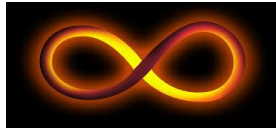


Ionisphere



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Ionisphere is the departmental magazine of the Fan-Pro Coordinating Bureau, established in 1980 by N3F President Irvin Koch, and re-established at the present time by President George Phillies. Thus it has a forty year history, but most of that time has been a long hiatus during which the bureau did not exist.

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EDITORIAL

Why Won't Science Fiction Be Denied?

Science fiction fandom has been broken up considerably since the New Wave, until it has ended up looking like the fellow in Lovecraft's "The Mound" looked after the underground dwellers had gotten through with him, a sort of pastiche, a jigsaw puzzle with a couple of the pieces tore. Young fandom had been joining the military, participating in collegiate insurrection, fighting in politics, going hip, and various such things that made a lot of them disappear before they matured into an adult fandom. In fact the New Wave writers took on a lot of the tendencies that had developed in fandom, showing the influence fandom actually has on science fiction. Many of them listened to admonitions made to them by people outside the field of interest saying they placed low in the literary world, and they tried to make it with other forms of literature. They left a record of their departures from the sf field in their fanzines.

That last point is an important one, as it relates to a prejudice against science fiction which exists in the large realms of the normal world. The normal, or mundane, existence, which is widespread, does not react well to the progressive, or even apocalyptic, nature of science fiction. Science fiction is regarded among these people as extreme, alarmist, or fanatic, and is sometimes referred to as "the lunatic fringe". There have been actions against those involved with science fiction coming from outside the science fiction range. Juanita Coulson, who was a school teacher, lost her job within the educational establishment because she was the co-editor of a science fiction fanzine. People were calling science fiction "crazy Buck Rogers stuff"—which was not appealing to Robert Coulson, who was being given the nickname "Buck". As education is an institution overseen by the government, this action seemed to originate from a governmental source. Science fiction fans in Ohio were being lured into taking court action to solve their competitive problems; they were out of place and ill at ease in courts, with which they had little familiarity. This was being done to cause ruptures in fandom's solidarity. Of course, this is not something we like here at the fan-pro coordinating bureau, and it may be assumed that our stand on such actions is to deplore them. At the time to which

I am referring, professional science fiction writers such as Alfred Bester, Robert Sheckley and Arthur C. Clarke were being seduced into writing for men's magazines, a move intended to make science fiction more discursive, more "off trail", as it were, than it already was. They were also tempted into the news syndicates, where they were not very welcome, news being written on a mundane plane, and once entangled there they were described as "subversives". This had the effect of smiting both involvements, the news being less than popular with Washington due to its disputative tendencies—while they were sabotaging the news, intentionally or otherwise, the newspapers were undermining their careers. This got rid of a lot of creative, and conceivably anti-government, thought.

Entertainment, known as "show business", was also seductive to science fiction writers and fans, who were drawn into it with false promises and never really scored there, although they did get their names on screen credits. Show business was ameliorative of science fiction and took up all of their creative time. Hence, with that many fans involved, fandom went bust, which it has not recovered from yet, as the thing is still going on, though apparently with disastrous results for all concerned—results which show up in the science fiction which is put on the screen.

Science fiction, though, has an active appeal which is the very thing that has made its upset so essential to the government. It has a progressive, adventurous quality which those who read it would as soon continue to have. Wide as their interests may otherwise become, they don't care to sacrifice their science fiction interests, even sometimes preferring crud science fiction to no science fiction at all. Science fiction has a call to it, and a spirit to it, to which there is no successful gainsaying. The unexplored realms which are so abhorrent to normality are something which the readers of fantasy and science fiction will not forego.

The conflict is not over with, and it will be interesting to see any outcome it may have—to watch further events as they come to pass. We are living in an exciting age after all, stuck as we may become in mundane matters. We may have seen science fiction readers denying any further interest in science fiction, but I believe we will start seeing people showing a high interest in it again. It is interesting enough to have that effect. We've been watching it affect the mundanes, the normal ways of life, and the literally unconcerned, which has been one result of science fiction going off in all directions, and I think it has had all the effect of that sort that it is going to have.

An Interview with Benjamin Kai Wai Cheah by Tamara Wilhite



Benjamin Kai Wai Cheah is a fantasy and science fiction author living in Singapore. I had the opportunity to interview him about his recent projects.

Tamara Wilhite: How did you get a short story in Jerry Pournelle’s THERE WILL BE WAR Volume X anthology?

Benjamin Cheah: Vox Day, the co-editor, issued an open call for the anthology on his blog in September 2015. After reading the post, an idea for a short story came to mind. I immediately got to work on my submission, then sent it in the moment it was done.

Weeks later, Vox Day informed me that Jerry Pournelle accepted my work, and the rest was history.

Tamara: Where else have you had short stories published?

Benjamin: I have a piece titled “Hostile Takeover” in Superversive Press’ MARS anthology, part of the planetary series of anthologies. Through Silver Empire, I published another short story named “We Bury Our Own” in **Lyonesse**, and a third called “Nightstick” in **Paragons**.

But these days I publish my short stories online as web serials on **Steemit**, **Narrative** and my blog.

Tamara: You’ve written several fantasy works like “Invincible”. What percentage of your stories are fantasy?

Benjamin: That’s hard to say. Thus far, all my novels have some fantasy elements in them, even if they’re not strictly marketed as such.

