

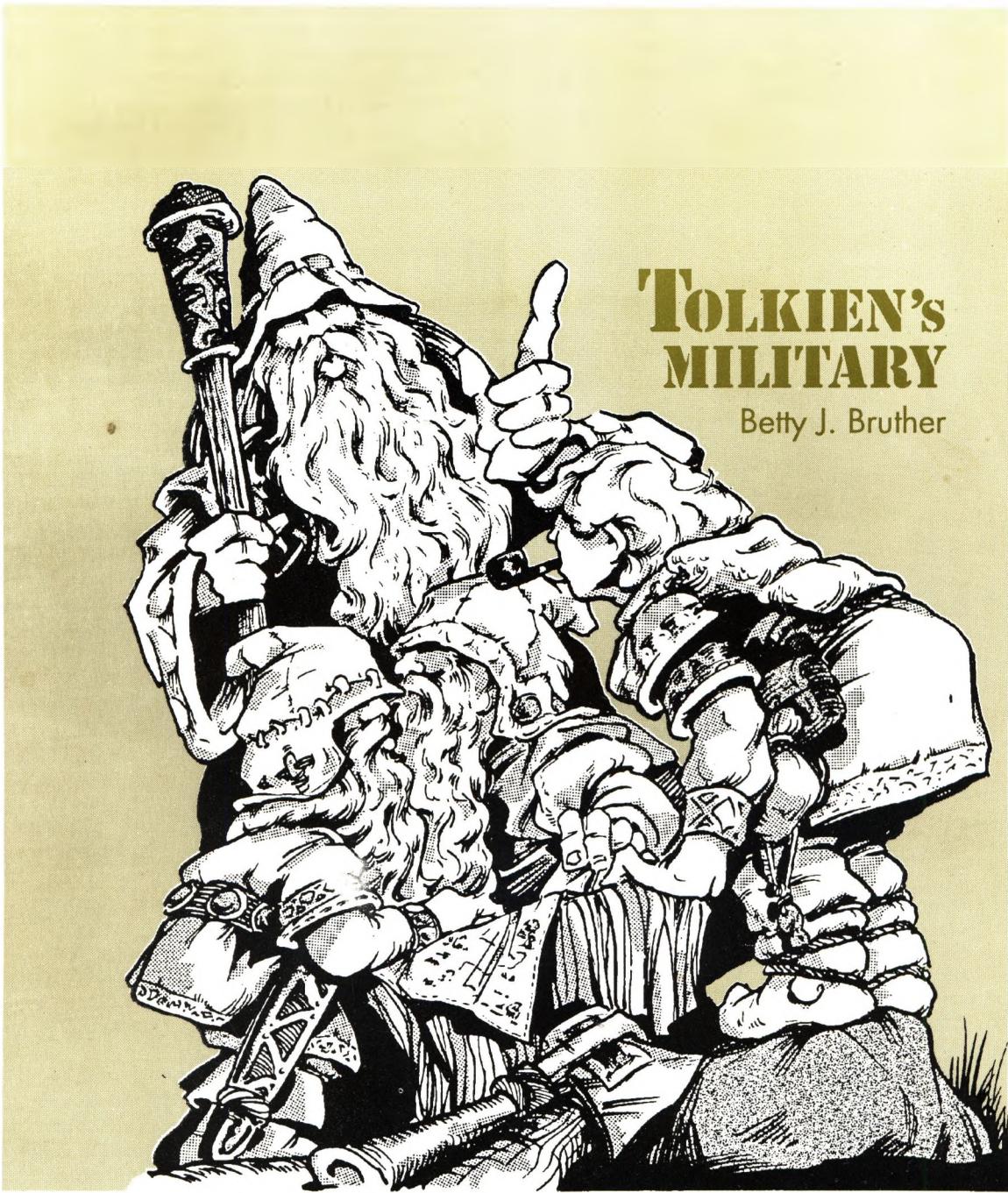


1989 Hugo Award Nominee

NEKAS

#39

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



TOLKIEN'S MILITARY

Betty J. Bruther

\$3.95

1989 Hugo Award Nominee

NIEKAS

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

#39

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NIEKAS
SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



Rhysling's Ancestors

Bumbejimas

by Edmund R. Meskys

For decades now, fan have been setting poems from favorite stories to music or writing stfnal words to well-known tunes. Excellent fannish settings of Rhysling's songs in "The Green Hills of Earth" have been a staple of filks at conventions. Marion Zimmer Bradley researched the models used by Tolkien in the songs in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* and used these to help her compose the "Rivendell Suite," which circulated widely in fandom 25 years ago. The late Ted Johnstone made a recording which he had copied for many, and I am sorry I never got a copy while he was still alive. (He had also broadcast a dramatic adaptation he had done of *The Hobbit* while he was a student at San Diego State College, and I lack that too. Incidentally, he lived under the pen name of Ted Johnstone but wrote The Man From U.N.C.L.E. novels and other stf under his real name of David McDaniel.) The first filksing I attended was at Pittcon, the 1960 Worldcon in Pittsburgh. I don't remember if any of Heinlein's songs were sung there, but I remember hearing many excellent songs by Juanita Coulson and Sandy Cutrell. Juanita is still with us and filking, but I have heard nothing of Sandy in decades.

When the genre became so popular, there was a recording house specializing in it: Off Centaur. Too few sales and too much piracy (some of it internal) put them out of business in 1988, but a new firm has been established by its major creditor, and this is selling off the remaining Off Centaur tapes. It is Firebird Arts and Music, P. O. Box 453, El Cerrito CA 94530, (415) 528-3172. They also sell art prints and books.

I have grown up with the dream of spaceflight and remember going into ecstasy when President Eisenhower announced Project Vanguard. Then came the shock of *Sputnik* and the heartbreak of the first Vanguard failures. There is an outstanding filk tape which covers the whole history of the space venture from *Sputnik* to the first shuttle, as well as the dream of colonizing the Solar System: MINUS TEN AND COUNTING (Off Centaur, 1983, \$11+1.75 shipping). Most of the songs on this cassette are original compositions and

not just new lyrics to mundane classics. It is studio recorded and not done live at con filksings the way some are. I will discuss in detail the first half dozen songs to give a good idea of the content, but to do so for the whole album would be telling you more about penguins than you really want to know. For that reason I will do little more than list the remaining titles.

The first song, "Surprise!" by Leslie Fish, opens to balalaika accompaniment:

Remember the '50's,
those self-complacent days,

When the future seemed a century
away,
Then up went *Sputnik*, gave the world
a butnick,
And made it clear that tomorrow starts
today.

Beep beep, boop boop, hello there!
(azhuba)

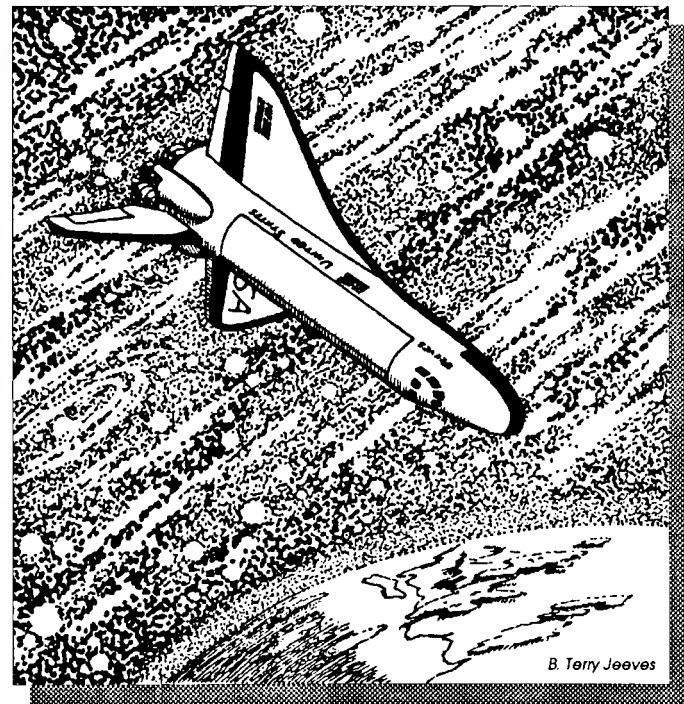
Sputnik sails giggling through the sky.
(hey, hey, hey) Red flags, red faces,
jump in the races.

The space age begins with a surprise.
(surprise)

and closes with:

Old *Sputnik* wore out and spiraled
back to earth,
On re-entry it burned up very soon,
Hail and good-bye to that upstart in
the sky,
And in twelve more years a man
walked on the moon.

Until I first heard this song I had never thought about the length of time between



Sputnik and Apollo XI. It is coggling to think that our second satellite, the first successful *Vanguard*, launched St. Patrick's Day 1958, was the size of a grapefruit; and Armstrong and Aldrin took that "one small step" on July 20, 1969. Actually I think it was after midnight on the east coast, but I watched it at a party with 200 others at John & Bjo Trimble's in LA. Even after hearing it fifty times, that last verse still hits me very hard.

"Mercury" by Harold Groot remembers the wide-eyed child who watched Shepherd, Grissom, and Glenn, the first three Americans in space, on TV. "Starfire," by Cynthia McQuillin, presents the thoughts of a spectator as an Apollo lifts off, revelling in the roar and praising the long chain of people who designed and built it over the past dozen years. Leslie Fish's "Toast for Unknown Heroes" covers much the same ground, but more clearly. The chorus says it all: "Step by step the longest march/Can be won, can be won./Many stones can form an arch/Singly none, singly none./And together what we will/Can be accomplished still./Many drops can turn a mill/Singly

none, singly none."

Mercedes Lackey's "Memorial" remembers Grissom, Chaffee, and White, who died in the Apollo fire nineteen years before *Challenger*. In "Phoenix" Julia Ecklar sings of the spirits of the three living on in every spaceship that has lifted off since then. Jordin Kare tells the story of the first probe to go on to Saturn in "Pioneer's Song." It ends with: "And when men some day follow to the places they have been,/We'll take the paths they've marked for us and see the sights they've seen,/To Jupiter and Saturn, to the stars themselves/we'll steer, And we pray that God but grant us then the luck of the Pioneer."

Bill Warren's dramatic "Ballad of Apollo XIII" recounts the time when life was more dramatic than fiction. An oxygen tank had blown shortly after insertion to the earth-moon trajectory and for several days it was questionable whether the crew would make it home alive. The song captures the drama and tension of the situation with superb power. In "Legends," Bill Roper mourns the passing of the moon program, saying, "We swore that we'd return,/But it doesn't look like we'll be back there soon" and "I wonder of the legends they will tell a thousand years from now." McQuillin sings, "Say to me the job is done and I say to you your words are hollow, and our work has just begun" in "Apollo Lost" (lyrics by Al Worden). In "Hope Eyrie" Leslie Fish tells us, "But the *Eagle* has landed,/Tell your children when.../And the old earth smiles at her children's reach/The wave that carried us off the beach/To reach for the shining stars." This hymn to Apollo XI became the anthem of the space movement.

"Minus Ten and Counting" warns us that unless we act soon it will be too late for men to go on in space. "Fire in the Sky" made me realize that *Columbia* first flew two decades to the day after Gagarin made the first manned flight in 1961. Diana Gallagher tells us, "It's logical, it's clear,/There's only one way to go from here,/Without a doubt,/The only way to go from here is out." We must colonize L-5 and the rest of the solar system to protect the earth and find needed resources. But the time will come when the solar system is full, too, and we must go on to the stars.

"Fly Columbia" hails the shuttle, and "Everyman" the men who build the starships for others. Gallagher's "Moon Miner," about the hundred men running the lunar mine, has a flaw—it speaks of earthrise on the moon which can't happen except for a small area at the limb where libration will cause the earth to move just

See BUMBEJIMAS, Page 50



Celia Myers

JOHN MYERS MYERS: A REMEMBRANCE

BY FRED LERNER

John Myers Myers died in Tempe, Arizona on 30 October 1988 after a long illness. He was 82.

Myers was born on 11 January 1906 in Northport, New York. By the age of thirteen he had determined to be a writer, and in both high school and college he was involved with student publications. Not all of these enjoyed the favour of academic authorities, which in part accounts for his college education having been spread among St. Stephen's, Middlebury, and the University of New Mexico.

His first book, *The Harp and the Blade*, appeared in 1941. This tale of tenth-century France was the first of several well-received historical novels, including *Out on Any Limb* (1942) and *The Wild Yazoo* (1947). With *The Alamo* (1948) Myers found his true vocation: recounting the heroes and villains of the American West. *The Last Chance: Tombstone's Early Years* (1950), *Doc Holliday* (1955), *The Deaths of the Bravos* (1962), and *Print in a Wild Land* (1967) established him as a leading authority on Western history.

In 1949, a dozen years' ambition to recount "an adventure in the world of literature comprehensively considered" materialised in the form of *Silverlock*, a *bildungsroman* set in the Commonwealth of Letters. Reviewers didn't know what to make of it, and readers ignored it; but somehow it became known to science fiction fans, and by the early 1960s it had attained cult status within Fandom. *The Moon's Fire-Eating Daughter* (1981), another erudite literary adventure, sold well but never achieved the abiding popularity of *Silverlock*.

The songs and verses scattered through his novels hinted at Myers's metrical abilities, which were revealed at book length in *Maverick Zone* (1961), a collection of three narrative poems on Western themes. Another long poem, *The Song of Raleigh's Head*, is being prepared for publication.

John Myers Myers is survived by his wife Charlotte and their daughters Celia and Anne Caldwell, and by thousands of readers, many yet unborn, who will treasure his literary legacy.*

One of Our Boys Is Missing Or, Literary Criticism, Iranian Style

Mathoms

by Anne Braude

As I write this (in early March), one of the major international news stories of recent weeks has been the furor over Salman Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses*. To date, about a dozen people have been killed in rioting over the book, the author is in hiding with a price on his head courtesy of the Ayatollah Khomeini, and Norman Mailer has appeared on DONAHUE to proclaim that the life of a bookstore clerk or two is not an unreasonable price to pay for freedom of thought. The major bookstore chains, after having taken the book off their shelves out of concern for their employees' safety (it says here), have put it back, pressured not only by writers' groups but by those same employees; curiously enough, they chose to remove it just when they ran out of it anyway, and the decision to sell it again coincides rather neatly with the new printing's becoming available. (I was told by staff at the Waldenbooks outlet I patronize that they *never* refused to sell the book but only stopped displaying it, and they were sold out and had ordered more copies.) According to LOCUS (March 1989), British sales have been so brisk that Viking has set up a *Satanic Verses* hotline, and at press time (mid-February), sales were over 100,000 copies. I doubt, however, that Rushdie's earnings yet match the bounty on his head (\$5.2 million: non-Muslims half price—and isn't that a case of rank discrimination?). As a reviewer of books myself I admit to a certain envy of the Ayatollah's influence—after all, I've been howling for Bastraw's blood in these pages for years now, and the moles still haven't laid a talon on him—but as a human person of the reading and writing persuasion, I am understandably dismayed.

I possess the basic qualification of most of those who have publicly commented on the book so far: that is to say, I haven't read it either. I have, however, looked the author up in a couple of reference works. The current edition of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* lists him among the practitioners of magical realism, "in which the recognizably realistic mingles with the unexpected and the inexplicable, and in



Robert H. Knox

which elements of dream, fairy-story, or mythology combine with the everyday...." Sounds a lot like *Little, Big*, doesn't it? The term is also applied to Borges, Calvino, Fowles, and Angela Carter, to list just a few names with which SF and fantasy readers might be familiar. The third edition of Benét's *Reader's Encyclopedia* says of his first novel, *Grimus* (1975), "a fantasy, hard to classify, it has been called an engrossing work of science fiction by a number of critics." I also have listened to the author's own response, in an interview on NIGHTLINE just before the death threat that drove him into hiding, and read a thoughtful review of the book in THE NEW REPUBLIC of March 6, 1989.

The major point to notice is that the objectionable material dealing with Mohammed takes place entirely in the imagination of a character who is going insane. This makes it directly comparable to the film THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, in which the incidents perceived as blasphemous were also part of a dream sequence. Of course, nobody here got killed over the movie; as I recall, the worst that happened was that some loon painted swastikas on a synagogue attended by a mogul of the studio that released it. (It seems to me, by the way, that it is the

protesters against the film that were the blasphemous—or at least heretical—ones: orthodox Christian theology holds that Christ was both perfect God and perfect man—"perfect" here meaning wholly or completely—and was therefore capable of any human action, emotion, or thought, including sexual behavior, though we have no warrant for believing that He did engage in any. The fundamentalists who deny even the unrealized possibility are mere Eutychians, or at best Monophysites.) This is by and large a Christian nation (at least the Arizona Republican Party has just voted to make it so), but despite the best efforts of the Puritans, the U.S.A. simply reeks of tolerance. Nobody worthy of being taken seriously ever suggested that LAST TEMPTATION should be banned (although the original novel was banned in the author's native Greece). "Blasphemous" novels like Robert Graves' *King Jesus* and works of purported nonfiction like *The Passover Plot* have done quite well despite the chagrin of the pious. And while the wounded sensibilities of Muslims have been cited as legitimate grounds for banning *Satanic Verses*, nobody has called for banning Holocaust-revisionist works because of the pain they cause to Jews. (For those of you who think that's precisely what I was call-

ing for in the last Mathoms, think again—and see Gincas.) And none of these works is properly fantasy, like Rushdie's; even the Graves novel purports to be historical fiction.

The most disturbing trend here, even more worrisome than the intolerance, is the apparent inability of many people in our modern world to differentiate between fiction and reality. I remember an old SF novel by Buck Coulson in which one character, a barbarian warrior, was unable to grasp the concept of fiction as distinguished from outright lying. I thought then, and still think, that this is a highly dubious proposition, as I have never heard of a culture worthy of the name that did not have the concept of storytelling; it seems to arise with language itself. And one could explain it simply enough to a warrior by the analogy of shooting at a target versus real hunting or warfare. Khomeini is not simply claiming that he has the right to censor what historians and biographers say about Mohammed; he is not even making such a demand concerning the way his Prophet is depicted in historical fiction; he is asserting that he has the right to sentence an author to death because he doesn't like the way that that author has presented a lunatic's delusions about Mohammed. And an appallingly large number of people, including our beloved Prez, don't seem to see anything wrong with this; never challenging the basis of his objection, they just feel that he expressed himself a tad too vehemently when he put a price on Rushdie's head.

An assortment of people ranging from ordinary citizens to powerful political and religious leaders have combined indignation at the Ayatollah's action with expressions of sympathy for the genuinely wounded feelings of devout Muslims. I also caught a story on the network news about a fellow who pulled a gun in a Domino's Pizza establishment and took hostages. It seems that his name is Kenneth Noid, and he had concluded that Domino's "Avoid the Noid" ad campaign was aimed at him personally. How does he differ from the Muslims upset by the religious musings of a fictional character presented as irrational? Yet Mr. Noid gets no sympathy from the public, just ridicule—and prosecution for his acts.

Suppose Rushdie had depicted a character who when mentally disturbed expressed himself in terms of Islamic orthodoxy, but when sane perceived and described the world differently. Somehow I don't think that this would make the Ayatollah any happier.

Artists have traditionally been particularly conscious of the distinction between the real and the imagined, probably because they have such active and powerful imaginations themselves. These "makers" are the polar opposites of those who, themselves unable to create, cannot tell the difference: on the one hand, like the people I've been contending with in my last few columns, they see reality as a matter of choice, with the world-views of the New Age fuzzymentalist, the fundamentalist advocate of creationism, and the Nobel Prize-winning astrophysicist as equally subjective and equally valid; on the other hand, they send wedding presents to the local TV station when characters on their favorite soap opera get married or have a baby, and they are prone to attack the actress who plays the villain if they happen to run into her in a supermarket. Perhaps this partially explains why allegory is today essentially dead as a literary form. It involves the consistent presentation of one pattern and level of meaning in terms of another, which is pretty useless if you're stuck with readers who can't tell the levels apart. For them the experience must be like a color-blind person looking at one of those color-blindness test you get as part of an eye exam. (Allegory also requires the reader to submit himself to the will and ideas of the writer with a meek humility that is in short supply today, especially among intellectuals.)

At least since Shakespeare's time, writers have played games with the fiction/reality interface. Woody Allen has done it notably well in the famous scene in ANNIE HALL where the people ahead of him in a line waiting to get into a theatre start arguing about the theories of Marshall McLuhan—whereupon Allen steps briefly out of the frame and returns with McLuhan himself to settle the matter. A more recent film, THE PURPLE ROSE OF CAIRO, has as a basic premise a movie character walking off the screen because he has fallen for a girl in the audience and the actor who plays him being sent to persuade him to return, while both the movie-studio personnel and the other characters in the film fume about the situation. This is first cousin to a favorite SF/fantasy theme, the alternate universe, of which there are examples too numerous to mention. Two of the best, because each plays with a variety of possible realities, are Philip K. Dick's *Eye in the Sky* and Heinlein's *Job*. A recent Arthurian fantasy mentioned in my essay in *The Once and Future Arthur* special issue, Gael Baudino's *Dragonsword*, deals explicitly with an imaginary universe which

is psychically projected by a "real-world" character who is incarnated in it himself in an avatar. But just as to do abstract art really well, you need to know how to draw, in order to play with reality this way—or to enjoy a book in which it is done—you need to have a pretty good grasp of the difference between reality and fantasy. Take, for example, L. Neil Smith's libertarian alternate universe. As a patriotic American who honors the founding fathers, I am nevertheless entertained rather than outraged by *The Gallatin Divergence*, in which George Washington is shot as a counter-revolutionary, Alexander Hamilton appears as a villainous transvestite, and a historical appendix mentions that in 1865 the distinguished actor John Wilkes Booth was assassinated by an obscure lawyer from Illinois. I know this is fiction. But to your typical John Birch Society member (or, for that matter, to my ex-governor) it would smack of treason. Shall we ban Mr. Smith because of the emotional distress of Mr. Mecham?

If not Muslim-bashing, just what is Rushdie trying to do in *The Satanic Verses*? In the NIGHTLINE interview, he stated that his theme is metamorphosis. Michael Wood, in the TNR review, describes its major themes as the question of belief itself, of the problematic existence of faith in a secular world, and "dislocation and befuddled identity," by which he means more or less what Rushdie means by metamorphosis. The title apparently refers to certain less than canonical verses of the Koran said to have been delivered to the Prophet by Satan rather than God. (Jews and Christians call this sort of thing merely apocrypha or pseudepigrapha; I think this is an exquisite example of the temperamental difference that separates Islam from the other two major monotheistic faiths.) The novel depicts a revelation of ambiguous authenticity to a listener of questionable sanity. As Wood puts it, "If the other speaks, then, if the unknown makes itself known, the decision what to call it remains ours. God and the Devil, in this light, look less like antagonists and more like lurid options that we have invented for ourselves." Although the review obviously went to press before the death threat, Wood does comment on the already burgeoning controversy. On the blasphemy issue, he says that the book "can't blaspheme, because only believers can blaspheme, as Rushdie himself says in the novel, and this is a novel about doubt." As for the passage which has been singled out as the most offensive, the episode of the brothel in

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The Theory and Practice of Science

Across the River

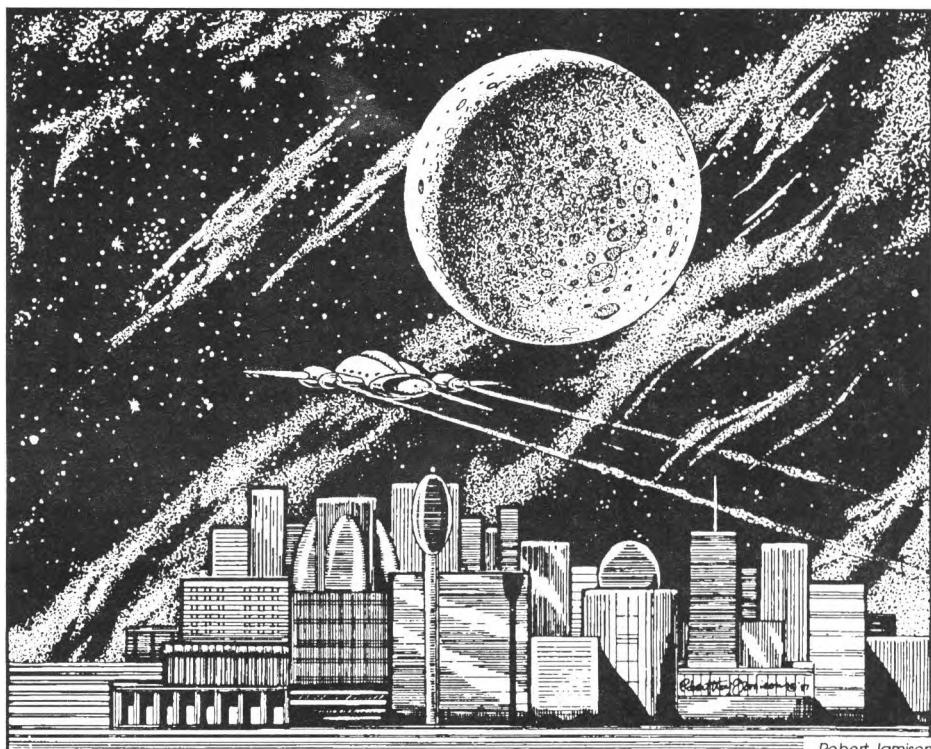
by Fred Lerner

"We hope to produce students who will be able to understand what scientists do." That is the goal of Columbia University's new undergraduate course in "The Theory and Practice of Science," and if it is realised it may well revolutionise the teaching of science in American universities.

Most American universities mandate some study of science for all undergraduates. But for most non-scientists, this requirement is satisfied with a watered-down version of introductory biology or chemistry, or with a "Physics for Poets" course. Those planning careers in science, medicine, or engineering plunge right into serious science and math courses during their freshman year; but they very seldom spend any time exploring the theoretical concepts underlying the scientific world-view, or learn much about the process by which scientific hypotheses are tested and theories formed.

Several years ago, Robert Pollack, Professor of Biological Sciences at Columbia, observed that "many of the students who do not major in a science, and even some who do, spend four years here and graduate as scientific illiterates." Such complaints have been common on both sides of the Atlantic: C. P. Snow's book, *The Two Cultures*, gave a name to the intellectual gap between literary people and those working in the natural sciences. But Columbia is in a unique position to correct this situation, and the results of the first few years' work in that direction have been encouraging.

The undergraduate curriculum at Columbia is based on the principle of "general education," which holds that all educated Americans need to share a common background of knowledge of the significant elements that have shaped our culture. "An Introduction to Contemporary Civilization in the West," a survey of the development of Western ideas and social institutions, was the first manifestation of this philosophy. Originating in 1917 as a "War Issues" course for officer cadets, its post-war development was fostered by Columbia's need to accommodate an increasingly



Robert Jamison

diverse student body. Many of these were young men from immigrant families, who lacked the classical education that had been standard preparation during the nineteenth century.

"C.C.," which is still required of all Columbia College students, was joined in 1937 by a mandatory course in "Masterpieces of European Literature and Philosophy." Companion courses in music and the fine arts are also requirements for the degree. By the end of his second year, every Columbia student shares a common intellectual experience in the humanities and social sciences. But the third leg of general education, the natural sciences, had never successfully been developed.

As "The Theory and Practice of Science" is still an experimental course, the syllabus is fine-tuned from year to year. During a typical year, it begins with eight sessions on basic concepts of mathematics as applied to data analysis. The remainder of the first semester is devoted to two topics

in physics, the discovery of the electron and the discovery of nuclear fission, which are treated as case studies of the scientific process. Just as in the C.C. and Humanities courses, students read and discuss primary texts, in this case original scientific papers by Faraday, Rutherford, Millikan, Bohr, and others. A computer simulation of Millikan's oil-drop experiment, and the taped recollections of participants in the discovery of fission, supplement the readings and class discussion. All this is intended not so much to teach the laws of nature as to give students a realistic idea of how physicists do physics.

The second semester concentrates on modern biology, tracing the development of molecular genetics from Mendel's garden to contemporary research on genetic diseases. Again the emphasis is on reading original papers, from Mendel to Watson/Crick and beyond. The final examination is usually set from the *Proceedings of the*

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The Crowded Future

Nihil Humanum

by John Boardman

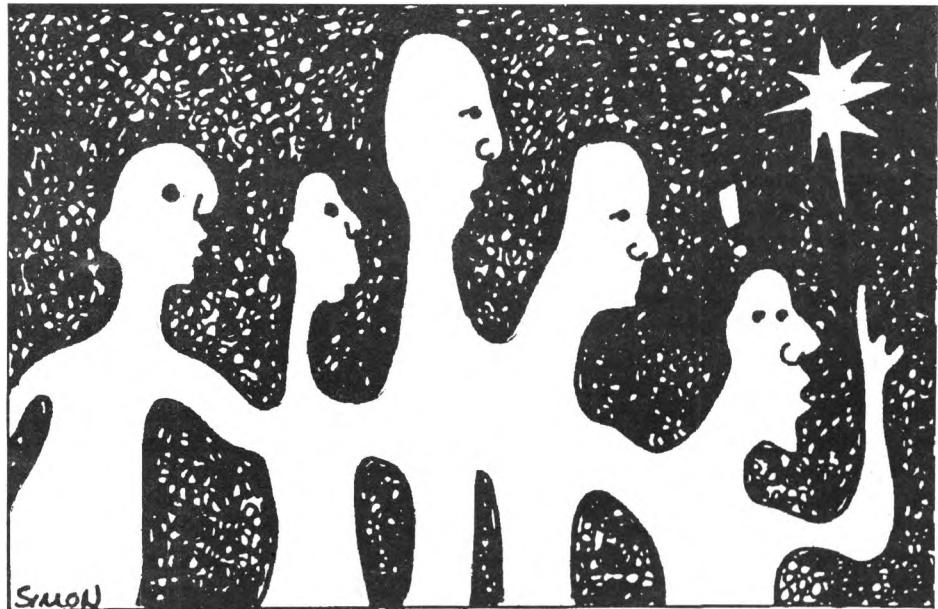
Not long after it first came out, I read and enjoyed Crawford Kilian's *The Empire of Time*. To my pleased surprise, I discovered in 1987 that Kilian was making these books into a series. Read them in the order listed at the end of this column if you want to follow them in their internal chronological sequence.

Moreover, I have found that though these books contain some things that I normally don't care for in science fiction, Kilian has plots and styles that make them palatable. And he has put an unusual amount of things into his plots without making them seem overloaded. In these "Chronoplane War" novels we have no less than four major ideas, each of which could support by itself a good novel—yet they blend together well. They are:

1. Social disintegration
2. Trainability
3. Doomsday
4. Chronoplanes (The Ishizawa Effect)

When Kilian's hero Jerry Pierce is growing up in Taos in the early 1990s, social and economic disintegration has overrun the United States and, presumably, the whole world. We never get any clear idea of what has caused this, though there is a hint that the U. S. has wasted so much money and effort in wars all around the world that society is going to pieces. Martial law, assisted by computer technology, is minimally holding together a society whose principal economic activities are barter and theft. As part of this, we find put into effect an arrangement actually proposed by President Carter—separate living areas for different ethnic groups. ("We have a right to preserve the ethnic purity of our neighborhoods," were the exact words of this classical Georgia racist.)

The second element is Trainability, discovered in the early 1990s. It seems that a small part of the population, if tested and trained for it in their teens, are capable of absorbing and acting on information very much faster than other people. Pierce is a Trainable, and is made, at the age of 17, "the de facto dictator of eastern Oregon



Margaret Simon

and all of Idaho." Like social disintegration, this is an old and often used science-fiction plot. An intellectual elite grows from within humanity; and although there are at first riots and pogroms against them, their superior abilities eventually make them not only useful, but indispensable.

Trainables are desperately being sought out and trained to help postpone the total collapse of society when Richard Ishizawa of Fermilab (the last non-Trainable to get a Ph. D. in physics) discovers the chronoplanes. And it through this that Pierce's world learns about Doomsday. Through Ishizawa's discovery, which costs him his life, the world learns that some incomprehensible disaster is going to strike on 22 April 2089. Through use of the I-Screen it would be discovered that this catastrophe would boil away the Earth's oceans and atmosphere, cut a vast trench in its crust, and utterly destroy all life.

But the most important of the plot elements in these books are the chronoplanes themselves. The I-Screen puts "our" Earth in contact with several worlds parallel to it and identical to it—except that they are at different periods of history. The I-Screen is *not* a time travel device. If you go to the chronoplane called Ahania in the year

which we would call 96 AD and warn the Emperor Domitian about the plot against him, as is done in *Rogue Emperor*, he wipes out the plotters and reigns until he is assassinated with an anti-tank missile in 100 AD. But you return to "our" Earth, and the history books still tell you that Domitian was assassinated, probably by Christian conspirators, in 96. And you can drain dry the Ploesti oilfields in one of the other chronoplanes, only to find that the output on "our" Earth is unaffected.

This is not a new idea in science fiction, though Kilian is not being deliberately imitative of his predecessors. One of the very first parallel-world novels made use of this same device: Gertrude Bennett's *The Heads of Cerberus*, which was published in 1919 under the name "Francis Stevens".* Her protagonist moved from contemporary Philadelphia to an alternate world which is still Philadelphia, but a couple of hundred years "ahead" of ours. There was a similar arrangement in Sam Merwin's *The House of Many Worlds* (1951) and its sequel *Three Faces of Time* (1955). The latter book, in fact, takes us into a parallel world only 22 years behind the date of *Rogue Emperor*, with Domitian's

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New Points on the Horror Compass

The Haunted Library

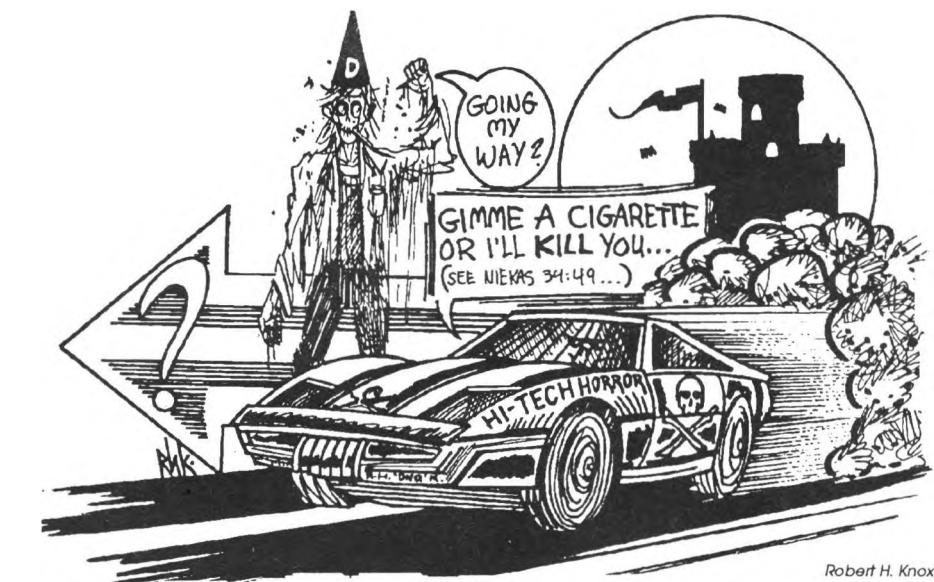
by Don D'Ammassa

The growing popularity of horror fiction has attracted a number of new writers, both those who had not been published previously and those who had been active in other genres. In most cases, most of the new authors to appear have been derivative or even imitative of those writers like Stephen King, William Peter Blatty, or Ira Levin whose books were best sellers, although a number of these went on to develop into original voices in their own right.

With the growth of the horror field, as with any genre, there is a gradual stretching of the boundaries as individual authors and groups of authors strive to find their own voices, to discover just what it is that they want to accomplish other than the basics of good storytelling and high income levels. Science fiction has been an established, popular (with its portion of the reading public) genre for decades now. There are discernible trends—cyberpunk, hard science, action-adventure, “New Wave,” military, and so on. Although there tend to be a comparatively small number of horror themes, there is for all practical purposes no breakdown of the field into the general areas that characterize much of SF.

Horror fiction, even now, is concerned mostly with standard menaces—demons, vampires, werewolves, ghosts, curses, indeterminate monsters, mummies, possession, sorcerous cults, voodoo magic, zombies of various kinds, and even borrows from SF. Even some non-fantastic thrillers have been lumped into the field, most notably the work of V.C. Andrews, and numerous psychopathic killer stories, most of which would normally have been marketed as mysteries.

