



DEROGATORY REFERENCE 99

Derogatory Reference 99. Arthur D. Hlavaty, 206 Valentine Street, Yonkers, NY 10704-1814. 914-965-4861. hlavaty@panix.com. Published four times (or so) per year. The print version is available for \$1 (\$2 outside the USA), arranged trade, or letter of comment (e-mail counts). If there is an X after your name on the envelope, send at least one of the above if you wish to receive the next issue. The e-mail version is available on request. Copyright © 2002 by Arthur D. Hlavaty. Staff: Bernadette Bosky, Kevin J. Maroney, Peter Celeron. Permission to reprint in any nonprofit publication is hereby granted, on condition that I am credited and sent a copy. This is a Church of the SuperGenius publication. In Wile E. we trust.

I do not believe that Son of a Bush plotted 9/11 as a trick to clamp down on dissent. I do not believe that those around him who are smart enough to think of it did so. I find it extremely likely that the Bush administration did not pay as much attention to the dangers of terrorist attack as the Clinton administration had. This suggests that perhaps the Republicans were mistaken, and helping your rich friends steal even more is a bigger distraction from the proper duties of government than getting your knob polished. (Of course, they obviously need a lot of help; Enron stole millions if not billions just in California and still went broke.) I now look forward to a replay of the Watergate scenario, in which the attempts to cover up exacerbate the administration's problems. Going, "Boogie! Boogie! Boogie!" about the threat of another attack is an excellent start.

Turning to something worse than the government: Microsoft announced in court that its software is so bad that revealing how it works would endanger national security. As Dave Barry says, I Am Not Making This Up.

In a frighteningly unprecedented display of both sociability and travel, I took part in three sf gatherings in three different states in consecutive weeks this March.

Lunacon

Synecdoche is the rhetorical device in which the part symbolizes the whole: Bernadette told Lunacon programming she'd be happy to appear on a panel any time except Saturday afternoon, when she would be teaching a writing class. They scheduled her panel for the middle of her class time.

On Friday evening, I attempted to attend the panel on How Not to Have a Fan Feud, which turned into How Not to Have a Panel, largely because two of the listed participants, having told programming that they would not attend the con, were not there. But there are always competent people at these things. I repaired to the Con Suite, where Alexis and Lee Gilliland were handling things at least as well as could be expected, given that the food that had been promised for hours earlier had not yet arrived. Jean Elizabeth Krevor was running the Green Room in a friendly and

efficient manner. (Harlan Ellison is right about "Let me help.")

I had already been assigned to the panel Bernadette (or as the pocket program said, "Bernette") was on, and I told the audience that I would attempt to channel her, so if I said anything more interesting than usual, they would know why. It was a good panel, including *Analog* editor Stan Schmidt (I recommend *Which Way to the Future?*, a new Tor collection of his editorials) and Darrell Schweitzer, from whom I learned that the last 200 pages of a large book add virtually nothing to printing costs, a datum that suggests much about current lavishly detailed and richly peopled fantasy series and/or Extruded Fantasy Product (a distinction I am not competent to draw).

The next two panels blur together in my mind, as they shared one room and several participants: "We Are Women, Hear Us Roar" with Esther Friesner and Jean Krevor, was followed by "Creating a Science-Fictional Religion," with Kage Baker, and both were fun. I am not sure whether Tamora Pierce was on one or both (the pocket program says neither), but I knew I was going to like her when she spoke of telling a respectable potential employer that she had taught a course in "History of" Witchcraft. (I do not recall whether she made quotation marks with her fingers or conveyed them through tone of voice.)

I have since learned more about her. There's a charming *Locus* interview in which she discusses setting out to write about "girls kicking butt," an area that is as yet insufficiently explored, Xena notwithstanding. And one advantage of procrastinating on the writing of this is that I can mention that Teresa Nielsen Hayden's Weblog pointed me to the fan fiction site (fanfiction.net), which collects writing set in the worlds of other print fiction. Tamora Pierce's stories are the fourth most popular source of such fanfic (after Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, and Animorphs). I do not know precisely what this means, but obviously she's doing *something* right. (By the way, I love the whole idea. Just as there are those who transgress against the rules forbidding playing with their food, so some of us play with our reading. A world in which people write erotica with the background and characters of George Orwell's *1984* is a more interesting one than I had suspected.)