The closest I have to pure fantasy novels is the Dungeon Samurai trilogy, written under the name Kit Dun Cheah. That works out to about half my published output so far.

Tamara: Your novel NO GODS, ONLY DAIMONS won a Dragon Award in 2017. It is both fantasy and alternate history. Where does their timeline diverge from ours?

Benjamin: In the beginning of time in that universe, two mysterious elements appeared alongside the ones we are familiar with. Aetherium, a substance capable of transmuting into any form and state of matter, and nythium, a corrosive goo that allows the gifted to manipulate the fabric of space-time. In the myths and legends of the world, the gods of that universe taught their people how to use these substances and withdrew their presence from the world. Regardless of how it actually happened, the Greeks were the first civilization to master the use of these elements, and dominated their version of Europe. Their influence is still felt thousands of years later, when the story begins.

Tamara: No Gods, Only Daimons is supposed to be the first of a series. When does the next book come out?

Benjamin: The second book, HAMMER OF THE WITCHES, is already available. The third novel, I've been informed, will be ready by the end of the year.

Tamara: You have a Hugo nomination. What work was that for?

Benjamin: "Flashpoint: Titan", my entry for "There Will Be War, Volume X".

Tamara: How many books are there in the COVENANT CHRONICLES? And what are they about?

Benjamin: The Covenant Chronicles is a story told at three levels. At the personal level, it is the story of black ops contractor Luke Langdon and his return to faith in a time of war. After surviving a devastating terrorist attack as a teenager, he lost his faith in God (the Creator, in that universe), became an atheist, and joined the military to seek revenge. Over a decade and a half later, he is still fighting his war. But when a summoning experiment goes awry, he is chosen by an archangel to do battle against the Unmaker, the ultimate embodiment of evil. Now he must grapple with his lack of faith, fight terrorists AND demons AND a global conspiracy, and navigate the treacherous waters of his profession without losing his life. Or, more importantly, soul.

At the second level, it is a story of international conspiracy. The world is locked in a futuristic war on terror between the West and a powerful terrorist group. But a third party is pulling the strings behind this war, using it as an opportunity to assume control over the world. Their trump card is a pact with the Unmaker. But the Unmaker is using

THEM.

At the highest level, it is a war between good and evil, with many factions. The archangel mentioned above is the chief angel of another faith—the faith of Landon’s enemies. Other elder gods make their appearance as well, choosing agents among the human population. The Unmaker has offended them all, and is hell-bent on unmaking the entire world. But as the gods prepare to make war on the forces of the Unmaker, one question remains: Where is the Creator? The Covenant Chronicles is slated to run for six novels.

Tamara: Did you help write the DUNGEON SAMURAI books?

Benjamin: I am the author.

Tamara: Can you tell me about the AMERICAN HEIRS series?

Benjamin: I killed that series due to poor reader reception. But the ideas in them will be reproduced in other series.

Tamara: What are you working on now?

Benjamin: I’ve just completed BABYLON BLUES, a collection of cyberpunk horror stories. Previously published as webserials, they follow a team of elite law enforcement operators sworn to protect the innocent from cultists and monsters. But in doing so, they run afoul of the New Gods. They are the rulers of the world, the ones who created those monsters and empowered the cultists for their own proxy wars.

They are also false gods.

I’m also working on a cyberpunk series titled SINGULARITY SUNRISE. Set in the dawn of the 22nd Century, the world is poised on the threshold of the Singularity: an era of runaway technological progress, leading to unfathomable changes in civilization.

But the Singularity promises only technological advancement, not what shape it will take. The world is divided between two factions: those who would use technology to empower and to liberate, and those who would use it to conquer and dominate. Both are locked in a struggle to decide the future of humanity.

Through genetics, robotics, information technology and nanotechnology, humanity is on the brink of surpassing itself. But for psychic contractor James Morgan, whose abilities are incompatible with human enhancement technology—or, indeed, modern lifestyle itself—he is left wondering if he is working towards a future that will leave him behind.

And when an artificial intelligence emerges, one that is purpose-designed to usher in the Singularity, he must protect it from those who would destroy or hijack it for their

own purposes—and humanity from its inhuman nature.

Tamara: Is there anything you'd like to add?

Benjamin: Thanks for reading! If you'd like to support indie authors who write fun, fast-paced fiction, check out the PulpRev movement on Twitter and other social media.



Northern Lights...an ionospheric phenomenon?

AN INTERVIEW WITH C.S. JOHNSON by Tamara Wilhite



C.S. (CJ) Johnson publishes fantasy and science fiction works as C.A. Sabol and C.S. Johnson. I had the opportunity to interview this modern fantasy author.

Tamara: Congratulations on getting married. When did you tie the knot?

CJ: My husband and I have been married for ten years this year, and I love him more each year. He is the endgame for a lot of my romantic heroes in some way or another.

Tamara: The majority of your works are fantasy. What is the distinction between fantasy works and high fantasy works like your novel THE MOONLIGHT PEGASUS?

CJ: The Moonlight Pegasus is a high fantasy novel for me since it's a world that's completely made up, on a different planet, and I am not entirely sure if it shares the same plane of existence as the rest of my books. It's actually the first book I've ever written in its entirety, and you can tell. It's very MG/YA, but I wrote it in high school and it was first published my first year of college.

Tamara: A KNIGHT'S QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL is stand alone. I'm aware of the STARLIGHT CHRONICLES and ONCE UPON A PRINCESS books. Do you have any other fantasy series?