With the proliferation of horror fiction, I suspect it is time to start watching for evolving trends, the establishment of accepted shared concepts of the field. In SF, for example, authors can set a story in the collapse of an interstellar empire without going into great detail, because there is a shared concept that has been developed by writers such as Poul Anderson, H. Beam Piper, Isaac Asimov, and others which has come to be accepted as a standard contin-



Robert H. Knox

uum for other fiction. Horror writers invoke this to a certain extent; vampires shun the daylight, silver kills werewolves, etc., but these are conventions that have existed since before the present generation of writers was even alive. It is not a natural evolution of the field.

Are there any identifiable prototrends? Let's speculate a bit. One development which I have noticed is the rehabilitation of the monster, or monster-as-hero story. Ghosts have always held an ambiguous place in the literature of the supernatural. Menacing though they may be, there have been favorable treatments of them through the years, Oscar Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost* for example, or Peter Beagle's *A Fine and Private Place*, or Josephine Leslie's *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*. The ghost is often motivated by concern for the living, warning of imminent danger.

The other creatures of darkness have fared less favorably. The vampire was not until recent years looked upon favorably at all; Manly Wade Wellman's “The Devil Is Not Mocked” was able to place its vampiric character in a favorable light only by contrasting it to the greater evil of the Nazis.

Werewolves were often portrayed as tormented spirits, but never as the hero except in those stories like “There Shall Be No Darkness” by James Blish, which trod the border between supernatural and outright fantasy.

Vampires in particular have received a facelift. Robert Lory produced a low quality action series for Pinnacle some years back in which Dracula was revived by two frustrated men and used as their weapon against the Mafia. As the series progressed, the more human and humane side of Dracula became evident, and although the series is noteworthy chiefly for its absurdity, it was a sign that traditional monsters might be looked at in a new light. Les Daniels has written four novels about a vampire who was shocked by the evil of normal humanity. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's enormously successful St. Germain novels, and the more recent series involving one of his female companions, have helped solidify the vampire as hero. Other writers exploring this theme include Fred Saberhagen and Lee Killough.

Is this same approach going to be applied to other monsters? There are already

indications that this is the case. Barry Sadler turned the Wandering Jew into a heroic figure in his "Casca" series, which numbers over twenty volumes. *A Werewolf's Tale* by Richard Jaccoma pits good shapechangers against bad. More significantly, the latest novel by Robert McCammon, who is moving from imitator to trend-setter, concerns a werewolf who serves as a spy for the British Secret Service during World War II. *The Wolf's Hour* is almost certain to be one of the major novels of the supernatural (it is difficult to refer to it as a "horror" novel considering the theme, unless the atrocities of the Nazis deserve that appellation) of 1989.

Where will this all lead? Is this just a thematic trend, or does it indicate that the term "Dark Fantasy" may indeed be a more appropriate label, since the horrific element may be of less significance? Will the years to come see the ghoul turned into a benevolent creature, rising to rid the world of the uneasy dead? Perhaps ghouls could be trained to prey exclusively on vampires. There's a story there somewhere.

Historical horror novels also seem to be an emerging trend. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Les Daniels are the most obvious examples, but there are other writers moving toward this setting as well. Michael McDowell's "Blackwater" series attempted to blend horror with the generational historical novel, as did Kathryn Kimbrough with her/his pseudonymous series of historical ghost stories. Oddly enough, it appears that the big, lush novel set in past times is nearing extinction outside the horror genre. The rare exceptions in the mainstream only underline the flagging interest in the past.

The one potential sub-genre of horror fiction that parallels those in SF is the Lovecraftian sub-universe, the world of Cthulhu, Nyarlathotep, and the towns of Dunwich, Arkham, and Innsmouth. At one time, a number of leading horror writers were routinely setting their stories against this backdrop, although the only remaining regular contributor appears to be Brian Lumley, whose latest efforts explore new worlds of his own contrivance. In these days of more explicit horror, I suspect that Lovecraft will remain an anomaly, still read, but rarely inciting imitators to enhance his vision.

Will the slasher films lead to a slice-and-dice fiction school? Probably, just as there will always be low grade space opera, Tolkien imitations, gothic romances, and other less creative forms. There will always be the perception, probably correct, that a certain segment of the reading public is

more interested in descriptions of blood and gore, preferably interspersed with some graphic sex, than well-developed characters, crafted writing, logical plot development, and the other niceties of fiction. This probably explains why, for example, my own novel was retitled from *The Gargoyle* to *Blood Beast*. Readers expecting dripping fangs, torn bodies, and such are going to be greatly disappointed. There is hack-work in any genre, and much of the least valuable horror fiction is, and will be, of this type.

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"Horror fiction, even now, is concerned mostly with standard menaces—demons, vampires, werewolves, ghosts, curses, indeterminate monsters, mummies, possession, sorcerous cults, voodoo magic, zombies of various kinds, and even borrowings from SF."

How about literary horror fiction? Is there an equivalent of the "New Wave" movement? The answer at this point is no. There is little experimental writing in the field, little overtly intellectual prose. Fred Chappell comes to mind as an exception, and the occasional shorter piece from Lucius Shepard. This is not to imply that the leading writers in the field are not skillful or lacking in literary merit. At their best, Stephen King, Peter Straub, Dean Koontz, Robert McCammon, Anne Rice, and several others are noteworthy authors by any standards I can imagine being applied. But none of these writers seem to me to be attempting the conscious use of language and style as an artificial artform. All writers use language to tell a story; only some writers use the way they use language to tell a story.

One final observation before I close this. Marketing approaches have an unavoidable impact on what gets written and published. SF and fantasy have been characterized increasingly the past few years by series characters and trilogies respec-

tively. Both have seen the proliferation of the "shared universe" concept as well. For some reason, none of these seem to have worked with horror fiction.

Charles Grant's "Greystone Bay" was supposed to be the opening volume of a shared universe horror series. For whatever reason, it has remained without a follow-up ever since, and Grant has recently indicated a reluctance to involve himself with editing in any case. The only horror trilogy, written as a trilogy, that comes to mind is the "Omen" novels (of which there were actually four), and these are a by-product of the films and are anomalous.

Series characters were at one time not uncommon in the smaller field of horror fiction that existed decades past. Seabury Quinn had Jules de Grandin, Dunsany had Jorkens, and there were several others. The series character has not done well in modern horror fiction however. Robert Holdstock's psychic investigator, Dan Brady, survived six ho-hum adventures (written under the name Robert Faulcon), but has disappeared. Heinrich Graat wrote three underrated novels for Belmont some years back about Ben Camden, who set himself up in opposition to the imposition of the Devil's will on Earth, but the series and Graat himself have not been heard from in over a decade. William Johnstone has been writing an abysmally bad series about demons invading earth for Zebra, but these are basically from the slice-and-dice sub-genre. Gary Brandner's "Howling" series uses different characters each time, and seems to have stopped at three, making it a trilogy rather than an ongoing enterprise. But with the noteworthy exception of the vampire hero (Yarbro, Daniels, Lory, Killough, Saberhagen), the series character is missing from horror fiction.

This entire situation might change tomorrow. The current popularity of horror fiction might come to an abrupt halt, and the more talented writers will turn to something else, miring it forever as a passing fad. A new wave of writers might appear with novel approaches and ideas that will banish the shuffling, lurking, leering monsters of tradition to the marginal publishers. Whatever may happen, the potential is enormous, simply because this is the first time in the Twentieth Century that supernatural fiction is being looked upon as a viable genre with mass appeal (hence big bucks) rather than just adolescent amusement or stories for the weirdo fringe. The next ten years could be very interesting indeed.*

Who Is John Dalmas and Why Am I Writing About Him?

Tape from Toronto

by David Palter

The first time I met John Dalmas was June 28, 1981. He came to visit me in my apartment in Hollywood, because he was looking for someone to assist him in putting together a new SF magazine that he wanted to publish, and a mutual acquaintance (Denny Wheaton) had suggested me. I was delighted by the opportunity, not only because of my love of SF, but because I greatly admired John Dalmas as a writer, having been very impressed by his first novel, *The Yngling*, which was serialized in ANALOG in October and November, 1969.

And so I did assist in the production of John's magazine, META SF, one issue of which was published in September, 1982. John regarded the magazine as an experiment, and when his chosen marketing strategy failed to generate enough sales, he dropped it. In the course of this brief venture John and I discovered that we liked working together, and that my particular insights into SF writing could complement John's own particular abilities. Consequently John has, in the seven years that I have known him, sought my comments on most of his manuscripts, and we have both been pleased with the results. John has acknowledged my contribution to his work in the dedication to me of his novel, *The Scroll of Man*. In addition, he has returned the favor by reading and commenting on a novel that I have been working on in recent years (in collaboration with Ron Kasman) which is as yet unpublished, but which I have recorded on cassette for Ed.

As a result of our long and close association, I am in an excellent position to discuss John's writing. I do want to point out however, that John's work really does not have to be explained to the public. John and I are both quite content for each reader to read his work on whatever level they are able to perceive. Nobody needs to have their attention forcibly directed to deeper layers.

However, I believe that the NIEKAS readership is more curious about the inner workings of the SF world than are the average SF readers, and I aim to cater to

this interest. In addition I am trying to propitiate our esteemed publisher, Mike Basstraw, who would like me to write something more directly relevant to the SF genre than some of my previous columns have been.

The key to fully understanding the fiction of John Dalmas is to understand the four major influences on his writing. First is J.R.R. Tolkien. Prior to reading *The Lord of the Rings*, John was happily devoting his life to the field of forestry and forest management (or silviculture) and indeed was a well-paid and distinguished expert in that field. However, Tolkien persuaded him that fiction could be more exciting than silviculture.

The Tolkien influence is most clearly seen in the novels *The Yngling* and its sequel *Homecoming*. In these two novels we see a future world in which the various human cultures, as they both evolve and degenerate, and the scientific and psychic developments of the age, have given rise to a conflict that is in many ways similar to that of Tolkien's great epic, but which is translated from fantasy into SF. These novels are a deliberate tribute to Tolkien, and they succeed in creating a similar flavor.

They also have a strong Scandinavian influence. Although John Dalmas is not actually of Scandinavian descent—his real name is John Jones, and his ancestry is Welsh—he has had a lot of experience with Scandinavian-Americans in the midwest, and has come to have a special love for that cultural group and background, which remains a continuing theme in his writing. A great many of John Dalmas' protagonists throughout his writing are of Scandi-



Margaret Simon

navian descent, and in these two novels in particular the Scandinavian culture is shown off to very good effect.

The second major influence is James H. Schmitz. Most of James H. Schmitz's work was originally serialized in ANALOG and he remains to this day, perhaps, the author who most perfectly captures the ANALOG philosophy of writing. He had a tremendous feeling for the heroic action-adventure SF story which remains well grounded in an understanding of science and in a practical and careful approach to science fiction, with likable protagonists who exemplify an American sort of ideal. Heinlein also did this to a great extent but Heinlein was more idiosyncratic; James H. Schmitz was perhaps the most pure exponent of the ANALOG philosophy of writing, and was the greatest stylistic influence on John Dalmas. This influence can be seen in all of John Dalmas's novels but is particularly clear in *The Walkaway Clause*.

The third major influence is L. Ron Hubbard. There's a good biographical sketch of John Dalmas in the November, 1986, ANALOG, which accurately describes

See TORONTO, Page 52

The 60's and the 80's: Bug Jack Barron and Armageddon Rag

Linkages by Pat Mathews

George R.R. Martin's *Armageddon Rag* is cleverly written and a strong evocation of an age we are all fascinated by: the 60's. Why did it nearly vanish after its first printing?

Norman Spinrad's *Bug Jack Barron* sold widely and has been periodically reprinted since 1969; talk of filming it keeps recurring. Why?

Both novels are thrillers. Martin's is a murder mystery with some structural debt to Agatha Christie. A record producer is found dead in his New England estate, his heart cut out, lying on a concert poster advertising the last concert of a group he brought up and sat on for the next ten years. Sandy Blair, once a writer for an underground paper turned "lifestyle," is offered the story by his old publisher; the mystery comes to obsess Sandy.

The investigation leads to the individual lives of the rock band *Nazgul* and of Sandy's old gang in college; all three parallel the songs on the album. The science fiction comes in a touch of Satanism, literal possession, and a subtle shifting of time-tracks near the end. Watch Sandy watch!

But the book, written now about then, shows an odd lack of understanding of either the Sixties or the Eighties. Sandy and the others, including the villain, blather on endlessly about The Revolution, but none of them define it. I ask you, how many different movements were afoot during the Sixties? Martin's characters decry the modern tendency to sell out, without understanding why this has happened. A new Mercedes, Martin seems to think; never beans and rice on the table.

Spinrad's Jack Barron and company freely define themselves as having sold out—for the beans and rice.

Jack, Sara, and Luke were close friends in college. Luke became (and the timing is exquisitely right) the first Black governor of Mississippi. Sara pioneered a school of design as prominent in her day as Art Deco two generations before. Jack became the sort of muckraking talk show host Geraldo Rivera once set out to be.

One of Jack's colleagues, an impoverished old alcoholic, claims he sold his child,

who has now disappeared. The trail leads through a string of disappearances—all poor minority children—into Luke's Mississippi. Who wants them and why is neatly tied into a political struggle that Jack and Luke appear to be winning.

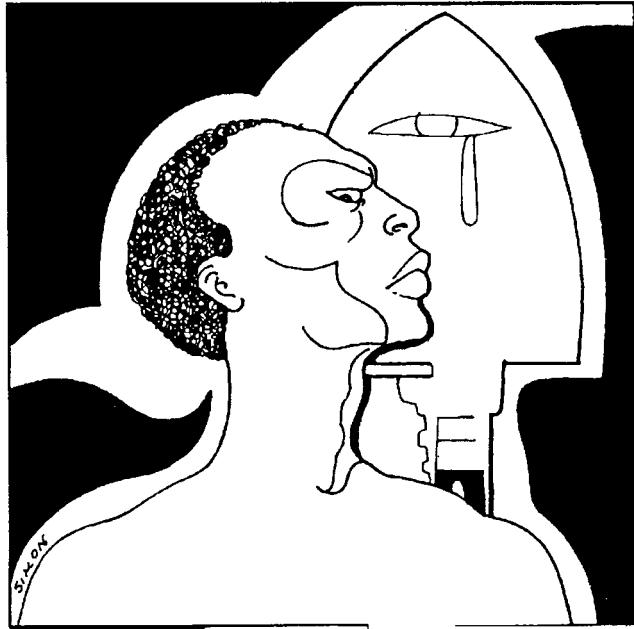
Having said that, are there flaws?

Yes, major ones.

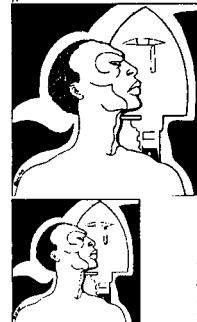
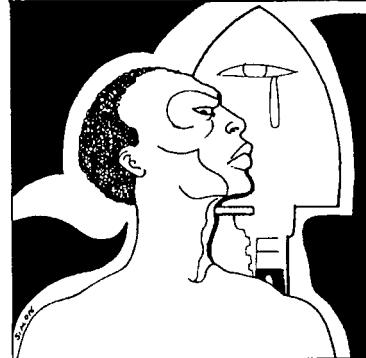
Sara, a major character, is consistently referred to as "whining" or "saying in a little girl whine." Many of Spinrad's characters, mostly villains or females, do that; perhaps a certain regional accent grates on his ear and his nerves terribly? She also has a long, sexist interior monologue—which could be omitted without affecting any part of the plot.

Luke's Mississippi is shown as incredibly backward and poor; unless the movie-maker explains this in terms of forces larger than one administration, Luke is going to stand convicted of being a very bad manager. In which case, why would Jack wish to inflict him on the nation? Also, where are the black middle and upper classes who would be Luke's natural backers? Behind him instead we see drugged-out White radicals, who in real life would have ruined his career.

The "Social Justice" politics, plausible before anyone tried them, are fortunately not central to the plot: only the need for a



Margaret Simon



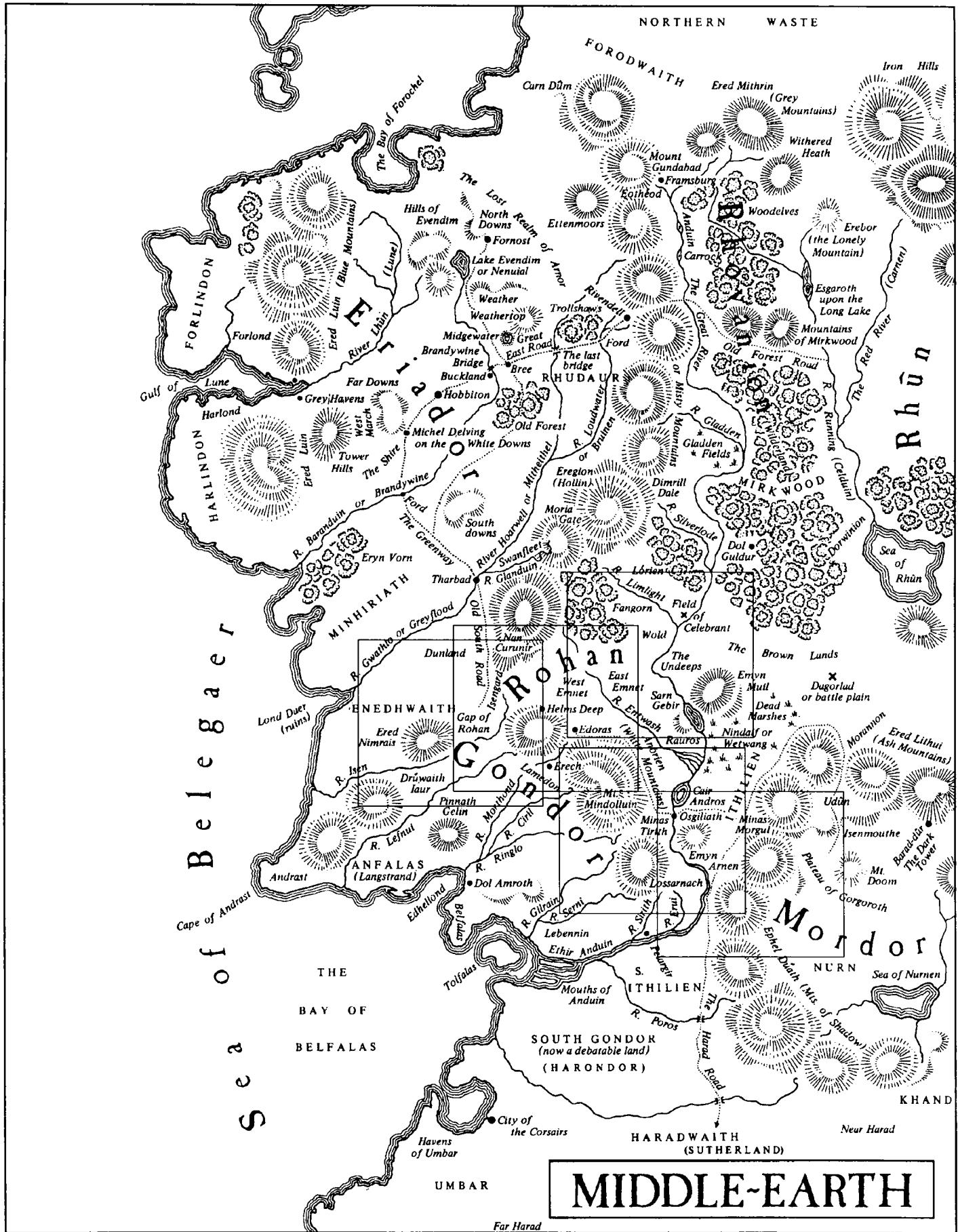
change. Because, folks, socialism has failed world-wide to improve human life; ask Mikhail Gorbachev.

Yet, Spinrad has the feel and shape of the Eighties down remarkably well for one writing in the late Sixties. The mystery is

soplausible that when children started disappearing in Atlanta, many readers of this book wondered, until Atlanta nailed a pedophile for the murderers.

Finally, Spinrad pulls no punches. To silence them, Jack and Sara are made unwilling accomplices to a crime of horror; there seems no way out. Sara provides one at the cost of her life. Sandy faces only disillusion with a pretty girl, and a moral choice so obvious the conclusion is foregone.

Yet in an odd way the books complement each other as two decades face each other across the gap of twenty years.*



TOLKIEN'S MILITARY

JR.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (LotR) trilogy is a military history. After all, LotR is the history of a great war—a military struggle between two ways of life for control of Middle-earth and its peoples. One society is an agrarian-based aristocracy; the other, an egalitarian, industrial society of the masses. One is composed of free individuals; the other, a society of masses. One has a feudal military structure; the other, a modern military structure.

Sauron's society is one of enslaved masses drafted into a mass army supported by an industrial means of production, all dominated by the will of Sauron. Rule is maintained by brute force. There are only large groups dominated by a collective will—the will of Sauron. In contrast, the feudal society is one of individuals supported by an agricultural means of production, all dominated by an aristocracy. The leaders

Betty J. Bruther

of this society are an hereditary elite of Men, Elves, Dwarves, and Hobbits. Rule is maintained by oaths of fealty and vassalage, freely given by the individual. On Middle-earth, the most heinous crime is the breaking of a freely-given oath. Broken, this oath must be fulfilled at some future date by one's descendants or one's wraith. This society bears a striking resemblance to a true democracy. Upon his return, the King is virtually elected by the people, by popular acclaim. (Tolkien, v. III, p. 303) Each society reflects its ethos in its military structure and its military actions.

MILITARY STRUCTURE IN LOTR

Characteristically, a feudal military structure was based on the overlord-vassal arrangement in which two individuals were bound by oaths of protection (alliance) and loyalty. The overlord was a leader of either great military strength and political intelligence or hereditary position to whom others allied themselves for military protection and enfeoffment, or other valuable consideration. In return for this action, the vassal owed his overlord military service. Normally, this military obligation was stated in terms of the numbers of knights and peasants to be used in a military campaign for a specified length of time determined by the growing and harvesting seasons. The size and power of the vassal determined the exact number of men specified in the agreement.

In LotR, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Free Peoples (two major divisions—Army of the North, Army of the West) and messianic High King of the Unified Kingdoms is ARAGORN. By hereditary right and by virtue of his military prowess/political intelligence, Aragorn (a direct male line descendant of the last High King) is the recognized leader of the army. He derives this military control from the force of his personality and the continually renewed oaths of fealty sworn to the last High King by the Stewards of Gondor and their vassals, The Stewards of Gondor have guarded the King's throne until the day of the return—never once breaking their oath and claiming the Throne for themselves. The King is their hope and their promise; Aragorn is that hope and promise of a new and better age on Middle-

earth. Aragorn claims his Throne in the face of a great danger.

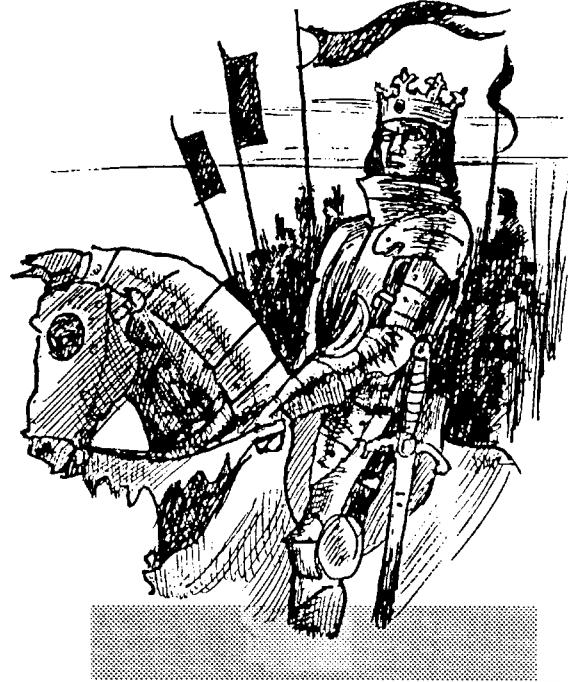
Sauron, the Dark Lord, has grown in power and has discovered that the Ring of Power, once lost, yet exists. The Ring has been found by a being of the West—a "Baggins." Sauron must have the Ring to gain absolute power over the beings of Middle-earth. Aragorn, the High King, must use his position of power and strength of mind to guard Middle-earth from Sauron. He is a warrior messiah, a guardian of freedom.

Aragorn is a man of great military experience. He is chieftain and guerrilla leader of the Dunedain (Rangers) of Arnor. He has led his Rangers on long, dangerous forays into the land of Sauron. As a knight-errant, he has fought in the ranks of both the armies of Gondor and Rohan against the Shadow in the East. Aragorn is a man prepared to take great risks for his cause. With the aid of Gandalf the Grey (Mithrandir), Aragorn makes his military decisions based on his knowledge of Sauron's goal, his knowledge of his allies, and his knowledge of the land.

Aragorn and Gandalf guide their allies toward the same military choices as they have reached; free choice and free will are an essential part of the military system in LotR. Bound only by freely-given oaths, the Free Peoples make their decisions. Aragorn does not force his leadership on his people. In the battle of the Hornburg—Helm's Deep, he allows the actual leadership of the battle to fall on Theoden of the Mark and his thanes. He understands the pride of the Rohirrim and does not demand obedience. On the march to Cormallen (the final battle with Mordor), Aragorn exhibits an understanding of some men's fears allowing them to retreat to a less-frightening task. He binds them with an oath to remain and fight in the spot to which he has sent them.

As a friend, Aragorn communicates his spirit of courage and love to his comrades-in-arms, enabling them to follow him through the Paths of the Dead on a terrible journey into darkness.

Friend and student of the Elf-lords and Gandalf the Grey, his life one of continuous struggle against the Dark Lord; destiny, his wyrd (fate) calls him to the Kingship and in Aragorn finds an astute statesman and courageous warrior-king, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the Free



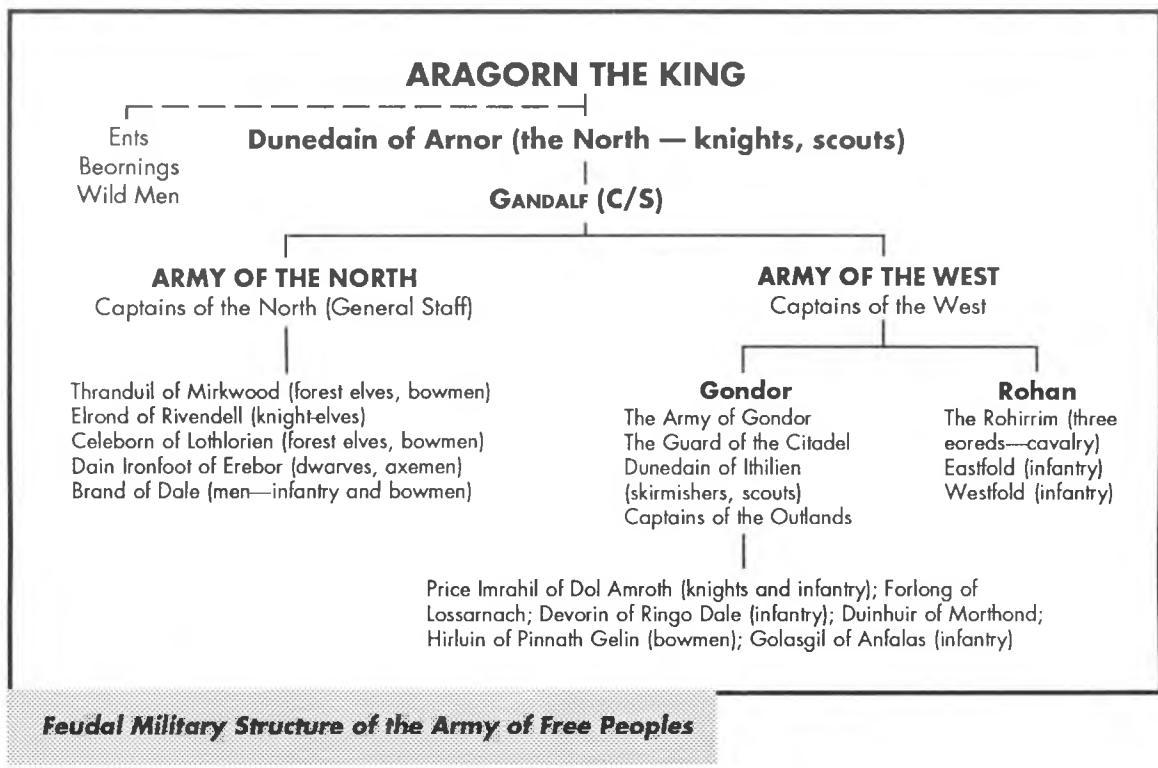
Richard Dahlstrom

Peoples.

The DUNEDAIN (Rangers) are an elite military force more familiarly known as the Rangers. To the Free Peoples, the Rangers are wanderers, tellers of tales, men with power to speak to the beasts, and solitary warriors. In reality, they are the guardians of the borderlands of the West against the forces of Sauron; the guardians of the Shire of the Hobbits, and scouts exploring new lands and tracking down enemies of the Free Peoples. They are the "eyes" of the Free Peoples—the spies of the Army of the Free Peoples. Intrepid warriors and independent men, they are loyal only to their chieftain and true King, Aragorn. They form his personal retinue of warriors in the battles against Mordor.

The CAPTAINS OF THE WEST are a military council—a decision-making and coordinating body of the ARMY OF THE WEST, composed of Aragorn, Faramir of Gondor, Theoden and Eomer of Rohan, the sons of Elrond (Elladan and Elrohir), Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, and greatest of all, Gandalf the Grey (Mithrandir), the White Rider. This group acts as a general staff giving direction and unity to the war effort, allocating resources, obtaining men and weapons, and making the final military decisions.

Most mysterious of all figures in LotR is GANDALF, MITHRANDIR, or the WHITE RIDER. (A brief aside—Gandalf the Grey,



Feudal Military Structure of the Army of Free Peoples

Radagast the Brown, and Saruman the White were Maiar, the lesser Ainur who were servants of the Valar, the greater Ainur. Five, the Istari, came to Middle-earth. Sauron was *not* one, tho' he was a Maia.) First, he has no real position within the aristocracy, except as personal counselor of the King and the Captains of the West. Secondly, Gandalf's real role is that of historian. He understands the workings of fate in the history of Middle-earth, the history of the Hobbits, and in the history of the Ring. Gandalf knows the strange power of the Ring to corrupt and destroy the will of its user. He knows it must be destroyed to free civilization from the danger of the Dark Lord. To this end, he uses all his skill and knowledge to convince members of the Council of Elrond (a governmental, policy-making body of the Free Peoples) to freely choose to destroy the Ring by sending it to the Cracks of Doom in Mordor. When Frodo chooses to be Ringbearer and take the Ring to its destruction in Mordor, Gandalf approves. He sees the working of fate in Frodo's choice. Frodo was meant to take the Ring to Mordor, as Gollum is meant to be its destroyer.

Gandalf is the prime organizer behind the coalition of powers in the North and West to destroy Sauron. He knows of Aragorn and his destiny to be the King. He encourages Aragorn to make the choice, to claim his rightful position, and to lead a

strong coalition against Mordor. He brings the representatives of the Free Peoples together at Rivendell and later at Lothlrien to make final decisions about the course of Middle-earth's history. He creates a Fellowship of the Ring and the coalition that will become the Army of the West. Under his diplomatic guidance and that of Elrond, a strong coalition is constructed to do battle with Sauron.

Furthermore, Gandalf is not only a diplomat and historian, he is also the chief strategist of the War of the Ring. His strategy is one of sacrifice. In the mines of Moria, Gandalf alone makes the decision to sacrifice himself in battle with the Balrog, an elemental force of evil. As the White Rider, a symbol of purity and light, he continues the battle against his eons-old enemy, the Witchking (Black Captain of the Nazgul) and the Luciferian Dark Lord, Sauron.

Upon his return, Gandalf is given leadership of the army of the West by Aragorn. Aragorn recognizes him publicly as the "banner and Captain" of the West, the White Rider, a greater and mightier creature than Sauron and the Nazgul. In his first major act on his return, Gandalf acts as historian to Aragorn. He tells Aragorn that he was meant to save or at least to attempt to save Merry and Pippin from the Orcs. It is his destiny to be placed where the need of the peoples of Middle-earth is

the greatest. He was meant to be in a position to save Rohan and its king Theoden from the dangerous forays of Sauron's Nazgul and the corrupting influence of Saruman the "Many-Colored." It is Aragorn's fate to begin the return to his throne at the Hornburg in Rohan. Gandalf makes Aragorn see the working of fate in his decisions. Frodo the Ringbearer, is meant to go to Mordor with only his faithful friend and servant, Sam. Aragorn the King and Frodo the Ringbearer must take different roads to save Middle-earth.

Gandalf, in his position of Chief of Staff, explains his strategy to Aragorn. Sauron is an unimaginative individual as are his servants. He cannot conceive of the fact that the Free Peoples would choose to destroy the Ring rather than use it. Sauron thinks Aragorn has the Ring. Therefore, he will turn his attention to the Army of the West, neglecting two small figures slowly making their way deep into Mordor to the Cracks of Doom. It is the task of Aragorn and the Army of the West to keep his attention from the great danger creeping into Mordor. Aragorn realizes the value of Gandalf's strategy freely electing to follow this course of action to the bitter end. In the final battle with Sauron, Aragorn leads a small army to the Gate of Mordor to challenge Sauron. He does this to give the Ringbearer time to complete his mission, even though his life and those of his army may be forfeit. Sauron falls into the trap; the Ringbearer succeeds; Gandalf and Aragorn are the victors.

Gandalf's interpretation of history and his strategy prove to be accurate. Frodo was chosen to bear the Ring; Gollum, to be the instrument of its destruction; Aragorn, to be the messianic warrior king; and Gandalf, to be the guiding light of Middle-earth. A mysterious figure, the White Rider, symbol of purity and light, Gandalf is more simply an historian and the Chief of Staff of the Army of the West.

The ENTS are more informally attached to the Army of the West, joining in only one major battle in concert with the men of the West—the Hornburg or Helm's Deep. They are the shepherds of the trees. Saruman, the Wizard, and his Orcs of the White Hand have been destroying the trees for use in their factories. The Ents are roused to hatred of Saruman, discover his plan to become the new Sauron, and march against the Orcs and Saruman to destroy Isengard. Later the Ents come to the Hornburg at Helm's Deep to complete the destruction of Saruman's empire. This is their only action in the War of the Ring. They return to the forest of Fangorn once their mission has been completed; they owe loyalty only to their trees.

The Army of the West is composed of small individual groups coming to the aid of Aragorn out of their loyalty to the King. The WILD MEN OF THE WOSE act as scouts and skirmishers for the Army, as do the BEORNINGS, a group of men related to the Rangers. The DWARVES have sent one representative to the West, Gimli, son of Gloin, a fine axeman and infantryman. The FOREST ELVES have sent one representative to the West, Legolas, a fine young Bowman and knight. Appearing in the final battles of the War of the Ring are two more Elves of Rivendell, the sons of Elrond, Eladan and Elrohir, who have ridden to help Aragorn and the Free Peoples. They bring the words of Elrond and his standard woven by Arwen, their sister and Aragorn's love. They will ride with him to the end. The EAGLES, lead by Gwaihir the Windlord, appear briefly as the air force of the Army of the West by coming to the aid of the King—killing the steeds of the Nazgul and rescuing trapped soldiers of the West. The Haflings or HOBBITS are small of stature, but great in courage and endurance. Only four are sent to the great battles with Mordor, one as the Ringbearer; one, his companion; one, a wise, intelligent young hobbit; and one, a headstrong, hasty boy-knight. They are loyal and courageous soldiers.

In the North, two groups guard the way into the last strongholds of freedom, the Elves of Mirkwood and an alliance of the men of Dale and the Dwarves of Erebor.

The Elves are bowmen; the men and dwarves, infantrymen and axemen. They are the last guardians of the Free Peoples should the battle go against Aragorn. They are his ARMY OF THE NORTH. The Captains of the North are Celeborn of Lothlorien, Thranduil of Mirkwood (two elves), King Dain Ironfoot (dwarves) and King Brand of Dale. They fight a defensive

war against the armies of Easterlings and Orcs of Sauron. Only in the West with the King are the Free Peoples on the offensive.