There were other pleasures: Old friend J. Katherine Rossner stayed with us over the weekend and visited the con. I had a substantial chat with Eric Raymond for the first time in many years. We discussed sex, science fiction, and computers and did not discuss the main area in which we disagree. (I distrust equalizers, whether they come from Karl Marx or Samuel Colt.) I was immortalized on film for the Fan Gallery. (The AutoCorrect attempted to change that.)

ICFA

The main thing wrong with the 2002 ICFA was that Bernadette couldn't be there. Her uneven health and (as ever) crowded schedule meant that she could either attend the conference or write the paper she had promised to deliver, but not both. She chose the latter, and I read her paper (on Ramsey Campbell) for her. Fortunately, my co-husband, Kevin Maroney, was also able to be present.

One of those who missed Bernadette was Peter Straub. Though he is not otherwise fannish, he and we live in adjoining cities and see each other once a year, 1000 miles from home. Bernadette has written extensively about his work, and he shares my high opinion of those writings.

There were many more of the usual crew, such as Fiona Kelleghan (whose sf criticism and appearance in a bathing suit—both excellent—were noted in the *Washington Post*).

There were new friends there, too. Kevin and I had lunch with Ted Chiang, whose remarkable short stories and novellas are about to be published in a single volume by Tor (*Stories of Your Life and Others*). I also met China Miéville, whose *Perdido Street Station* has been praised by many people whose opinions I value. If I didn't have advanced Reader's Block, I probably would have read it by now. He's a big guy with a shaven head and (as Kevin put it) a spiral-bound ear, but I didn't notice anything *unusual* about his appearance. (Bernadette read and enjoyed his *King Rat* around the time it came out in the US, and that was about when she started getting pet rats, of which we now have four. Coincidence or conspiracy: You decide.) China and I do not have the same political views, he understated (I am tempted to regress to the words of my childhood and call him "Red China"), but I enjoyed meeting him.

Before the Conference I realized something: I have an Inner Self that could be called Mr. T—not the guy from the A-Team, but short for Tourette). I don't actually have the affliction, but I often find myself wanting to utter really offensive remarks. (Sufferers from the syndrome don't restrict themselves to the words you can't say on television;

they'll also want to make ethnic slurs and announce that the plane they are on is being hijacked.) We were preceded in the hotel by a group from VicePorterhouseCowpers (or whatever—the accounting firm that can't write its own name in a straight line), and I really wanted to break in to their meeting and yell, "Do you get down on your knees in gratitude that it wasn't one of *your* companies that got caught?" Later, at the Critical Theory Roundtable, where you could bleed to death from all the cutting-edge theory, I kept wanting to scream, "Eternal objective literary values!"

At the first Thursday session, I attended a panel on Batman, composed of Joe Sanders, Joe Sutliff Sanders, and Craig Jacobsen. (You mean your name *isn't* Joe Sanders? Isn't that confusing?) Most informative; the Caped Crusader has been through many changes.

That was followed by a panel on the history of the ICFA and the IAFA, which I thoroughly enjoyed. There was a printed handout summarizing that history, which got almost all of it right, except that this year's Special Guest, Molly Gloss, was referred to as "Molly Bloom" (*long* Guest of Honor speech).

Actually, the GoH speech was by Joan Aiken, whose selection represented the Conference's theme of Children's Fantasy, and it was a mesmerizing account of some of the dreams at the heart of her work. One of her books, the delightful *The Cockatrice Boys*, was given away to one and all at the luncheon. We had earlier learned that someone at her publisher had confused "cartons" and "cases," and so 9,600 copies of the book had been delivered to an unsuspecting Bill Senior, but that had been rectified.

After lunch, there was a session on Jorge Luis Borges, one of my heroes. In a paper on "The Aleph," the speaker mentioned that the Aleph, that single place at which the entire universe can be focused, could be seen as a foretelling of the Internet. (As could "The Library of Babel.") He also mentioned perhaps my favorite line from the master: "The genius was not in the poetry, but in the reasons the poetry should be considered admirable." There's a lot of that going around, even more than in Borges's day. (Perhaps by now there is a second-order version: "The genius was not in the criticism, but in the reasons the criticism should be considered admirable.")

The next session I saw was on children's fantasy, and the paper I enjoyed most was Farah Mendlesohn's, on how the children in Diana Wynne Jones's stories acquire agency, a term which refers to that essential step to adulthood where the child learns to use power, with the

awareness that there will be consequences. ("Memo to my younger readers:" Jon Carroll once said, "You will hate Consequences.")