CJ: I'm working on THE REALMS BEYOND THE RAINBOW, which is my first Christian fantasy romance series.

Tamara: Do you consider DIVINE SPACE PIRATES trilogy your only science fiction series? Or do you count TILL HUMAN VOICES WAKE US as science fiction?

CJ: I count them both as sci-fi, but Till Human Voices Wake Us is a little bit of a fantasy,

since there are mermaids. While I have given them more of a scientific formation in the worldbuilding, most people attribute them to a fantasy world, and so I think the science fantasy (think underwater Star Wars) is more apt.

Most of my work is in some way both a tribute to who I am or something that means something intensely personal to me. *The Divine Space Pirates* and *Till Human Voices Wake Us* are tributes to my dystopian fears, some of my favorite literary works (Dante Alighieri's *THE DIVINE COMEDY* for the former, and "The Love Song of J. Arthur Prufrock" for the latter), my faith, and my absurdist sort of affection for end of the world scenarios.

Tamara: And can you tell me more about it?

CJ: *Till Human Voices Wake Us* is the story of Milo Bishop, a college student who has, all his life, heard his Uncle Jay's stories of a community of mermaids living in a terrarium under Southern California. As an adult, Milo doesn't believe any of this—until Milo has a near-death experience and has a vision of a mermaid calling to him, too. Together with his uncle and his best friend, Milo finds his way down to the community, and then learns that there's a prophecy that the end of their world will come when humans arrive.

Tamara: What other genres have you written?

CJ: I've mostly kept to fantasy, science fiction, and fairy tales, but I've written some nonfiction, some contemporary young adult, and historical fiction. I also have some historical fantasy, which is pretty cool since I adored history as a student. I write with a classic and often Christian tilt, and my work is not graphic since I have kids, and admittedly, I still remember the first time I read *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES* and wanting to punch Thomas Hardy further into his grave, so I think it's important to be a little gentle on my audiences' psyches. I like to write books that the more you think about something that troubles my main characters, the worse it becomes, and in this way, you can read a lot of my books multiple times and still find yourself surprised. That's part of the fun of re-readable books.

Tamara: What led you to write fantasy?

CJ: I like being able to play with ideas. Fantasy is better suited to my personality for that. I think it's funny how I like to over-analyze ideas, but when it comes to reality, it's harder for me to break things down into smaller pieces (never ask me to discuss a lightbulb, for example). I will say most of my fantasy is more realistic fantasy, where it's dependent on a sequence as much as mystery.

Tamara: Can you tell me about the upcoming vampire-zombie novel *OF BLOOD AND*

BRAINS? I think it is slated to come out third quarter 2020.

CJ: Sure!

I have had a lot—a LOT—of my fans ask me about writing a vampire book. I taught high school in the age of the TWILIGHT rage, and so I didn't really want to at first; it's hard to top something that's famous RIGHT NOW. I saw Twilight change into 50 SHADES OF GREY, and HUNGER GAMES slip into DIVERGENT, and I never wanted to be a "genre-chaser", even though I like to genre-hop. So if I knew I was going to write a vampire book, I wanted it to speak to something important to me, something that I wanted myself to write.

And so one day as I was giving blood at a blood center, I thought how fun it would be to write a book where a vampire and a zombie team up to rob morgues and funeral homes in order to get blood and brains. Of course they would fall in love and their romance would be doomed, and I wanted to see how it would play out. Would they find a way to be together despite their backgrounds, needs, and conditions? Would it really be "doomed" in the end? Now that my parents are getting older and I am part of what Allison Pearson calls the "sandwich" generation of kids who are hoping to be able to take care of their parents while raising their own kids, I worry sometimes about how much power illnesses and disease have over love's endurance and capability for suffering. Putting my fears and worst-case scenarios into a book like that helps me feel braver in facing my own struggles.

My fans have been excellent in suggestions for characters, so I now have: Oscar Findley and Fawn Lancaster are currently in the process of robbing the same funeral home. He's suffering through a surprise craving, and she's staying late to steal a brain and work on a possible cure for her zombism. They're not sure how their alliance will work out yet, but I'm excited to see it unfold along with them.

I'll finish it soon, but it'll be out next Halloween to remind people of the necessity and preciousness of time and love.

Tamara: What are you currently working on?

CJ: Besides *Of Blood and Brains*, I am working on a few projects. I have a serial, *FATGIRL*, about a model-wannabe high school girl who eats radioactive doughnuts and accidentally becomes her city's beloved overweight superhero; there's an extra story that'll be in the *APPALLING STORIES IV* anthology from Obsidian Point Publishing for that one, coming out in December, 2019.

I also have my last book in my *ORDER OF THE CRYSTAL DAGGER* series to finish up

and bring the series to its devastating conclusion, and then I have a short story series called OMELAS REVISITED that'll be launching in as part of the HIDDEN MAGIC:A MAGIC UNDERGROUND ANTHOLOGY trilogy.

Tamara: Is there anything you'd like to add?

CJ: This week (November, 2019) I have a new book coming out! It's my fantasy fairy tale Snow White retelling, NORTHERN LIGHTS, SOUTHERN STARS. It's already got wonderful reviews and I'm excited to see how people like the idea of a historical fantasy that goes a little deeper into the Snow White story. As someone who struggles with depression, I wanted to write a book that would encourage people to be more like Snow White—to be unafraid to believe in the best of people, to keep working hard when things look hopeless, and to believe in the power of love in all its many forms, including romance, friendship, family and faith.