The two dominant politico-military powers in the West are GONDOR and ROHAN. Both are bound together by a military alliance based on the vassal-overlord relationship. Gondor granted the Rohirrim of Eorl the Younger a tract of land to the north of Minas Tirith. In return for this land, the Rohirrim through the oath of their first King, have sworn a binding oath to serve Gondor in time of war, upon receipt of a Red Arrow. Once the Rohirrim receive the Red Arrow, they are honor-bound to muster and ride to the aid of Gondor and the King. The Rohirrim are a cavalry force, for the most part knights with a few mounted bowmen. The main divisional force of the cavalry of Rohan is the "eored". These eored are commanded by the First Marshal of the Mark, the King Theoden; the Second Marshal of the Marches, Theodred the heir, and soon slain in battle with the Orcs; the Third Marshal of the Marches, Eomer, the nephew of Theoden and heir to the kingdom. These eored are sent to danger spots on the border of Rohan to fight the encroaching armies of the Easterlings and the Orcs of Mordor. Within Rohan, the King has two major vassals—the leaders of Eastfold and Westfold who protect the borders of Rohan and are bound to come to the aid of Rohan in times of danger.

Gondor has a similar military structure. There is a standing army under the leadership of Boromir and Faramir, a Citadel guard, and the personal retinue of Denethor, the Steward of Gondor. It has several minor vassals grouped under the common name of the CAPTAINS OF THE OUTLANDS. These men are appointees of the Steward of Gondor, trusted and strong men, who have been granted land in return for their defense of that land against the Corsairs of Umbar and the men of Harad, both groups servants of Sauron. These Captains of the Outlands are Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, Forlong of Lossarnach, Devorin of Ringo Dale, Duinhuir of Morthond, Golasgil of Anfalas, Hirluin of Pinnath Gelin, and a few small free-holders. Their men are a mixed bag of infantrymen, knights, bowmen, and axemen.

The most important of these minor vassals is Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, a man of Elven blood, courageous and loyal to the



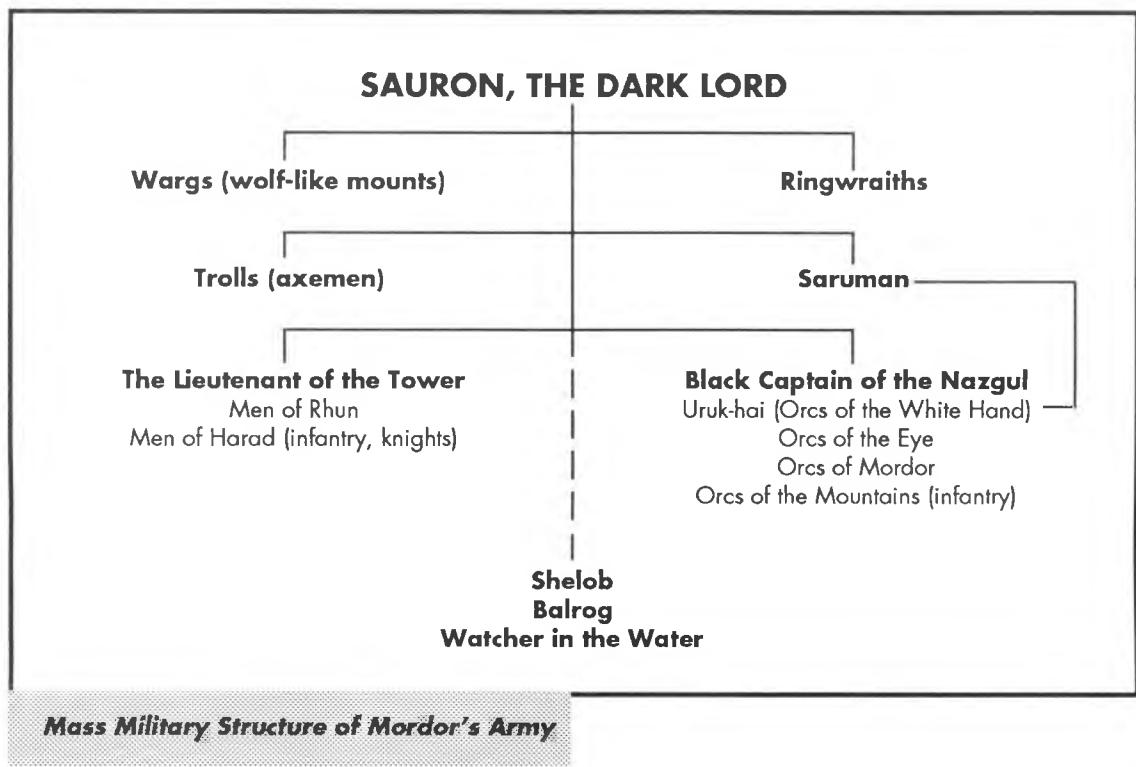
Richard Dahlstrom

King and the Steward. He is the cousin of Denethor, the Steward, and heads an army of one thousand men. He is one of the Captains of the West. He is a highly intelligent man. He is also a man who fully understands the history of Middle-earth and his particular role in that history. He is a warrior.

Each vassal of the King remains true to his oath. He makes his choice freely, preferring to fight darkness and corruption, rather than suffer slavery in Sauron's factories. Given the Nordic ethos of the Free Peoples of the West (the breaking of an oath is a more terrible crime than murder), most choose the honorable route—to remain true to the king.

Sauron's army is a modern mass military structure with its base solidly on an industrial means of production. However, in contrast to the West, all rule comes from Sauron. All belong to Sauron, yet it is an egalitarian society. All men and beasts are equal; all can rise to leadership as a part of Sauron.

Sauron, the Dark Lord, is a figure of Luciferian darkness and corruption, once a figure of great beauty, now a sunken dark shell. He is a being of great power. However, he has made a terrible mistake in his lust for material objects. He has placed much of his power in a plain gold Ring of Power. It is to regain this Ring that Sauron fights the Free Peoples of the West. His one



fear is that Aragorn or Gandalf will claim the Ring for his own and take his power and Throne from him. He cannot conceive of anyone giving up the Ring for something that cannot be possessed—freedom. He cannot see that his enemies may choose to destroy the Ring—his base of power. Blinded by his lust for power and possessions, Sauron cannot see that free men will sacrifice themselves to free others. It is his one blind spot and one Gandalf and Aragorn use against him and set their great trap. Sauron walks into it. He is destroyed by his own lust. Sauron's world is one of masses, vast industrial strength, and destruction of the environment.

His chief lieutenant is THE BLACK CAPTAIN OF THE NAZGUL, Angmar the Witchking, a Ringwraith, the leader of nine mortal men given minor Rings of power by Sauron. Angmar the Witchking is the servant of Sauron—another face of Sauron. Angmar the Witchking is the traditional enemy of the line of Elendil to which Aragorn belongs. As Chief of the Ringwraiths, he directs the hunt for the Ring. He commands the Orcs of Sauron and the other eight Ringwraiths until his death in battle on the Fields of Pelennor by the sword of Eowyn, niece of Theoden of the Mark, and by the dagger of Merry the Hobbit.

The RINGWRAITHS are nine mortal men who have died, yet live by the will of

Sauron. They act as his hunters, drawn to evil and corruption, dominated by the Ring and commanders of the armies of Orcs, Wargs and Trolls seeking the Ring and fighting Aragorn. They ride on winged steeds—fell beasts and carrion-eaters. They are expressions of Sauron. The armies commanded by the Ringwraiths are composed of the Orcs of the Eye, Orcs of Mordor, Orcs of the Mountains, and are allied with the Orcs of the White Hand (the Uruk-hai). The Orcs of the White Hand are the creations of SARUMAN (the Many-Colored), formerly the White, who has abandoned himself to darkness and corruption. His ORCS OF THE WHITE HAND display an independence from Sauron rare among his followers. They are dominated more by their creator, Saruman, who hopes to become the Dark Lord himself. His Orcs argue with the Orcs of Mordor and on occasion kill one and devour it. They also believe the Free Peoples to be rebels against their true King, the Dark Lord. They lust after blood, flesh, and battle.

The ORCS OF THE EYE are Sauron's personal guards and servants; they are his personal creation. They are tall and strong, well-armed with mass-produced weapons—swords, small round shields, and heavy body armor. These Orcs are the lower level commanders of the platoons, regiments, and other groups within the army of Sauron.

They are the creatures of Sauron.

The ORCS OF MORDOR and the MOUNTAINS are the backbone of Sauron's army. They are short, strong beasts, totally under the control of Sauron. They are draftees into his army, driven from place to place in Sauron's land of industrial waste under the whip of the Orcs of the Eye.

All commanders in the field armies of Sauron, down to the lowly whip-bearer are creatures of the will of Sauron with no will of their own. The most obvious expression of this savage slavery to Sauron is the LIEUTENANT OF THE

TOWER also known as the MOUTH OF SAURON. This man is an appendage of Sauron so enamored with his power and his nature that he has forgotten his own identity, preferring to call himself the "mouth of Sauron". He likes the power of Sauron; he wants to be a slave-owner like Sauron—to torment and dominate men. He was once human and still has a vestige of his humanity left, so that he could enjoy the taste of evil and the intoxication of possession, unlike the Nazgul.

In the armies of Sauron, the Lieutenant of the Tower (a living man) commands the contingents from Harad and Rhun—men known as Easterlings and Southrons by the Free Peoples. These men are brave warriors who believe Sauron to be the rightful King of Middle-earth. They are the traditional enemies of the men of Gondor, Rohan, and Arnor (the Northern kingdom). They are the only allies of Sauron to make a stand in the end as Mordor falls in flames.

All are equal in the armies of Sauron. No one is independent; all are expressions of the will of Sauron. The leaders of the armies are Sauron in different forms. They are leaders of a mass army supported by the weapons of the industrial plant of Sauron. Any member of Sauron's army can become a leader. All he must do is abandon his self-identity and become Sauron. It is a totally egalitarian society. All Orcs, men, and beasts are equal, but not free.

MILITARY ACTION IN LOTR

Military action in LotR is a combination of encirclement and attrition tactics. Typical battles in LotR begin with the encirclement of a military force, weakening of that force by attrition, and then a final frontal charge against the decimated ranks. The only chance of survival a surrounded force had was to break out of the circle and fight its way free. Five separate engagements in LotR shall be analyzed in the following section: namely, the battles of Cormallen, Pelennor Fields, Helm's Deep—the Hornburg, and Isengard, and the skirmish between the kidnapper Orcs of Merry and Pippin and the Rohirrim.

1. The Battle of the Orcs and the Rohirrim

Protagonists—Eomer, the Third Marshal of Rohan, and the Rohirrim

Antagonists—Ugluk and Grishnakh, the Orcs of Mordor and the White Hand

In this battle the men of Rohan drive a trapped party of Orcs along a pre-determined route. All stragglers are killed by mounted bowmen within the ranks of the Rohirrim. By this method a large number of Orcs are killed or disabled; the Orcs flee toward the nearby forest. The riders real-



ize their plans and a party rides ahead to cut them off on a small hillock. The Rohirrim surround the Orcs on the hillock, continually circling throughout the night, occasionally making forays into the camp to kill isolated Orcs. At daybreak, the Riders charge the remaining Orcs (charging over them twice) and kill them. Only a small wedge of Orcs attempts to drive a path to the safety

of the forest. The Riders cut them off, dismount, and kill all the remaining Orcs. Eomer, the Marshal, dismounts and fights Ugluk, the Orc-leader at the edge of the forest. Ugluk dies; victory goes to the Rohirrim.

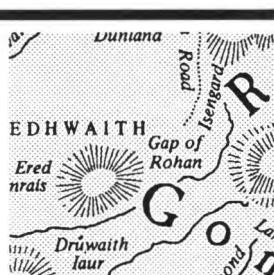
Even the attempt by a small group of Orcs to penetrate the Rohirrim circle to reinforce their comrades fails just before daybreak. The Rohirrim on an even smaller scale surround these Orcs, tighten the circle, charge over the Orcs, dismount and engage in single combat with the survivors. Again, victory goes to the Rohirrim. (LotR, v. II, pp. 70-79)

2. The Battle of Isengard

Protagonists—Fangorn of the Ents, the Ents, and the Huorns

Antagonists—Saruman the Wizard, the Orcs of the White Hand

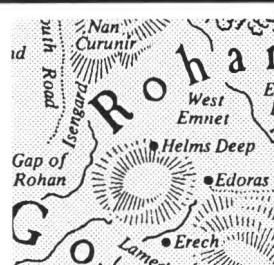
The Ents are roused against Saruman and his Orcs for they have destroyed their charges, the trees. The Ents march on Isengard. They surround the fortress. Then, they root themselves into the very stones of Isengard. They tear the fortress walls apart, huge gaps appear in the walls, the gates



are ripped off their hinges, and the Ents enter Isengard. The angry Ents throw themselves at the tower of Orthanc; but the tower is

ageless and of magical powers: the Ents cannot tear it apart. It is the only structure in Isengard to survive the Ents' attack and victory.

Saruman uses his industrial might against the Ents. In one incident Saruman uses a weapon resembling a flamethrower. One Ent is burned to death in a shooting star of flame from the vents in Isengard. (LotR, v. II, p. 221) It seems to be a liquid fire much like modern napalm. However, the Ents are victorious. Their final act in Isengard is to cleanse the environment of the filth created by Saruman and his factories. (Tolkien, v. II, pp. 80-116, 205-210, 216-230)



the might of Saruman in battle and is victorious. The Orcs of the White Hand cross the borders of Rohan burning all in their way. The people of the borderlands flee to the impregnable fortress of Helm, the Hornburg. There, the advance of the Orcs is stopped

by Theoden, Eomer, and Aragorn. The Hornburg is a citadel surrounded by a Deeping Wall protected by a dike of earthworks built into the side of a canyon. It is considered to be an impregnable fortress with ample killing grounds between the dike, the wall, and the Citadel (that can only be reached by a narrow staircase).

The Orcs encircle the fortress. Many thousands of Orcs spread over the ground and flood over the defenders of the dike. In the midst of a lightning storm, the Rohirrim begin the killing of the Orcs. The Orcs

3. The Battle of Helm's Deep, the Hornburg

Protagonists—Theoden, King of the Mark; Eomer, the Third Marshal of the Mark; Aragorn, the King; Gandalf; Erkenbrand; Hama (killed in the battle); the Rohirrim

Antagonists—Saruman and the Orcs of the White Hand

At the Hornburg in Helm's Deep, Theoden the King of the Mark (Rohan) challenges

have brought a great ram with them. They use it to batter the single weak point of the fortress—the gate. Aragorn and Eomer drive the Orcs from the gate. However, a small culvert under the wall gives the Orcs entry into the ground between the Citadel and the Deeping Wall. They are driven from the fortress in a hard-fought battle. A lull in battle occurs.

Then, a blast is heard. The fire of Orthanc, a blasting fire is used against the wall. A huge hole is ripped in the Deeping Wall.

The Orcs pour through the hole into the killing ground between the walls and the Citadel. The Rohirrim and Aragorn retreat into the Citadel.

However, Theoden prefers to die in the field, not in a fortress. At daybreak the Rohirrim are mustered and prepare for a glorious charge against the Orcs. The horn of Helm blows. The Rohirrim charge down on the Orcs. The Orcs are so stunned by the sound of the Horn and the pounding hooves of the cavalry that they freeze, then run for

the only exit from Helm's Deep.

The Orcs stop at the exit to the canyon. Gandalf and Erkenbrand arrive on the hilltop preventing the Orcs from fleeing. In one direction, Gandalf; in another, the Rohirrim; and in another, a dark forest—a moving forest of Huorns.

The Orcs turn and fight.

Many are killed in battle; others flee into the forest. Victory goes to the Rohirrim, their King, and their allies. (Tolkien, V. II, pp. 160-191)

4. The Battle of Pelennor Fields

Protagonists—Theoden of the Mark; Eomer, the Marshal; Eowyn, niece of Theoden; Rohirrim

Antagonists—the Black Captain (Sauron); forces of Mordor; Harad and Rhun

On the field of Pelennor, the Army of the West commanded by Theoden attempts to break free from the encircling forces of Mordor. Minas Tirith, the capital of Gondor has been besieged by the forces of Sauron. By default, the suicide of Denethor and his apathy, the wounding of Faramir, Theoden of the Mark finds himself leading the forces of the West against Mordor. Theoden divides his cavalry force into three "eoreds": commanding the right, Elphel; to the left, Grimbald; and in the center Eomer and himself. Theoden leads the glorious charge against Mordor himself, far outstripping his followers in his eagerness to battle with the Black Captain. They attack the besieging forces from



the outside (they are reinforcements to Minas Tirith) and break through successfully. A berserker rage takes over the Rohirrim—a lust and joy of battle takes them. They kill Orcs. Nearly the whole field is overrun in the first charge.

Only the men of Harad attack Theoden; the Orcs run. Theoden successfully kills the brave warriors of Harad. It is a war between the serpent of Harad and the white horse of Rohan; Rohan wins. It is Theoden's moment of glory, soon cut short by the Black Captain. Snowmane screams; the Nazgul lands on the horse and Theoden bravely tries to defend himself from the Black Captain, Angmar. He is struck by a poisoned dart and falls dying. Only one brave soldier stands by him—his niece Eowyn. She kills the Nazgul. The tall, dark king of the witches rises from the earth. He

is fell and terrible to look at, but Eowyn strikes at him. He raises his mace and strikes her shield. She staggers in agony and falls to her knees. He raises the mace for the death-blow, when Merry the Hobbit strikes him in the leg. It breaks his will-power binding his flesh to his bones. Eowyn runs him through and he falls on her body. The Rohirrim see their dead King and Eowyn. A berserker rage of immense proportions takes them. They go singing and fury into battle.

The Rohirrim drive the men of Harad from the field, even though faced by *mumakil*, armored elephants. Their horses are frightened by these huge beasts and the charge of the Rohirrim is stopped. Reinforcements arrive for Mordor. All seems lost. Then, on the sea, the ships of the Corsairs are seen, but it is Aragorn returned from the Paths of the Dead with reinforcements. Together Aragorn and Eomer drive the forces of Mordor from the field. No quarter was given by either side. Victory goes to the King, Aragorn and his allies. The King has returned to his people. (LotR, v. III, pp. 135-152)

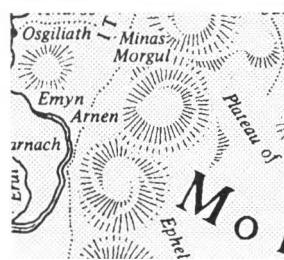
5. The Battle of Cormallen

Protagonists—Aragorn, the King; Gandalf; Faramir (by proxy); Eomer; Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth; The Rohirrim (500); The Army of the West (6500 infantrymen)

Antagonists—Sauron; the Lieutenant of the Tower; men of Harad and Rhun; and the Orcs.

The Battle of Cormallen is the final battle with Sauron, the most dangerous and most sacrificial in nature. Aragorn and Gandalf have deliberately decided to invade Mordor to give the Ringbearer the chance to complete his mission

Aragorn leads his men into the wasteland of Mordor. They halt before the great Black Gate and challenge Sauron. Sauron, through his Lieutenant, offers them their lives—a life of slavery. They reject these



terms. Aragorn and his men make their final stand on two small hillocks before the black slime of Mordor.

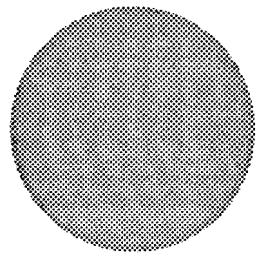
Aragorn and Gandalf, with the standard of the King, stand on one hill with the Dunedain; Eomer and Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, the sons of Elrond, and some of the Dunedain on the other hill. Only the arrival of the Eagles prevents the total destruction of the Army of the West; then in a cataclysmic roar, Mordor falls. Frodo, through the action of Gollum, has had time to complete his mission. Victory goes to the King. (LotR, v. III, pp. 199-208, 278-279)

Again, this battle, like the other battles, analyzed in this article was one of encirclement and attrition. Quarter was never given by combatants.

Mordor must die or the Free Peoples must die. The King must return or Sauron must rule.

The issues were simple; freedom or slavery. Sauron's industrial might—his modern weapons, such as flamethrowers, dynamite (the fire of Orthanc), and other ominous weapons—cannot win against the swords, shields, spears and armor of a free people—the Men, Elves, Dwarves, and Hobbits of Middle-earth.*

[The map of Middle-earth was created by James Cook and is reprinted from *The Dictionary of Imaginary Places*, Alberto Manguel and Gianni Guadalupi, MacMillan, Inc., NY, 1980. Thanx, guys.]



The Haunted Woods

The darkly shadowed forests which cover much of Europe have an eerie mystique about them which has caused them to be regarded for centuries as the dwelling places of supernatural creatures.

by Mark Sunlin
art by Richard Dahlstrom



Trolls, witches, elves, and goblins were until recently just as firmly believed to inhabit these woods as were squirrels, foxes, and deer. Even the trees themselves, such as the mighty oak or the claw-like birch, could seem to come hauntingly to life after dark. Witches were rumored to have transformed themselves into certain alder trees which grew at bizarre, distorted angles, and, when cut, oozed a bright orange sap which resembled nothing less than blood. No region so majestically invokes this haunting atmosphere as does the Black Forest of Germany, its very name conjuring up images of a woodland haunted by dwarfs, witches, and goblins. To fully understand the beliefs in these creatures we must understand something of the environment in which they lived—or were thought to have lived.

In today's modern life, where all but the most remote roads are illuminated at night by powerful street lamps, and where the rumble of traffic—often annoying, but at the same time socially comforting—is an ever-present background noise, it may be difficult to imagine what life was truly like in, say, the dark, quiet Norwegian woods prior to the 20th century. Here there were

only isolated country houses with no electricity, no paved roads, no telephones or television, and in the evening, beyond the eerie half-light provided by flickering candles or kerosene lamps, utter darkness. Under such highly suggestive conditions the imagination could only too easily be led to believe that innocent rustles coming from the dark woods beyond the cabin door were nothing less than the footsteps of three-headed, club-wielding, man-eating trolls.

In those days the forests held a real potential terror for the country folk, for they had no newspapers, books, or other means of helping them separate the natural from the supernatural, and so to them there was no difference. A shepherd or farmer living in the forested Dovre mountains of Norway in the 1800s might never have actually seen either a bear or a troll himself, but he might have heard tales from others who claimed to have seen them, and so, with no reason to doubt this, the troll became just as real to him as the bear. Consequently, as evening's darkness fell, he would, as Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen put it, "fasten the door against troll-folk; shut out all the cantankerous little hobgoblins. They come with the darkness, they knock and rattle!"

GNOMES

In Norway today there exists a wooden statue believed to have been carved some 2,000 years ago which depicts a six-inch-tall dwarflike man wearing a very long beard and a tall, pointed cap. On the base upon which he is standing appear the words

NISSE

Riktig Størrelse

Or in English:

GNOME

Actual Height

Gnomes were the nearest folklore equivalent to Tolkien's fictional hobbits. Like hobbits, they were regarded as benign little folk living in burrows at the base of old trees where they made themselves as comfortable as possible—much like Tolkien himself, it has been noted, at least in this later respect ("I am in fact a hobbit," he once declared, "in all but size. I like gardens and trees; I smoke a pipe and like good plain food"). Gnomes were also considered to be guardians of the woodland animals.

Although gnomes resembled dwarfs, there were ways of distinguishing the two: First, your average six-inch gnome would reach only to about the kneecap of a three-foot-tall dwarf. Gnomes were also considered more domestic in habitat, dwelling in nearby woodlands while dwarfs resided among the distant mountain peaks. The most distinguishing feature, though, was the gnomes' tall, red, pointed cap. Speculation had it that this cap either rendered the gnomes invisible or served to deflect falling branches which could brain a woodland creature as small as a gnome. One very early description of a gnome from the Netherlands, recorded as an actual sighting over 1,000 years ago, gave the following eyewitness account:

"Today I saw a miniature person with mine own eyes. He wore a red cap and blue shirt. He had a white beard and green pants. He said that he had lived in this land for 20 years. He spoke our language, mixed with strange words. Since then I have spoken with the little man many times. He said he was descended of a race called *Kuwalden*, a word unknown to us, and that there were only a few of them in the world. He liked to drink milk. Time and time again I saw him cure sick animals in the meadows."

DWARFS

Legend had it that amidst the isolated mountain ranges of Switzerland and Germany there lived a supernatural race called *Dwergen*, or in English, "Dwarfs." As agile as mountain goats, "they scamper over moss and fell, and are not exhausted by climbing steep precipices," wrote Jacob Grimm in his scholarly 1835 *Teutonic Mythology*. Suitably then, one 19th-century Swiss described a particularly rugged mountainous slopes as being "enough climbing for wild dwarfs."

Clad in long, grey beards, and often rustically covered with moss, the shaggy Dwarfs were regarded as being quite the easy-going sort, forming social communities in picturesque mountain valleys where, as miners, they piled treasures of gold and silver from the land. Walt Disney's 1937 film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was true to these legends in that it was adapted from an original German folk tale which had been related to the Brothers Grimm by a grandmotherly friend named Marie around the year 1810. In *Teutonic Mythology*, Jacob Grimm offered a descrip-

tion of dwarfs as drawn from true folklore beliefs:

"The dwarf is already grown up in the third year of his life, and a greybeard in the seventh. They attain the stature of a four-year's child. They have much knowledge of occult healing virtues of plants and stones. Dwarfs, because they are honest and feed on simple foods, and are more intimately acquainted with the secret powers of nature, live long and healthy lives."

Although dwarfs were rumored to occasionally kidnap human females as wives, it was not otherwise their way to trouble human-folk—that was something left to the likes of trolls, goblins, and witches. Instead, dwarfs were the stuff of which more benign legends were made. The image of a benevolently small race living a Shangri-La sort of existence among the distant picturesque mountains surrounded by treasures of silver and gold has rather a wistful tone of longing about it, and must have been especially appealing in the often dangerous and hand-to-mouth existence of past times.



Today the word *gnome* survives distinctively in the "gnomic verse" of poetry—stanzas comprised of wise sayings or proverbs.

GOBLINS

If any of the supernatural creatures calls to mind the word "grotesque" it is the goblins. Whereas dwarfs and gnomes represented something of the benevolent side of life, goblins were just the opposite: hideously ugly little monsters who were blamed for much of the troubles which vexed everyday life in the European countryside: they caused milk to go sour, tangled horses' manes, were responsible for bumping sounds at night which woke you from a sound sleep, and hauntingly drew smoke from outdoor fires into your eyes no matter where you stood. Appropriately, the word goblin is derived from the Greek *kobalos*, or "rogue."

The roguish goblins were said to come out primarily at night, so you weren't likely to actually see them. But everyone knew they were there just the same, if only by their hijinks: things that went bump in the night were a sure sign of goblin activity. Although the goblins themselves were rarely seen, the peasantfolk did sometimes detect mysterious flickering lights dancing about in the forest after dark. These lights were definitely not of human making, and the favored theory throughout Europe was that

they were caused by prankish goblins carrying a candle or lantern. In England such lights were most commonly known as "Will-o'-the-Wisp"—"Will" being the name attached to the goblin believed responsible, and "wisp" referring to the wisp of flame seen issuing from what was taken to be his candle. In Lancashire, England, these lights were known as Jack o' Lantern for similar reasons, while in Denmark they were *lygtemand*, the "light man," and in Germany, *Irrlicht*, or "wandering lights"; in each case it was light-carrying goblins who were thought to be behind the phenomenon. Composer Engelbert Humperdinck even added an encounter with one of these light-carrying goblins to his 1893 opera version of the Grimm's story "Hänsel and Gretel" to emphasize the fear which these siblings felt at being lost in the haunted German woods after dark. Until the early 1960s it was not known for certain what these lights were, and some scientists doubted that they even existed, but it is now known that Will-o'-the-Wisp lights are caused by highly combustible gases rising from swamps and igniting briefly.

In Germany goblins were called *Kobolds* and were often said to haunt mines where they were blamed for the mysterious bumping, creaking noises which echoed through the dark, gloomy tunnels. Back at the surface the miners often discovered that the silver ore which they had so laboriously brought out of the mines was laced

with a strange mineral impurity, and this too was blamed on these goblins. The foreman of the mines, already accustomed to the noisy kobolds knocking about in the dark tunnels, might have looked at the day's haul, spotted the impurity, and hurumphed in annoyance, "*Ein Kobold!*"—a goblin! So strong was the conviction that the kobolds were responsible for this phenomenon that in 1735, when the mystery mineral was officially named, it was dubbed cobalt, as it remains today, after the Kobolds—the German goblins who had placed it in the silver ore. In fact, cobalt, the goblin mineral, is an integral part of vitamin B12, which for this reason is technically known as cobalamin, so it seems there is also a little goblin in us all....

HALLOWEEN

The modern custom of Halloween had its roots in the Druid festival of Samhain, or "Summers End." This was an ancient Thanksgiving holiday which celebrated the autumn harvest with festive decorations of pumpkins and brown leaves such as are used as Halloween door adornments today. But the ancient Druids, and other Europeans after them, also believed that ghosts, witches, fairies, and other such spirits came out to haunt people on this particular day, perhaps being influenced in this by the darkening, increasingly gloomy days of late October. After November first was designated All Saints' Day, the day before became All Hallows Eve, finally becoming shortened to Halloween. But the spirits of the past still haunted the day, for the belief persisted that

"In that thrice hallowed eve,
When ghosts, as cottage maids believe,
Their pebbled haunts permit to leave,
And goblins haunt from fire to fen."

The modern Halloween custom of Trick or Treat, with children dressed as goblins and witches going from house to house to collect candy, has more direct elfin origins, although it was not initially connected with Halloween. Since elves and their kin were liable to menace people and animals at any time, it was thought that resorting to a bit of bribery would be one way of being left in peace. In 19th-century Bavaria, for example, elves were said to find strawberries irresistible; so the shrewd Bavarian farmer, knowing this, would tie a basket of the fruit between his cows' horns before turning them out to graze, thus bribing the elves with a placating treat so that he and

his cows would be left alone. In England bread, porridge, and milk were routinely left out for goblins and elves to similarly pacify them, and since these offerings usually disappeared by morning (eaten perhaps by dogs, cats, foxes or hedgehogs) here was all the more assurance that they met with the approval of the little folk. In time this custom became transformed into the very similar Trick or Treat dealings which take place today with modern suburban goblins on Halloween night.

THE "LITTLE FOLK"

In the year 1878 an Englishman named John Dobson recorded the following account of a most unusual woodland scene at Inkly Wells, Yorkshire:

"All over the water and dipping into it was a lot of little creatures, all dressed in green from head to foot, none of them more than 18 inches high, and making a clatter, and jabber thoroughly unintelligible. They seemed to be taking a bath, only they bathed with all their clothes on. Soon, however, one or two of them began to make off, bounding over the walls like squirrels. Finding they were making ready for decamping, and wanting to have a word with them, he shouted at the top of his voice, 'Hallo there!' Then away the whole tribe went, helter skelter, toppling and tumbling while making a noise not unlike a disturbed nest of young partridges."

These creatures were elves, and along with fairies, leprechauns, and others, were often known collectively by the euphemism of "little folk"—in fact, the word *leprechaun* comes directly from the Old Irish words "small body." Many of the otherwise inexplicable workings of nature were attributed to or blamed on elfin magic or malice in days of old. The delicate lacework of frost which crystallized beautifully on windows and leaves on cold mornings was created by the little folk at night—after all, how else could one account for the sudden appearance of such intricate artwork? And how too could one account for the millions upon millions of individual sparkling droplets of dew which coated the grass on summer mornings? But elves and their kin were pranksters as well as artists; when a whirlwind swept through an Irish wheatfield as the farmers were harvesting grain, causing part of the crop to be lost in the wind, it was written off as "the fairies taking their share." And most people would

be surprised to discover that when they use the term stroke in the medical sense to describe the loss of consciousness resulting from a blocked blood flow to the brain they are using an expression which originated with belief in elfin malice: such sudden, inexplicable collapses and deaths among humans or animals were once attributed to wicked elves who had "struck" these victims down with arrows. Thus when asked the cause of someone's demise in days past the shepherd's reply might have come "Sure'n it were elf stroke!" Numbers of tiny flint arrowheads could even be found lying about the countryside to support to this theory, although today these are attributed to Stone Age hunters.

In the English countryside elves were thought to inhabit hollow trees; and so the wise peasant, knowing all too well the trouble the little folk could cause, would sometimes rap sharply upon the trunks of such trees when passing them in the forest so as to disorient any elves living within and thereby reduce their penchant for harm. Today, like the "elf stroke" theory, we have inherited this custom in the habit of knocking on wood for good luck.

The brightly colored flower known as foxglove was one of many plants believed to have been poisoned by the little folk to keep for themselves. The name foxglove is actually a derivative of the original name "little folks' glove," for elves and fairies were believed to have worn the finger-shaped flower as gloves. Today the powdered leaves of the foxglove are utilized as a heart-stimulating drug called digitalis, which can be quite a deadly poison in improper doses, causing vomiting, collapse, and death. Such an effect befalling those who had eaten the leaves of this bewitching plant in days past certainly helped assure everyone that the little folk had deliberately poisoned the plant in order to prevent humans from stealing its attractive flowers. Rightly or not in their rationale, such folklore did help to underscore the dangers of this and other such plants and to colorfully emphasize which ones were to be avoided, and so the peasantfolk quickly learned through word of mouth to leave the poisonous foxglove severely alone.

The people most able to actually see the elusive little folk tended to be either children or those who has been "touched in the head" by enchantment. But even the average individual could glimpse into the enchanted world by using certain herbs, such as St. John's wort, which were reputed to overcome elfin glamour, or invisibility. When eaten in large amounts of the leaves of this yellow-flowered plant cause a phe-

nomenon which modern pharmacologists call photosensitivity—an increased visual sensitivity to sunlight similar to the effect you may have experienced when coming out of a dark movie theater into the bright sunlight: the world appears to have suddenly and inexplicably gained an alien brightness. Modern veterinary texts note that sheep and cattle who have been nibbling St. John's wort will stand in shady areas and blink, for their world has likewise turned unnaturally bright. This enlightening effect apparently convinced the peasantfolk that St. John's wort was allowing them to see through mortal surroundings and into the enchanted world of elves, fairies, and wood nymphs.

MIDSUMMER

The most haunting time of the year in Old Europe occurred not at Halloween, but rather each June during the annual Midsummer celebrations. Midsummer was, and still is a popular holiday in northern Europe, marking the longest day of the year, on June 24th. But on Midsummer's Eve—the night before Midsummer—witches, goblins, elves, fairies, and other supernatural creatures were rumored to become unusually active and more highly visible than they ordinarily were. Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was based on these beliefs.

Despite the very long hours of daylight in Europe at Midsummer, often stretching until midnight or beyond in Scandinavia, this was a time when a decidedly haunting atmosphere hung heavily in the air. The expression "Midsummer madness" has proverb status in England, while "to have but a mile to Midsummer" likewise describes someone as being a bit off-key—apt reflections of the mystique of Midsummer.

St. John's wort, the yellow-flowered herb which was reputed to reveal the presence of elves and witches, was highly connected with Midsummer celebrations; in fact, Midsummer is also known as St. John's Day. In his 1889 book *The Folk-Lore of Plants*, English botanist Thomas Thiselton-Dyer reported that according to the beliefs of his day "St. John's wort is in great request, and is extensively worn in Germany on Midsummer's Eve, a time when not only witches people the air, but evil spirits wander about on no friendly errand." The mystic plant was valued, he noted, for "scaring away the workers of darkness by bringing their hidden deeds to light." As such, the traditional crown of seven wild flowers worn by Nordic girls during Midsummer

celebrations often contained St. John's wort, for not only did this forewarn them of evil spirits, but for good measure it was also believed to allow them to see their future husbands.