The next morning I attended a session on Philip K. Dick. I enjoyed Tony Wolk's discussion of the mind-body problem in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* and Alex Irvine's ingenious suggestion that some elements of Dick's work come from the San Francisco poets he hung out with in the Fifties, but I was surprised that the paper I liked the most was Emily Bick's discussion of Dick, G.K. Chesterton, and Bret Easton Ellis. I'm afraid I share the vulgar prejudice that *American Psycho* is the sort of book that gives homicidal pornography a bad name, and I've never liked *A Scanner Darkly*. But after some introductory French culture about Barthes's theory of fashion, we got a fascinating discussion of the fiction of disinformation situations, where all the evidence can lead the protagonist (and thus the reader) in at least two opposite directions. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* is of course a classic of that approach; that element is one of the strengths of *A Scanner Darkly*; and apparently Ellis's *Glamorama* fits into that category as well.

I had to miss the after-lunch presentation by Scholar GoH Rod McGillis so I could prepare to deliver Bernadette's paper. Apparently, one of the themes was Post-Colonial Theory. That makes sense: Having been children, we are all post-colonial. Bernadette's paper deals with Campbell's use of autobiographical material in his fantastic fiction and sets the stage for next year's ICFA, when Campbell will be the GoH.

The next morning, there was a panel on feminist sf, including Bill Clemente's paper on James Tiptree jr., which not only discussed her excellent novels and stories, but also brought back a few memories for me. Back in the mid-Seventies, I was just getting into fanzine fandom. One editor, Jeff Smith, was corresponding with the mysterious Tiptree, who interacted only via the Post Office, and whose gender was not then known. I thought "he" was a fascinating person, who wrote things like (in answer to an anguished complaint that the Moon Landing was boring and commercialized), "That's like getting indignant because water doesn't burn and shit doesn't taste good. I mean, what did you expect?"

Smith did a large special issue of his zine *Khatru*, in which a number of sf writers postally discussed feminism. Tiptree was one of them, and most of the feminists present found enough ineluctable masculinity in "his" words to suggest that the discussion would go better without "him." The climax, as it were, came when Tiptree made a reference to "Arthur 'Jiggling-Nuts' Clarke."

Another participant accused Tiptree of gay bashing, and she replied that she knew nothing of Clarke's sexual orientation, and wouldn't have made an issue of it if she had, but she was replying to Clarke's suggestion that women's breasts would jiggle provocatively in free fall by pointing out that men have bouncy bits too. So it was a woman disguised as a man accused of gay bashing because she believed her target's effort to sound as sexist as a real het male. Truly a drag comedy worthy of Shakespeare.

The panel on feminist sf was followed by a session on current British sf. Last year *NYRSF* published an article suggesting that science fiction is getting middle-aged: stodgy and nostalgic. Paul Kincaid wrote to suggest that perhaps this was true only of American sf, that as the US and Russia were once supposed to, British and American sf converged, then passed each other, so it's the British writing that is now expansive and optimistic. The panel seems to think that there's a lot of exciting new British sf coming out.

I'd like to recommend one example here. I had the good fortune to read John Meaney's *Paradox*, a book set in a fantasy-like monarchy, but one where the magic is rigorously worked-out mathematics and logic. I particularly enjoyed it because it harked back to the Asimov approach, where the protagonist triumphs by figuring out the world around him, rather than by adventuring or beating people up. I recommend it wholeheartedly; it hasn't been published in the US yet, but I hope it will be soon.

And then came the concluding banquet, which Kevin and I had the pleasure of attending with Donna Ross Hooley and her husband, Steve. This year Donna had once again given a paper on Permanent Special Guest Brian W. Aldiss. She has done so many of those that the Conference should make her the Permanent Special Guest Scholar. The ones I've heard were excellent, but there's usually something I want to see even more when she is presenting her paper, and this year was no exception.

One of the ways in which Kevin is not a mere normal person is that he can hang spoons from his nose, and he taught Donna how to do so. It was that kind of banquet, as indicated by the presentation of the Robert A. Collins Award. Bill Senior and Chip Sullivan have been serving the Conference far beyond the call of duty (not to mention sanity) for many years now. There is an award for that sort of thing, and there was some question as to which of these eminently deserving gentlemen was to get it this year. It wound up being given to both, with an allegedly humorous

statement in the second presentation that the other person wasn't *really* getting it.