Amazon link: <https://www.amazon.com/C-S-Johnson/e/BOOE8TOZ9Q>

Goodreads link: <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/48383326-northern-lights-southern-stars> Author profile:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/WriterCSJohnson

Instagram: www.instagram.com/WriterCSJohnson

Web: www.csjohnson.me

Goodreads: <https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/6889892.CSJohnson>

Amazon: www.amazon.com/author/csjohnsonetc

Bookbub: <https://www.bookbub.com/profile/c-s-johnson-640297c2-4f48-4cf3-994c-ab5c0a7358b9>

Thank you so much!



BEHIND THE SCENES: ROD SERLING

by Jeffrey Redmond

A man whose fantasy series took television by storm



Rod Serling, always identifiable by his tight expression around the mouth



For those of us old enough to remember the old days (daze) of black & white television, there was definitely one show that stood out far from all the rest. It was written and hosted by Rod Serling (December 25, 1924-June 28, 1975) and was his television series THE TWILIGHT ZONE. Serling believed that the role of the writer was to "menace the public conscience". And throughout his life he used radio, television, and film as "vehicles of social criticism" to this end.

Rodman Edward Serling was born in Syracuse, New York to Samuel and Esther Serling. The Serlings, a Reform Jewish family, moved in 1926 to Binghamton, New York where Rod would spend the remainder of his childhood. The Serling family was involved in the Binghamton Jewish community, a community held together by ethnic underpinnings more than religious ties. Like many members of the local Jewish community, Serling's family infrequently attended synagogue except during High Holy days.

The second of two sons (his brother Robert J. Serling later became a novelist), he was born in Syracuse, New York to Samuel and Esther Serling, but was raised in Binghamton, New York, where he later graduated Binghamton High School. Though brought up in a Jewish family, Serling became a Unitarian Universalist.

Sam enrolled his sons in Sunday School at the local Jewish community center where director Isadore Friedlander and his wife, philosophical humanists, were spiritual mentors to many of Binghamton's Jewish youth.

At high school, where he edited the newspaper, Serling experienced anti-Jewish discrimination when he was blackballed from the Theta Sigma fraternity. In an interview in 1972 he said of this incident, "It was the first time in my life that I became aware of religious differences."

After graduation Serling enlisted in the United States Army in the Pacific Theater in World War II from January 1943 to January 1945. Beginning in May 1944 he served with the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 11th Airborne Division in New Guinea and during the invasion of the Philippines. He was seriously wounded in the wrist and knee during combat, and was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. The war also took a permanent mental toll on his personal psychology, and he would suffer from flashbacks, nightmares, and insomnia for the rest of his life. When discharged from the army in 1946 he suffered from severe Post Traumatic Shock Disorder (PTSD), and was "bitter about everything and at loose ends".

Due to his wartime experiences, Serling suffered from nightmares and flashbacks for

the rest of his life. Though he was rather short (5'4") and slight, Serling was also a noted boxer during his military days.

Serling enrolled under the G.I. Bill of Rights at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. In the late 1940s Antioch was famous for loose social rules and a unique work-study curriculum. Serling was stimulated by the liberal intellectual environment and began to feel "the need to write, a kind of compulsion to get some of my thoughts down".

During his first year at Antioch, Serling met his future wife Carol Kramer, a Protestant. Both families had a difficult time accepting the proposed union. Serling's mother had always hoped her sons would marry Jewish women. Carol's father told her, "I absolutely forbid you to marry that black haired little Jew".

Shortly before their marriage Carol convinced Rod to convert to Unitarianism. She was not practicing her parents' faith, and he had never shown interest in Judaism, though he always identified as being ethnically Jewish.

The liberal environment at Antioch, which had Unitarian connections going back nearly a century, helped Rod and Carol to shed their family religious tradition and to accept Unitarianism as a convenient compromise. They were married in an ecumenical service at the Antioch chapel in the summer of 1948. They had two daughters, Jody and Ann.

Serling graduated in 1950 with a Bachelor's Degree in Literature. He got his start as a writer after winning second prize in a contest for the radio show DR. CHRISTIAN in 1949, while still a college student. Serling and his wife Carol (married in 1948) moved to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he took a job as a staff writer for WLW Radio.

Biographers note that through his career, Serling was inspired by legendary radio and TV playwright Norman Corwin. Both men would trace their careers through the WLW broadcasting franchise and eventually find homes at CBS, and both would be honored for weaving pivotal social themes through their scripts.

Passionately motivated to become a freelance writer, Serling worked days for the station and spent nights writing scripts at his kitchen table. By 1952 his income from moonlight writing enabled him to quit WLW, focus on writing full-time, and move to the New York area. There Serling won Emmys for three early teleplays: PATTERNS, 1955; REQUIEM FOR A HEAVYWEIGHT, 1956; and THE COMEDIAN, 1957. His message in Patterns was that "every human being has a minimum set of ethics from which he operates. When he refuses to compromise these ethics, his career must suffer, when he

does compromise them, his conscience does the suffering”.

By 1951, Serling started to break into television by writing scripts for FIRESIDE THEATER, HALLMARK HALL OF FAME, LUX VIDEO THEATER, KRAFT TELEVISION THEATER, SUSPENSE and STUDIO ONE. In 1955, Kraft Television Theater presented another of Serling’s scripts, the seventy-second to make it to the air. To the Serlings, it was just another script, and they missed the first live airing. The show was *Patterns* and it changed Rod Serling’s life.