When you consider it, it might seem rather puzzling that all these supernatural goings-on should come to be associated with Midsummer, a time of year when the weather is at its mildest, the days at their longest, and the plants and trees in full glorious bloom. One would expect such enchanted imagery to be conveyed later in the year, say around Halloween, when the receding sun, gloomy weather, and dying leaves help set the stage more suitably for hauntings. But then again, perhaps those long summer days actually helped Midsummer's Eve gain its enchanted status. In northern Europe the twilight of dusk lingers for a very long time at Midsummer—for hours, actually, before the sun finally goes down around midnight. To those who were up and about at such a late hour this dusky twilight would cast a decidedly haunting, otherworldly atmosphere over the land—an atmosphere made all the more haunting by the fact that most people would be only half awake at such a late hour. Perhaps it is not so surprising after all that witches and goblins were often sighted on Midsummer's Eve.



MUSHROOMS

Mushrooms possessed a number of traits which seemed to connect them with the elfin world. To begin with, after a good rain the woods would virtually explode overnight with new mushrooms where the day before there had been none. Knowing only too well how long it took to coax a crop of barley grain into existence, the peasantfolk were quick to attribute this uncannily rapid growth to the magic gardening habits of elves, "whose pastime is to make midnight mushrooms," as even Shakespeare noted. As an additional otherworldly trait, certain mushrooms, such as the appropriately named *Pleurotus lamaps*, actually glowed like lamps in the dark, giving off an eerie greenish or yellow hue. And so, many mushrooms came to bear names associated with the hidden world of elflore: "elf's cap," "pixy stool," "Jack o' Lantern, mushroom," "fetid wood witch," and the related woodland fungus called "fairy butter," believed to have been made by elves "from the roots of old trees."

One of the more distinctively mystic properties of mushrooms is that they can sometimes be found to have grown in a most uncanny circular formation resembling a botanical Stonehenge—that is, as though they

had been cultivated in the form of a ring-shaped corral. The appearance of this well-ordered geometrical growth has such a "tended" look to it that even today one might almost be inclined to suspect a supernatural hand behind it. The European peasantfolk of yesteryear were less hesitant about doing so: to them these rings marked nothing less than the paths of fairies who had danced at such locales at night, thus earning them the exotic name of "fairy ring," by which the phenomenon is still known to this day. And after that connection had been made, there was no end to their mystique: in 1889, English botanist Thisel-

Dyer remarked that "At the present day, the peasant asserts that no sheep or cattle will browse on these mystic patches, a natural instinct warning them of their peculiar origin."

In reality, however, as Thiselton-Dyer himself knew in the 19th century, fairy rings are created by the net-like roots of mushrooms spreading outward in a circular pattern, with new mushrooms sprouting up only at the outer perimeter of the circle. But it is significant to note that the fairy ring phenomenon occurs *only* in undisturbed regions; modern lawn mowers cut mushrooms down before they have a chance to form into fairy rings, while in days of old it was sheep, goats, and cattle who did the same thing, thereby effectively preventing the formation of fairy rings in populated regions. And so it was only in untrodden, out-of-the-way places that one was likely to come across these mystic mushroom rings. Of course, this only served to heighten their mystique and confirm the suspicion that they had been cultivated supernaturally, rather than by the hand of Man.

Since elves were known to have poisoned certain plants to keep them for themselves, it seemed appropriate that some mushrooms (the "toadstools") should be poisonous or, even more mystifyingly, cause bizarre behavior or hallucinations if eaten. The fly agaric mushroom of fairy tale illustrations, with its bright red cap sprinkled with white specks, is certainly the most vivid example of this. It has been claimed that Vikings deliberately ate these mushrooms in order to gain the fighting frenzy known as *berserk* when they were out pillaging villages. One modern botanist reports that after eating such mushrooms "brilliant colors and changing scenes are visualized...colors intensify, often forming dream-like shapes that rapidly appear and disappear." Recently, a modern pagan group in Wales had a deliberate taste of what their ancestors might have experienced after nibbling the elves' mushroom—the fly agaric. In a potentially dangerous (and not recommended) experiment, they gathered together around a campfire one evening and began eating these mushrooms. Soon afterwards, some of the group saw—or thought they saw—five small figures sitting in the nearby grass illuminated by the flickering light of the fire. Others heard the music of pipes, the tinkling of bells, splashing sounds coming from a nearby stream, or "laughter like small children." One can readily imagine the impact something like this might have had on, say, a 19th-century Swedish wood-

cutter who ate some of the elves' forbidden mushrooms after cutting trees down in their forest....



NIXES

The nixes were eerily beautiful water nymphs who might be described as freshwater mermaids without the fishy tails. They were rumored to haunt forest ponds and rivers in Germany, and on sunny days were sometimes seen sitting on the shore or on overhanging tree limbs above such waters combing and arranging their very long blonde hair. Lake Zug, near Lucerne, Switzerland, was said to harbor a veritable kingdom of nixes who came out to dance at harvest festivals, leaving a trail of water droplets which could be traced to the edge of the lake. But like so many of the supernatural forest folk the nixes could also be harmful to humans, for they had a disenchanted reputation for luring men into their watery domain where they would then drown. However, it is not clear whether the nixes were regarded in folklore as being intentionally deadly or merely endowed with what might be called an innocently lethal femininity, but the latter seems more likely the case. ("A haunted cry of the nixes, similar to a death cry, is said to serve as an omen of a drowning," wrote Jacob Grimm in his *Teutonic Mythology*.) Either way, one particularly winsome nixe known as Lorelei became legendary throughout Germany for her drownings. It was said that she dwelled in the Rhine river near a castle-like cliff which became known as the Rock of Lorelei, and that from there, over the course of many centuries, she charmed

many a boatman to his doom as he attempted to navigate her river bend. Today a signal tower stands upon these rocks to alert oncoming boats, not to the danger of nixes, but instead to the erratic currents in the region, as in a manner of speaking the legend of Lorelei did in former times.

Certain natural objects native to forest ponds were associated with the nixes. In Germany, as well as in Sweden and Denmark, the aquatic water lily, with its heart-shaped leaves capped with showy flowers floating languidly and seductively on the surface

of ponds, was called "nixe bloom."

In Sweden, the tufa stone, a porous, crumbly rock which forms near springs and streams, was dubbed "nixe's bread." But the nixes' lethal side also came to light in an association with the poisonous root of the beautiful but deadly water hemlock, known in Sweden as "nixe root."

TROLLS

More than any other of the supernatural woodland creatures it was the fearsome man-eating giants known as trolls who were the epitome of the haunting forest gloom. "Trolls were strange, misshapen creatures related to both giants and dwarfs," relates Roger Lancelyn Green in his *Myths of the Norsemen*; "they lived wild, savage lives, delighting in dirt and evil smells." Trolls were reputed to dwell throughout Scandinavia, but especially in the dark pine and spruce forests of Norway—the ideal breeding grounds for monsters. Suitably, trolls were said to hate daylight and to choose as their homes the dark, foreboding caves which exist in remote corners of the mountainous woods. Formed by natural gaps between giant slabs of moss-covered rock, there are no more ominous sites in all the forest than such primeval caves, and to come across one deep

within a silent evergreen forest even today—especially in dark, threatening weather, or just before sunset—is still an unsettling experience. Nothing, it seems, would be less surprising than to see a troll emerge from one of these woodland caves.

There was some disagreement in folklore as to the size of trolls, some making them out as dwarf-size, others of mortal human-size, while still others asserted that they were giant-size. Jacob Grimm asserted that "the troll is both monster and giant." Apparently, like many things, this depended largely upon the observer. One thing everyone agreed on was that trolls were particularly to be feared because of their reputation for roasting and eating humans. They were not much to look at either, being, as one Norwegian emphasized, "very ugly, except to other trolls." In fact, if one ugly head was not enough, trolls were often reputed to come in the two- or three-headed form, although in Henrik Ibsen's 1867 play *Peer Gynt*, which was based on Norwegian folklore surrounding a character named Peer Gynt, the king of the trolls laments that "Three-headed trolls are going clean out of fashion; one hardly sees even a two-header now, and even those heads are but so-so ones." A particularly frightening segment of the troll family were the nine-headed trolls, called *negenkopp* (*negen* meaning "nine," and *kopp* meaning "head"). Today the fearsome *negenkopp* still lurk behind the origin of the word "nincompoop."



WATER SPIRITS

The woodland lakes and rivers of northern Europe were said to be haunted by water spirits, some of whom were even known as individuals. While some of these spirits were quite harmless, most were noted for their disreputable habit of drowning people. Boatmen or others who met with foul weather or rough currents were often assumed or have been taken by such spirits, as were children who may have fatally fallen into the water when playing. Such accidents were more common in past times than they are today, not only because people were closer to the land, but also because back then few people ever learned how to swim in chilly Europe, so a simple fall into a lake or river could easily prove fatal. The lakes, rivers, and ponds did therefore hold a very real danger, so much so that parents would sometimes deliberately invent water demons to safeguard their children by scaring them a safe distance from the treacherous water's edge. Jenny Greenteeth was one of such "nursery bogies," as these haunted babysitters were called in England. Parents warned their offspring that ugly, bile-green Jenny would surely rise from beneath the depths to snatch anyone coming near her watery haunt, sink her green fangs into them, and then pull them beneath the surface to drown. No doubt this was highly effective, as we can well imagine. In 1895, Scottish author Michael Denham recalled his own childhood fears of a similar water spirit named Peg Powler:

"Peg Powler is the evil goddess of the Tess, and many are the tales still told at Piersbridge of her dragging naughty children into its dark waters when playing. The writer still perfectly recalls being dreadfully alarmed in the days of his childhood lest, more particularly when he chanced to be alone, she should issue from the stream and snatch him into her watery chambers."

It is easy to see that these nursery bogies—or the belief in them—would have been as effective as any babysitter in instilling obedience. At times the parent had only to use the threat of such creatures to bring a child to order, such as one Scottish mother warned her offspring: "If tha doesn't leave off shrieckn' I'll fetch a black bogie to tha!" Such tales of water spirits, nurtured in susceptible imaginations during childhood, undoubtedly lingered on in many cases into adulthood, helping to foster the belief among many that such creatures did

actually exist. In fact, they have even lingered on to this day in a manner of speaking, for it is from the nursery bogies that we have inherited the familiar childhood threat "the bogeyman will get if you don't watch out!"

WITCHES

Katherine Briggs, a professor of literature at Oxford, recorded a particularly vivid description of a witch named Black Annie from an inhabitant of the 20th-century English countryside:

"She was ever so tall and had a blue face and long white teeth and she ate people. She only went out when it was dark. When Black Annie howled you could hear her five miles away, and then even the poor folks in the huts fastened skins across the windows and put witch-herbs about it to keep her way."

As the most human of the supernatural creatures, witches were once dreaded throughout Europe; for one thing you never really knew who among the population might turn out to be a witch. Because of this, anti-witchcraft charms, such as the wood of the rowan tree, were much in vogue. "No tree," wrote botanist Thomas Thiselton-Dyer of the rowan in 1889 England, "holds such a prominent place in the witchcraft-lore... even the smallest twig renders their actions impotent."

A most vivid example of this belief, and of the belief in witchcraft in general, came from a lady in Yorkshire, England, as related by William Henderson in his 1879 *Folklore of Northern Counties*:

"A woman was lately in my shop, and in pulling out her purse brought out a piece of stick a few inches long. I asked her why she carried that in her pocket. 'Oh,' she replied, 'I must not lose that or I shall be done for.' 'Why so?' I inquired. 'Well,' she answered, 'I carry that to keep off the witches; while I have that about me they cannot hurt me.'

On my adding that there were no witches nowadays she replied, 'Oh yes! There are 13 at this time in town, but as long as I have my rowan tree safe in my pocket they cannot hurt me!'

It was due to their evil spells that witches were so feared. The term "hag-ridden," as applied to a run-down appearance, actually originates back to such beliefs in witchcraft, for it was once believed that victims of tuberculosis (or "consumption," as it was then called) owed their condition to having been turned into horses at night by witches—or "hags"—who had then ridden them to exhaustion—hence the illness was



attributed to their having been "hag-ridden."

At certain times of the year witches were reputed to flock together like bats, soaring through the air on their broomsticks around the peaks of mountains. Many of these mountains gained a certain notoriety because of this, and in his 1835 *Teutonic Mythology* Jacob Grimm noted that "the fame of such witch mountains extends over wide regions." In particular he may have been thinking of 3,747-foot Mount Brocken, which rises like a bare pyramid among the Harz mountains of central Germany near the region where the Brothers Grimm were raised and gathered their famous folk tales. Here on the night of April 30th each year—*Walpurgisnacht*, as it is called to this day—legend had it that the witches who had been roaming throughout Germany during the long winter months gathered together for one final terrifying rendezvous at the mountain top. Covering themselves with an occult ointment of fat, opium, and hemlock, they went into a trance and then flew about the barren mountain peak on their

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SAM MOSKOWITZ

THE FABULOUS MYSTERY INDEX



Mystery, Detective, and Espionage Fiction: A Checklist of Fiction in U.S. Pulp Magazines, 1915-1974. Compiled by Michael L. Cook and Stephen T. Miller in 2 volumes, 1183 pages, \$100.00. Published by Garland Publishing, Inc., 136 Madison Avenue, N.Y., NY 10016.

This is a reference that any knowledgeable collector, in which category I classify myself, would have asserted was literally impossible to assemble. Certainly, a bibliography of a specific detective fiction magazine such as STREET & SMITH'S DETECTIVE STORY or DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, as formidable as such a task would have been, was practical, but certainly not all pulp detective magazines. Only the western pulps could conceivably be more numerous or have more titles. True, Michael Cook in his bibliography of *digest* detective and mystery magazines

(*Monthly Murders*, Greenwood Press, 1982), minus some issue gaps here and there, fundamentally accomplished his purpose of "A Checklist and Chronological Listing of Fiction in the Digest-Size Mystery Magazines in the United States and England," but the earliest digest-size detective magazines began to appear in the thirties, peaked in the fifties, were compact if someone wished to save them and were not caught up, for the most part, in patriotic paper drives during World War II which in a few years turned pulps from a common to an uncommon sight on the second-hand market.

While certain detective and mystery pulps have been collected, the situation is not comparable to science fiction where hoarding old issues seemed to be a genetic trait among its readers and if a determined researcher worked hard enough he could always find the tough issues somewhere. Further, they had never been as numerous

across the years as detective magazines (despite the flood in the early fifties).

Historically the detective story was important because its writers could be found in the general adventure magazines, popular slicks, love story pulps, westerns, science fiction, supernatural and horror publications, as well as mystery magazines. There was an overlapping into other genres. As a specialist in science fiction, fantasy, and horror, I found it desirable to assemble thousands of detective and mystery pulps to obtain a more accurate perspective on my primary fields of interest, science and fantasy fiction.

For example, the first active Canadian science fiction fan, Nils H. Frome, never forgot a story that he read before he was a participant in the field. In an article he wrote for GOLDEN ATOM, March, 1940, titled "But Stars Still Shine!" he said: "The strangest story I ever read, the most off-trail story, is one that was published years ago in the long since defunct MYSTERY, entitled "The Man in the Mirror." I don't know yet what it was all about; as near as I can make out: a girl, at a party, sees a man in the mirror as she is putting on makeup. He apologizes, and goes out. They meet later and she falls in love with him. Later they are invited to a party, and again she glimpses him in the same mirror while putting on makeup. Like before, he apologizes and leaves. If I was seeing it in a movie I would say this is where I came in. After that, the man in the mirror is never seen again."

I had tracked down all other stories that Frome mentioned in that article and I owned a complete file of MYSTERY MAGAZINE, which was the second genre magazine in its field, a semi-monthly launched with the issue of November 15, 1917 and terminating in 1929. That magazine specialized in running occult and off-beat mystery stories, but I couldn't find it there. I did have several issues of a letter-sized slick-paper magazine titled MYSTERY, published along with others for distribution through the Woolworth five and ten cent stores in the early thirties. I suspected it had to be there but not until the issuance of the Cook/Miller index was I able to find it, thanks to the fact that they offer a chronological story-by-story issue-by-issue index of all the magazines they list, because I did not know the name of the author. Frome had remembered the title correctly, but not the author, who was Louis Golding, and the issue, April, 1934. Golding had written at least one fantasy novel, *The Miracle Boy*, 1927, which made his writing of an off-beat story like "The

"Man in the Mirror" credible, though his main credits were detective novels beginning with *Luigi of Cantanzaro*, 1926, and ending with *The Frightening Talent* from Archer in 1973, published posthumously since he died in 1958; he was a British writer because most of his books first appeared in England.

Most bibliographies will give you an index by title and author but not, as in the case of magazines, by date. That eliminates one of the most useful bibliographical listings, and the type of listing that makes fascinating reference just to read along and determine the progress of the magazine and the caliber of the contributors.

Naturally one expects to find here all the pulp magazines that are obviously straight detective or mystery, but there are some inclusions that make the index valuable to those who collect other genres. For example, there are complete indices to HORROR STORIES, TERROR TALES, EERIE STORIES, EERIE MYSTERIES, TALES OF MAGIC AND MYSTERY, UNCANNY STORIES, UNCANNY TALES and others of similar stripe, most of which are not indexed elsewhere. The hero character pulps like DOC SAVAGE, THE SHADOW, THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE, THE WIZARD, BILL BARNES AIR ADVENTURER, THE AVENGER, DUSTY AYRES AND HIS BATTLE BIRDS, CAPTAIN SATAN, DR. YEN SIN, and G-8 AND HIS BATTLE ACES are also listed.

There are other titles which one would not ordinarily expect to be included in a bibliography of detective stories, but which ran enough such to make inclusion useful. These include DARE DEVIL ACES, DON WINSLOW OF THE NAVY, FIRE FIGHTERS, GOLDEN FLEECE, JUNGLE STORIES, THE LONE EAGLE, MIND MAGIC, MYSTERIOUS WU FANG, NEWSPAPER ADVENTURE STORIES, SAUCY MOVIE TALES, SOLDIER STORIES, STORIES OF SHEENA, TROPICAL ADVENTURES, and ZEPPELIN STORIES.

When you add these to all the known pulp detective story magazines, you get a very wonderful bibliography indeed—one that is a pleasure to browse through, because there is much to be learned.

For example, *West India Lights* is the title of Henry S. Whitehead's Arkham House book. One would expect that story to have originally appeared in WEIRD TALES or another specialist supernatural magazine. Not so, it was in MYSTERY MAGAZINE for April, 1927; and the same issue's cover was the title story of a volume of delicate Chinese fantasies, *Pale Pink Porcelain* by Frank Owen, another WEIRD

TALES regular. An interesting fact about this magazine is that the first 172 issues were edited by Lou Senarens who wrote the Frank Reade, Jr., and Jack Wright dime novel series under the pen name of "Noname."

We also learn the first generic pulp detective magazine was published by Street & Smith under the title of DETECTIVE STORY MAGAZINE, Volume 1, No. 1 dated October 5, 1915. The serial *The Yellow Label* by Nick Carter started with Part 2. The answer to the mystery was that the pulp magazine was converted from a "dime" novel and Part 1 ran there. A similar conversion occurred when Street & Smith's WESTERN STORY magazine, the first generic western pulp was converted from a dime novel featuring Buffalo Bill.

The Solar Pons pastiches of August Derleth started with "The Adventure of the Black Narcissus" in THE DRAGNET MAGAZINE for February, 1929. What is more interesting is a letter by H.P. Lovecraft in a subsequent issue praising the editor's acumen in selecting a story by so capable an author. Readers of the early WONDER STORIES and AMAZING STORIES who still wonder at the origin of such authors as Edwin V. Burkholder, Joe W. Skidmore, and Kennie McDowd would probably be surprised to find them in 1929 issues of THE DRAGNET along with August Derleth. They might be even more surprised to find the best-selling author Irving Stone settling for whatever the rate of pay was for publication at that time (certainly not over one cent a word). It also was historically interesting to find a story by Eugene Clancy, who was one of the co-editors of the legendary THRILL BOOK MAGAZINE, but less puzzling when it is realized that Harold Hersey, his companion editor, was the publisher!

Followers of Seabury Quinn might be curious to find what sort of stories he was writing for REAL DETECTIVE TALES & MYSTERY STORIES, DETECTIVE CLASSICS, and JUNGLE TALES.

This is not to say that the work is perfect. I have a very substantial pulp detective collection. It is scarcely likely to be in a class with those who specialize in that area, but there are issue gaps that I could have filled in if asked, since one of the editors, Steve Miller, did visit me towards the end of the project. One major mix-up occurs with MYSTERY MAGAZINE. The editors have it running from Nov. 15, 1917 to August, 1927 for 197 issues under the aegis of Henry E. Wolff, publisher. Actually, it disbanded under him with issue 172 dated January 15, 1925, then started up

with No. 173 one year later with the issue of January 15, 1926, as MYSTERY MAGAZINE Co., headed by Louis F. Wilzin. It ran as a semi-monthly to issue 184 dated July 1, 1926. It suspended for August and September, 1926, issues and resumed as the Priscilla Corp. with the issue of October, 1926, now a monthly, and ran for 10 more issues changing its name to MYSTERY STORIES with August, 1927. It ran monthly to May, 1929, for a total of 216 issues. It was, during the period from 173 on, under the editorship of Robert Simpson (a fine storyteller from the Frank A. Munsey ALL STORY MAGAZINE era), one of the most literate and intelligent mystery pulps ever published, with marvelous cover art. It had a stated policy of running at least one occult story every issue—sometimes several. It had a long novelette by Dashiell Hammett and ran science fiction by Ray Cummings and Murray Leinster. An immensely collectable pulp.

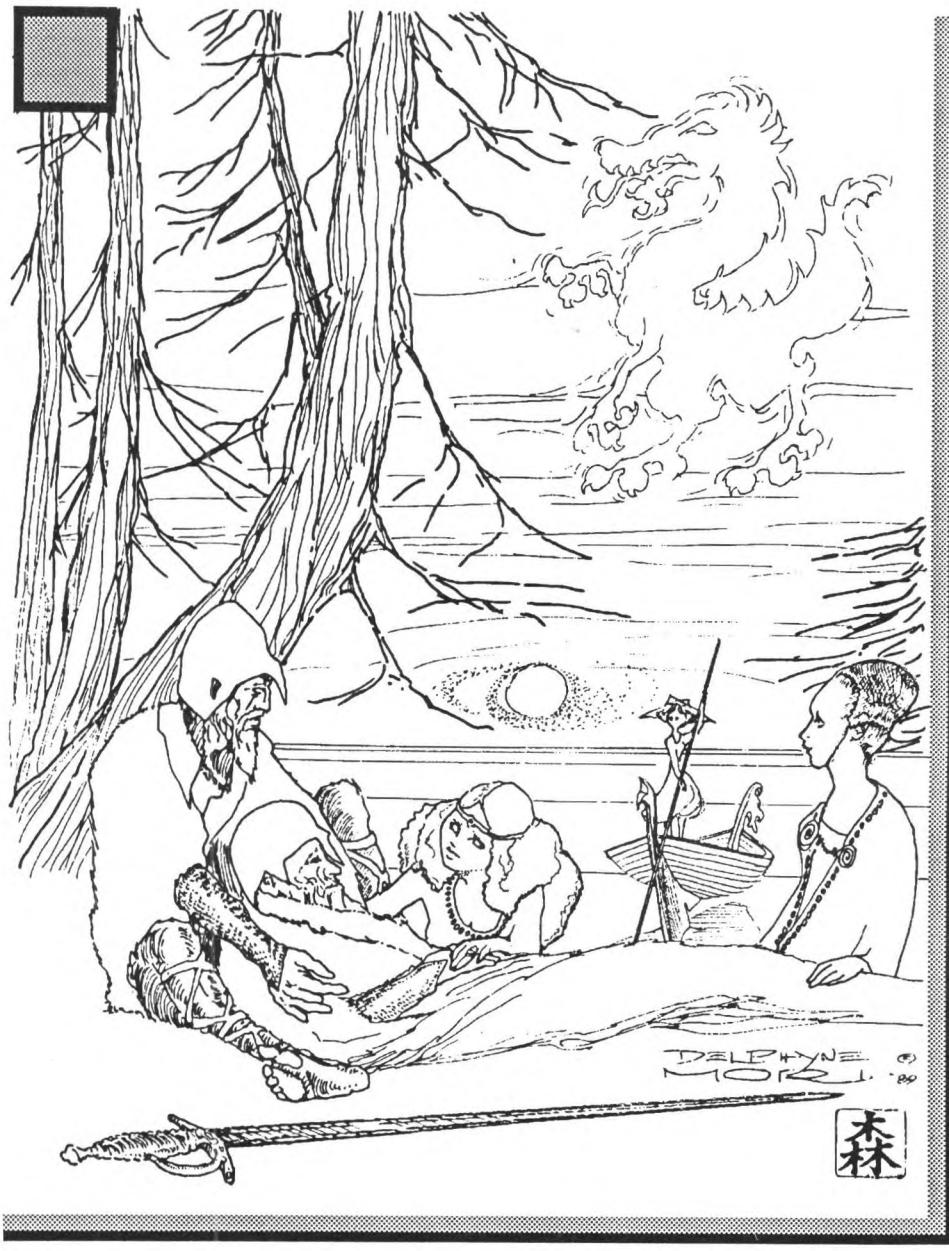
The type is far too small and difficult to read in this bibliography. I needed a magnifying glass to go through it. This might have been corrected with a different layout that did not leave a quarter blank at the bottom of each page. There is not a separate story index.

On the further plus side is an appendix which summarizes the publication data of all the magazines listed and this is extremely useful.

In total, this is a pioneering reference, good and comprehensive beyond hope. In the introduction, the compilers state they were advised not to attempt it. That was excellent advice and I would have told them the same. I am grateful they did not take it. The price seems high, but if it were published in segments, few would have hesitated to pay \$20 a volume for five or more volumes and would have thought they were getting off easy. Long after the collector forgets the cost, he or she will be still enjoying the contents. For libraries, it can be said that nothing else like it exists in the world. It is unique. Access to this material will mean ever greater use made of the material in the pulp magazines otherwise entombed in time for lack of a responsible guide to what exists there.

The editors are to be congratulated.*

[Since this review was written, one editor, Michael Cook, who has many fine bibliographical works of popular fiction to his credit, has succumbed to a heart attack and is no longer among us. It is safe to say, had he not attempted his mystery bibliographies, it is doubtful that they would ever have been done by anyone else.]



The Mystery of Avalon

At the end of the great legend of King Arthur, the last great warrior monarch of Romano-Celtic Britain is mortally wounded in the battle of Camlan. Mysterious women arrive on the battlefield as the sun is setting and take him to their magic ship. The king's surviving followers, led by Sir Bedevere, who has been given custody of the mighty sacred sword, Excalibur, watch as their stricken ruler is taken away. The sun sinks into the darkening ocean as the supernatural ship speeds into the night. But there is hope, for all are told that King Arthur will be taken to the mystic isle of Avalon somewhere far off in the remote west. The heirs of King Arthur's followers fight the Saxon invaders, knowing that one day, in their lifetime or in some distant future age, the last hero of ancient Britain will return when his land calls him in the hour of greatest need.

by Jon Douglas Singer
art by Joan Hanke-Woods

This is the climactic scene in the legend of the death or, one should say, the passing of King Arthur, as described by Sir Thomas Malory and Alfred Lord Tennyson. The question, then, is where was Avalon and did it really exist or was it only a myth? Was Avalon a Dark Age Celtic Valhalla? As I noted in my unpublished manuscript on Welsh mythical places, it appears to have been influenced by, if it did not replace, the apparently older pagan Welsh transmarine paradise of Annwn. Although Annwn was later transferred to a subterranean location and identified with the Christian Hell, it was at first regarded as an overseas land far beyond Ireland. It seems that Avalon was also regarded as a remote, distant country.

The name Avalon is the modern form of the name; in earlier times it was known as Avilion, according to Charles Squire in his classic work, *Celtic Myth and Legend*. The name seems to have been derived from the name of the god Avallon or Avallach, god of the pagan British otherworld. Squire reported that one Scottish legend called Avilion the island valley of Avilion, meaning that it was an isle with a valley on it, presumably a vale between hills or mountains. Avilion was said to be west of Scotland or Ireland. Avilion was also called, in Welsh, Ynys Avallon, the Island of Avallon or Avallon's Island, a sort of Celtic Hades. It was in the Land of Summer, which in turn was another overseas paradise which later came to be erroneously identified with Somerset in England, as I noted in my manuscript on Welsh myths.

An alternate derivation of the name Avalon was suggested by the erudite Scandinavian scholar, Fridtjof Nansen, author of *In Northern Mists*. He learned that one of the islands mentioned by the great Greek explorer Pytheas (c.325 B.C.) was Abalos (in Greek, although the Latin form Abalus is usually used in most texts). The name of this isle resembled that of Avalon, so Nansen thought that it was the source of the Celtic name. However, Abalos was located off the coast of Jutland, just south of Denmark. Abalos was therefore in the North Sea, whereas Avalon was located somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean. Since the dead or mortally wounded heroes or even living, healthy explorers of ancient British sagas who sailed to Avalon are usually thought to have gone west, they must have made a wrong turn or gone all around south England to France and thence to Jutland! That idea is unlikely; so the conclusion is that Nansen's idea, however tempting it might be on purely philological grounds, is surely wrong. There were Celtic

tribes in northwest Germany or Belgium near Jutland, but we do not know their name for the land of the dead.

A third scholar who investigated the tale of Avalon was Arthur Brown, author of *The Origin of the Grail Legend*. He revealed that the tale of Avalon may go back as far as 826 A.D. and that it was in flower by 1113. He thought that it was derived from the ancient pagan Irish tales of the prehistoric battle of Moytura where a god called Nuadu was wounded, as King Arthur was later. The Irish tale was written down in the ninth century and Nennius, who was one of the first to mention Camlan, wrote in 826. But, as I noted that Avalon was probably a later form of the otherworld of Annwn, it could be that Brown is wrong and the two traditions are independent of each other. Furthermore, the battle of Moytura took place 4,000 years ago while the battle of Camlan took place in about 539 A.D.

One of the foremost Arthurian scholars, Geoffrey Ashe, wrote about the legend of Avalon in *Land to the West*. The medieval British scholar Geoffrey of Monmouth wrote a book called the *Life of Merlin* some time between 1100 and 1154. In that work, Avalon was ruled by nine sisters just as the earlier pagan Welsh paradise of Annwn was ruled by nine mystic maidens. That is one of the sources of the descriptions of the weird women who appeared to guide the wounded King Arthur to the distant isle. Ashe added that Avalon was sometimes called the Glass Fort or Ynys Witrin, the Island of Glass. One of those who guided King Arthur to Avalon was a monk named Barinthus, according to Ashe. In the *Life of Merlin* Avalon was located in the remote west far beyond the equally remote and quasi-mythical isles of the Gorgades and the Hesperides which were beyond the west coast of North Africa.

Ashe then revealed a new theory about the location of Avalon. It was not a lost isle far out in the midst of the great ocean but comfortably close to home, at a place on English soil. In fact, it was supposed to be none other than Glastonbury in Somerset! This bizarre location for the lost isle was suggested by C.A. Raleigh Radford, a contributor to *The Quest for Arthur's Britain*, which Ashe edited and wrote a few chapters for. Radford reported that in 1125, William of Malmesbury and later Caradoc of Llancarfan (c.1150) knew that the Celtic name for Avalon was Ynyswitrin, which, other writers assumed, was the Celtic name of Glastonbury! Also, King Arthur was associated with the area because the evil King Melwas kidnapped Guinevere and

took her to his realm, the Summer Region, The Summer Region was associated with Somerset because the Romans called it Aestiva Region and that is Latin for Somerset, which is the modern English form of the old Anglo-Saxon name of the same kingdom. As I said earlier, Avalon was supposed to be located in the Summer Region. But it could not be in Somerset because that Summer Region, which the Welsh called Gwlad yr Hav, was beyond the ocean! Thus a supposedly mythical place was switched to a familiar nearby locale. But although William of Malmesbury knew that Avalon was called Ynyswitrin or Ynys Witrin, as a nickname, he never stated that it was at Glastonbury. That idea evolved later. How?

In 1184 a fire burned down Glastonbury Abbey. In 1191 the monks claimed that they found the tombs of both King Arthur and Queen Guinevere, complete with a Latin inscription identifying the deceased royalty and stating that their resting place was none other than Avalon! There is no proof that such is the case and we have only the monks' word that it is. Skeptical author L. Sprague de Camp was certain that the bones could have been those of King Arthur's Saxon enemies. Nevertheless, since that date, 1191, many scholars have determined that Avalon should be picked up from some unidentified location in the Atlantic Ocean and placed squarely at Glastonbury Abbey. Today there is a plaque, viewed by thousands of tourists and serious investigators, which identifies the tomb at the Abbey. De Camp hinted that the monks may have staged a hoax in order to raise money from pilgrims and nobles. The money helped rebuild the damaged site. Even Radford thought that the inscription on a cross found at "Arthur's Tomb," which named both the legendary ruler and the supposedly mythical isle, might have been real. Yet Glastonbury is not an island. Why do modern scholars think that it could have been Avalon?

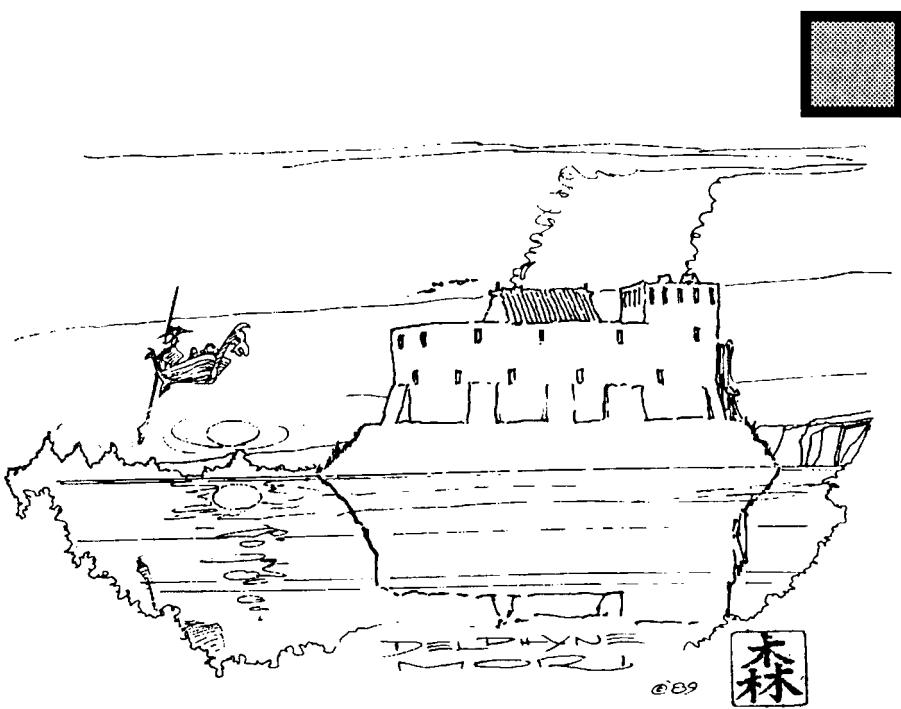
Radford pointed out that while Glastonbury is today on dry land, the nearby hill of Glastonbury Tor was once almost entirely surrounded by marshes. Thus it would have been island-like. Archaeological excavations around Glastonbury have yielded artifacts or other information about cultures in the area which ranged in age and type from megalithic ones (c.4,000 B.C.-1,000 B.C) to pre-Roman Celtic and post-Roman Dark Age examples. Alongside the serious orthodox archaeological work a number of wilder esoteric theories have sprung up recently. These theories

link megalithic sites such as mounds to Celtic druidic cults, Roman or mixed Romano-Celtic cults and supposed Dark Age pagan Celtic surviving cults, Christian sects, pagan or Christian Saxon and medieval beliefs. Ultimately, the earlier cults are in turn linked to modern secret occult societies who attempt to tap into ancient energy patterns somehow left over in the charged atmosphere of the place.

It is inevitable that sooner or later, a number of scholars or authors should attempt to link the lost isle of Avalon with the equally famous lost island of Atlantis. Since that idea has influenced modern beliefs about Avalon, I cannot avoid that hypothesis.