The second presentation was long and detailed. Given that people wanted to get to the Saturday evening party and were wondering if the organization was actually taking back an award it had given, it seemed at the time as if we might be getting a speech the length of Molly Bloom's. We had much time to find flaws in the speech, and many people did.

But let's not end on that note. It was a great gathering, offering knowledge and companionship, as usual.

Minicon

Historical Background: I wanted to get on the Internet in 1977, when it didn't exist yet. There being no blogs yet, I did a *zine*, which I had to type on paper, copy, and mail out. (This is the 99th issue of it.) I then found what would evolve into newsgroups and Live Journals. (Do not believe the Young-Web Creationists who say that the Net created those *ex nihilo*, printing out fake fossils of earlier forms.) They were called amateur press associations, or *apas* for short, and despite the primitive crudities of typing on paper and mailing them to someone who would put them together in a big lump and mail them back, I enjoyed them.

For years I was in a dozen or more at any given time, and I'm still in five of the surviving ones. One that was important to me for quite a while was MINNEAPA, centered in (you guessed it!) Minneapolis. I believe I was told about it by Carol Kennedy, whom I'd been sending my zine to for a while. I was in it from the late 70s to the mid-80s. Also in it were some people you may have heard of, such as fantasy writers Pamela Dean, Stephen Brust, Emma Bull, and Will Shetterly, as well as Bruce Schneier, the cryptography maven. In 1982 we were joined by a woman named Geri Sullivan. Then as now, I sent this zine promiscuously to anyone who indicated what I could interpret as interest, and when Geri did so, I showed her mine. It was the first zine she had ever received. She now publishes *Idea*, maybe the best fanzine in the world, with beautiful mimeography (which is not an oxymoron) and fascinating writing. I think it's a clear case of *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, but this argument fails to convince some.

(Perhaps the best article I ever read in *Idea* was a wrenching memoir by Kathy Routliffe. I had never met her before, but I sent her a zine, as I had Geri, and we corresponded.)

Anyway, all this history made me even happier to be chosen as Minicon's Fan Guest of Honor, and offered me a chance to see all these and more old friends, some of whom I hadn't seen in twenty

years, and some I'd never met. Further pleasure came from being joined for the con by Bernadette and Kevin. (The concom wanted them there; perhaps part of my attraction as Fan GoH was that, like the Christian God, I would be three in one.)

Michael von Maltzen was in charge of programming, and he and I exchanged e-mails a reasonable time before the con. Sharon Kahn, another old MINNEAPA friend I'd never seen face to face, came up with useful suggestions. The last time I was a Fan GoH (Westercon 1989), the concom had given me a choice of writing a speech or being interviewed by a panel. You will be shocked to learn that I took the option requiring less effort and preparation. I suggested the same approach this time. I assumed there would be about four or five panelists. The one I suggested was Jo Walton, whose delightful posts on rasff and other newsgroups had led to her selection as Fan GoH last year.

There turned out to be a problem with that. I'd volunteered Jo without telling her, and worse, when I was e-mailed the tentative program, I saw that she was to be the only one on the interviewing panel. To further complicate things, her family was in the process of moving to Canada from the UK and pretty much incommunicado, but I was finally able to get in touch with her by e-mail and make clear that I would be willing to recruit other panelists so as not to put the whole interviewing task on her. She indicated a willingness to go it alone.

We arrived on Thursday, and shortly after we had checked in to the hotel, we ran into Jo, with her son Sasha and her husband Emmet O'Brien. We went to an excellent Chinese restaurant with them and another old friend from rasff, Tom Womack. I also encountered Steve Brust, who said he remembered me from MINNEAPA and had enjoyed my zines.

The con assigned us not one but two liaisons, my old friend Carol Kennedy and my new friend Susan Levy Haskell, who did a marvelous job of making the con pleasant for us and minimizing our difficulties, but were helped by the way the concom made the con pleasant for everyone and minimized everyone's difficulties.

The next day, the concom had made luncheon reservations for us at Aquavit, an elegant place a few blocks away. As we were gathering a group, including Carol, Rachael Lininger, Pam Dean, and David Dyer-Bennet, I noticed the name of another previously unmet MINNEAPA friend, Eileen Lufkin, and invited her to join us. She proved to be not only good company, but also a useful native guide. Much of downtown Minneapolis has walkways between the buildings, or as Bernadette

calls them, Habitrails. Eileen led us back to the hotel without going outside.