Patterns dramatized the struggle for power involving a corporate boss, an old hand running out of ideas and energy, and the bright young executive being groomed to take the older man’s place. It was a huge hit, and was even presented again the next week, something nearly unprecedented. It established Serling as a rarity: a TV playwright.

More acclaimed plays for TV followed. *THE RACK*, about a Korean War veteran and the effects of torture, the legendary *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (from CBS’s *PLAYHOUSE 90* series), plus several more, some of which were adapted as movies. *Requiem*, like *Patterns*, was honored as a turning point in TV drama. The installment’s producer, Martin Manulis, noted for a PBS biography of Serling that after the live broadcast, CBS chairman William S. Paley called the control room and told the crew that the show had set TV ahead by ten years. The show’s director, Ralph Nelson, wrote and directed a television drama four years later for the *WESTINGHOUSE DESILU PLAYHOUSE* about mounting *Requiem for a Heavyweight* called *THE MAN IN THE FUNNY SUIT*, in which Serling appeared as himself.

By the late 1950s the days of the live New York teleplay were over and the television industry had begun to move to Hollywood, where there was more money, equipment and talent. In 1957 the Serlings moved to Pacific Palisades, California. Serling believed “that of all the media, TV lends itself most beautifully to presenting a controversy”. He found that with television he could “take a part of the problem, and using a small number of people, get my point across”.

However, Serling quickly realized that to get a point across often meant creating scripts that contained controversial messages and dialogues. Corporate sponsors, on the other hand, had no desire to have their products matched with messages that might be deemed offensive. But, tired of seeing his scripts neutered and mangled (removing any political statements, ethnic identities, even the Chrysler Building being removed from a script sponsored by Ford), Serling decided the only way around this interference was to create his own show.

In 1959 Serling expressed his frustration: "I think it is criminal that we are not permitted to make dramatic note of social evils that exist, of controversial themes as they are inherent in our society". Because of the hostile creative environment Serling began to see the advantages of writing science fiction and fantasy. He learned that advertisers would routinely approve stories including controversial situations if they took place on fictional worlds. Out of this realization came the television series THE TWILIGHT ZONE, 1959-64, on which Serling and other writers would enjoy unprecedented artistic freedom.

In 1959, CBS aired the first episode of a groundbreaking series, The Twilight Zone. Serling fought hard for creative control, hiring writers he admired (such as Richard Matheson and Charles Beaumont), and launched himself into weekly television. He stated in an interview that the science fiction format would not be controversial, and would escape censorship, unlike the earlier Playhouse 90. In reality the show gave him the opportunity to communicate social messages in a more veiled context.

Serling wrote or adapted 99 of the 156 Twilight Zone episodes. The first season opened with the episode, "Where is Everybody?" on October 10, 1959. This pilot had been originally pitched to CBS with the idea of Orson Welles as narrator. Welles asked for too much money, however, and the producers decided that Serling would do the narration. The series, with Serling's trademark appearances, ran for five years and won him two Emmys.

From within the surreal world of The Twilight Zone, Serling addressed dozens of social issues such as prejudice ("The Eye of the Beholder", 1960), loss of identity ("Mirror Image", 1960), capital punishment ("Execution", 1960), censorship ("The Obsolete Man", 1961), the Holocaust ("Deaths-Head Revisited", 1961), ageism ("The Trade-Ins", 1962), and social conformity ("Number Twelve Looks Just Like You", 1964). In the closing words to "The Shelter", 1961, Serling expressed what he understood to be humanity's greatest challenge, "No moral, no message, no prophetic tract, just a simple statement of fact: for civilization to survive, the human race has to remain civilized".

Serling drew on his own experiences for many episodes, with frequent stories about boxing, military life and aircraft pilots, all incorporating Serling's firsthand knowledge. The series also incorporated Serling's progressive views on racial relations and other social issues, all somewhat veiled by the science fiction/fantasy elements of the shows. Occasionally, however, Serling could be quite blunt, as in one episode where America's racism and hatred causes a dark cloud to form in the South before eventually spreading

elsewhere. Serling was also rather progressive on matters of gender, with many stories featuring quick-thinking, resilient women, although he also wrote plenty of stories reaturing memorably bitchy nagging wives.

The show lasted five seasons (four seasons in a half-hour format, one full season as an hour long drama), winning awards for Serling and his writers, as well as critical acclaim. The program, while having a loyal fan base, never had huge ratings and was cancelled twice, only to be brought back. After five years and 156 episodes, 92 of them written by Serling himself, Serling was tired. In 1964, he decided to let the last cancellation be final.

Serling sold his rights to the series to CBS. His wife later stated that he did this partly because he believed the studio would never recoup the cost of creating the show, which frequently went over-budget. In hindsight, this was a costly mistake. A possible motive for Serling washing his hands of the rights for a quick buck could be tied to his incessant entanglement in lawsuits for plagiarism in regards to his story ideas for episodes.

In 1962, Serling accepted a year-long teaching position at Antioch college. He felt that he needed to "regain my perspective, to do a little work and spend the rest of my time getting acquainted with my wife and children". At Antioch he taught writing, drama, and a survey course about the "social and historical implications of the media".

