traveling with me, helped me get my luggage and get to a cab quickly. He had an hour and a half before his bus to Manchester was to arrive so was not in a rush and I was glad to have his assistance. I missed my bus by 10 minutes but did make the 6:15. I was too tired to read and dozed most of the way to Laconia.

When I had checked in at the Denver airport I had found that I had been, as usual, assigned to the segregated seat. I was over an hour early for the flight so I asked to be reassigned and to sit with Scott. This time I was not hassled at all which really surprised me because I was flying on United. I still remembered the numerous incidents of harassment reported in Braille Monitor and my own experiences. The funny thing is that this is far from the first time I had flown with Ned, tho until now I had managed to avoid United. I guess to a large extent it depends on the personalities of the flight crew and terminal personnel.

This was my first flight with Ned on

a DC8 and it does have a couple inches less leg room than the 727. Scott took the window seat and I took the middle one. I stowed my shoulder bag under the seat and tried to get Ned in front of my legs but he simply wouldn't fit. The flight attendant started clucking and saying that perhaps we would have more space up front. I then pushed my feet forward into the luggage space and got Ned under my legs where he fit perfectly. He was very comfortable there and we had a good flight. He is a long dog and his paws and part of his head were in front of the aisle seat. Since the plane was not quite full, the attendant said she would leave the seat empty though it was not really necessary. I felt good about having made my point and being able to ride in non-segregating seating.

You might wonder at my making such a big fuss over this matter of seating. The bulkhead seat is only a little bit less convenient than the regular one, having no hand-luggage space and less-convenient tables. But it is because of the very insistence by some airline people that we can ride ONLY in the segregated seat that we must stand our ground. On a number of occasions blind travelers with guide dogs have been refused permission to board a plane because all the bulkhead seats were taken. There was the incident on United in Monterey this April, and last year a good friend, Mike Hingson, was refused permission to board a PSA flight from L.A. to SFO causing him to miss an important business appointment. He is a sales representative for Kurzweil Computer Products and missed a sale and a commission. When he boarded the next flight an hour later (there is no assigned seating or reservations) and politely requested that he not be put in the bulkhead seat, airline personnel assaulted him and bodily forced him off the plane. He is now suing PSA for over a million dollars in damages.

I do have particular problems with Ned because of his size. He is a German Shepard, but of an unusual variant of the breed which is almost all black, except for paws and belly, and has a large bear-like head. I know of only one other person who has a large guide dog like mine: Susan Whalen of Austin, Texas. At the last NFB convention she suggested that we form the guide-bear users' organization.

Anyhow, 99 out of 100 dog guides (technically they should be called dog guides but that sounds clumsy; Guide Dog, like Seeing Eye Dog, is actually a registered trademark like Scotch Tape but which is threatening

to become generic) will fit under an airplane seat and will actually do BETTER in a non-bulkhead seat because of this.

Ned is a beautiful dog and I am very proud of his appearance and personality. As I said in my article "Dogs, Sticks, and Lasers" a few NIEKU ago, they make a rough match between the size of the dog and the user. When I got Ned he was immature and weighed 78 pounds. He is now close to 100. But most of the dogs in my class weighed under 50 and one was even under 40. Ned is now 10 1/2 years old and in a few years I will have to get a replacement. I enjoy having a large dog and will probably request a similar dog when I do go again. He has done well in intercity busses (including the 8 hour trip from NH to NY) and Amtrack. It is only on planes that he is a bit big and spills over into my neighbor's leg space, but this is true whether we go in a regular or bulkhead seat. For that one bit of inconvenience I do not think I would want a smaller dog.