And then the con officially began. One of the pleasures I was looking forward to was the sound of my own voice. There are about a dozen things I'm not afraid of, and public speaking is one of them. (Private speaking is not.) I had offered to be on lots and lots of programming, and they took me up on it. So I went to moderate the first panel, on Creating Gods.

As Brian Aldiss would say, Hubris was immediately clobbered by Nemesis. An hour later, I said, "Stop me before I moderate again." The Discordian Panel was later, but this had all the chaos you could want, including more talking over each other than an Altman movie. But as the Minicon Moderators' Guide (which I should have read *before*) reminds us, it's only an hour, and no one got killed. Actually, it was just that the panel, lacking proper leadership, went off in two directions: Fantasy writers Lyda Morehouse and Katya Reimann talked about deities in their worlds, while Richard Tatge and I talked about alternative religions in this one. Like me, Richard is a Sixties person. I believe I was the one who quoted a Stephen Gaskin line that describes us: "I experimented with drugs in the Sixties, but I didn't exhale."

I was in the audience for the following panel, which discussed the rift in Minneapolis fandom over Minicon's decision of a few years ago not to try to be all things to all people. I don't want to get into a fraught topic that I don't know much about, but let me just say what I did notice: The current Minicon attracts lots of nice, interesting people. It's even drawing newcomers. Two I enjoyed meeting—Shweta Narayan and Zack Weinberg, who flew in from Berkeley—further enlivened things by dressing in clown/jester garb.

Later that evening, I encountered old friend Jon Singer, and finally got around to telling him the circumstances of our first meeting: It was many years ago, and a Fannish Personage was displeased with my writing. (We have long since made peace.) He informed me that I should crawl on my knees to Jon Singer, to be instructed in how to do fan writing right. I met Jon shortly after that, and liked him anyway.

The following morning Neil Belsky brought us an excellent pizza. Bernadette then discoursed, brilliantly, as usual, on Charles Williams, in a small upstairs program room.

Then came the Trickster panel, with a chance to talk about Coyote and other heroes, and more important, a chance to see Eleanor Arnason again. I mentioned that there were people at the con I hadn't seen in twenty years. I hadn't seen Eleanor

since 1964, when we both graduated from Swarthmore. I had read her books, such as the delightful *To the Resurrection Station*, and we've had a chance to correspond. In any event, the panel was enjoyable, and afterwards we got to compare notes on the good old days. It seems that we disagreed about Swarthmore—I loved it; she didn't—though we agreed that it was an elitist refuge from Real Life. My only complaint was that they ejected me, by a process of graduation. But they *told* me to eat from the trees of knowledge.

[One thing I love about Swarthmore is that the school has given up its football team. When I was there, merely having a bad team was enough, but the sports thing has gotten out of hand. The book to read on this subject is *The Game of Life*, by James L. Shulman and William G. Bowen. Essentially, it says that the one group that most closely lives down to the affirmative-action stereotype (don't belong there, don't learn, don't even mix with the others to give them a Diversity Experience) is Jocks—excuse me, I mean Athletic-Americans. (Alumni spawn are not too far behind.) Even badminton scholarships help jockify the place.]

Somewhere in the general confusion was dinner, and I am not sure whether that was the one where we enjoyed hanging out with Neil Rest, or the one where we enjoyed hanging out with Jeanne Mealy. I don't think it was the one where we enjoyed hanging out with Kathy Routliffe and her husband, Bob Berlien. I should write more things down when I'm going to do a con report. (If you were there, but are not mentioned in this report, that's why, and I apologize. Beth Friedman. Mary Kay and Jordin Kare. Vicki Rosenzweig. Marilee Layman. And more.)

After that, Elise Matthesen moderated the Alternate Sexual Lifestyles panel, with the Valentine's Castle Three. Bernadette mentioned that the last such panel she had attended was entirely devoted to gay & bi, but Elise did not make the opposite error. She invited a male couple to join us. Excellent panel.

The absolute highlight of the con for me was the Fan GoH interview. Jo was awesome at it. Those remarkable on-screen and in-person communications skills translated into excellent interviewing. It was fun for us, and I believe it was fun for the audience.