After saying "Television has left me tired and frustrated", Serling began to write more movie scripts. SEVEN DAYS IN MAY, 1964, showed Serling's passion for nuclear disarmament and peace. He said, "If you want to prove that God is not dead, first prove that man is alive". He tackled racism and anthropocentrism in the movie adaptation of Pierre Boulle's THE PLANET OF THE APES, 1968. At the same time, he continued to write for television. THE LONER, 1965-1966, and NIGHT GALLERY, 1970-1973, however, left Serling bitter. He had little creative control and said of Night Gallery, "It is not mine at all. It's another species of a formula series drama".

Serling was an ardent supporter of the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Santa Monica church, and the American Civil Liberties Union. He supported these and other organizations by accepting speaking engagements and with monetary donations. He was politically active, and in 1966 campaigned for incumbent Pat Brown against Ronald Reagan in the California gubernatorial race.

Serling's social activism also took the form of writing letters to newspaper editors. In one poignant example Serling responded to Dr. Max Rafferty, a religious conservative educator, who had a weekly column in the Los Angeles Times. On October 10, 1966,

Rafferty's column addressed social reform and claimed that humanity's problems were not the responsibility of society but of the individual. The article's theme is well expressed in Rafferty's statement, "I don't feel guilty about crime in our cities because I'm not committing any".

In 1967 Serling said, "I happen to think that the singular evil of our time is prejudice. It is from this evil that all other evils grow and multiply. In almost everything I've written there is a thread of this: a man's seemingly palpable need to dislike something other than himself." Speaking about the Viet Nam war at the 1968 Binghamton Community High School graduation, Serling said, "If survival calls for the bearing of arms, bear them you must. But the most important part of the challenge is for you to find another means that does not come with the killing of your fellow man."

In 1969, NBC aired a Serling-penned pilot for a new series, *Night Gallery*. Set in a dimly-lit museum, the pilot film featured Serling (as on-camera host) introducing three tales of the macabre, unveiling canvases that would later appear in the subsequent story segments. The series, which premiered in December 1970 (its brief first season rotated as one spoke of a four-series programming wheel titled *Four in One*), focused more on gothic horror and the occult than did *The Twilight Zone*.

Serling, no longer wanting the burden of an executive position, sidestepped an offer to retain creative control of content—a decision he would later regret. Although discontented with some of producer Jack Laird's script and creative choices, Serling maintained his stream of submissions and ultimately wrote over a third of the scripts for the series.

By season three, however, Serling began seeing many of his script contributions rejected. The disgruntled host, his complaints ignored, dismissed the show as "Mannix in a cemetery." *Night Gallery* lasted until 1973. While the series has its own cult following, it is not as widely known as *The Twilight Zone* and is generally regarded as a pale shadow of Serling's previous series.

Serling wrote a number of short stories in the science fiction and horror genres, which were collected into three volumes of *Twilight Zone* stories (1960, 1961, 1962), two of *Night Gallery* stories (1971, 1972), and a collection of three novellas, *THE SEASON TO BE WARY* (1968). A critical essay on Serling's fiction can be found in S.T. Joshi's book *THE EVOLUTION OF THE WEIRD TALE* (2004). Joshi emphasizes Serling's moralism and the streak of misanthropy which runs through his work, and argues that, far from being merely re-written scripts, many of Serling's stories can stand as genuinely original and

meritorious works of prose fiction.

Subsequent to *The Twilight Zone*, Serling moved onto cinema screens. He wrote a number of screenplays that have a highly political bent, including *Seven Days in May* (1964) about an attempted military coup against the President of the US; *Planet of the Apes* (1968), which is quite scathing about the human condition, and *THE MAN* (1972), about the first black US President.

Serling had taped introductions for a limited run summer comedy series on ABC, *KEEP ON TRUCKIN'*, which was scheduled to begin its run several weeks after his death; these introductions were subsequently edited out of the broadcast episodes. He also wrote the pilot episode for a short-lived Aaron Spelling series called *THE NEW PEOPLE* in 1969. Late in his life, Serling taught at Ithica College in Ithica, New York, where he resided for many years.

Late in life, he did a lot of voice-over work for various projects. He narrated documentaries featuring French undersea explorer Jacques-Yves Cousteau and (uncredited) performed the narration for the beginning of the Brian De Palma film *PHANTOM OF THE PARADISE*.

Years of stress from perfecting his passion and heavy smoking caught up with the writer in his final years. In 1975, a fifty year old Serling suffered two severe heart attacks before entering Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester for heart bypass surgery. He had a third heart attack during the operation and died the following day. He is interred at the cemetery in Interlaken, New York, a part of upstate New York featured prominently in some episodes of *The Twilight Zone*.

After his death, several Serling scripts were produced. *ROD SERLING'S LOST CLASSICS* (1994), a TV movie based on several unfiled *Twilight Zone* scripts; *IN THE PRESENCE OF MINE ENEMIES* (1997), set in the Warsaw Ghetto; and a science fiction remake of *A TOWN HAS TURNED TO DUST* (1998) and *A STORM IN SUMMER* (2000).

Serling's personal papers can be found in the Special Collections department at the UCLA Research Library in Los Angeles, California and at the University of Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research in Madison, Wisconsin. The archives at UCLA contain personal and business correspondence from the last ten years of Serling's life as well as scripts and other *Twilight Zone*-related materials. The University of Wisconsin has correspondence, scripts, speeches and articles, reports, press releases, clippings, and files on Serling's produced and unproduced writings for television, motion pictures, radio, and the theater.