Lewis Spence wrote in *The History of Atlantis* that the tale of Avalon might be derived from the legends of the lost continent. Spence reasoned that many of the Welsh tales of lost lands and sunken cities might have originated in some distant locality and when the Celts migrated to Britain, they transferred their stories to their new home. However, some of their legends of fabulous countries, such as Annwn, the ancient paradise, might refer to transmarine countries like Atlantis. Although some of the fables of lost cities were switched to Welsh locales, folktales of overseas regions like Annwn were not altered. Thus, if Avalon was a Christianized version of Annwn, and if Annwn was some part of Atlantis, then perhaps Avalon was also. Spence compared descriptions of the cities in Annwn to those in Atlantis. Thus, Caer Sidi, a chief city of Annwn, was said to be similar in plan to the capital of Plato's sunken land. Skeptics, of course will say that Welsh monks and bards were simply influenced by Graeco-Roman books on Atlantis or else they borrowed details from Plato's work and translated them into a Welsh milieu and the Welsh language. I also noted in my unpublished manuscript on Welsh mythical places that there is a poem called *The Spoiling of Annwn* which described King Arthur's voyage to that supposedly mythical land.

Spence also noted that Avalon meant, "Isle of Apple Trees," and that is a Celtic translation of the Greek mythical islands called the Hesperides where the sacred apples of the old Greek deities were guarded. The Hesperides were located off northwest Africa, near or at the Canary or Azores Islands. But as nobody has produced hard evidence of such an identification, the Hesperides may have been far beyond those traditional sites. At any rate, the Hesperides were associated with Apollo, Poseidon and the Atlantean corpus of



myths.

Anthony Roberts was another advocate of the "Avalon was in Atlantis" theory. He suggested, in his book *Atlantean Traditions in Ancient Britain*, that the concept of Avalon was derived from the sunken continent and that Atlanteans settled in Britain where they built many of the megaliths. Spence had made a similar suggestion in the 1920's and Roberts repeated that idea in 1977. Unfortunately for Roberts, the megaliths were built not much earlier than 5,000 B.C. whereas Atlantis is said to have sunk around 9,000 B.C. It is not implausible that Atlantean descendants could have built the megalithic sanctuaries long after migrating from their destroyed homeland but there is no irrefutably direct evidence for such a possibility as of this writing.

Roberts claimed that megalithic sites located around Glastonbury were clues to Atlantean colonists' activities in Britain. In the 1920's Mrs. Katherine Maltwood was studying Dr. Sebastian Evans' English translation of the medieval French Arthurian romance *Perlesvaus* when she realized, or at least assumed, that the deeds and tales of the knights of Camelot, as well as their treasures, were symbols of earlier pagan myths. These in turn were astrological symbols representing an ancient zodiac going back to druidical (pre-Roman) and even to Atlantean times!

Maltwood decided that the land of Logres mentioned in *Perlesvaus* was the area around Glastonbury. She studied maps and went on many long field trips, search-

ing for clues to ancient structures. She felt that many canals, called *rhines* in the local dialect, were ancient and they were part of an organized network which formed a giant picture when one drew lines between them as on a child's "follow the dot" drawing puzzle. Beside the rhines there were old paths and trackways, some of which dated back to neolithic times.

Maltwood claimed that between the villages of Charlton Mackrell and Somerton, which are along the Cary River, there was a gigantic horizontal effigy or artificial figure spread out along the plain. This effigy was marked by the Cary River, old trackways, paths and the sides of certain hills. The figure when seen from above as supposed to be a colossal three-mile-long lion. She asserted that it represented the zodiacal sign Leo. If it was Leo, then it was oriented towards other signs in the area. Maltwood continued her surveys and claimed that she found other titanic shapes hidden between forests and below modern field patterns. One was Orion, which she associated with mystical wisdom, and another was a ship effigy located on rhines extending to the Bristol Channel. That ship effigy was supposed to represent the celestial ship of Egyptian myths, which brought the souls of the dead to Amenti, the hidden land of the west. She thought, according to Roberts, that Amenti was Atlantis. Thus the Holy Grail and the Round Table were linked to astrological symbolism and Egyptian myths which presumably went back to an original source—Atlantis. She even compared these effigies to

similar but more readily apparent and more famous earthworks of the Mound Builder tribes of prehistoric North America which can still be seen today, as at Serpent Mound in Ohio. She equated Glastonbury with Avalon because she assumed that that is where Joseph of Arimathea brought the Holy Grail.

Maltwood found ten zodiacal signs as opposed to the traditional twelve. Among those she claimed to have located were Taurus (around Collard Hill in the Glastonbury region), Gemini and Scorpio. Cancer was not found while Scorpio incorporated Libra.

Maltwood then used a Philips Planisphere to check her ground figures with actual constellation outlines. She thought that they matched each other and even individual stars indicated by figures on the ground matched stars charted on the planisphere.

If Maltwood can be believed, she discovered a colossal complex of effigies, spread out over an area with a circumference of thirty miles, and some of the structures are huge. The effigies which are supposed to represent Leo, Pisces and Sagittarius alone are three to four miles long. She then discovered three more effigies at Park Wood at Butleigh. These represented Ursa Major, Ursa Minor and Canis Major. Maltwood even suggested that Park Wood was shaped like the Egyptian Serpent Sun-Crown, as seen from above. However, I have no archaeological proof, as of this writing, for Egyptians in the region, although it is not implausible that the megalith builders may have picked up Egyptian ideas from merchants.

Further evidence of the effigies' antiquity was found when Maltwood read the works of Dr. John Dee, astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I. Dee talked with local monks who knew that the effigies had existed and were formed by the trackways, woods and paths. There was an old legend which, I think, has never been verified by archaeologists: that Joseph of Arimathea founded the original Glastonbury Abbey.

Unfortunately for Maltwood and her followers such as Roberts, nobody has found Egyptian or Atlantean ruins in the area. Geologists and archaeologists deny that there was a sunken continent or island of Atlantis in the Atlantic. There is no direct proof that the Glastonbury Effigies are Atlantean. They could be megalithic but probably have nothing to do with Atlantis. And skeptics may say that the effigies are illusory subjective artifacts, like Rorschach inkblots. The canals and trackways are real, but do they really delineate figures?

The trackways are of different ages and while some do date back to the neolithic era, not all of them do. Also, it is odd that megalith builders would use zodiac signs like those of modern or Greek times. The signs used today, which are discussed by Roberts, go back through Arabic texts to Greek or Roman astrological books and are ultimately derived from Babylonian sources, whose symbolism was somewhat different from that of modern astrology. Needless to say, the names of the signs were different. Was the modern zodiac ultimately derived from Atlantis and then brought to Babylon as some mystics such as Maltwood and Roberts simply? One would have to find proof of Atlantis in order to verify such an idea. So far, there are only reports of sunken cities in the Atlantic, near the Azores and the Canary Islands, as well as in the Cape Verde Islands. These have been discussed by Charles Berlitz in his books *Mysteries from Forgotten Worlds* and *Atlantis—the Eighth Continent* but the reports of the sunken cities have never been verified by a majority of the archaeological community. Even recent Russian claims about their discovery, (c. 1978) of a sunken city near the Azores were disputed when photographs revealed blurry indistinct rocks which could have been rock formations caused by flowing lava from volcanic eruptions. There are other sunken structures scattered around the Bahamas and Bermuda and while I think that some of these might be ancient submerged ruins, most archaeologists still dismiss them as natural rock formations.

We must dismiss Atlantis from the mystery of Avalon, then, for lack of hard evidence. If Mrs. Maltwood did discover bizarre titanic megalithic structures around Glastonbury, there is no direct evidence linking them to Atlantis or Avalon. Also, there is another important fact: Atlantis sank but Avalon never did! We can assume that Avalon was a surviving fragment of Atlantis.

But there appears to be no evidence for such an idea in the legend itself. Then there is the exciting possibility that, if Avalon was not just a myth, perhaps it could be found! Where should we look for it?

We have already dismissed it from the North Sea and Glastonbury. It does not seem to have been in Atlantis. We can go back to the earlier tales and to some later theories for clues. As I stated earlier, the tales of Avalon seem based on the tales of Annwn. In the Dark Ages, in the sixth century A.D., the great Welsh bard Taliesin is said to have composed a weird

poem entitled "The Spoiling of Annwn". King Arthur is mentioned in that poem as leading his warriors on a quest across the sea to Annwn in search of sacred treasures. That tale may have inspired later versions of the Holy Grail epic, except that most of the searches for the Holy Grail take place on land and the raid by King Arthur on Annwn can only take place after an ocean voyage.

I pointed out in my manuscript on Welsh mythical places that some scholars suggested that Welshmen could have reached America in pre-Columbian times. Those theories were summarized in a book by Richard Deacon, *Madoc and the Discovery of America*. Most archaeologists dismiss such a theory but several investigators are continually following up such leads as persistent legends in the Appalachian Mountains, for example, where there are stories of ancient tribes of white-skinned, blond-haired or red-haired and blue-eyed "White Indians." Archaeologists are highly skeptical of these folktales but the rumors remain, as I noted elsewhere. I will discuss one new possible clue to ancient Welsh voyagers on our shores. If that clue is valid, then perhaps Avalon is actually America....

One of those who do not believe in the "Glastonbury is Avalon" equation is Robin Palmer, author of *Demons, Monsters and Abodes of the Dead*, a dictionary of mythical and legendary places. She was skeptical of the discovery of King Arthur's grave at Glastonbury and described the original Avalon as an island. It was pleasant, with apple orchards and plants of all types as well as gardens. That implies a temperate or even a semi-tropical climate. Furthermore, Avalon was ruled by Morgan le Fay and her sisters. They forged Excalibur, which implies that the land had iron and we can suggest that Celts had colonized the area in antiquity. Perhaps some Celts had fled Britain during the Roman conquest or pagan Britons who remained faithful to the old gods could have fled their home to America during the conversion of the British Isles in the third through the sixth centuries. In any case, an exotic location beyond Ireland, which was known to the British, is inferred. Since there are no large inhabited islands in the Atlantic west of Ireland, it is not implausible that Morgan le Fay's domain could have been on our coast.

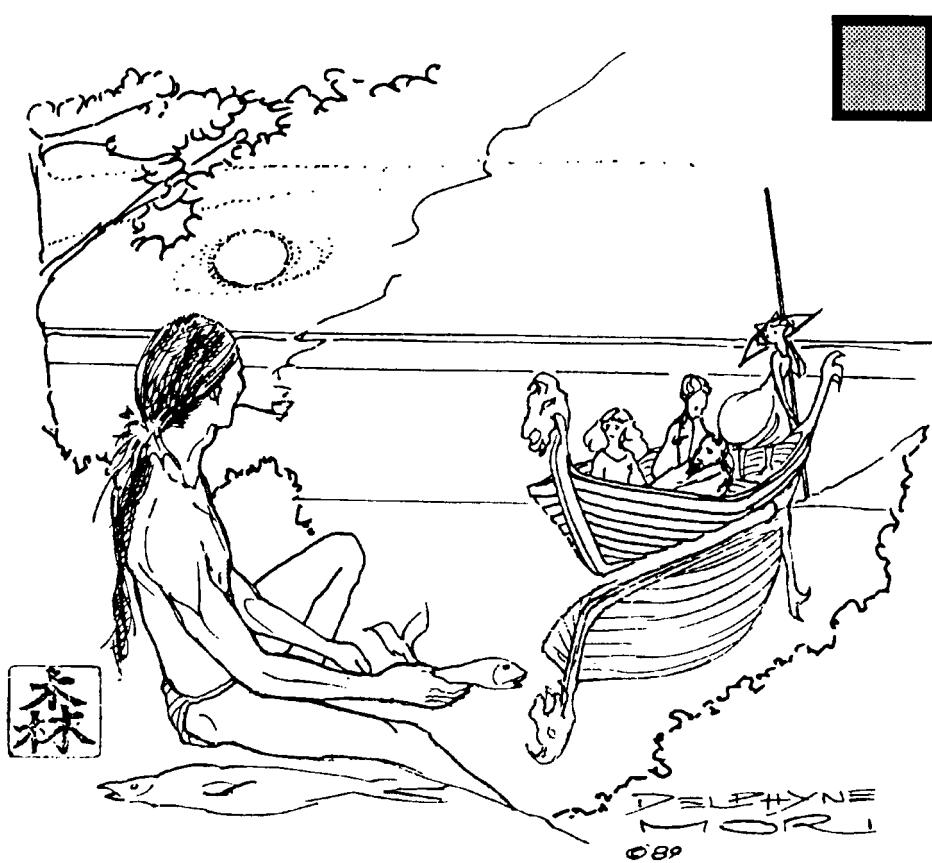
Is there physical evidence for that idea? There may not be any artifacts or ruins but there is a map. This new search for evidence of pre-Columbian Welsh explorers was conducted by Arthur Davies, retired

geography professor at Exeter University in southwest England. Davies is also an honorary Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He had conducted research on the career of the practically forgotten Welsh seafarer, John Lloyd, also known as John Scolvus (from an old Latinized German word meaning the Skillful) or John Llywd. Davies got interested in Lloyd's voyages after he had studied legends about Madoc, a twelfth century Welsh prince who sailed to the mysterious country called the Green Meadows of the Sea which was far to the west of both Wales and Ireland. In later times, after 1492, the Green Meadows of the Sea was supposed to be America.

To return to Davies and John Scolvus, the geography professor learned that Scolvus, otherwise Lloyd, had been trading with the old Norse colony in southwest Greenland. Such trading expeditions were illegal, for the Norwegian king who annexed Greenland had taken over all trade with that region as a royal monopoly. Only the royal trading ship called the king's *knorr* (Norse for merchant vessel) could legally make the voyage. Others were regarded as smugglers. Thus Scolvus had to keep his activities secret. He undoubtedly learned of the Greenlanders' voyages to Vinland and went there himself.

Davies found that a globe made in 1536 indicated a locale north of Hudson Strait and the southern tip of Baffin Land, which John Scolvus reached around 1476. Also, a record from 1480 reported that John Lloyd had, several years earlier, sailed to an unnamed far western region and had returned nine months later. The distant voyage must have taken him to American waters. And in 1475, at a time when Welsh trading ships were making illegal journeys to Greenland, some of those craft had taken, under Scolvus' leadership, a colony of Greenlanders to settle in Hudson Bay. The Greenland colony was then in decline due to worsening climate and attacks by pirates or by Eskimos, whom the Norse called Skraelings. Although the Eskimos are peaceful today, they sometimes turned against the Norse and competed with them for hunting and fishing grounds. The Norse tried to establish a colony in Vinland. In 1477 Lloyd arrived, but it was too late; the colonists had frozen to death. That was an ironic fate for hardy pioneers who had first colonized Iceland and Greenland!

In 1497, the explorer John Cabot left Bristol in a Welsh ship, the *Mathew*, which was manned by Welsh sailors who took him on a secret route to the St. Lawrence River's mouth. That route was then thought to lead ultimately to China, an assumption



which later proved to be erroneous. The point is that the Welsh already knew about that area before Columbus and so did the people of Bristol. The Bristol merchants had dispatched ships to search for the equally legendary isle of Hy Brazil in the remote west. Those searches took place in the decades just before Columbus' fateful voyage. I discussed those expeditions in my unpublished manuscripts on Irish mythical places. Certain scholars such as H.H. Babcock suggested that Hy Brazil was some part of America. Cabot disappeared in 1498, presumably after a shipwreck or an Indian attack. Then, in 1499, a map was published which depicted great tracts of American land, from an obvious Hudson Strait as far south as New England. The map is apparently authentic. Yet the map is a mystery because it delineates, with great accuracy, vast areas of coastline which were not officially discovered until 1610 when Henry Hudson, the first official piercer of Hudson Strait's environs, arrived.

The answer is that somebody, some two centuries prior to Henry Hudson, had beaten the master of the ship *Half Moon* to Hudson Strait. Early documents indicated that that someone was John Scolvus and other sources said that John Lloyd had been there. Davies said that the two men

were one and the same. Scolvus was an honorary title given to Lloyd because of his scholarship and daring. He was unable to capitalize on his discoveries because he was unable to secure a royal charter granting him authority over newly found lands, whereas Columbus had secured such a charter. Lloyd kept his work secret for fear of having his discoveries stolen by claim-jumpers. Authentic charts seemed to support Davies' conclusions about Lloyd's pre-Columbian voyages to America. The Welsh learned about that land from the Norsemen or even from earlier, quasi-legends such as those of Madoc. It is tempting to suggest that similar voyages could have been made in the Dark Ages, by Welsh explorers if not by the fabulous monarch King Arthur himself. Indeed, Richard Deacon reported that an even earlier Welsh ruler, King Gafran ab Aeddan, sailed off to the Green Isles and disappeared, as did Merlin. Taliesin, the Welsh bard who wrote (or composed) *The Spoiling of Annwn*, mentioned an exotic country beyond the sea. Incidentally, Taliesin described the sea as being like a looking glass. That description matches the Caribbean or Bahamian waters instead of the stormy northern Atlantic. Could Avalon, if it was America, have been located in the southern coastal states, around Florida?

Davies concluded that Lloyd could have sailed from Hudson Bay as far south as Maryland or even farther south, beyond the present-day borders of the United States.

It is exciting to think that there is a tradition of Welsh voyages to a remote transmarine western land which may have been America. If Avalon was that land, then King Arthur's final port of call could have been somewhere along our shores.

Two new books on Arthurian legends shed more light on the mystery of Avalon but their theories ultimately perplex the casual investigator. Nevertheless, I offer them here for your perusal, if not approval. The first tome is Nikolai Tolstoy's *The Quest for Merlin*. This 1985 book (out of print the year it was published) is primarily a study of the legend of Merlin, King Arthur's famous magician. Tolstoy noted that Avalon was located either in the ocean in the west or in English territory, his preferred theory. About 1200 A.D. a French Burgundian poet named Robert de Boron wrote two epics on Merlin and the Holy Grail. In the latter, an account of Joseph of Arimathea's voyage to Britain, it was reported that the Grail was taken to the land in the West and the vales of Avaron. Tolstoy said that Avaron was an old form of the name Avalon. He then promptly asserted that Avalon was believed to be in the Somerset flats around Glastonbury. Unfortunately, he did not present any hard evidence; but it seems that he simply accepted the "localists" theory, placing a transmarine isle in a familiar site on dry land! This is his conclusion despite old bardic tales such as the one summarized on p. 253, which stated that Merlin accompanied the wounded Arthur in a ship to a paradisiacal island, the Island of Apples, as Avalon is called in English.

A second book on Dark Age Britain discusses the Avalon enigma in greater detail. Dr. Norma Lorre Goodrich's *King Arthur* argued that the Dark Age monarch was real and that he lived in c. 475–542 A.D. However, she claims that he ruled around Hadrian's Wall and Lowland Scotland instead of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall! She insisted that the geographical data fit the north rather than southern and southwestern England but I will let the experts debate that point. I myself am partial to the traditional location of Arthur's realm in southwestern England, which is where most historians and archaeologists have placed his activities, assuming that he really existed. I do agree with Dr. Goodrich's dates for the reign of King Arthur, though, as those do fit the evi-

dence.

What does Goodrich have to say about Avalon? She devotes an entire chapter to the question. First she points out that Welsh, Old French, Middle English, and other medieval epics about Arthur usually stated that Avalon was an isle in the sea or ocean, which could only be reached by a long voyage in a ship. A prelate named William of Malmesbury, a contemporary of Geoffrey of Monmouth, was the official historian of Glastonbury Abbey and he attempted to identify Avalon with Glastonbury. Few dared to oppose his dogmatic conclusions, even to this day.

However, we have all those accounts of a vessel taking Arthur, Merlin, and others over the sea to Avalon. As I pointed out, the marsh which may have surrounded Glastonbury was not a sea! Goodrich found a list of nine other possible locations of Avalon, compiled by the Celtic folklore expert Sir John Rhys. These sites were isles or coastal areas of England and Wales, namely: Gower, Aberystwyth, Gresholm, Scilly Isles, Bardsey, Puffin Island, Man, Tory Island, and Anglesey. Goodrich eliminated most of the candidates for the following reasons: Gower was a peninsula of South Wales, not an island, while Aberystwyth was only an island at high tide. Gresholm and Bardsey were out of the running; although seagirt, they were rocky and infertile, unlike Avalon. Goodrich arbitrarily knocks the Scilly Isles out of the competition because she assumes that Arthur's realm was in Lowland Scotland, which was too far from the Scilly Isles. I should point out that the Scilly Isles may have been suggested as a location of Avalon because of equally famous legends of the lost land of Lyonesse which was supposed to have been near the Scillies, although Goodrich herself made no such identification. However, if Arthur's realm was in Southwest England, not Caledonia, then the Scilly Isles could be a good stop-over point on the way to Avalon.

To return to Goodrich's own theory, where, then, according to her view, was Avalon? She pinpoints two possible locations. Anglesey was the holy place of the British druids, a sort of Pagan Vatican City. Many Celtic pagan and earlier megalithic ruins can be found there. Man was one of the sacred sites of the Irish sea god Manannan. One of his supernatural palaces was supposedly there. One legend stated that King Arthur went there once and killed the brother of the famous historian, St. Gildas. Goodrich dismissed Anglesey because it was low-lying and always well known, where Avalon was a "disap-

pearing" island in a remote place.

Like me, Goodrich dismisses the Avalon-Glastonbury theory and she locates it in the midst of the sea. But she remains a bit too conservative and cannot bring herself to situate it at a truly distant locale across the ocean. For Goodrich, the Isle of Man seems to be good enough. While it fits, she thinks, old literary descriptions of a seagirt island, it is still very near to the English mainland and the Scottish Lowlands. She claims that medieval epics about the Holy Grail fit locales on the Isle of Man, and that the Castle of the Grail, where the sacred chalice was hidden, was on Man. She concludes that the Castle of the Grail was in Avalon. She then equates both with that supposedly mythical isle, which therefore becomes a real place which any tourist could visit in modern times without the aid of supernatural boats. Unfortunately, her sources, medieval epics, have a relative late date of around 1100–1200 when Arthurian romances in Old French and other western European languages became "best sellers." Despite impressive scholarship, the written sources seem to be very late, as King Arthur lived around 500 A.D. and text in the thirteenth century may not be all that reliable. Yes, Man is an island in the midst of the sea, in this case the Irish Sea, and it is surrounded by mist or storms on many occasions. It was also, and still is, associated with many pagan Celtic myths.

But Avalon was still remote, so remote that it had magical palaces the likes of which Man never had. The fantastic splendor of Avalon's palaces and capital city did not match the medieval or Dark Age buildings on Man; even if the kings and chiefs had castles, cities, and treasures, their wealth did not match the supernatural glories of remote Avalon. Also, even if Man were remoter than Anglesey or at any rate, harder to reach, it was still too near and too well known. I beg to differ with Goodrich on this point and I still agree with those Celtic folklore researchers who equate with the older oversea isles of the British Elysium. It is interesting, indeed fascinating, to learn that Goodrich concludes that St. Brendan actually reached the New World in the Dark Ages, via the Stepping Stone Route (up to the Scottish isles, therefrom to Iceland, Greenland, and down to Canadian waters, or by a southern route to the Azores, Madeira, and across to the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico or southeastern U.S. waters). If she is willing to admit that St. Brendan actually reached America, then why could not America be Avalon? But she is unwilling to sail so far into the Sea of

See AVALON, Page 54



Patty Anderson

Arthur! Arthur!

by Ben P. Indick

Ladies' Day In Avalon

Unlike most Arthurian writers Marion Zimmer Bradley in *The Mists of Avalon* speaks primarily from the distaff side; she also utilizes religious aspects not often touched upon. Indeed, the struggle between the Druids and the growing Christianity is at the heart of the novel. Her protagonist is Morgan le Fay, here spelled Morgaine, usually at best a sly and at worst an evil witch. Christianity is Morgaine's antagonist—the faith is espoused by Guinevere, here spelled Gwenhwyfar. This is not Ms Bradley's whimsy; it is the Celtic spelling, and the Celtic view rules the book. The misty island of Avalon is a major element in the book; in other accounts it is generally mentioned only when the dying Arthur is taken there by barge from the scene of battle with several queens, always including Morgan, his sister.

Morgaine here is no fey character; like everyone in the book, she is deadly serious about everything. When she is a child, her mother Igraine, preferring to be alone with Uther Pendragon, her new husband, deposits her with the priestesses of Avalon. (She unloads Arthur upon Sir Ector, traditionally). On the fairy island, the girl is groomed to be its future chief priestess, and to experience the stag ritual, where

she will be deflowered by a young man brought to the isle for that purpose and to father an important child. The experience, which is the doing of Viviane, the High Priestess, is a disaster, for the young man she has chosen is Morgan's half-brother Arthur.

If this sounds familiar yet askew, it is Bradley's variation of the more commonly presented incestuous act with Morgause, aunt to Morgaine and Arthur. The result is the same; she becomes pregnant, and although she considers aborting the unborn child, she finally allows the birth. It is Mordred, of course. She leaves the infant with her aunt. Viviane's hope had been to produce an heir who would mate Christianity and Paganism, so that the latter would not be destroyed. Mordred is hardly the ideal bearer of such a hope; however, Bradley is more fair to this unhappy boy than most writers. He does scheme, but he possesses some of his father's nobler attributes, and is a real person.

There are other original touches. Lancelot is the son of Viviane, and his given name is Galahad, which he later confers on his son by Elaine. White presents the dark knight as French, but he is known as Lancelot of the Lake, so Bradley has grounds. Merlin is here, but his name is a generic term and he will be succeeded by

other merlins. He will also die before Nimue can seal him into a tree, but she is touched by his successor, Kevin. These and other such instances are unique, but Bradley makes them seem at home within the greater tapestry we know. Her research is formidable, and there is no reason to quibble with it.

Arthur's unhappy queen is hopelessly in love with Lancelot; but in this instance, the difficulties she has with the frustrating love make her into a veritable born-again Christian, envious of the unfettered joy of others. In a significant break, the author presents the Grail as a symbol of Avalon rather than of Christ. Its pursuit leads Arthur's court into disarray, although eventually it will be seen as a symbol uniting the faiths.

The book is rich in fantasy and its characters are real, even ordinary people, rarely larger than life, and we can understand and sympathize with them. It is a most original approach. Yet the book, so earnest in its intent, lacks both passion and magic. In her efforts to avoid the expected landmarks, Bradley even downplays the importance of the sword whose discovery leads Arthur to the throne. She simply has it lying on the funeral bier of Pendragon, from which Arthur just takes it. No stone, no prophecy. The author's choices tend to make mundane the folk of legend; the struggle between the faiths, redundant after a time, is resolved only to a degree by a limply acceptant ending. It is nevertheless a moving book, willing to take risks, and perhaps because of them consistently interesting.

A Modernist in Armor: Thomas Berger's *Arthur Rex*

Berger, an important and unpredictable novelist, offers his own variation upon the traditional story, employing a pseudo-medieval narrative language along with the contemporary writer's insight into motivation. It is witty and at times erotic, particularly in episodes between Lancelot and Guinevere. The queen toys with the knight when he is brought to her; pretending to sleep, she brings his hand to her breast, then berates him for it. He protests, but she teases him, glancing into her bodice at the spot he touched her. Inflamed, he bites his hand until it bleeds. When she continues her coy pursuit he cannot restrain himself. He thrusts his bloody hand into her hair. "Now we are both stained forever." Then they cannot restrain themselves.

The sexual congress with Margawse, as Berger spells the name, is for the most part humorous, as Arthur dispels her notions of betrothal by telling her with straight face that it has been prophesied "my queen will be a golden-haired virgin." Later, when he journeys to the castle of Guinevere's father Leodegrance, his peregrine kills her canary. Not knowing who he is, the young girl berates him. He has been warned that his betrothed is plain; but he does not know her by sight, and although this girl is less than "golden-haired," and her complexion somewhat blemished, he promptly falls in love with her. When she states she is going to her "father the king" to see that he is punished for his bird's cruel act, he says "Then you are sister to Princess Guinevere to whom I am affianced?" And the unhappy girl, not knowing it forebodes a lifetime in which she will be unhappy, cries "Alas, I am herself."

If Robert E. Howard Had Written Arthur...

An unusual variation on the Arthurian theme is David Drake's *The Dragon Lord* (Tor Books, 1982). Well known for his science fiction battle novels involving the mercenary Hammer's Slammers and for Roman fantasies, Drake's novel is in no way a retelling of Malory. For all purposes it is an original novel, utilizing the milieu of Arthur but without the romance of Camelot. It is an unblushing sword and sorcery novel, and if there is no debt to classic themes, there is none to medievalism either, not a single *thee* nor *thou* to be found in its pages. The emphasis is on physicality and witchcraft. There is a bit of the Druid vs. Christianity motif, a major theme in Bradley, but more for color here than any plot urgency. It is all action, all black and white, not because of literary weakness but in response to the author's aims.

On the Arthurian level, perhaps Drake's most significant departure is to make Arthur an ambitious and active king, impetuous and determined to have his way. Here is no traditional shining knight, ruminative and wistful. He is rough, even brutish, truly the "Leader" as his men, no less tough than he, term him. Lancelot is quite the drill sergeant in this militant context, and if an expectant reader looks for signs of the Guinevere and Mordred listed on the back cover of the book, it will be a vain wait.

The actual protagonists are several of the king's mercenaries. Together with an Irish witch they must first support and then contravene the dangerous magic which a foolish but compliant Merlin works

at the demand of Arthur, who is bent on Fame to be achieved through a horrifying witchcraft.

Drake's own knowledge of military matters guarantees that men, machines and battle plans will be prominent, even to having the fighting men behave like barracks room buddies. It does no harm to a good, active tale with little patience for the romantic folderol of a White, Steinbeck or Malory, although one side-trip is, in proportion, as lengthy and digressive as is Tristram's book in the original legends. It is a story more for Howardians than for Arthurians.

White and the Wart

As a fantasy, T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* would ultimately rank in public popularity second only to Tolkien. He would perhaps have been surprised. He was not without self-confidence, but the book had cost him years of heartwringing labor.

It began lightheartedly enough with *The Sword in the Stone* in 1938. With *The Witch in the Wood* in 1939, White, obsessed by the developing war in Europe, found a cause which would provide the purpose of his story. The dream that would move his Arthur, he thought, could inspire the world for peace. *The Ill-Made Knight*, 1940, was the third novel. The fourth would be the final battle and doom of Arthur, but his dream would survive into a fifth book, in which Merlyn would return and conduct Arthur back to the world of the animals to learn how, finally, to abolish war. Throughout the characters would speak as would White's own contemporaries, with none of the medievalese common to many Arthurian romances.

It proved difficult to reconcile his aims with the practical considerations of his publishers. Disagreements delayed the project for nearly two decades, during which time he abandoned the grand philosophical aims involved with the return of Merlyn in Book 5. The tetralogy, concluding with the fourth part, *The Candle in the Wind*, appeared in 1958. For it, he rewrote much of the first book, using material from the abandoned *The Book of Merlyn*.

White knew and loved medievalism. It infuses and enriches his non-fiction such as *The Goshawk* and *The Bestiary*. Before noble motives ever swayed the author, he allowed his wit, knowledge and love of the period of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and above all his sense of fantasy and fun to rule in the original version of *The Sword in the Stone*. It is a playful idyll of childhood and growing up. Its anachronisms and

mildly satiric tone, at least until the moving climax in which young Arthur discovers the sword, become much more sober in the rewritten version.

One of the immediately obvious changes involves Morgan le Fay, the great sorceress. She and her castle are in each version, and represent an obstacle to be overcome by young Arthur, known as "the Wart" to all, and to his noble companion, Sir Kay. Arthur's ancestry is at this point unknown, and he is squire to Sir Kay and a ward of the latter's father, Sir Ector. The castle of the witch represents Gluttony, and the lads must pass through it without touching anything or they will remain there forever as slaves.

In the original version, the boys come upon the castle within a forest, where it is blazing with light. It is, in fact, a typical motion picture palace of the 1930s, lit with neon and a marquee reading THE QUEEN OF AIR AND DARKNESS: NOW SHOWING. Within is an usher with epaulettes and gold braid, plush red carpeting over everything, Moorish maidens, candies, tempting foods, all lovingly described, even Negrominstrels, eyes rolling, singing mock spirituals behind an ice cream bar. The Wart and Sir Kay go from floor to floor until they meet the dread Morgan herself. And she is the most Hollywoodian of all, wearing beach pajamas and smoked glasses, lolling "full-length on a white leather sofa." The walls are covered with celebrity photographs signed personally to her: "Darling Margy from Oberon", "From Charlie to his own Queenie" and the like. She elegantly holds a long green jade cigarette holder and a cigarette whose smoke she blows enticingly at the boys. The entire scene is a daring and hilarious conceit.

In the rewritten version, the use of the castle and the witch as symbols of gluttony is greatly heightened, although at the cost of humor. The castle the boys discover is a nearly amorphous pile in the woods, grotesque and detestable: "It smelt like a grocer's, a baker's, a dairy and a fishmonger's, rolled into one. It was horrible beyond belief." Gone are the marquee, the usher, the theatre, the minstrels. Instead of traveling wide-eyed from one tempting floor of goodies to another, the boys come almost immediately upon the witch. And she, far from the beautiful movie magazine cover image, is a "fat, dowdy, middle-aged woman with black hair and a slight moustache...stretched upon her bed of glorious lard." It is indeed a change. Happily, in a later episode common to each version, she is described more generously, with no mention of that moustache.

Further evidence of the author's new vision for the tetralogy are several fantasy sequences. In the original, Merlyn teaches the Wart about life and dealing with people by transforming him into animals and living within their environments. Some are amusing, other exciting. Life as a snake in the original is replaced by a visit to an ant kingdom which is a potent allegory on fascism and communism. As a wild goose, the original book handles the adventure in the manner of classical fantasy, and the Wart meets the goddess Athena in a pantheistic setting. In a rather realistic revised scene, he discusses the tendency of men to indulge in war and killing, which peaceful birds find abhorrent. A delightful episode involving another witch, Madame Mim, is eliminated altogether in the revision. It is remarkable how White went over each line, even each word. Whereas in the first he writes: "The Wart slept well" in the revision he writes "The boy slept well." The replacement of a fond pejorative by the generic "boy" is a significant change of tone.

The changes in the great climactic scene are minor. Here the Wart is scurrying home to find a sword for Sir Kay to wield in a tournament. He happens across the great sword embedded within a stone in a marketplace. It is the most memorable scene in each book, yet few Arthurian novels, including Malory, have taken more than a chapter to reach it, and most are matter-of-fact, more interested in the revelation that it was not Kay but Arthur who was able to withdraw the sword. For White, the moment is the culmination of the Wart's boyhood. Aided by his memories of the animals with whom he has lived, their courage, hope and wisdom, he is able on a third try to wrest the sword free. Kay, recognizing it for what it is, the key to the throne of England, pretends that he had removed the sword. Faced, however, by his father's love and trust, he confesses that the Wart and not he is to be honored. Merlyn addresses the Wart for the first time by his proper name, adding his title. The chapter is identical in each version. There is really no improving on perfection.

In the first sequel, *The Witch in the Wood*, White again spins a novel from a few chapters in Malory. The title refers not to Morgan le Fay but to one of her sisters, Morgause, wife of King Lot, mother of four boys. The revised version, having already dropped the theatrical reference to Morgan Le Fay as Queen of Air and Darkness now uses the label as the title of the second book, conferring it upon Morgause, who possesses some small magics of her own.

The book maintains the bantering tone of the first, and when it succeeds it is because White has removed the characters from legend and given them ordinary life. He captures hauntingly as well the quality of the small villages of the time. Comic interludes are, however, often labored, with inane and endless chatter. He uses with less success the same trick with Morgause as with Morgan, having her use 20th century beauty devices such as mudpacks and skin masks, learned from a book her sister had obtained from the future. In revising the book, White excised all this type of humor and eliminated most of the tiresome knightly folderol. At last he had cut nearly half the book, with, it must be admitted, no attendant loss. He concentrated instead on Morgause's ambition.

She is unaware that she is half-sister to Arthur (his aunt in Malory). Weary of her husband's failures, twice the age of Arthur, she sees in him a hope for power. When she appears, wild and beautiful, at his castle with her four sons, the book reaches its finest and darkest hour. Perhaps it is her beauty, or her greater experience. Perhaps she had given the young and naive king a love-philtre. Or, White writes, "it was because he had never known a mother of his own, so that the role of mother love took him between wind and water. Whatever the explanation may have been, the Witch in the Wood had a baby by her half-brother nine months later. It was called Mordred." In revising the book, he adds a paragraph of genealogy. It is not as stark a final page, but it does offer insight. Arthur had not known this was his sister, but "it seems that innocence is not enough." It has the elements of Greek tragedy, for one day the child born of incest will die at his father's hand, and in his last moments will murder his father.