I had quite a scare and thought that this might have been Ned's last major trip. For five years now we have made about two plane trips a year and I anticipate continuing that for the indefinite future. Shepards of Ned's age are prone to arthritis and he had shown occasional signs of it. While I was in the Bay Area, he suddenly began to display some signs of distress which I took to be arthritis but could not get to a vet to check it out them. When I got to Arizona with its hot dry climate, he seemed much better so that seemed to confirm my opinion. He stayed OK through Denver and my first two weeks home but then he suddenly had greater distress than ever. Something was really painning him and he carried his head crooked, like he couldn't straighten out his neck. I took him to his vet and found out that he had a very bad ear infection. The vet cleared it out and Ned is now on antibiotics. He is feeling much better and I will be able to use him on future trips.



OK, Kermit...and when you are elected President, I want full-funding for NASA...



## The Official NIEKAS Molepoll

As I made clear in a review in NIEKAS 25, I think that Duncton Wood by William Horwood is a marvelous book and destined to become a classic of modern fantasy. I have now been joined in that view by one and one-half of the senior editorial staff. (Mike also loves the book; Ed likes what he has heard so far, which is installments included in my taped letters; I don't know how Sherwood has escaped.) Therefore the magazine has decided to adopt officially my private molepoll, which is a survey of the favorite characters of those who have read the book (which abounds in marvelous personalities--and don't try to tell me a mole can't be a person). The primary reason for this ploy is to encourage all of you Out There to buy and read the book. The statistics at present are four votes for Boswell and one for Rebecca (whom our Resident Curmudgeon, Professor Shumaker, found "ravishing"). The lack of votes for Bracken, the hero, can I think be explained by the fact that for most of the time the reader is looking out through his eyes and not at him as a character. (Bastraw cast his original vote for Rune; he has been Dealt With.) If you want to know what we are going on about, get hold of the book; and then send in your vote to me or, if more convenient, to Mike. Don't send it to Ed; he has already revealed himself as a Closet Mole Poisoner. (Why does he have to be so chauvinistic about his lousy tomatoes, anyway?)

Anne Braude

## Anyone for Dragons?

Delirious from the success of the Science Fiction and Religion issue, we are now planning another special issue for NIEKAS 30. The chosen subject this time is dragons: a logical selection as all of us enjoy reading about dragons, several of us have written about dragons, and one of us is a dragon. (Also, we are hoping for lots of artwork.) Now is the time for all you fantasy fans to get in your licks: send in your artwork, poetry, parables, and prose--we will even consider using fiction if it is very short and very good--to:

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## One Last Gasp

NIEKAS 28, as I type this, is a fait accompli--and accomplished fait, if you will. You have now read and/or enjoyed this issue; probably without even noticing that my column and Sherwood's column DO NOT APPEAR AT ALL.

(OK, alright, I know the applause is just to make us feel good.)

There are two good reasons for this anomaly: it put us all that much closer to our planned 60 pp. length (check page number below) and also to serve as an example to all our late-nik contributors. You see, we didn't get our material in by the deadline.

I don't know what Sherwood had planned for his act but I know mine would have been slightly above the fantastic level. Among other things I would have echoed Harry Andruschak's despair for our Planetary Exploration Programs. (He does not mention that he himself may be a victim of the Reagan Shuffle by the time you read this.)

Harry says that the Trimble's "Write Now" campaign almost turned the tide. I really hate to think that any of our readers didn't let Them What Govern know how they feel about the whole matter.

But let me leave you with this chilly little thought: the personnel at JPL won't have to worry about finding work after they are cut from their research work, they are sure to land jobs with the Department of Defense.

And the world keeps on turnin'...

Mike Bastraw

## Next Issue

Part II of "Isn't It Romantic" by ANNE BRAUDE, "Mother Ghou! Rhymes" by JOE R. CHRISTOPHER, more ghastly verse by ROD WALKER, DON D'AMMASSA continues his survey of the horror genre, HARRY ANDRUSCHAK updates the state of the space program, a surprise article by FRED LERNER, the usual columnists, STEVE FOX art folio

## Due Dates

December 1, 1981 - articles  
December 15, 1981 - columns  
January 1, 1982 - reviews  
January 15, 1982 - LoCs  
February 15, 1982 - NIEKAS 29 mailed

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