He continuously wrote letters to editors and published his thoughts in newspapers throughout the country. A clippings archive of these writings exists in The Antiochiana Collection at Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. Biographer Joseph Engel wrote, "Serling apparently saved almost everything that crossed his desk from 1955 when huge success first enabled him to hire a secretary, to his death twenty-three years later. His correspondence included a veritable who's who of show business and politics...Serling left a very revealing paper trail".

His work includes published short stories, radio, television and movie scripts. Among his short story collections are PATTERNS (1957), STORIES FROM THE TWILIGHT ZONE (1960), INTO THE TWILIGHT ZONE (1964), and THE SEASON TO BE WARY (1967). Hundreds of Serling's teleplays were produced for Playhouse 90, Hallmark Hall of Fame, Lux Video Theater, and other anthology series. Notable teleplays include THE SERGEANT (1952), HORACE MANN'S MIRACLE (1953), THE STRIKE (1954), THE RACK (1955), and THE DARK SIDE OF THE EARTH (1957).

During his lifetime, he received six Emmys and his biggest successes in writing include:

Patterns (1955)

Requiem for a Heavyweight (1956)

The Comedian (1957)

A Town Has Turned to Dust (1958)

The Velvet Alley (1958)

The Twilight Zone (1959—1964 television series)

Night Gallery (1970—1973 television series)

Planet of the Apes (1968 co-written with Michael Wilson)

In his last interview, four months before his death, Serling was asked about reincarnation. He said, "I don't believe in reincarnation. That's a cop-out...I anticipate death will be a totally unconscious void in which you float through eternity with no particular consciousness of anything."

Biographies of Serling include Joel Engel, ROD SERLING: THE DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES OF LIFE IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE (1989) and Gordon Sander, THE RISE AND TWILIGHT OF TELEVISION'S LAST ANGRY MAN (1992). Detailed information about The Twilight Zone including a synopsis of all episodes can be found in THE TWILIGHT ZONE COMPANION (1989).

Serling was ranked #1 in TV GUIDE's list of the "25 Greatest Sci-Fi Legends" (1 August

2004 issue). He will always be ranked #1 for us—his loyal fans. And especially and always for those of us who are about to take a journey. Not of legend but of mind. As we enter...The Twilight Zone.



CULTURAL PAGES N3F Writings



Compulsive Shoppers by Jeffrey Redmond

From the ancient Er-Dan manuscripts (Codex 1811), as translated by Ed-Mon:

On the three mooned planet, in the busy urban area of GroB-FloBen, the inhabitants all had active and productive lives. They were told in their educational centers, and in their temples, that having wealth to purchase things was a sign of the deities' favors being upon them. Indeed, poverty was looked on as being a condition of possible punishment from the deities. Merchants and agents advertised their wares loudly and often, and the local economy flourished. As in some other places, there was competitions for personal displays of esteemed wealth. Some families would quite often do without many more important necessities, in order to go about wearing expensive jewelry and attires. Sometimes proper meals were even given up, so as to have the ability to display a new and more costly decoration on the front of the dwelling.

The local inhabitants found that they often needed to work more and longer days. The extra income from this was needed to pay for the images of better lifestyles. But the acts of going to the marketplace, and buying useful goods, was considered by most to

be an important event in itself. Though there were a few others who had a different point of view. Sometimes one trying to merely impress others with his wealthy position would go right to the front of a temple gathering. He would dramatically pour a big bag of coins onto the altar, right in front of everyone else there. Some of the other worshippers may have been envious and impressed, but it is unknown if any of the deities themselves actually were.

One leading citizen of the community was Hol-Ander, a huge and heavy one, larger by far than anyone else. He was among the wealthiest, and always had way more than enough to eat. He believed that his riches were a sure sign of the deities' direct favor upon him personally. Indeed, he would often refer to himself in this way:

"I am most certainly among the already selected few, who are of those definitely blessed." Hol-Ander had a wife who was also very large. And she was reproductive enough to satisfy any and all extended family desires and expectations for offspring.

Hol-Ander had a sister named Guld-Erna. She was unmarried, and still lived in their aged parents' home. She took care of her father until he died, and also of her mother until she died. Hol-Ander then inherited the place, as per the customs and laws of that time and place. But since he already had a large and spacious dwelling of his own, he gave it to Guld-Erna to remain in. She also had an education, and had received a good part of the inheritance. So she was also well off in the community. Guld-Erna was not unattractive, but she had no male suitors. She did not want the ones who only desired her for her wealth. No male was considered by her to be wealthy enough for her consideration of actively and overtly pursuing as a marriage and life partner. And males who wanted females for reproductions went after other ones instead of her.

Guld-Erna thus grew older and lived alone. She would sometimes visit with her brother's family, or with her female friends. Or they would visit her. But she remained unmarried, with no offspring of her own. And she was ultimately lonely. She and her female friends would go out and about in the town center, to meet and greet as many others as appeared. She was especially interested in being friendly to any handsome and unmarried males around. Some of them would exchange pleasant words with her, and some even expressed a mild compliment or two. But, in the end, the males always ended the conversations to go about their own business. And, in the end, these males would invest their time and efforts to attract other females instead.