Lancelot joins Arthur in *The Ill-Made Knight*, so described because he considers himself ugly. It survives nearly intact in the tetralogy. Arthur's marriage to Guenevere is accomplished as offhandedly as in Malory; it is, after all, a marriage of state. However, White endows the usually serene queen with a warm, impetuous, loving nature. Fond of her husband, even loving him in her way, "Jenny" cannot restrain her passion for the glowering, unhandsome, but stirring Lancelot. The love each of the three has for the others ironically leads to mutual destruction. Arthur will not act against them even though he knows they have betrayed him, but he is forced to act. Guenevere, sentenced to death at the stake, is rescued by her lover, and the final battles are initiated.

At last the king knows that his dream of peace is dying.

In the concluding book, *The Candle in the Wind*, Arthur faces final battle, the failure of his dream, but still hopes that one day Right would prevail over Might. "There must be a day when he would come back to Gramarye with a new Round Table, which had no corners, just as the world had none, a table with no boundaries between the nations who would sit to feast there." He tells his dream to a young lad, Tom of Warwick, so he can go back home and tell others of this "ancient idea". It is a pretty notion, for White intends the boy as Malory.

While working on the book, White wrote to his closest friend, David Garnett, writer and publisher, "the Round Table" was an anti-Hitler device. Might-as-Right must be squashed altogether....At the end, I insinuate he (Arthur) is back in the badger's sett, waiting to come out and help us with Merlyn and all of them, if we ever let the time come." He was having trouble with Book 2. "Morgause is really the villain of the piece. (I may mention that she is my mother.)"

Not only his mother influenced his book. White was a man troubled by his own homosexuality, although he never practiced it and sometime mortified his flesh in response to his urgencies. He released his love only toward animals, his birds and his dog. He drank increasingly. Some of the tensions of financial stress were relieved in 1940 when the Book of the Month Club purchased *The Sword in the Stone*. Even better, in 1946 they took his *Mistress Masham's Repose*, a delightful Lilliputian fantasy. Of further help was the Lerner and Loewe musical *Camelot*, based on his book. Walt Disney Studios finally exercised a 20-year-old option and made *The Sword in the Stone* as a full-length animated feature. His final years were then comfortable. *The Book of Merlyn* still existed, a nemesis, unfinished, given to irritating exposition and lecturing, cannibalized in his final preparation of *The Once and Future King*. If ever a lingering compulsion to publish it had existed, it was by now long since gone with other dreams. It was published posthumously in 1977.

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The Once and Future King

Goes to the Movies



Jane Sibley

by Thomas M. Egan

The once and future king continues into the future—even if only in a grade-B movie.

KRULL is a 1983 release from Columbia Pictures directed by Peter Yates. The novelization is by Alan Dean Foster, Warner Books, \$2.95, 237pp.

This was one of the minor gems in the avalanche of grade-B movies that flooded the post-STAR WARS marketplace. It passed relatively unnoticed yet it is worth a second look. Superficially science fiction, KRULL is, in reality, a quest epic. The hero has to find a talisman and thus save a world and a beautiful princess.

A product of British scriptwriting and acting (except for the American lead character), it is derived in large part from the King Arthur legends and J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*, and to a lesser extent the Star Wars sagas. No attempt is made to hide the heavy British accents of nearly all the characters. The flavor of Cockney in the lesser characters gives touches of unintentional humor. The frankly European medieval atmosphere is shown in dress and armor, social habits and dwellings.

The story is set in "another galaxy, far away...." The time? Anyone's guess. The place? A strange planet with weird beasts and vegetation. There, magic is as natural as science. There is no unity among the varied humanoid peoples of the world of Krull. War among the many feudal kings

and nobles is as normal as in Arthur's Britain.

The result is an open invitation for outside conquest by the equivalent of Saxons.

From another world or dimension (never explained), comes something monstrous whose complete form remains unseen until the film's end. It carries with itself an enormous ship which it transforms into a tremendous black fortress. It is The Beast. Its nature verges on the demonic, if not something from Hell itself. It can change shape, read minds, and possesses evil magic that makes it nearly omnipotent. Only a strange star-shaped weapon-symbol called a Glaive can defeat it. This ancient talisman, like Arthur's Excalibur, can link itself with the mind of a True Hero to destroy The Beast. But the warrior must have more than mere physical bravery.

More than the physical conquest of a world is at stake; Cosmic Issues are involved. Can the proper hero really be found?

Enter Colwin, crown prince of a minor kingdom. He seeks to unite his people with their chief rival of an ancient blood-feud. For the plan to work he must cement the alliance by marrying the princess Lyssa. The remaining kingdoms have all been decimated by the Beast's robotic followers, The Slayers, who are making the planet into a desert for their master. Lyssa is surprisingly independent for this type of film. She gives intelligent and logical responses to fellow characters, even her consort-to-be, and defies The Beast in a

lively and believable fashion when she is held captive.

There are important elements of philosophic-moral conflict. Power is something everyone wants but can't handle.

Colwin is seen first as an energetic and ambitious prince who woes his bride-to-be in a fairy-tale atmosphere of magic. In the massacre by the faceless armored Slayers he fights well but sees his whole family die and Lyssa kidnapped. He is lying gravely wounded amidst piles of bodies when the wizard Ynyr arrives to tend and restore him. No long beard on this wizard but otherwise he is like Gandalf giving instruction and prophecy. He sends the prince in search of the fabled Glaive, but where to look?

Prince and wizard build a "fellowship," which includes some good-natured thieves who exhibit a spiritual growth during the quest.

Sauron-like, The Beast understands power and self-interest but not the use of individual initiative for the sake of others. The moral testing of the Fellowship builds up gradually through many incidents. All members fail some tests but carry on. Colwin only partially defeats the Enemy with the Glaive, and it is Lyssa who has the final initiative. Her answer does not involve force but the being of a human soul. With it the forces of metaphysical darkness can be driven back.

The Seer's prophecy of the Once and Future Kingship of the whole galaxy is linked to Colwin's acts.

Unfortunately there are many anachronisms in the movie and the book. Occasional modern slang and too-obvious clichés are other defects. These are outweighed by excellent photography and some very eerie and wonderful background scenes.

The future of a space-age Arthurian dynasty on Krull tantalizes. It promises justice and real peace and a consideration for all that echo a golden age of legend. But it's the little things that make us like the film's message: the enjoyment of friendship and courage, and one's free choices, that complements the science-fantasy.*

a beastly discussion forum

Gincas



Allen Koszowski

ARTHUR RIDES AGAIN!

Mike Ashley

I've just completed a volume of Arthurian fantasy for Robinson Books [in England] to be published summer of '89. It's an anthology of sixteen items with two new stories and fourteen reprints, most of them never previously reprinted, by writers like Jane Yolen, Andre Norton, Thomas Goodrich Roberts, Joy Chant, Phyllis Ann Karr, etc. The book includes a bibliography of Arthurian fiction at the end.

Margaret Simon

Friesner's article, "Flower of England, Fruit of Spain," was particularly delightful, well written, and enlightening. The strongest point she makes is in stating that "symbols have it all over individuals when it comes to giving a body of people a victory-oriented mindset. Individuals can be heroes, or they can be decidedly less." It is so true, so relative from past to present times—our Jimmy Deans were the Galahads, eh? The mindset, whether for "victory" or for the "cause"—the nature of the battles we have fought.

Mark Blackman

The Hebrew adaptation of Arthuriana (mentioned by Ruth Berman) only points to the universal application, and appeal, of the myth. If a pagan myth could be Christianized (note to Phyllis Ann Karr, my edition of Malory—Mentor, with an introduction by Robert Graves—has Merlin taking the infant to a priest to be baptized Arthur; Steinbeck repeats this),

why not Hebraicized? Considering, however, that the Grail story was a later accretion, one may wonder why it had to be mentioned at all; obviously, by 1279 it was already an integral part of the legend. In an odd way, from Pat Mathews' article, we see this mirrored in Star Trek fandom; the books are considered part of "the Canon".

"Bumbejimas": I expect Charles Philip Arthur George (who, Geoffrey Ashe claims, tongue-firmly-in-cheek, I hope, is a direct descendant of King Arthur) would either be Charles III or, likelier, George VII. In any case, there wouldn't be an Arthur II until there was an official Arthur I. Recall that there were three Edwards during the period of Saxon and Danish rule who weren't counted in the enumeration when Edward Longshanks became king as Edward I; would they count a mythic monarch? [The official enumeration begins with William I (the Conqueror). A.J.B.] Re: the sleeping or "hidden savior" motif in other cultures, elements of Owen (Ywein) Lawgoch's legend (sleeping in a cave until needed) preceded and probably inspired Arthur's. Ed mentions Holger the Dane and Frederick Barbarossa (who also figure in fantasy novels), and St. Kazimiras. The nearest analog in my culture (Judaism) is the Prophet Elijah (Elias in Catholic Bibles), who never died, but was instead taken up to Heaven in a chariot of fire (cue the Vangelis music and tell Von Daniken to shut up), and who will return to signal the Redemption and the coming of the Messiah. [How about Melchizedek? A.J.B.]

Note that the returning "hero" is a prophet and not a warrior, not even the nation's greatest hero, David (the most three-dimensional character in the Old Testament—and a figure,

as Ruth Berman notes, with many parallels to Arthur). However, while he himself is not so singled out, tradition has the Messiah springing from his House. The Gospel writers, accordingly, claim Davidic descent for Joseph (by two incompatible genealogies, by the way, though it's all kind of irrelevant if one believes that he was not Jesus' real father.) Jesus' Second Coming makes him a "once and future king", though it is also akin to pagan (agrarian) resurrections such as Osiris' and Dionysos'—and maybe even the groundhog's re-emergence. In a modern vein, the "Rip van Winkle" gimmick is a handy device for social commentary (Bellamy's *Looking Backward*), and in sf for time travel without a time machine.

Anne Braude's "The Once and Future Arthur" was, of course, the highlight of the issue. I'm somewhat surprised, though, that in her brief mention of the mythic aspects of Douglas MacArthur, she doesn't remind us that "Mac" means "son of" or point out that his father, and his son, was named Arthur MacArthur. As for reawakenings, Merlin's return brings magic to a post-apocalyptic world in Simon Hawke's *The Wizard of 4th Street*. Arthur himself returns—and runs for Mayor of New York—in Peter David's *Knight Life*. (Merlin is back as well, having aged backwards to about 12-years-old; and the Lady of the Lake is none too thrilled with the crud in Central Park Lake. By the way, humorous treatments and travesties of the Arthurian myth was a topic your contributors overlooked.) Merlin also returns and Arthur is reincarnated (doubling as a reborn Sigmund) in Tim Powers' *The Drawing of the Dark*.

Milton Stevens

As a result of our regular parking lot at the police building being repaved, I found myself parking in a rather dingy area at the corner of First and Avalon. I wouldn't have paid any attention to the street name if I hadn't been reading NIEKAS 38 at the time. There is absolutely nothing romantic or chivalric about the corner of First and Avalon, but you would need a bit of heroism to stay around after sundown. Then again, chivalry and romance have fallen on rather hard times lately. Maybe it's appropriate for a street named Avalon to be in that sort of neighborhood. I wonder where you would start looking for the Grail in that type of area. If I were in the habit of writing fiction, I might very well pursue the idea.

With the entire issue devoted to one topic, ideas which were suggested in one article were frequently dealt with in another. For instance, Phyllis Ann Karr's article, "The Last Temptation of Arthur" started me thinking about the similarities between Arthur and King David. That topic is dealt with later in Ruth Berman's article, "The Hebrew Arthur." However, I was thinking of Samuel as the Merlin character. Samuel uses a stratagem to have Saul recognized as king, and Merlin does a similar service for Arthur. There is a period when only Samuel knows that David should be king, and the situation is similar between Arthur and Merlin. There are a few other miscellaneous items, such as both David and Arthur fighting giants.

The writers of the early Arthurian stories were borrowing elements from other stories of kingship to add to the story of their own local

warlord. While some of the elements seem to be from King David, I suspect a couple were from Julius Caesar. In the Suetonius version, Brutus was Caesar's illegitimate son. The similarity to Caesar might have been a reason for having Arthur campaigning in France (a campaign which is entirely unlikely from the historical viewpoint).

Phyllis Ann Karr's article also started me thinking about the strangeness of the symbolism of the Lady of the Lake giving Arthur a sword. Alexei Kondratiev explains that point quite well in his article.

The comparison of Arthur and El Cid by Esther Friesner is an amusing item. The idea may not hold up very well in the Napoleonic Era with both Launcelot and Roland presumably on the other side. However, in the WW II era, I don't know how the issue could ever have been in doubt with both Arthur and Sherlock Holmes on the British side. [There is a short story called "His Very Last Bow"—author, Ruth?—in The Misadventures of Sherlock Holmes, ed. Ellery Queen, that does bring the very elderly Holmes into a WWII situation. AJB]

Joe Christopher

When Marion Zimmer Bradley writes of Malory inventing the story of Lancelot (p. 21, middle column, 2 lines from the bottom) she meant Chrétien de Troyes. I understand that his "Knight of the Cart" is the first romance of Lancelot.

One comment about Ruth Berman's "Ashes to Arthurs." She mentions Geoffrey Ashe's approval of a novel about Guenevere titled *Child of the Northern Spring*. That book has been published, it became an alternate for the Book of the Month Club, and it has appeared in paperback. I met the author, Persia Woolley, at a Mythcon a few years ago, and she wrote me this last December that she was going through the second volume of her Arthurian trilogy polishing at that time; she's going to be off to Britain this summer for more research. Anyone who reads her *Child* will find a Guenevere far different from Bradley's in *Mists of Avalon*—as Woolley commented to me she would be, when we were discussing Arthuriana at our meeting. (Isn't it nice that the romances don't have to agree in their presentations of the characters—or other details, for that matter?)

I hope, in ten years or so, NIEKAS will do another issue on King Arthur. Diana L. Paxson wrote what I believe was a blank verse masque on the Perceval legend for a Mythcon; perhaps you could stretch a point and collect it under your rubric of poems in such an issue.

Ruth Berman

One odd little puzzle in Arthurian matters that I don't think has ever been figured out is why Victorian writers wrote brilliant Arthurian poems and essentially no Arthurian novels (not even poets like William Morris and Bulwer Lytton who were also novelists). George MacDonald included Sir Percival as a character in *Phantases*, the story of the wanderings of young Anodos in fairyland, and that's about as close as the period gets to an Arthurian novel. [The answer is probably the period's belief that the novel, like Life, should be real and earnest; fantasy was only suitable for poetry. Writers of

prose fantasy, such as those you mention, are few and very far between. AJB]

E.B. Frohvet

The King Arthur issue was mildly interesting despite a certain air of neo-equine flagellation. Perhaps the desperate solemnity accorded to the subject by virtually all of your contributors may account for the failure of everyone to mention the two most original treatments of the story in the last century. Those would be, of course, Mr. Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee* and MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL.

Just to tie up a couple of loose ends: the full name of the current Prince of Wales is "Charles Philip Arthur George (Windsor)," and the color of the Order of the Garter is blue, not green.

Jane Yolen

I have to argue with David Palter's contentions that as he already knows the story of King Arthur, the stories don't surprise him. He is a plot reader, the lowest form of reader in my estimation. Even given that he tells us that he has a few novels (one Bear, one Niven, one Zelazny) he has managed to reread and enjoy on the second reading, he is an admitted fresh-and-new freak. I suppose I shouldn't carp. He is also probably a great buyer of new books and, as an author, I have a financial investment in such critters.

But I reread books all the time. Most recently, *The Secret Garden*, *The Jungle Books*, *The Back Door*, and about every ten years I read *Moby Dick* again. I love the Arthur story in every shape or form, even though I know what's going to happen. That is the very least of the story, what happens. How it is told, what new revelations come with the reading of it, and most especially the fact that I am new each time I read it. I am a different person. I first read a version as a child. Again as a young adult I discovered T.H. White. I took a course in college and again in graduate school in the Arthur cycle. And I learned something each time. We bring ourselves to the tales we read.

L. Sprague de Camp

I don't think (p.2, col.1) it right to speak of "Henry II...and other British kings." Henry was King of England, Duke of Normandy, &c; actually more of a Frenchman, since he was born in France, spoke primarily French, spent most of his life in France, and died and was buried there. I don't believe "British" in the modern sense came into use until Georgian times. George I made himself unpopular by calling himself a "Briton." Many English thought he was being soft on the Celtic fringe (Scots, Irish, Welsh) whom they sneered at as bare-arsed barbarians.

I can add some historical curiosa to Ms. Friesner's piece on the armada. The armada did not come just to shoot it out with the English navy but to clear the way for the Prince of Parma to lead an army of the world's then best infantry from the Spanish Netherlands, blockaded by the Dutch, across to England. What mainly ruined the campaign was the fact that the Spanish tactic was to shoot one big broadside, close, and board. Design of their cannons and gun carriages was such that reloading took hours, and few Spanish guns got off more than

one shot a day. The English kept out of boarding range and shot faster.

William the Conqueror's Tower of London then served as the arsenal. The admiral Lord Howard of Effingham sent a messenger galloping to London to beg for powder and shot, of which he was running out. The officials refused because Howard had not submitted a requisition in proper form. Luckily for the English, the Spaniards had decided that conveying Parma's army was hopeless and set out for home. Many were wrecked in Ireland, and the English massacred a couple of thousand survivors. [See Rudyard Kipling's splendid "Simple Simon" in Rewards and Fairies. AJB]

An excellent book, Geoffrey Parker: *The Military Revolution (Military Innovation and the Rise of the West)*, Cambridge, Un. Pr., 1988, gives a wonderful historical irony. In 1555 Philip II of Spain visited England, where he married Mary Tudor, a.k.a. Bloody Mary. A conscientious man, Philip dutifully made a speech to Parliament, urging the English to build up their navy. Parliament took his advice, and 33 years later some of the ships of that program fought against Philip's armada.

C.W. Brooks

I noted with horror the "Machin" on the contents page, but was relieved to find that the error was not repeated in my article which was beautifully set and printed.

Thomas M. Egan

Arthur is the hero *par excellence* in Western tradition embodying both spiritual and secular hopes. Where would modern fantasy literature be without him? Each year a slew of new writers try their hands at embellishing his tradition. Have you seen Leonard Wibberley's 1972 book on Arthur's Excalibur in modern Britain? Grand satire and gentle fun poking at the British welfare state.

My own contributions to the Arthurian tradition include poetry and essays (on items such as "The Fisher King as Celtic Myth and Christian Symbol") in **FANTASY EMPIRE**, **DRAGONFIELDS**, and **IRISH ECHO**.

Professor Joe Christopher's poetry is superb!

Among the Arthurian essays I noticed the one on Spain. I happen in my graduate studies to be working on Medieval Castilian politics of the Fourteenth Century. The reign of Alfonso XI of Castile-Léon has some of the aspects of an Arthurian tragedy. A very young prince, he succeeded in 1312 at the age of one year. His Christian homeland was devastated by civil wars, social corruption, and Moorish invasion from North Africa and Granada. He died of the Black Death at the age of 39 in 1350 while besieging Moorish Gibraltar.

He is renowned as a warrior king who saved Spain from the last great invasion from Africa in 1340 and as a giver of strong government and justice to his people, high and low alike. His epic is told in *El Poema de Alfonso XI*, (c. 1344; edition in Spanish edited in Madrid in 1953). The poet refers to the prophecy of Merlin of the king who will save the day for Spain for Christendom. Alfonso's weaknesses also have Arthurian overtones; marital infidelity on his part, division in his family, the failure of the military order he founded in 1330 (like the Round Table

in some ways) to thrive as an instrument of chivalry.

I love Anne Braude's and other contributors' enthusiasm for Arthur. Yet they generalize too much in a negative way on medieval culture. There was no unique magnitude of human cruelty and bloodletting in medieval Christendom. All periods of history and every human culture, including our own, are bloody and cruel. The Nineteenth Century saw the British Empire reach its heights of territorial expansion and lay the basis of modern politics in our poor Twentieth Century. The bloodletting needed to achieve this is staggering though little remembered today. The Sudan conquest/wars of the general Kitchner/Mahdi conflict cost 2 million lives. The Kaffir wars of the late 1800's destroyed a whole people by the British, and so on. The idea that women had no real rights in feudal law in the middle ages is rubbish. They were not chattels in either church or civil law. Feudal custom allowed women to be rulers of princedoms and kingdoms—quite unlike classic Greek city states and the Roman Republic/Empire. Only after 386 does the Roman Empire (Christianized) allow empresses to rule. (e.g., Eudoxia, Irene, Theodosia, Zoe, etc.)

Medieval Christendom didn't understand the kind of freedom the modern secular state allows

today but it did believe in its own versions of liberty and self-government. (Magna Carta, town autonomy, university corporations, the responsibility of power in a Christian moral view of the "community of the realm").

Buck Coulson

This is an excellent compendium of the Arthurian myths and it included a lot of things that I didn't previously know. But nobody mentioned my own two favorite Arthurian books, Henry Treece's *The Great Captains* and David Drake's *The Dragon Lord*. Of course, since Treece pictured Arthur as the unwashed and cruel barbarian Artos the Bear, and Drake pictured him as a homicidal maniac, my favoritism might mean that I have no romance in my soul. Or perhaps, like David Palter, I've just seen too much of Arthur and become cynical. (My third favorite of the literature is Marion's *Mists of Avalon*, also a completely different version of the legend.)

Anne Braude

John Boardman, in his review of *The King Arthur Companion*, suggests that Malory's two convictions for rape may be discounted because the complainant was not the alleged victim but her husband. This ignores the legal doctrine of

feme-covert, in force in England as late as the nineteenth century, by which a man and wife, made "one flesh" by the marriage service, were in the eyes of the law one person, and that person the man: a married woman would not have legal status to sue on her own behalf. For more on Malory's career as a one-man Warwickshire crime wave, see "The Quest of the Knight-Prisoner" in Richard D. Altick's *The Scholar Adventurers* (Macmillan pb, 1960), which does for literary research what *The Microbe Hunters* does for scientific research.

Another error of both Boardman and Karr is the assumption that the German material is inaccessible: Helen M. Mustard and Charles E. Passage's translation of Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* was published in paperback by Vintage in 1961. I do, however, like his theory that Lancelot should have been on lithium, which is a lot more entertaining than the Freudian analyses of Hamlet etc. that are the staples of medico-literary "scholarship." The possibilities here are endless: Did the Green Knight suffer from some rare form of endocrine deficiency? Was Galahad's legendary chastity caused by a twist in his chromosomes? And how about Gawain's magical strength, which waxed and waned with the sun? Could it be due not to the fact that the character may have originated as a solar myth but to hypoglycemia? *The Arthurian Encyclopedia* cites a 1980 version of *Parzival* by the German experimental theatre group Workshop Moosach, which treats that hero as a case of schizophrenia.

As for Mordred, modern novelists who have in fact spoken up for him are Karr herself in her Arthurian detective story *Idylls of the Queen* and Mary Stewart in *The Wicked Day*. I don't think that Boardman's speculation that Mordred and Lancelot were originally the same will stand up. Mordred definitely belongs to the Orkney line. In the earlier material the king's best knight, as in much Celtic legend, was the king's sister's son, Gawain, who was also his heir (cf. Cuchulain and Roland, for example). Mordred, as evil nephew as well as bastard by incest, is a kind of Jungian Shadow of his heroic brother. In the later material, French poets replaced Gawain as champion with a French-born hero, Lancelot, in the process discarding the whole sister's-son motif. Since the two characters have different thematic resonances, it'd be difficult to point to a figure that might have been the common inspiration of both.

Karr's own piece, suggesting that Merlin was actually Arthur's evil genius, is plausible, well argued, and very entertaining. As far as I know, the only other suggestion that Merlin might not be entirely benign is Zelazny's "The Last Defender of Camelot." I cannot buy her allegorizing of Arthur's battle with the giant of St. Michael's Mount as a symbolic self-redemption; one might, however, do something with the Fisher King/Waste Land archetypes, as the film EXCALIBUR apparently did. The character has been made to fit into the Joseph or Arimathea legend, but to my mind is more plausibly read as a confusion between *Le Roi Pécheur* (Fisher King) and *Le Roi Pécheur* (Sinner King).

In Ruth Berman's account of Geoffrey Ashe's lecture and discussion, neither the distinguished scholar nor the usually astute Ruth apparently

INTERVIEW

DR. NORMA LORRE GOODRICH

WEEKEND EDITION, National Public Radio, April 1, 1989

Weekend Edition: As legend has it, the affairs of King Arthur were conducted around a legendary piece of furniture, a round table, but if Dr. Norma Goodrich is correct that legend may have to be re-written because of a mistaken translation of an Old French word, "rōonde." Dr. Goodrich, what exactly is the meaning of that word, rōonde?

Dr. Goodrich: Well, the meaning of the word has to be rotunda. The two dots over the O indicate that there is a consonant left out when the word came from Latin into French, and the only consonant that fits and would be the right gender would be a "t" and that would make it rotunda (rotonda).

WE: So no table.

Dr.G: No table, unfortunately, no.

WE: Dr. Goodrich is a retired professor of French and Comparative Literature and formerly a dean of the Claremont Colleges near Los Angeles in California. She joined us from her home in California. Your source on this is the twelfth-century writer Wace of Jersey.

Dr.G: Geoffrey's translator was Wace. Wace was supposed to be doing a translation for King Henry II of Geoffrey of Monmouth and he added some material of his own that somebody else must have given him, and he's the first person to have coined the phrase which then was erroneously translated as The Round Table when the French said nothing like it. The Old French said it was a "rotunda" built upon a platform. The platform would be the table, *tablee*. It would be a *tabled rotunda tabley* it should have

said.

WE: Let me ask you about another aspect of the Arthur legend or myth, take your choice, that's been developing in recent years. Harold Brooks Baker who's the publisher of *Burke's Peerage* is among those people who believe that if an excavation was carried out in Stirlingshire, which is midway between Glasgow and Edinburgh under a slagheap that's on some land that's owned by a maker of bathroom fixtures, he thinks that this is going to confirm the fact that King Arthur, if he existed, and of course Mr. Brooks Baker believes he did, was a Scot.

Dr.G: I think that Mr. Brooks-Baker is absolutely correct, and I'll tell you a secret. I think he got it from my book that was first published in 1986, *King Arthur*.

WE: Dr. Goodrich, what is there about Arthur that you find so compelling as an historical figure?

Dr.G: I suppose it's because I admire brave people. I am half English. I lost a great number of English cousins, in fact all the male English and American cousins of my family, in World War II in England; and I also think it's because I'm so tired of the dirty-fingernail theory of art [as in the movie EXCALIBUR where everybody rolls in the mud, as King Arthur, a noble Roman Commander-in-Chief of Hadrian's Wall, would certainly never have done] that I'm looking for someone who's worshipful, who's heroic. I suppose that has to be it.

[Dr. Goodrich is being honored by Scotland, is working on Queen Guinevere and will have six new books out by December.]*

caught a classic error in terminology: the query that described the characters in Arthurian literature as euhemerized Celtic gods. Euhemerism (from Euhemerus, the fourth-century B.C. scholar who invented the theory) is the opposite process: the deification of kings and heroes. This one goes right up there with "meteoric rise" and Sherlock Holmes's deductive reasoning' which is actually a process of *inductive* reasoning. "Meteoric rise" has caught on because there is no equivalent snappy phrase for the correct version (which should be some form of "to go up like a rocket"): the most familiar equivalent for the reverse of euhemerism is probably "rationalization," which is however used much more often in the psychiatric sense. Northrop Frye has used the term "displacement" for the adaptation of myth and metaphor to canons of morality or plausibility, which seems to be what the misusers of "ehemerism" have in mind.

To Gene Wolfe, who is working on a novel about a Lincoln-Mercury dealer involved with Morgan le Fay: if you need a Mordred, have I got a slightly used ex-Governor and Pontiac dealer for you! Sure, the stripped gears on the mouth need a little work, but the brain *has never been used!* Not even on Sundays. Come to think of it, especially not on Sundays.

Alexei Kondratiev's "White Phantom" was fascinating—to my mind, the best thing in the issue. For a similar perspective on Guinevere, see Charles T. Wood's "The Thrice-Unburied Guinevere" in AVALON TO CAMELOT, I,4 (Summer, 1984).

Joseph T. Major failed to do his homework properly on both Malory and Spenser. Malory was a supporter, not an opponent, of Warwick the Kingmaker and a foe, not a loyal subject, of King Edward IV. Spenser modeled his Prince Arthur not just on the Earl of Leicester but on his own employer Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton, and Sir Philip Sidney as well. The poet did not give up after six books but died shortly after his home was sacked by Irish rebels and burned to the ground; further books of *The Faerie Queene* may have been destroyed in the fire. As for his alleged unreadability, FQ has never been widely popular but Spenser is known as "the poet's poet" because practically every major English poet (and most of the minor) from his own time until our century has read him with delight.

Richard Brandt

Since a couple of your contributors mentioned Nikolai Tolstoy's *The Quest for Merlin*, your readers might be interested in a subsequent novel by the same author, *The Coming of the King—The First Book of Merlin*. Although set after the death of Arthur, it sets light on the less-than-chivalric reality of Sixth-Century Britain, in particular the gruesome practices and rituals of the Saxons and Norsemen.

Jon Singer objects to locating Avalon in the Somerset flats, and this reader immediately harkens back a few pages to Marion Zimmer Bradley's mention that Somerset was usually under water at the time—in fact, "part of a great brackish inland sea." Only in summer was it dry enough for pasturing—which tantalizingly suggests the region meets both of Jon's criteria for Avalon, traveling across the sea and a "disappearing island!"

PALTER'S PROPOSAL

Brian Earl Brown

Relocating the Jews to New Mexico would only create a new class of displaced New Mexicans and Native Americans. Besides the significance of the Wailing Wall is its location, not its existence. It wouldn't be the same in Tempe. [Tempe is in Arizona. A move there would, however, automatically make them all Gentiles (which is what Mormons, thick on the ground here, call non-Mormons. AJB)] A better solution would be to send all the Arabs in Israel to Detroit where there is already a large Arab community. It would have a far better chance of being assimilated over here than they ever would have been at the hands of their fellow Arabs.

Mark Blackman

David Palter's modest proposal on solving the Mid-East problem is none too Swift. (I note that he doesn't suggest relocating the "Palestinians" among their Arab brothers, you know, like the ones who annexed the West Bank "Palestinian" state in 1948—and by the way, "Arabic" is a language, not an ethnus.) In NIEKAS 38's "Laiskai," Anne Braude rightly points out the inherent flaw in relocating Israel to New Mexico; we'd then have a Navajo *intifada* and Palter making yet another modest proposal—where this time, the Gaspe Peninsula (as John Dalmas suggests)? Antarctica? (A quick note to Ben Indick—in 1903 the British government offered the Jews a homeland in, of all places, Uganda. It was, naturally, rejected; Zionism is about Zion.) On a more serious note, Palter is confusing the Arabs in Israel with those in the Territories—the former are Israeli citizens with full political rights (except the obligation of military service); in fact, the Israeli Consul in Atlanta is an Arab Israeli.

Joseph T. Major

The problem with David Palter's Polemic is that in *A Modest Proposal* Swift gave some real suggested solutions to Ireland's problems, which he hoped would have attention called to them by contrast with the "horrifying shocking" solution of child-eating. (It was also a metaphor for how he perceived the relationship between England and Ireland, but...) That few, if any did, being horrified and shocked, not to mention showing themselves unperceptive, was not Swift's fault.

Were we to take his proposal seriously, the answer would be much the same as that to the earlier proposals to set up a Jewish National Home in Uganda or Birobidzhan: "Israel is the Land of the Book that the Jews are the People of." Besides, with reference to Israeli politics and his suggestion of getting a political party to sponsor it—the reason for the current prominence of the Likud coalition is Menachem Begin's decision to appeal to the Sephardi Jews, many of whom had been expelled from Arab countries around 1948 (or had had parents who had been, etc.) and who had not been well off previously. As a result, they were not overly fond of the Arabs. Join to that the attitude of the

religious Jews and you have a considerable obstacle.

By the way, the recent Israeli election has resulted in a Knesset which includes 40 members of the Likud and a total of 18 for the religious parties, out of 120. Funny how that worked out, no?

As for relocating the Western Wall—the entire Temple Mount is the holy place, the Western Wall is just the only surviving part of the temple. Orthodox Jews will not visit the Dome of the Rock, not because of any anti-Muslim feelings or dislike of other religions, but because while doing so, it would be possible to pass over the site of the Holy of Holies in the Temple—where only the High Priest could go.

Thus, one can say that Palter's proposal fails to take into account the general trend of Israeli politics and significant trends in Judaism. It is probably just as well that his modest proposal for a final solution to the Jewish problem in the Middle East was not meant to be taken seriously.

Felice Maxam

[Palter's] got a lot of half truths and misconceptions in [Palter's Polemics], and having been at the Jewish Federation for over two years now I might be able to work up as much as an article. I'd treat it as a serious proposal and lay out my personal objections to it. (NM is a lot closer to Alabama than Israel is and given the relative viciousness I'd rather deal with Arabs than with the Ku Klux Klan). If we could treat it as a serious proposal I think we could work up some non-acrimonious discussion.

Richard Brandt

Regarding the Israel-to-New Mexico transplant, a bit of legal trivia I picked up from a sheriff's deputy when cattle trespassed on a friend's yard: the entire state is still considered open range, which means a rancher's open stock are free to roam over any land that isn't fenced in. If you don't enclose your territory, a rancher can't be held liable for any damage his cattle do to your property if they should wander onto it. Of course, I suppose the Israelis would be protective of their borders....

David Palter

I wish to reply to the comments on my column in NIEKAS 37. I am grateful to Ben Indick for expressing appreciation of at least part of my article. He is so far the only reader of NIEKAS to express any appreciation of either of my two articles published to date. Ben Indick also asks, "David would not be on the level, would he?" Well, I have to reply that I'm not really on the level in the sense that this is not a serious political proposal. I am well aware of the fact that it will never be adopted and cannot be done.

The population of Israel would never agree to it and it is a pipe dream. On the other hand I am on the level in another sense, which is that I do sincerely believe that this would be a better solution for the problems of the Middle East than anything that is presently being attempted. If I compare the NIEKAS plan to what we can now expect, which is an indefinite continuation of the bloodshed and strife that exists in that region, I would say the NIEKAS plan is better.

But no, it is not serious in the sense I am actually going to try to implement it. I realize that it is a hopeless dream.

A number of people expressed skepticism about the feasibility of my proposal. Two people found it doubtful on the grounds that the Indian population already living in New Mexico would not wish to be displaced by Israeli settlers, and two people expressed skepticism on the grounds that the water supply of New Mexico is insufficient to accommodate that quantity of added immigration. As far as the first objection goes, to my knowledge the state of New Mexico does have a substantial amount of real estate that is not inhabited by Indians.

The population density of NM is something on the order of 100 times less than that of the region currently inhabited by Israel. Nobody has to be thrown out of their present habitation, grazing lands, or whatever. I think that simply by using the proceeds from the sale of Israel to Saudi Arabia the immigrants could purchase on the open market, without coercing anybody, suitable real estate in NM to make possible such a relocation, without harming, inconveniencing, oppressing, or displacing a single person. [In calculating acceptable population density, remember that it takes about 10 sq. mi. of grazing land to support one cow in this environment. AJB]

The shortage of water would be a harder problem to solve but it is not insoluble. Israel itself, in the Middle East, does not have an adequate natural water supply but it has countered this by building desalinization plants which process water from the Mediterranean. Admittedly it isn't as easy in NM which does not have a sea coast, but one could build pipelines to bring water in from the Gulf of Mexico. There are other possibilities such as diverting a Canadian river.

The most troublesome criticism comes from Robert H. Knox who does not criticize my plan on the basis of being infeasible or being politically incorrect or unfair but simply criticizes it on the basis of it being about politics which he feels I have no business talking about in NIEKAS, which he states in very strong terms. And he explains it with this quotation from Humphrey Bogart: "I don't like disturbances in my place. Either you lay off politics or get out." I would like to point out to Robert H. Knox that there has been no disturbance in NIEKAS except for the disturbance that *he* is causing.

The other five people who wrote in and commented on my article were able to do so in a courteous manner in reasonable fashion. Four out of the five wrote in to express their skepticism and only one expressed any liking for the article but all five expressed themselves courteously and reasonably without causing any disturbances.