The following morning, Bernadette and Carol talked about Lies Your English Teacher Told You. Kevin and Bernadette then joined Jon Singer, Patrick Nielsen Hayden, and Jo Walton for the indescribable but fascinating [*] panel.

We stayed over Sunday night. I got to meet GoHs Emma Bull and Will Shetterly after the con.

The next day Minneapolis reminded us that it was Minneapolis by having a snowstorm. That didn't delay our flight too badly.

It was great. I was registered by Karen Cooper at the beginning of the con, and expected to have more chance to talk with her, but it didn't turn out that way, and there were only brief chats with Geri Sullivan, Joyce Scrivner, and Dan Goodman, among others. I didn't get to see Bruce Schneier, Nate Bucklin, and Joel Rosenberg at all.

But mostly the con was wonderful. The only serious flaw was the one it shared with the Sixties and my Swarthmore years: It ended.

I still don't have an actual full-time job, but I'm getting a reasonable amount of proofreading and copy-editing work. I'm also doing more writing for reference books. I have an essay on Robert Silverberg in the forthcoming *Supernatural Fiction Writers*. The subject of that piece commented on a previous zine of mine in FAPA, saying that he'd never before seen William Gaddis and Marion Zimmer Bradley in the same sentence. In that spirit, let me just list the people I wrote up for a Sixties Encyclopedia: John Barth, Hugh Hefner, Tim Leary, Dwight Macdonald, and Mario Puzo.

My computer's screen croaked. Kevin installed a new one, and I realized how bad it had gotten before it croaked. I'm glad I didn't get around to writing that screed denouncing gray, hard-to-read Web sites.

Sometime around age 50, you begin to notice that every year is a Year of the Jackpot. This year we've already lost a whole bunch of interesting and/or talented and/or nice people, such as Bruce Pelz, Chuck Jones, Nancy Rapp, Dave Van Ronk, Robert Nozick, Waylon Jennings, Martha Beck, Billy Wilder, Stephen Jay Gould, and the amazing photosurrealist Abdul Mati Klarwein (if you saw a great Ballantine book cover in the early 70s, it was Klarwein) not to mention three excellent sf writers—R.A. Lafferty, Damon Knight, and George Alec Effinger.

I always said the best description of Lafferty's writing is what W.C. Fields said about sex: There may be some things better, and there may be some things worse, but there is nothing exactly like it. Knight did one of those Thomas Kuhn revolutions (from radical to obvious in his own lifetime) with the idea that sf was neither a pulpish subliterate that was beneath criticism nor a slannish super-literature that was above it. Effinger had horrible health problems and never lived up to the dread Great Potential, but wrote some marvelous stuff.

In memory, here are a few quotes:

Effinger: So okay, Brad and the Nine of Handbags you know. The Corvette is the Chariot. Great Shape Barbie is Strength, and the Barbie game is the Wheel of Fortune—"Solo in the Spotlight"

Jennings: There's one in every crowd, for crying out loud, why was it always turning out to be me? (OK, so Billy Joe Shaver wrote it, and Waylon just sang it.)

Knight (from a plot summary): Franchard, who is telepathic and clairvoyant, then has Joyce, who knows nothing about anything, tortured to extract unspecified information from him.

Lafferty: There is a secret society of seven men that controls the finances of the world. This is known to everyone, but the details are not known. There are those who believe it would be better if one of the seven were a financier.

Van Ronk: My mucous membranes are just a memory. Sometimes I think this stuff is bad for me.

Wilder: Nobody's perfect.

Some Books You Really Want to Know About

Jasper Fforde, *The Eyre Affair*. This one is just plain fun, set in a World as Myth where history was determined by great works of literature, and is subject to retroactive change. I'm actually glad that there will be sequels.

Noelle Howey, *Dress Codes*. Charming memoir of having a father who always thought he should have been a woman, and finally did something about it.

Damien Broderick, *Transcension*. One of the best imaginations in sf finds a form to match.

Charlaine Harris, *Dead until Dark* and *Living Dead in Dallas*. The Southern Vampire series. (*Redneck* would be the wrong word for several reasons.) Delightful books in which a telepathic waitress and a vampire team up to fight crime and such down in the bayous, in a future where vampires are kinda accepted.

Special thanks to Mercy Van Vlack for the delightful totemic cover, drawn in honor of my Minicon GoHship.

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