Guld-Erna would often feel rejected and become depressed, having no one else with her in her dwelling. She would always dress herself in her most loudly gaudy attire. She

would wear as many pieces of her personal jewelry as she could, and then go out to the marketplace with a bag filled with coins. She would often return from her excursions with many more items of purchase than what she actually needed. Instead of a male in her life to care for and be cared for in return, she accumulated an endless amount of personal possessions. Eventually she had all of the rooms of her dwelling overly filled with artifacts and items of every description. Jewelry, clothing, utensils, furniture, decorative things, and all sorts of odds and ends. It finally came to the point where it was difficult to go around inside of the dwelling, because of all the rooms and passages being so blocked with everything there. And, indeed, even Hol-Ander himself would often remark that:

“My sister’s home is actually more of an overflowing museum of bad taste than anything else.”

And so it was.

The seasons came and went, and Guld-Erna herself became older, and eventually took ill. At her death she was mourned by her nephews and nieces, the offspring of her brother. They were her only family members, and by both expanded custom and law her heirs. She had never been an active member of any temple or community organization. Nor had she ever worked much with any charity or cultural activities. Indeed, she was not ever known to have even cared for any of the smaller creatures as pets. Others in GroB-FloBen then expected the offspring of Hol-Ander to fight among themselves for Guld-Erna’s vast accumulation of personal possessions. But, to everyone’s surprise, this did not happen.

These offspring themselves had way more than enough of their own items already, and they also found that their late aunt’s personal tastes in material accumulations bordered on being merely useless baubles. Things that were just gaudy and colorful were in great abundance, but few—if any—of her items had any real practical or heirloom qualities. They thought of trying to sell much of the things, but few others in the town wanted any of it. Guld-Erna herself had frequently paid way more than full prices for her purchases, without ever trying to bargain or haggle with the merchants. These fellows had far too often taken advantage of her strong desires to buy just about anything, and they had almost always charged her way more than fair prices.

The one nephew expressed, “She certainly seemed to have needed a large amount of useless junk to try to make herself happy.” And the one niece explained, “She used these empty treasures as fulfillments in her lonely life, as substitutes for love.”

The nephews and nieces eventually emptied the dwelling by having to give away anything and everything that they could to the town's poor ones. The rest of the unwanted items were eventually taken to the dumping place for trash, and left there. In time it was all covered over with the wind blown soils from the surrounding areas. Guld-Erna died, a depressed and unhappy one, with way too many useless material possessions. She had indeed used these as personal replacements for attention and affection, genuine things she sadly lacked in her real life. She came to care more for mere items rather than for other beings. Objects were more important to her than living things. Mistakes which far too many others have made, and continue to make, in their own lives.

TURNS, AND TWISTING

by Betty Streeter

Life throw you a Curbs

We just can't wobble

In.

Life turns, and twist

In our mind.

Lord, which way.

Lord help us.

How to face.

Each, and every day.

Not leave our mind

Going everywhere.

SEEING MY WAY THROUGH

by Betty Streeter

Life is ragged

Life through new direction

Life No escape

This age Living..

Sizing new decision

sizing down

either way.
Life you still Living.
Think this way
Think that way.
Keep things brief
Life, still figuring
It out.

WITH BOTH MY HANDS by John Polselli

I strive to reach the sky with both my hands
And raise myself beyond creation's rim.
To step forth bold upon forsaken lands
And said tranquil seas of crystalline.
When fire burns my unremitting soul
And wild dancers, round vast shafts of light,
Cast fervent glances steeped in vitriol—
The dogmen and the demons taking flight—
Know then that I am released from worldly cares,
And by my grave the dreadful Gorgon stares,
Turning every emerald leaf to white.

PARAGON by Gerald Heyder

It's been said beauty is a sign of perfection. It's been intimated knowledge is a sign of cerebral perfection.

It has been claimed true love is also a sign of perfection. Why is total perfection
so unattainable no matter how much we strive to attain it?

We all wish to be a paragon, that model of infallibility
but seemingly impossible to achieve through our ardent attempt of accomplishment
but alas, no cigar, no kewpie doll!

Perhaps, as has been said, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, everything is in the eye, ear and heart
of the beholder

and that could be the key for perfection as well. Perhaps all are paragons in our attempts to be one?

“I gazed into the great beyond and saw perfection that isn’t there, but I saw it anyway?!”

MUMBO JUMBO by Gerald Heyder

Isn’t it strange how life can be more complicated than being simplistic and comprehensible?

People have a tendency to use a sledgehammer when a tackhammer will do.

Life can be so exaggerated, like a joke drawn out to be boring so the punch line is Ho-Hum!

Human existence is often times people dancing in a circle, going around and around

but where does the circle begin and where does it end?

Perhaps life is more a case of being a question mark and the answer is, or will be, superfluous and
meaningless.

Forget all the mumbo jumbo nonsense and see the forest instead of the trees

Playing strip tease to appease our minds of confusion.

Gobbledegook and garble are in the same race with mumbo jumbo don’t you know.

“I tried to solve a puzzle, diaphanous as it was; when I understood it, it was nothing more than fuzz!”

WHERE THE FATES ABIDE by John Polselli

When moonlight’s caterpillars spread a row

Of roses round the fading edge of time,

And stroboscopic entities below

The threshold where the weeping nightwinds climb

Move incrementally upon the street,

Soft laughter sounds from windows left ajar

While distant steps of unfamiliar feet

Lead upwards toward a single shining star.

The hedgerows tumble by a burning sea

As legs of spiders scurry from the clouds,

And wild women dance in ecstasy

While whitecaps sprawl upon the shore like shrouds.

And somewhere roam the tigers of the tide

Aflame with hunger where the Fates abide.