It is profoundly nauseating that he should have to be so nasty in expressing his disapproval. It would have been perfectly sufficient for him to say, "I would prefer not to have political discussions in NIEKAS." If he had said that I would have had to take it into consideration and would be aware that there is at least one reader who has expressed such a concern. He is not the only one.

I know for a fact that Mike Bastraw feels that I have strayed a bit far from the correct domain

of discussion in NIEKAS. That will influence my choice of subject matter because I am concerned about writing the kind of column that NIEKAS readers actually want to read.

There is no need to be insulting. My article is not insulting to anyone, is not vicious, unkind, immoral, or nasty. It does not merit invective and abuse such as he is heaping on me in his nasty and unpleasant letter of comment. It is also insulting to Ed Meskys who chose to publish it. I have no fear of controversy or argument. If someone wishes to say something pertinent about what I have said, or to propose a contrary viewpoint, or even if they objected to my skill as a writer, I would not be offended.

[We now bid a fond farewell to this field of discussion. MB]

OH, HORROR!

Joe Christopher

I enjoyed especially Don d'Ammassa's "The Haunted Library". I've read over half of his classic list of horror novels, but only one of his modern list. But let me comment about that one—George R.R. Martin's *The Armageddon Rag*—that when I read it, I thought of it as a Gothic novel—a dark fantasy, if you will—but I at least did not think of it as a horror novel; there was none of the suspense of the waiting-to-be-attacked sort, and none of the extreme gross-out scenes which I, at least, associate with the modern horror novel. I am evidently being too limited in my terminology. [See *Linkages*, p. 13 for more on *The Armageddon Rag*.]

I wish you would produce one of your special issues on horror fiction some time; if I had time, I'd like to write a note explaining that T.E.D. Klein was wrong when he wrote that "They Bite" was Anthony Boucher's best piece of Gothic fiction...I know—it's a matter of taste; but even when one cannot actually prove such a point, an argument clarifies what different people value.

By the way (and along the same line) I'd like to see d'Ammassa's explanation of why Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* does not belong in his classic list. I'd put it in there for historic reasons, if nothing else, but I'd like to know his reasons for keeping it out.

A sudden thought—if you do produce a special edition on horror fiction, I hope you get someone to do an annotated checklist of psychic sleuths—I've got over a half dozen volumes in that tradition, but I'm missing many, I'm sure.

Jane Yolen

As for Don d'Ammassa's list—well I suppose every reader's best ten would be different. I would have moved Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* up to #7 and where is James's *The Turn of the Screw* (a novella, you say?) and Jackson's *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*.

Brian Earl Brown

I do detest horror novels partly for the first reason Don d'Ammassa gives: the noting that most quest fantasy novels are rational and assume strong limits to evil which is not typical of dark fantasy. But I also dislike horror for more Calvinistic reasons. I don't think people should get their jollies off by playing on prurient fears of the readers.

B.Terry Jeeves

I suspect that Don d'Ammassa (in NIEKAS 37) was setting up straw men with his three complaints on horror fiction. Horror fiction may be non-rational but that tag can even be tied on mainline fiction which relies too much on coincidence or unbelievable motives. If it's a good yarn who cares about its plausibility?

Two. You can't steal writers from any genre. On that basis we lost Heinlein when he moved from hard-core SF to sociological themes.

Three. Horror fiction is formula fiction. So is one heck of a lot of all fiction. To me the valid objection to horror fiction was one he never quoted, my own point four. I dislike 99% of horror fiction. Certainly since SF demands a basic knowledge of some science it is harder to write than horror, where one only needs an idea before writing off in all directions. SF is not being marketed as horror, at least not in the UK. I've stopped looking the shelves marked "science fiction" as they are chock full of horror fantasy with not an SF title in sight. Because of this people now think that SF is horror and fantasy. Oh, horrors! [My local Waldenbooks puts some horror novelists under general fiction, some under mystery, some under sf/fantasy, and some under a new horror /occult category. Go figure. AJB]

Speaking of horrors, that's what I think of cartoon comic books of the Elfquest kind—immature and utterly twee. Bring back Pogo!

Milton Stevens

I can assure Don d'Ammassa that I am not one of those science fiction fans who resents any potential migration of SF writers to the horror field. As far as I am concerned, I hope Yog-Sothoth offers them a thousand loathsome contracts and Cthulhu drags them off to a pit filled with percentage-mad agents. Those scify writers have been overpopulating for years anyway. The basis of my feelings is that I still would like to keep up with the science fiction field, but I feel no similar urge when it comes to horror fiction. Back when I saw the movie WHO'S KILLING THE GREAT CHEFS OF EUROPE? it occurred to me that something similar might happen in the SF field. Some poor completest collector who hasn't been able to afford to eat in the last thirty years, might finally snap and go on a rampage. Now killing each writer in a manner appropriate to his work might be a challenge.

OH, CENSORSHIP!

Mark Blackman

I'm afraid Anne Braude is perpetuating misapprehension about the principle of freedom of thought. Reading the Constitution—which is as dangerous as reading the Bible; people find out what each *really* says—we find only: "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech." Saying that everyone has the legal right to have and voice an opinion is not the same as saying that every opinion is equally valid. Facts are facts, some questions do not have two sides, and some opinions are better-informed than others (which might even be based on delusions). And while errors of

thought may not be subject to governmental punishment, they sure as heck are fair game for debate. In other words, let them have their say, then try to demolish their arguments. Censorship is evil. (Ayatollah Khomeini's call for the murder of Salman Rushdie is the essence of censorship, if not its inevitable consequence.) [See Mathoms thish.] [You say you're taking issue with me and then proceed to restate my argument! AJB]

Anne points out, as do I in NIEKAS 36's (and Richard Brandt in NIEKAS 38's) Laiskai, the tricky question of how far we must go to protect others' rights to their opinions, even beliefs which may intrude on others' rights. At Hexacon last year, we learned that elsewhere in the hotel (in a private room far from us) was a meeting of the local Ku Klux Klan. Most outraged over this was perhaps John Boardman, one of the few white American Protestants at the con (that is, one of the few safe from being a Klan target), while Jews, blacks and Catholics were grudgingly saying the KKK had a right to peacefully assemble. We knew you can't selectively protect rights; the Constitution covers both us and the Klan—though it is especially distasteful when a group takes advantage of its liberties to advocate the abolition of others'.

Milton Stevens

Anne Braude's column in #37 made me realize that the theory of evolution wasn't taught in the public schools I attended. The Monkey Trial was mentioned in history classes, but the theory really wasn't explained. Despite all the furor about what is taught in public schools, anyone who didn't learn anything beyond public school information wouldn't know much of anything. Unfortunately, that's becoming increasingly true of colleges as well. Revisionists have been at work not to make the world the way they would like it, but to make it appear that the world always has been the way they would like it.

B. Terry Jeeves

Anne Braude stands up firmly for the anti-censorship brigade but then at the end admits that there must be a way to limit how freedom of thought for A allows him to defame B, which I have long argued with those who say blithely, "I'm against censorship in any shape or form." There is always some area of human life where they will draw a personal line. The rabid cuss-word user or avid porno fan limits his language and doesn't pass his books to his own mother. A recent video mag editor wrote, "I'm against censorship in any shape or form," and then went on to demand some form of control over video nasties. The catch is that censorship means different things to different people. Incidentally, I gather that Anne advocates censoring creationism out of existence. I support that view but it's just another form of censorship even if it is censorship of wacky ideas. See what I mean?

Richard Brandt

David Palter does go to extremes with censorship, suggesting that Creationism and Holocaust revisionism are ideas sufficiently dangerous to warrant it. No way, David—once you

admit such a thing in principle, then the same argument can be used against anything the speaker considers dangerous—pornography, blasphemy, Darwinism, or remarks inimical to the best interests of the party in power.

Ideas aren't dangerous in and of themselves—only to the extent to which their advocates can incite action based on them. Even then the question remains—dangerous to whose interests, anyway? To refer back to our own history—if you can convince a majority of the public that the government should be overthrown—then does that government have a right to exist? Sedition laws notwithstanding—and if you can't convince them, then laws against seditious speech don't hold water. So said Oliver Wendell Holmes in a dissenting opinion, and he was Mr. Clear and Present Danger himself. [But most revolutions are the work of a minority including the U.S. rebellion against British rule. ERM]

Applying the same principle to any form of speech that frightens you is left as an exercise for the reader.

The distinction David fails to draw is between the power of free speech, which must be absolute, and the right to listen, which is at the discretion of the listener. No one can forbid creationists access to a printing press; however no one can force an editor to buy a manuscript or a librarian to buy a book which they believe to be of dubious value. You may see a thin line between pulling a book off the shelves because someone finds it offensive and just against stocking it, but there's no free speech issue here. Just as a school system should be free to decide to teach biology based on the consensus of contemporary scientific thought, and not be pressured to present the views of a fanatical fringe minority. [But what about an area where funnymentalists have total control of a school system and by consensus teach such nonsense? ERM] Recent history shows that disseminators of crackpot science and hate literature are perfectly capable of reaching a sympathetic audience by the publishing and distribution means available in our free-market society. No need for the State to step in and decide our kids should be force-fed what's gospel.

To me, a library is perfectly justified in deciding *Omaha, the Cat Dancer* doesn't belong on its shelf—but to raid a book store and persecute its owner for selling the same work is an outrage (just to pick a recent real-life example). Preventing the public from exercising its willing access to controversial speech—which it clearly demonstrates by laying down its bucks or its library card at the checkout—is a clear contravention of the principles of the First Amendment, whether we're talking here about pornography, THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST, revisionist history, Joe Bob Briggs, THE COLOR PURPLE, or white-supremacist propaganda.

In the meantime, I don't read *The Myth of the Six Million* for the same reason I don't read Terry Brooks....

Because I don't have to.

I might have saved myself some time by simply referring David to Anne Braude's letter, and her illustration of "how frail a barrier" protects of what we like to think of as fundamental liberties.

Little quibble, though, Anne: Cocteau's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST was certainly not made during the silent era. [As I realized when I saw it for the first time in a decade a few weeks ago—remembered the subtiles but not the dialogue. AJB]

Anne Braude

David Palter seems to think—he's a bit ambiguous—that in my last Mathoms I was advocating denial of First Amendment protection to creationism, Holocaust revisionism, and the Ku Klux Klan et al. Actually I was asking a lot of difficult questions without proposing any definite answers. I am serious about the First Amendment, as my Laiskai remarks a couple of pages after David's in that same issue indicate; but I am really uncomfortable about granting its protection to outright provable lies. The most satisfactory compromise I can come up with is some sort of truth squad, functioning like the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal in its pursuit of pseudoscience. I don't think creationists should be silenced, but I do think that they should be told kindly but firmly that what they do bears no relationship to scientific behavior and they may not call themselves creation scientists.

I think that all news stories about Holocaust revisionism should be accompanied by a disclaimer pointing out that that basic premise has been proved false in court as well as at the bar of history. And hatemongers who claim that they are objective and unbiased should be told to their faces that they are lying. On the other hand, I cannot go along with Richard Brandt who opposes censorship of pornography because it is 'harmless entertainment.' Richard, you should read *Beyond Belief*, Emlyn Williams' account of the lives of Ian Brady and Myra Hindley, perpetrators of England's infamous Moors Murders, which shows how sadistic pornography can be far from harmless. But what I am primarily concerned with is the promulgation, as fact and scholarship, of vicious anti-Semitism and doctrines asserting the inherent inferiority of certain races, sexes, cultures, etc. (cf. Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasure of Man*).

I'm not (she said for the thousandth time) denying anyone the right to question anything; but I am denying the right of factual error or downright falsehood to misrepresent itself as truth. It is perfectly legitimate, for example, to try to prove that Christianity is preferable to Islam if you make your case by reason and example, comparing their doctrines and the good and the harm they motivate their followers to do. (800 years ago you could have made as convincing a case for Islam's moral superiority to Christianity; and Buddhism may be ahead of both on points.) It is not legitimate argument, however, to assert that anyone who accepts the divinity of Christ is by definition morally superior to anyone who doesn't and to call this opinion "evidence." When geologists have painstakingly disproved every creationist misrepresentation of the fossil record, should creationists not be challenged as ignorant, unfair, or dishonest when they refuse to acknowledge the fact? The real problem is our abysmal national

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letters to us

Laiskai



William Rotsler

Send letters of comment to *Laiskai*, Niekas Publications, RFD 2, Box 63, Center Harbor, NH 03226-9729. Addresses will be omitted upon request.

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On October, 1988, after "short vacation," Volgograd SFFC "The Wind of Time" renewed its activity.

Nearly 100 fans came for opening ceremonies. They met with young SF author Sergey Siniakin from Volgograd and had SF translator Aleksandr Korzhenevsky from Moscow.

The organizers are planning regular video SF viewings, meetings with SF writers, pen-palling with Soviet and foreign clubs and fans. There will be a public library with books in Russian and in English.

We want to get your magazine NIEKAS but don't have western money. I offer to exchange SF information and various SF items, books, postcards, posters, etc.

Milton Stevens
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Ed and Anne Braude deal with the idea that the German language lends itself to autocracy and intolerance. I have my doubts about the idea. The Dutch have a very similar language, (some have considered it a dialect of German) yet the Dutch have a considerable history of being tolerant and non-autocratic. Of course, there

are a couple of important differences between the Dutch and the Germans. The Dutch are a seafaring people. By nature seafarers see a lot of different places and people. They get used to diversity and come to associate it with money. This puts tolerance on a very firm foundation. The Germans are much more of a land oriented people, and they also had The Thirty Years War. The Thirty Years War has warped German history ever since. Long and hard fought wars seem to inspire intolerance and autocracy. The long struggle of the Spaniards against the Moors is another example. I'm sure someone will mention the Boers in South Africa as a counter example to what I have said about the Dutch. The Boers settled into a land-locked existence centuries ago, and the Boer War was enough to traumatize them into an inflexible position. I suspect things would be much different in South Africa if the Boer War hadn't happened.

Piers Anthony's guest of honor speech was an excellent item. Each time I thought he was going to open himself up for a quibble he managed to avoid it. This makes for brief comments.

I also thought that Tamar Lindsay's comparison of CROCODILE DUNDEE and Peter Pan was quite well done. It's certainly not an association which would readily come to mind.

Brian Earl Brown
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Anne Braude says nothing new about fantasies and the best solution to the lack of original mysteries to steal for fantasy novels is not the *Kabbalah* or any such things so much as the destruction of this entire incestuous and parasitic

genre.

CROC DUNDEE as *Peter Pan* makes odd interesting sense. I also enjoyed Tamar Lindsay's review of BEETLEJUICE.

I wish someone had provided a picture of Mr. Diplock's Speedrails as I still can't quite see how they work and I wish SaM would stop citing an illustration as proof that Wells' ironclads were tracked. Since when did an artist know any more about an invention than the rest of us? When has the author ever corrected an artist's interpretation of a story however inaccurate? [SaM's point is that the artist was contemporary with the first appearance of the story, before he had real tanks to influence him, and he drew something which could be interpreted as threads. ERM]

Anne Braude asks if I would have reacted differently if she had cited Steiner as a source for her comment on the German national character. I might have given it a bit more thought but I don't think so because now you're blaming the Holocaust on the German language. [No, I'm not; and neither is Steiner. But language does provide an image of mental process. A friend of mine recently pointed out that it's difficult to express mild dislike in Arabic, but if you want to express intense loathing the language provides an embarrassment of riches. AJB]

Joe Christopher

I thought my poems were very nicely presented; a thank you to everybody concerned, including Margaret B. Simon for the mysterious facial and leaf-pattern for "Five Songs of Bragdon Wood."

By the way, I also need to thank Jane T. Sibley for that marvelous parody she drew, for my "Sylvie's Song of Young Adulthood," back in NIEKAS 36, of Harry Furniss's depictions of Sylvie.

I wish Pat Mathews had given bibliographic citations of the books she discussed.

I'd like to see an article on SF related tapes/records. I know the Off Centaur people in California and I've bought a tape or two from them in the past, "The Austin Ditty Limits" filk singing for example. I wonder if there is a tape anywhere of Theodore Sturgeon singing "Thunder and Roses" or Manly Wade Wellman singing "Vandy, Vandy" or of Marion Zimmer Bradley singing her "Rivendell Suite." One of my favorite memories of the only worldcon I've ever attended was in Chicago back in the 50's, is of crashing a party given by the San Francisco people, The Elves, Gnomes, and Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder, and Marching Society, and sitting on the floor near Theodore Sturgeon listening to him play his guitar and sing. [See Bumbejimas thish; the "Rivendell Suite" exists but I don't have it. I, too, would like tapes of all the items mentioned. ERM]

The "Magic Lantern" column has problems these days with all the video tapes out. Besides current reviews do you suppose you could occasionally run some suggestions about some of the available early movies? I suppose I'd have to say that my favorite SF movie is THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT [It is also somewhat of a rarity: a truly funny SF film. MB] which indicates the difficulties in making lists. Anyway I watched Walt Disney's THE THREE CABAL-

LEROS for the first time since it was round initially in 1944. The only sequence I had remembered was the dance and/or march of the cacti, Señorita, and Donald Duck at the end, but what struck me was how after the excellent inset cartoons at the first the Brazil and Mexico sequences had a lot of reddish monochromes in them. I remember reading once that the film was intended to make money in Latin America during World War II when the European audience was not available, but it also seems obvious that the Disney organization needed to get the film out in a hurry, probably for financial reasons. [About 20 years ago, at a NESFA meeting, I saw an old Disney documentary about how a bunch of cartoonists were sent to Latin America on a charter plane to get the feel of the culture because the people were important allies in WWII. Of course no mention was made of commercial considerations. I remember they made a big deal of creating a parrot character whom they said would play an important role in future Disney cartoons. I believe he was used a bit but seems to have disappeared. ERM] Ah well, it's got some nice sequences in it. My grandson laughed aloud a number of times.

(Just as the drug cultures took up Disney's FANTASIA a decade ago for the sake of its dance of the mushrooms so I can see some of the homosexual cultures liking this for the song "We're the gay caballeros" and the bit with the three animated protagonists on women's legs. Isn't it amazing the difference 40 years makes in how we perceive things?)

Ruth Berman
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Anne Braude mentions an interest in Urban Fantasy. I'd recommend a recent (1987) book of this sort—well, sort of this sort—by a friend of mine, Eleanor Arnason's *The Daughter of the Bear King* (Avon). A bit over half of the book takes place in the other-worlds involved, but large chunks take place in Minneapolis (with an excursion into St. Paul). In addition to the carefully drawn maps of other worlds you expect to find in a fantasy novel where the characters do a good deal of traveling, this one thoughtfully provides the reader with a map of Minneapolis (and a bit of St. Paul). The other-worldly beings who try to cope (with varying degrees of success) with Minneapolis include a human woman, the ghost of a computer built in her world by wizards who studied the theories of the Victorian mathematician Charles Babbage, a dragon (actually a pterodactyl), and some Anasazi Indians.

Jane Yolen
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I am highly amused at W. Ritchie Benedict's ambivalent review of my novel *Sister Light, Sister Dark*, though my amusement was somewhat strained with his reaching for comparisons with those great literary works THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK and JAWS. Surely he can do better than that when looking for works in which a hero confronts—and tries to integrate—the dark side. How about LeGuin in both the Wizard of Earthsea trilogy very explicitly and a bit more on the sinister side (pun defi-

nitely intended) in *The Left Hand of Darkness*? I would, though, like to start an argument about his contention that this book (or any book) has a "feel" of a woman's book. Does he mean that because the author and protagonist are women, only women would be interested? Should I then never have been interested in a story which the author and hero (and the hero's buddies) are male? I'd love to hear from your readers on this subject. I'm sure that MZB and Susan Shwartz and Ursula LeGuin would have lots to say. Diana Paxson? Ruth Berman? Esther Friesner?

Cuyler W. Brooks, Jr.
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I agree with Moskowitz that Eric Pape should have been in the *Bibliographical Dictionary of Science Fiction and Fantasy Art*—but what about Franklin Booth? If only for *Flying Islands of the Night*?

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Laura Todd has a fine idea on recycling. However, I did my own recycling out of discards at Overhead Door during the 21 years I worked there, to such effect that I probably have a lifetime supply of letter-paper, manuscript paper, three-ring binders, and enough envelopes for the next several years. I've done my review columns for two magazines since 1983 on carbon-sets discarded by Overhead, and there's enough left for another year or two. All of this, mind you, was being thrown out. While most corporations may not be that wasteful, I should think that anyone working for a medium-sized company could acquire enough discards to avoid the need for buying recycled products. I never took a thing that wasn't sitting in hallways waiting for the cleaners to remove to the incinerator; companies discard an incredible amount of useful material. (Of course, salvaging in quantity requires someplace to store the stuff until needed; that's one reason why we now have a ten-room house.)

Jane Yolen's letter makes me wonder if perhaps the younger fantasy fans aren't as well-read as us older ones? A lot of fans don't even seem well-read in our own genre; as a huckster I can guarantee that the books that sell best are the recent ones; the older classics are ignored. This could be, of course, because the customers already have read them, but a lot of younger fans don't seem to recognize titles or authors who were active before that fan's entrance into fandom. Certainly the fans I know personally, young or old, are either widely read or trying to make up for a previous lack of reading, but then, I'm not likely to be attracted to people who aren't.

Fawn Fitter
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On the subject of Heinlein's death, I, like Dave Waalkes, found that few people knew who I was talking about when I mentioned it. When I first heard the news (on the radio), I was driving home from Cape Cod with a carful of friends and, to everyone's uncomprehending surprise,

burst into tears. Then I had to explain why the death of someone I never knew affected me so deeply.

Anne Braude, I have my first, last and only nominee to the vacant throne....may I present to you the incomparable Spider Robinson? He is adept at Heinlein's specialty of taking a strong character who might just be someone you know and plunking him or her down in a situation almost-but-not-quite recognizable as "real." Sure, he's obsessed with the concept of telepathy as a way of overcoming the loneliness of the human brain, forever locked alone inside the skull, but that's a universal problem, and one he deals with in so many different ways that I never tire of wondering what he'll hit me with next. If that doesn't convince you, he also likes Tom Waits, the Apple Macintosh and atrocious puns. Anyone who can write three whole books—*Callahan's Crosstime Saloon*, *Time Travelers Strictly Cash* and *Callahan's Secret*—based entirely on word games has my respect and quite a lot of envy as well. Now I'm going to make my usual request for help finding an out-of-print book, this one Mr. Robinson's Melancholy Elephants, a collection of 12 short stories published by Penguin Canada in 1984 and by Tor Books in 1985, adding two stories for a total of 14. I'm looking for the Tor edition but will accept either one. This is meant as a gift for my closest friend; I will pay any price with heartfelt gratitude, so feel free to bleed me dry in the name of sentimental value.

Robert Bloch, I am a member of "today's generation of young fans," and I find NIEKAS' literacy both intelligible and relieving. Just because I'm fresh out of college doesn't necessarily mean I'm illiterate, or un-literate, which is worse. Not knowing how to read is not a sin, but being able to read well and still not reading is, in my opinion, utterly unforgivable. Being able to read well, but not write well, on the other hand, is all too common.

Speaking of writing, may I jump on the bandwagon in defense of Amnesty International? I have been a member of the Urgent Action Network for almost three years now and in that time have written at least two letters a month on behalf of people imprisoned, tortured, *ad nauseum*, for the peaceful, non-violent expression of their political beliefs. A.I. sends me the cases of journalists because I am a member of that profession and tend to believe that freedom to disseminate information, abridged even a bit, is like being "a little bit pregnant." While it may be true that most of my letters have had no impact, several of "my" prisoners have been released, and I would like to think I have had some small, direct impact on their fates. It's all very nice to sit by and say "Oh, I can't do anything in the cause of human rights," but these monthly letters are something tangible that can be done, and is being done, and is working.

Finally, again directed to Anne, I enjoy reading your pieces, tho I don't always agree with them, but was it really necessary to recite your entire academic resume in your letter? I'm proud of my own academic achievements and am not above boasting about them from time to time when appropriate, but I'm not even remotely tempted to compare myself to J. Danforth Quayle, admittedly a featherweight (couldn't resist) in the mental-processes cate-

gory.

Thanks for letting this sf enthusiast (I don't really consider myself a fan) put her two cents worth in—pleasure to join this illustrious collection, and you're all cordially invited to my next “call the landlord and shave the cat” shin-dig. [I was trying to make a point about the decline in academic standards and expectations, not about the wonderfulness of me. The point is that I had available a multitude of options that probably aren't offered at most schools today, and academic achievement standards were high. Between my college years and Quayle's, somebody invented the pass/fail system, and it's been downhill ever since. AJB]

Joseph T. Major

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In Bumbejimas [NIEKAS 37] Ed says, “Alternate histories are a major subcategory in sf and often done quite well.” I would disagree with the second half of that statement. To write a good alternate history requires thorough knowledge of a great many factors, and a careful and reasoned judgment on how the real actors would react to changed circumstances. Even someone who knows some of the relevant history very well may slip up. The example that comes to mind is S.M. Stirling’s wish-fulfillment dream *Marching Through Georgia*. He apparently knows his South African history but so much of his work comes out as “they will do it because it is convenient to my plot.” Thus, time is compressed, material barriers are ignored, political realities are overleapt, all in the name of “but this is an alternative history! It is different!”

Referring to Ed’s example: he was let down by the reader as the name of the author is spelled Jerry Y-U-L-S-M-A-N and “she” is a he. Moreover, Yulsman is only marginally aware of history outside the English-speaking countries. The political history of Germany is incredibly tangled and hard to discuss. One relevant point is that by 1930, due to the Depression, Germany was already in political trouble. The government could not pay the legally required and constitutionally protected pensions. This led to the era of “government by decree,” where laws and budgets were passed not by the Reichstag (the parliament) but by Presidential decree on the submission of the cabinet, which itself was only nominally responsible to the Reichstag.

A German government faced with irreconcilable arch-nationalists on one flank and Communists on the other, while dealing with a “evil-Huns-want-to-conquer-the-world” attitude abroad, would have to be run by a genius to survive, much less succeed. Of course, in the real world, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning did do much of what Yulsman has his German government doing, including concessions in the field of rearmament—but then he was also working without reference to the faction-ridden Reichstag, and was eventually undermined by President Hindenburg’s advisor Franz von Papen and War Minister General Kurt von Schleicher. (Nothing of this is dependent on the Nazis, by the way.) However, one wonders—was it the conflict between the two extremist rejectionist parties that enabled the “middle” (and describing the Social Democratic Party [of the 1920’s]

and the German National People’s Party as “middle-of-the-road” really stretches that term a ways) to survive as long as it did?

The greatest beneficiaries of a no-Nazis situation seem most likely to have been the Communists. A great many Nazis were called “beef-steak” Nazis—brown outside, red inside—and the relationship between the totalitarian parties was closer than their propagandists would sometimes admit. Of course, one could then wonder how Stalin would have reacted to a Communist government beyond his control, and how the German Communist leader Thälmann would have handled conservatives, Trotskyites, and the inevitable British, French, and even perhaps American reaction to the “evil-red-Huns-who-want-to-conquer-the-world.”

There is another alternative assuming “no-Nazis,” though. In 1923, as the German mark began its final plunge towards a conversion rate of 4.2 trillion to the dollar, the French had an interesting idea. Why not, they said, break up Germany? Set up an independent Kingdom of South Germany under the reign of the popular Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, and so stop having to worry about the united industrial and population might of *le Boche*.

The *Landesstathalter* of Bavaria, Gustav Ritter von Kahr, was sounded out and declared himself favorable to the idea. Accordingly, he laid plans, sounded out people of his own, and was on the verge of success when the central government declared martial law and took over. The reason? It seems that General Ludendorff and this ex-P.F.C.-unemployed-painter got together in a beer hall and started a commotion.

Thus, if no Nazis, then no Beer Hall Putsch, therefore a Germany divided not by East and West, but by North and South. (Might be a novel in that.) In conclusion, I might well say that the problem in assuming that an author has worked out something which does not seem apparent to you is that it is all too often the case that he has not. [A North/South division would be plausible, as it would follow the Protestant/Catholic division. Another factor is the lack of strong democratic traditions and institutions in pre-war Germany, which had been mostly under aristocratic rule until after WWI. AJB]

Pat Mathews overestimates the desirability of linkages in “Of Robots and Worms.” The recent trend of Asimov’s newly combined Robots-Foundation series has been towards a theme of “R. Daneel, Secret Master of the Galaxy,” replacing the Robot series’s theme of concern for the questions of “What makes a human human?”, and the Foundation series’s theme of “Learning and using the scientific laws of history.” It was a lessening of the series to merge them, I think.

Much the same applies to Heinlein’s merger of all his work into the “World-As-Myth” metaseries. This merger showed up how much his main characters had become like each other. In addition, it again eroded much of the basis of the later parts of the series; in *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* Heinlein turned the entire series into “they succeeded because Lazarus Long came back in time and told them what to do”—turning the series into something on the order of “They” stretched out to novel-length.

I could take more nit-picking issues with

Shea, but I really should not. I did find his description of the rigid class structure of Pern very much to the point, and one that writers and fans should take into consideration.

Tamar Lindsay is to be complimented. In her “A Tale of Two Crocs” she has made a significant addition to the ranks of FLT’s. (A term defined by Darrell Schweitzer: “Frivolous Literary Theories,” or the literary theory as work of art. The next step beyond deconstructionism, adding humour to its scanting attitude to the original.)

Ruth Berman should read the chapter in Winston Churchill’s *Great Contemporaries* on Kaiser Wilhelm II. WSC thought the Kaiser an intelligent man who had been ruined by, essentially, no one ever saying “no” (or perhaps “nein” strictly speaking). And when one is insulated by fans praising certain parts of one’s work, one tends to favour them. (For example, I have heard a rumour to the effect that Virginia Heinlein went through all her husband’s mail and removed anything of a negative tone. If true, this would be a prominent example of this and we have deplored the results of getting only positive feedback in this case.)

Bastraw’s Bastion: Bastraw describes The Thrill of expecting a new Heinlein story and repeats the Robinsonian saw “mediocre Heinlein is still better than no Heinlein.” Uncritical admirers like Bastraw and the person referenced above do a writer little good. Indeed, it could be said that such a statement calls into question the speaker’s ability to determine even mediocrity, much less quality.

For my own part, the last seventeen years of Heinlein’s life and writing career produced not “The Thrill” but “The Dread”—how bad will this one be? How much dialogue-with-himself conversation will there be—90% of the text, or more? How many women will declare their highest calling and sole reason for existence is to provide children for the Perfect Man? How many times will these women call their Perfect Lover “darling?” Will there be an ending to the story, or even a plot? How much wish-fulfillment “Make it din’t happen” magic will there be?

Example of the last: The one scene in *Methuselah’s Children* where Lazarus Long breaks down in grief contains a comparison of his loss to “when his mother died.” What is done in *The Number of the Beast* pretty much washes out that scene—and *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* only exacerbates the problem. Why a writer would want to vitiate one of the best examples of his ability to convey grief is a puzzle at best.

It seems that the “World-As-Myth” metaseries has become an extended wish-fulfillment dream in which there are no enemies. Who is the antagonist in *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*? At least in *TNotB* R.A.H. gave some very obscure and “cute” clues in the names of the ostensible villains. Since I am not Spider Robinson (who was told this, boasted *in print* of having been told, and did not say), I will tell you that they are all anagrams of one or another variations on the names of Robert or Virginia Heinlein. An honest approach to the subject (in a way), but in yet another way indicating that the whole book is pointless.

I once dreamed of a future “World-As-Myth” metaseries novel in which Laz nixes the rescue

of his father, followed by a famine, Laz's feet swelling up, and finally a totally unexpected and universal computer dump which says "Seek out the unclean thing"—oh, you heard that one?

Bad writing is bad writing no matter who does it. When it is done by one who once did such good writing, the contrast only serves to make it seem all the worse.

Felice Maxam

[past Hugo-winning editor of NIEKAS]

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I will remark on the art in NIEKAS. [Though] as you know, I have the art appreciation of the average turtle. But I really did enjoy its skill and topicality, in the sense that it related to the articles it illustrated, qualities of all the art in #37, and also the way in which it was presented. Good repro, you know. I felt it really contributed to the content as well as being pleasing to the eye.

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England

The cover on #37 was striking and I preferred it to the rear illo. Oh, I liked that one too. Very reminiscent of an illo to an early Campbell or Smith yarn in ASTOUNDING—it could have been used for a Skylark or Lensman tale. But the front was clear, neat, and well presented. Interior art (with the exception of the Gincas heading) was both well varied and well drawn, and well presented for that matter.

Turning to Bumbejimas I find I both agree and disagree with some of your comments. Not violently, I hasten to add. Just a difference of viewpoint. I support you entirely against the attitude you mention for Jane Yolen criticizing you for praising a particular story. There is no such animal as a story praised by all or panned by all. If you like the story then you have every right to praise it. If Jane criticized you for praising a story by an outsider that's even worse. [I really goofed in expressing myself! Jane had criticized me not for praising the story but for dividing writers into "insiders" and "outsiders." Your viewpoint is closer to hers than to mine and I must admit the right of it. ERM]

Where I disagree mildly with you in referring to Miss Jacqueline Suzanne as a trash novelist. Now I know nothing of the lady's writings, never having read anything by her. If I did I might well give her a zilch mark on my own rating scale, but presumably someone must like her stuff if a publisher will buy and publish it. So it can't be trash to everybody. Take a parallel. R.A. Lafferty is loved by many yet I can't abide him. The fact that he is trash to me doesn't mean that it would be fair to label him as a "trash writer" in a general article or review. Opinion aren't facts is the message. Even if the majority holds similar ones. The earth wasn't flat even when everyone believed firmly that it was. The title to Anne Braude's piece sums it up. We're all entitled to ridiculous opin-

ions provided they don't contradict fact. [Again I goofed! I meant "trash" not as a subjective evaluation but as the category of soft core porn with no redeeming value in the best-seller genre, perhaps with a touch of the Harlequin novel. I am afraid that I was unfair to the author by going on general impressions of reputation without reading any of her books. This is as bad as mundanes criticizing sf as trash without reading any. ERM] [Mike—Ed is trapped in The Valley of the Dolls. Now's the our chance for a coup. AJB] [And he'll never see it coming unless that blasted dog talks. MB]

Re: Piers Anthony's reluctance to write "set the man free" letters to a terrorist country, I tend to agree with him. If world opinion cannot get someone like Terry Waite free what chance is there for a letter from a virtual unknown?

Shea on Pern: Sorry, the Pern potboilers put me off. Apart from their twee, formula, reboiling of cabbages, I fail to see how the threads didn't manage to get a total stranglehold on Pern in the days before the colonists arrived.

Moskowitz: looking at the illo reprints I can't see plainly visible what you would call treads. I can see a big wheel with a giant tooth on it and a stretch of crushed ground or shadow, but no tread. Likewise for the fig. 2 illo: wheels yes, treads no. He may well be right about the existence of treads in the yarn he mentions but the illos don't bear him out.

Tamar Lindsay

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I see by the letter column that some people appear to have misunderstood why I write what I do.

I am well aware that the movies I like are often panned by reviewers. That is the reason I began writing these things—to tell people why I thought the movie did not deserve to be panned.

The usual movie review is a teaser intended

to get the reader interested enough to go see the movie, at best giving just enough information to use for the decision. And I know that, for some people, being told the plot blow-by-blow will spoil the movie for them. However, I don't write movie reviews—I write movie explications. The method of an explication is to give every detail so that the reader can understand the point I am trying to make without having to go out and find the movie.

People who don't want to know what happens can skip over my stuff. People who, like me, do want to know at least whether a movie is suitable for children or upsetting to the sensitive, can find out.

By way of precedent, I can point to a magazine of the sixties, SCREEN STORIES, which printed exact novelezations of movies while it was still possible to use that information to make viewing choices. I know I found it helpful.

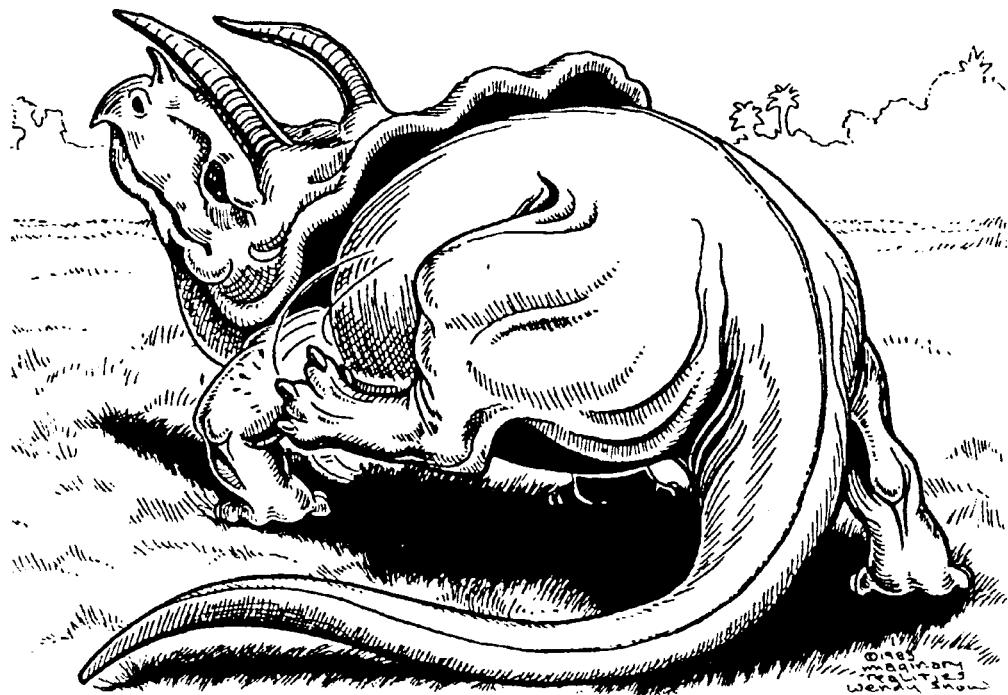
Mark L. Blackman

1745 East 18th Street Niekas #4A

Brooklyn, NY 11229

Fred Lerner wonders "what motivation will our descendants have for thawing us out," and, to be sure, the idea that the living don't want to be usurped by those they've supplanted was used on the Doctor Who episode "Resurrection of the Daleks". On the other hand, Frederik Pohl, in a recent column in SF CHRONICLE, comes up with a rather nasty motivation for preserving Ronald Reagan and "all the other politicians and CEO's and leaders of every kind to whom we have entrusted the running of our country for the last decade or two"—to thaw them out after the economy and the environment have been destroyed and say, "Hey, look what you did."

WAHF: Mark Maurer, Andre Norton, Phyllis Ann Karr, Eleanor Parker, Paul Demazioquio and Dick Spelvin.*



Wendy Snow-Lang

BUMBEJIMAS, continued from Page 3 across the horizon and back. Or will the mines and mass driver for the L-4 and L-5 factories to build solar power stations be located on the limb? If so, she should have mentioned that. Actually her words about the two-week-long Lunar night immediately preceding this would make "sunrise" a more logical event to mention.

In "Voyager" the spacecraft wonders if anyone is listening to the information it is sending back. "Lightship" is the solar power satellite beaming microwaves to a clean, unpolluted earth and to other factories in orbit. In "Planet Bound Lovers" Diana Gallagher has the wife of a shuttle pilot dream of the future when she will be able to go out too. The "Mass Driver Engineer" brings minerals back from the asteroid belt. Leslie Fish finishes the album with two more songs: "Sentries," about machines which automatically watch the skies for us from orbit, and "Witnesses' Waltz," about the million or more who gather to watch a shuttle's return. The former is somewhat unclear, but I thought the sentries are watching for hostile aliens. The last song is one of the best and ends the album on a really positive note.

Not every song is equally moving for me, nor will you necessarily be moved by the same songs that move me. But if you grew up with The Dream and haven't heard this album, by all means get hold of it! I feel drained every time I listen to it.

There are other space filk albums. Leslie Fish, Diana Gallagher, and Julia Ecklar each have several, all good. Diana Gallagher's "Docking Maneuvers in Zero G" in her album "Starsong" tells of the frustrations of sex without gravity. And there other good space filk songs on general albums. The LA FilkHarmonic's "There Is No Sound in Space" has the excellent "Rise Up You Challenger" to the tune of a black spiritual. Even after the loss of the space-craft this is a moving song.

Nothing Revisited

The next issue, *Fables and Futures: Andre Norton*, edited by Anne Braude, will be a Special. It will focus on Andre Norton, her work, her universes, and her influence. The one after that, #41, will be a general issue featuring Anthony Boucher's Future History series, an interview with Donald Wolheim, and a survey of writer/director/actor John Sayles.

Sometime after that we will be doing an anthology of previously published articles on J.R.R. Tolkien, mostly from the first 20 NIEKAS from the 60's, though we will also accept new material; and a best of NIE-

KAS anthology, again concentrating on the first 20 issues. Joe Christopher has suggested, among other themes, a special issue of NIEKAS on Gothic and horror fiction. Fred Lerner liked the idea, but others on the NIEKAS staff are skeptical. (I am mildly intrigued by the idea.) What is your reaction? Would you like to see such an issue?

Fables and Futures and the two anthologies will have both NIEKAS issue numbers and "special publication" numbers and will be marketed in stores as books. Two other Special Publications in the works are *Obsessions*, a series of thirteen prose poems by Anthony Magistrale, illustrated by Robert H. Knox, and *Son of 50 Extremely SF* Stories (*Short Fiction)*, stories 50 words or less. These will automatically be sent to subscribers as issues of NIEKAS unless the reader specifies that he/she/it does not wish to receive them.

We are currently soliciting articles for the special issues, and stories for the anthology. See Bastraw's Bastion [page 56] for submission guidelines.

We thank the readers who nominated NIEKAS for the Hugo award, and all the wonderful writers, artists, and helpers who make this fanzine possible. Now we are all waiting for the results of the final voting to be announced Saturday evening at Noreascon! Remember: if you are a member you are eligible to vote.*

MATHOMS, continued from Page 5
which harlots assume the identities of Mohammed's wives: "The story is surely in appalling taste. But that is its point. It casts no slur at all on religion. It comments wittily, instead, on the backsliding and the all too human material that religion has to work with."

Though Wood defends the book against the charge of blasphemy, an editorial in TNR the following week, provocatively entitled "Two Cheers for Blasphemy" and prefaced with a quotation from Milton's *Areopagitica*, affirms it as a virtue: "...Blasphemy is nothing to be ashamed about. It is a birth pang of democracy." The Muslim reaction is referred to as "the Islamabad irony. When the mobs in Islamabad marched against Rushdie's book before the American cultural center, many were baffled by the association. In fact, the association was beautifully appropriate. If you are for the banning and the burning of books, if you deny the right of a writer to write and the right of a publisher to publish, if you believe that an opinion may be refuted by a bullet, you are anti-American.

The militant mullahs are right. Philosophically and historically, the United States is their enemy. The defender of *The Satanic Verses* is The Great Satan. For this we may be proud."

This seems to me to be going to the opposite extreme. Moreover, it confuses blasphemy (from the Greek for "evil speaking" and meaning impious irreverence, defamation, or calumny) with honest intellectual inquiry. The fundamental distinction is one of motive. The person who sets out to commit blasphemy intentionally causes emotional distress to the believer; upsetting people is what it is all about. The best example I can recall is a pornographic version of the Crucifixion that graced—or rather, disgraced—the cover of THE PELICAN, the UC Berkeley undergraduate humor magazine, when I was a graduate student there. The picture made no moral, satirical, religious, or psychological point; it was just there to prove that the magazine could get away with being as offensive as possible. (I was most offended, by the way, not by Jesus Christ's being made the subject of a dirty joke but by making crucifixion—slow death by torture—something to laugh at.) Similarly, the so-called "parody" in HUSTLER that provoked an unsuccessful libel suit from Jerry Falwell was not really satirizing real flaws in Falwell—and goodness knows he has enough of them—but was simply sliming him. Although I am pro-satire and anti-Falwell myself, I rather wish he had prevailed in court: we are now left with a legal precedent that broadens the definition of satire excessively, so that the standard set for fair comment makes no distinction between the wit of an Art Buchwald or a Mark Russell and merely calling someone a dirty rotten son of a bitch.

On the other hand, to look a sacred cow in the mouth is not necessarily to blaspheme, if one's motive is to see if she is sick, dead, or possibly not a cow at all but a cleverly disguised armadillo. Darwin was called a blasphemer in his day; but his motive was not to wound the feelings of the faithful merely for the sake of being offensive. He simply wished to establish the facts and account for them in a rational manner, an endeavor he had no reason to suppose would offend the God Who endowed mankind with the divine spark of reason. Ironically, recent scientific critics of Darwin's arguments, such as the punctuated equilibrists, have on occasion been condemned by some on grounds suspiciously resembling a charge of blasphemy, as were the first relativity theorists who dared to challenge the sacred mathemati-

cal texts of Newton. The authors of "Two Cheers for Blasphemy" were on the wrong track; it is the spirit of free intellectual inquiry, often labeled blasphemous by its foes but not in itself intentionally so, rather than the desire to blaspheme, which has made Western culture great.

As for the science fiction community, we should have learned our lesson about censorship from the ill-fated attempt to suppress the theories of Velikovsky, assuming we needed to learn it at all given the fact that the struggle for freedom of thought and expression is one of the basic themes of the genre. Unlike the religious zealot, the scientifically-minded individual does not feel personally threatened when his ideas are challenged, because he is fully aware of the contingent nature of all models of the external world and therefore does not have the believer's painfully deep emotional investment in them. This is a distinction of attitude rather than of subject matter: neither the scientific zealot nor the skeptical theist is a completely unknown phenomenon. Science fiction itself, as a genre, is a vast proving ground for ideas, where the principal activity is the working out of the "what if" of a variety of social, biological, physical, and intellectual possibilities. And the Rushdie affair reminds us that one of these possibilities is *Fahrenheit 451*. It sometimes seems to me that this is all I talk about in these pages, whether I am insisting that the opinions of Heinlein's characters should not necessarily be imputed in toto to Heinlein himself, defending the validity of unorthodox variations of the Arthurian legend, demanding justice for those we label Others, or snarling at the zealots who cannot or will not distinguish between fact and opinion. To quote again from "Two Cheers for Blasphemy": "The zealot is a man without irony. He is not interested in wit. He detests doubt. He fears complexity. He consecrates violence." Or, in Michael Wood's words, "Rushdie wants us to understand what he at one point calls 'the terrible power of metaphor,' to remember that 'fantasy can be stronger than fact'... But mainly Rushdie is suggesting that such fictions are the closest a secular world can get to faith. Madness and literature are our substitutes for revelation, or at least our analogues."

A curious recent development involves the former pop star of the seventies, Cat Stevens. Since I ceased to stay in touch with the ins and outs of pop music around the time Simon and Garfunkel broke up, I don't know anything about his music; but he has in recent years converted to Islam and has now been quoted as supporting the

Rushdie death sentence. A radio talk show host in L.A. (who used to be on a Phoenix station until he got fired) started a campaign to get people to come down and burn their Cat Stevens records. He failed, mainly because the fire department wouldn't issue a permit; but the media covered the story as if it were an exact parallel to the Rushdie case. As a general rule, I don't think book- or record-burning serves a useful purpose; but surely there is a distinction between destroying one's own paid-for copy of a work to protest the author's views and trying to prevent anyone else from reading it (let alone trying to kill the author). Spokesmen for Islamic moderation (so called) have popped up on NIGHTLINE and MACNEIL/LEHRER to claim that if the book were anti-Jewish instead of anti-Muslim, the media and the public would be much more sympathetic to those who would ban it. This, however, overlooks the fact that there is a brisk worldwide antisemitic publishing industry, much of it funded by Islamic money and some of it written by government ministers of Arab states. The newsletter of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust Studies reports on it regularly. A recent report on their newly opened European Bureau points out that "Europe...has, in fact, once again become the antisemitic publishing center of the world. For example, hate literature written in Spain is now being distributed throughout South America. German- and British-produced Neo-Nazi publications denying the Holocaust are made available in Scandinavia and North America.

"Just 40 years after the Holocaust, a popular underground computer game circulating among high school students in West Germany invites youngsters to 'send Jews to the gas chambers and deport Turkish workers.' As the screen displays 'Jews are our misfortune' to the sound of the German national anthem, it demands 'Death for all Jews.' Anybody heard any popular outcry about this?

In a world in which Out There is increasingly problematic and intimidating, in which the more we learn about the basic structure of physical reality, the less sense it seems to make—and the less we seem to matter, in which the miracle of modern communications technology forces us to exist cheek by jowl with people who find our way of thinking utterly alien and who do not intend to let us get away with it, and in which magic, myth, and metaphor control our ostensibly rational behavior to an extent that perhaps only the late Joseph Campbell could fully comprehend, mad-

ness and literature may not be mere analogues; they may be the only choices we are offered. We already know which option the Ayatollah prefers.

Me, I'll take a good book any time.

Post Scriptum: Charles Paul Freund writes in the March 27, 1989 issue of TNR, "Muslim extremists," the last people in the world to take Western literature seriously, are now unhappy with Dante. A group calling itself "The Guardians of the Revolution," noting that in *The Inferno* Muhammad inhabits a pit near the bottom of Hell, has (I'm not making this up) threatened to blow up Dante's tomb in Ravenna. The mayor there has received a letter ordering him to dissociate himself from the work, and to declare that 'Dante lied and that these verses can no longer be read or studied.' The Guardians have somewhat overestimated the role played by Ravenna's otherwise estimable mayor in the West's literary establishment, though their efforts to open a new line of deconstructionist criticism, at this post-de Man stage in its development, is not without interest."

Literary criticism hasn't achieved this level of high weirdness in the 30 years since the then-Governor of Mississippi banned a children's book called *The Rabbit's Wedding* because it depicted a little black bunny and a little white bunny getting married.*

RIVER, continued from Page 6 National Academy of Science.

"The Theory and Practice of Science" has so far been a small-scale operation, enrolling only 40 to 60 students each year out of a total College enrollment of 2500. Six instructors, two each from the mathematics, physics, and biology departments, give lectures and lead class discussion, while weekly recitation classes are led by teaching assistants. But the ultimate plan, according to Prof. Pollack, who is now Dean of Columbia College, is "to establish a large interdisciplinary staff...to provide the ongoing intellectual vitality necessary to sustain the program." Additional topics, such as hemoglobin and plate tectonics, will be used as case studies in future years. And eventually the course may become a college-wide requirement, ensuring the participation of science majors as well as non-scientists.

Columbia's new science course will probably be replicated at other American universities, as the Contemporary Civilization and Humanities courses have been. To facilitate this, Pollack and his colleagues

are preparing a textbook for publication by the Columbia University Press. *The Scientific Experience* will include historical narrative, but the meat of the book will be the texts of important original scientific papers.

Development of both the course and the textbook have been aided by a major grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and interest on the part of other universities has forced Columbia to maintain "a huge mailing list." But there are no societies or journals devoted to this sort of pedagogical innovation, and the existing reward structure in academic science departments doesn't encourage faculty participation in an elementary interdisciplinary course. Yet Pollack and his colleagues are strongly optimistic about the future of their enterprise, which they expect "to transform the education of undergraduates at liberal arts colleges throughout the country."

As a Columbia graduate (class of 1966) I have been following the development of this course with considerable interest. If it had been offered when I was on campus, I would've been better prepared for the work I now do as information specialist in a high tech company. And a whole generation of doctors, lawyers, teachers, businessmen, journalists, and politicians would be making sounder decisions on that infinitely wide range of topics affected by the progress and process of scientific discovery.*

HUMANUM, continued from Page 7

father Vespasian on the Roman throne.

In Kilian's novels these chronoplanes are given names from the writings of the 19th-century English poet William Blake, since Ishizawa was a Blake enthusiast. There seem to be a lot of Blake enthusiasts in s-f; Philip Jose Farmer's *World of Tiers* novels and Alex Comfort's *Tetrarch* also draw on his writings, though I cannot say that I come remotely close to sharing this enthusiasm. The chronoplanes have dates in our calendar from 1804 (for an Earth base date of 2015) all the way back to 70,787 BC. In addition, there are two "uptime" chronoplanes, Ulro in 2239 and Urizen in 3571, both of them dead worlds explored only for the purpose of learning the Facts about Doomsday. The discovery of the I-Screen is the only thing separating our Earth's history from that of Ulro and Urizen.

Towards the end of *The Fall of the Republic*, the I-Screen and the existence of Doomsday have an enormous impact on society. The ineffective police-state anar-

chy into which the U. S. has degenerated is closed out, and the International Federation (IF) replaces it. Through its Agency for Intertemporal Development (AID), the IF concentrates all the energies of humanity to meet the threat of Doomsday. The huge populations of our Earth are moved "downtime" to underpopulated chronoplanes with lots of space and natural resources, and no pollution. The other chronoplanes are searched for Trainables who can be brought to our Earth, trained, and put to the task of finding out what Doomsday will be and how to prevent it. Any downtime government that objects to this treatment, or to the people dumped on it, gets quickly and violently changed by the AID, of which Pierce is a top field agent. Any fanatics or other undesirables are simply rounded up and dumped downtime—a policy which backfires in *Rogue Emperor*.

This leads into what I find the most distasteful aspect of these books—the implicit statement that "emergency" can justify all kinds of arbitrary treatment of the governed by the government. It is clearly Kilian's belief that we the people have badly misbehaved ourselves by insisting on personal liberty and the right to hold and follow our own beliefs. We therefore need to be taken in hand and pushed around for our own good, all in the name of keeping society functioning. And his examples of such inconvenient people are all drawn as extremely as possible, as if only bikers, racists, and religious fanatics would suffer from the imposition of an autocracy. Crawford Kilian seems to be in agreement with George Bush, that civil liberties are strange notions from our nation's past, that can only impede the functioning of government and society if enthusiasts keep insisting upon them.

Yet Pierce's adventures are written compellingly, and Kilian has obviously done his homework on the other eras in which Pierce operates. There is still a lot of space for more chronoplane adventures between *Rogue Emperor* and *The Empire of Time*. In this book, first to be written and last so far in the series, the cause of Doomsday is finally discovered—and the whole IF comes crashing down now that it is no longer necessary. At last the inhabitants of individual nations and chronoplanes can declare and enjoy their freedom. No doubt, if Kilian is inclined to continue this series past the fall of the IF, Jerry Pierce can find more action in the social strains that will be caused by this new situation. Or there are interesting possibilities in the fact that, at the very end of *The Empire of Time*, four new chronoplanes are discovered—away

downtime in the Permian Era. Now there is something to challenge the imagination.

*Gertrude Bennett's husband was lost on a treasure-hunting expedition in 1910, and her father died a few years later, leaving her with a small child and an elderly mother to attend to. She started writing fantasy and science fiction, using a masculine pen name as the conventions of the day demanded. Any anthology of Feminist s-f that does not include her short story "Friend Island" is incomplete. After her mother died and her daughter grew up, she stopped writing. Nobody knows what later became of her.

Crawford Kilian (Ballantine/Del Rey Books):

The Fall of the Republic, 1987 (1998–1999)

Rogue Emperor, 1988 (2008)

The Empire of Time, 1978 (2015–2020)*

TORONTO, continued from Page 10

John's life and background, without mentioning the influence of L. Ron Hubbard. John rarely discusses that influence. I suspect that he wishes to avoid unnecessary controversy. In the case of this article I'm going to risk a degree of controversy because I feel that it is necessary to mention this influence in order to fully understand the writing of John Dalmas.

Like myself John has studied L. Ron Hubbard's copious writings and found them to be inspiring. This does not mean that either John or myself is an unqualified admirer of L. Ron Hubbard the person or that we agree with all aspects of L. Ron Hubbard's philosophy. L. Ron Hubbard was, in fact, a deceitful, manipulative, and even an evil person. If anyone doubts this, the facts about L. Ron Hubbard's life are revealed in an excellent biography entitled *Barefaced Messiah*, by Russell Miller. However, the personality deficiencies of L. Ron Hubbard, which were extreme, do not prevent him from expressing some valuable truths and insights. He did not live by the principles he propounded, yet they remain, in many cases, interesting principles. L. Ron Hubbard was an inspiring philosopher, although a rather disgusting human being. In any event the philosophical influence of L. Ron Hubbard is fundamental to all of John Dalmas's fiction.

The novel which most perfectly expresses this particular influence is *The Scroll of Man*. Set in the far future, this novel brings to life all of L. Ron Hubbard's metaphysical theories in a grand apocalyptic vision which

is reminiscent of the classic novels of A.E. van Vogt (who, incidentally, is another important writer who has been profoundly influenced by L. Ron Hubbard).

Another novel in which L. Ron Hubbard's influence is particularly conspicuous, *The Varkaus Conspiracy*, is set in the near future, and depicts the struggle and triumph of an organization which represents John Dalmas's vision of what the Church of Scientology ought to have been.

It is interesting to note that there are two of John's novels in which the influence of L. Ron Hubbard is not easily visible, *Fanglith* and *Return to Fanglith*. These novels are invariably and deservedly compared to Robert A. Heinlein juveniles, and seem to be light-hearted efforts to write entertaining SF for its own sake, without introducing any deeper level of metaphysical meaning (although there is a deeper level of ethical principle). These books are, in fact, the easiest place to start for a reader who is not acquainted with John Dalmas. They are a great deal of fun.

The fourth major influence is Rod Martin, who is the co-author of John's novel *The Playmasters*. Rod is yet another student of L. Ron Hubbard, and he has made many interesting re-interpretations of L. Ron Hubbard's work, creating thereby a new school of thought. I personally think of it as Transcendental Video which Rod agrees is a reasonable name, although he has declined to officially confer any name on his school of thought. The writings and work of Rod Martin are carried out under the auspices of the Infinity Dynamics Association, or INDYN. John Dalmas has used three of his novels (*The Regiment*, *The Reality Matrix*, and of course, *The Playmasters*) to provide an exposition of Transcendental Video in a fictional form. This has made them conceptually rich, and also rather bizarre. The most bizarre of John's writings is *The Playmasters*. It is also exceptionally interesting for this reason.

John never subordinates his story to his message, rather he builds situations in which his chosen message will naturally and inevitably emerge from the workings of his exciting plots. In spite of this, it is often quite clear that John's novels have been written for the purpose of expounding upon a particular type of theory. I've already discussed the fact that his most recent novel, *The General's President*, was written to develop certain political theories. I might add that these political theories are somewhat influenced by the political theories of L. Ron Hubbard.

Recurrent themes which run through-

out John's novels are reincarnation, psychic ability and the cultivation thereof, and the struggle between unswervingly honest, ethical people and utterly unscrupulous, evil conspirators. John views all these things in a particularly Scientological light. The fine details such as the specific techniques used by villains to drive people crazy, and the techniques used by heroes to alleviate insanity, are unmistakable indications of this influence. They are Scientological or quasi-Scientological techniques, which any Scientologist would recognize.

Specifically, John is fond of using fictionalized versions of Dianetics, which is the basic technique upon which L. Ron Hubbard's vast religious, philosophical, and organizational edifice rests, even though hundreds of additional techniques have been added over the decades. John has admitted this in print, in case anyone doubts my interpretation.

In META SF there is a novelette, "Grettir and the Tollgate," attributed to Casey John, which is another John Dalmas pen name (in this case John was resorting to a favorite strategy of the old pulp editors, which is to write for your own magazine under a pseudonym, to give the appearance of having more contributors than you actually have). This entire novelette subsequently appears as a portion of the novel *The Reality Matrix* published four years later in 1986.

In META SF this novelette includes a footnote on page 19, which states: "According to the author, a one-time Dianetics practitioner, the foregoing scene is based loosely on procedures used in L. Ron Hubbard's Dianetics. He altered the actual procedure to speed up the scene, and adds that use of the altered version would probably have no effect." This was specifically included so that Scientologists reading the magazine would not be offended by the depiction of an unorthodox version of L. Ron Hubbard's technology.

In the subsequent novel version there is no explanatory footnote. John had by that time become so unorthodox that he ceased to concern himself with the futile hope of failing to offend orthodox Scientologists.

John is constantly writing about a mythologized version of Scientology. There may be a Scientological type organization in his novels, but most usually there is merely a protagonist whose personal philosophy and method of operation has a Scientological influence. In the writing of John Dalmas, the best elements of Scientology are polished and exhibited in transmogrified form, cast into science fictional

idioms that give them scope for the nobility and power with which they have all too rarely exhibited in the real world. Is John therefore a man who refuses to face reality? Not at all; he is a man who dreams of a better reality.

Much of what he describes may never occur, may in fact be impossible. I do not share all of John's philosophical beliefs; for example I can no longer take the idea of reincarnation very seriously. However, John's writing shows us many powerful truths about the way human beings interact, about the nature of ethics, and about problem solving. So, as in all SF, we find an artistic blend of the real and the unreal. It is all the more illuminating for that reason.

John and I do not agree as to the precise dividing line between the real and the unreal. This causes no problems between us. John and I are in perfect agreement on the paramount necessity for freedom of thought, hence we do not begrudge their opinions. This is also John's major point of departure from the philosophy of L. Ron Hubbard, who took extraordinary measures to stop his followers from ever being allowed to disagree with him about anything. John, in contrast, presents his own viewpoint in complete willingness for the reader to make up his or her own mind. This is one of John's endearing traits, and is among the reasons why I so much enjoy knowing John as an individual, in addition to the pleasure I derive from his fiction.

I should point out that although John consistently draws on certain basic sources of inspiration, he also is constantly changing as a writer. At the time he published *META SF*, he was still trying to work with the Church of Scientology, and wanted them to help distribute his magazine. It was specifically intended as a forum for Scientologically influenced SF. In the editorial for the first and only issue, John states the editorial philosophy of the magazine: "We will freely depict man as greater in all respects than conventional wisdom admits...men and women have innate abilities well beyond those generally displayed or recognized, ready to be opened up...."

Any SF magazine is prepared to speculate about the possibility of such superhuman abilities, but here John flatly states that they exist, and will be the theme of the magazine. This was clearly intended to mesh with the operations of the Church of Scientology, which is in the business of selling services which supposedly develop precisely the kind of abilities which John likes to write about.

John discovered in the course of this publishing experiment that the Church of Scientology was extremely difficult to work with. And over the years he has found his viewpoint being swayed to more revisionist theories, primarily those of Rod Martin but also new ideas that he experiments with himself. Consequently he would have to be regarded by the Church of Scientology as a dangerous heretic, since only the ideas of L. Ron Hubbard are accepted as legitimate by the Church.

There is no telling what direction John may take in the future, beyond the fact that he is always trying something new. Despite the consistent themes that I have noted running throughout his work, it remains true that every John Dalmas novel does something in some way different from any other John Dalmas novel.

The novel that he is currently writing is called *The Lizard Mission*, and it may well be in print before this article is. Personally I am avidly looking forward to reading it. I am always entertained by John's sheer storytelling, and in addition I will be very interested to see what new philosophical theme he may wish to develop.*

WOODS, continued from Page 27

their broomsticks in a frightening nocturnal revelry which lasted until dawn the following day, May Day, thus symbolizing the end of the long, dark northern winter. In Cornwall, England, there existed a similar witch mountain called Castle Peak, around which it was said that "many a man and woman attest to having seen the witches flying on moonlit nights, mounted on the stem of the ragwort."

One rarely hears of elves, witches, or goblins haunting the woods anymore today, even in the Black Forest. Only the names of certain sites frequented by these creatures seems to persist, such as the strange, flat rock formation in the Harz Mountains known as *Hexentanzplatz*—the "Witches' Dance Floor"—where witches were once said to have danced away the long winter nights. But this doesn't necessarily mean that the spirit of the haunted woods has disappeared; modern eyes may just be interpreting it in a somewhat different light. Consider, for example, the similarity between the following descriptions:

"Most of those seen hereabouts wore red caps, and the women wore green dresses. I heard a man say he had seen as many as 200 one evening after sunset and that was

the way they were dressed. They were two and a half feet high and had red hair and ruddy faces."

"They are best described as dwarfs with large heads and spindly feet.... They are generally very well formed. Sometimes they have been termed beautiful. They are usually about three and a half feet tall."

Similar as they might sound, the first of these descriptions was an undated Irish report of elves, while the second was a 1977 summary by the skeptical editors of the *World Almanac* of typical eyewitness descriptions of UFO inhabitants—the modern little green folk with the pointed ears. Likewise, the dancing swamp lights attributed in days of old to candle-carrying goblins have often been interpreted today as the vehicles of these new little folk. And where the term bogie was once a euphemism for treacherous water spirits (as in "nursery bogie"), it has now come to be a slang military term for any unidentified flying object. A recent Gallup poll disclosed that half of all Americans believe that such UFO inhabitants truly exist, while one out of three college students believe that a troll-like giant called Bigfoot haunts the dark, Norwegian-like woods of the Pacific Northwest. As much as ever it appears that the night still belongs to the goblins—or as one Irish matron best phrased it "I don't believe too much in t' little folk me self, but I'm scared of 'em though!" So be certain to bolt your doors well tonight, for as Peer Gynt warned, "They come with the darkness...."

"Sometimes indeed the elves make a rustling noise like that of a gust of wind, or a silk gown, or a sword been indicated by frightful and unearthly shrieks... A favorite time for their encounters with men seems to be dusk and wild stormy nights of mist and driving rain. Often, without fault or effort, in places most unexpected, mortals have been startled by their appearance. Men cannot therefore be sufficiently on their guard against them."

John Campbell
Scotland, 1900*

AVALON, continued from Page 35

Darkness.

Another researcher who concludes that Avalon is somewhere in America is James Bailey. In *The God-Kings and the Titans*, Bailey compares ancient Old World ruins and artifacts to those in the New World

and claims that ancient civilizations had reached our shores long before the Vikings. He studies Celtic myths, although very briefly as he is mainly interested in the ancient Mediterranean cultures. He decides that the Celtic legends of lands beyond the Atlantic may be traditions of Celtic discoveries of portions of the pre-Columbian America. For example, Bran, brother of the sea god Manannan, an Irish deity, went over the sea to America; and the Irish prehistoric legendary tribe of the Tuatha De Danaan also fled there after another tribe, the Milesians, defeated them in battle around 2600 B.C. And Bailey suggests that the Welsh country of Avalon was not in Glastonbury's environs but somewhere in ancient America. There are Indian legends of white gods who sailed over from the east, such as the famous Aztec tale of Quetzalcoatl.

Incidentally, Bailey wrote before Barry Fell popularized research on supposed Celtic inscriptions in America. There does appear to be evidence for ancient Irish voyages; but so far I do not know of hard archaeological evidence for Welsh Celtic voyagers to ancient America. Davies' work on fifteenth-century maps and the career of John Scolvus is our best modern evidence for Welsh voyagers. But it is interesting that there are other investigators who are willing to suggest that Avalon was indeed somewhere in the Americas.

Perhaps other researchers will indeed find other clues to Avalon on American shores.

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Babcock, H.H. *Legendary Islands of the Atlantic*, reprinted by The Sourcebook Project, P.O. Box 107, Glen Arm, Maryland 21057, c. 1984.*

GINCAS, continued from Page 45

ignorance: when the average American is so culturally illiterate that he doesn't know what war took place between 1861 and 1865, can we be surprised that he doesn't understand the niceties of what constitutes scientific method or historical proof? That is the explanation not only for the prevalence of such nonsense as New Age fuzzymentism but at least in part for America's decline in technology, the deplorable state of our space program, and Evan Mecham.

This brings me to wackos in general and to Dave Waalkes' comments in particular, which reminded me of the running gag in the new sitcom MURPHY BROWN about the inability of the main character to find a secretary who is both sane and competent. Each episode has a new secretary-of-the-week. (When last I looked, the secretarial desk was occupied by a crash-test dummy.) At one point, Murphy thought she had found her ideal, a polite and efficient middle-aged woman with an impres-

sive résumé. When informed that she was exactly what Murphy had been looking for, she replied pleasantly that she knew that the position would suit her; Satan had told her so when they talked that morning. But as for his encounter with the lady who replied to his comment on the Soviet Venera probe that she had been to Venus and liked the people, a simpler and more charitable explanation is that she misheard him and thought he was referring to Venice. She's not really crazy, Dave; she's only subliterate.

SILVERLoCS

Joseph T. Major

One thing about Fred Lerner's dream of a *Silverlock* theme park [NIEKAS 37]: suppose someone refuses to give up a vital copyright? I found *Silverlock* to be essentially a parasitic book—it existed primarily through all the references it made to other works. Once, that was a popular form of writing, in the so-called "Georgian" period in England, when one showed one's acquaintance with the classics of literature by referring to them as obscurely as possible. Now, Myers is not obscure, which indicates something in either the audience or the author. But then, the works of the Georgian period did not last.

Thomas M. Egan

As for your *A Silverlock Companion*, I join so many others in praising its professional background research. Yet I can't admire John Myers' achievement. *Silverlock* doesn't work. There are just too many elements of literary antecedents to absorb and balance. They spoil this literary broth. Their themes cancel each other out.

Anne Braude

I have some disagreements with Ben Indick's comments on *Silverlock* in Gincas. For one thing, the appearance of Robin Hood in *Ivanhoe* is not really introducing a fictional character, as Robin is treated as just as historical a figure as Richard Coeur de Lion. One version of his legend says that he was the Earl of Huntingdon and even gives a specific death date (November 18, 1247); another claims he fought against Simon de Montfort at Evesham in 1265; but Francis James Child (whom I am more inclined to believe, albeit reluctantly) calls him "absolutely a creation of the ballad-muse." Fantasy novelist Robin McKinley has a novel about him just out, *The Outlaws of Sherwood*, a straight historical with no fantasy element.

And I think Ben is wrong in calling *Silverlock* not a true adventure story because the fictional characters encountered don't seem to lead truly independent lives; he is in a way paraphrasing Faustopheles' indictment of *Silverlock* in his trial before the Delian Court, where it is adduced against him that he has not participated in certain heroic feats. The Commonwealth, being in many senses a landscape of the imagination, presents the traveler with what adventures are appropriate to his spiritual state at the time, whether he travels the way of Chance, Choice, or Oracle. It is for *Silverlock* a learning experience involving moral and spiritual decisions rather than a video-game-type action adventure.*

BASTION, continued from Page 56

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by Michael Bastraw

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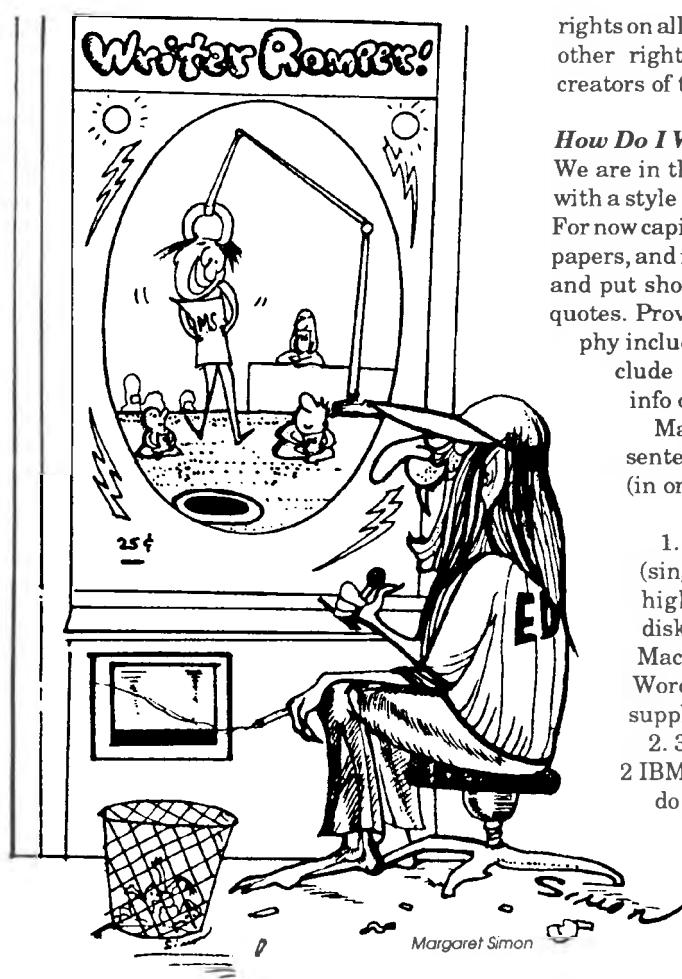
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See BASTION, Page 55