



Hugo Award Winner

# NIEKAS

44

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



\$4.95

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# NIEKAS #44

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

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# Bumbejimas

by Edmund Meskys

## Efficiency

As I get older and take on more responsibilities and obligations I think about efficiency and allocation of time. Also my physical condition has forced me to change some of the things I do and read.

When I lost my sight in late 1971 I had a major change in lifestyle. I could no longer read what I was used to, like the sf zines and fanzines, and professional and semi-professional journals like *Physics Today*, *Sky & Telescope*, *International Science & Technology*, *Saturday Review* (which had excellent coverage of science), and *Missiles & Rockets*. Of course I had neither the time nor the inclination to read from cover to cover each issue of these or the half dozen other journals I subscribed to, but I read at least something in each one. In addition I had to give up others like zines about Lithuania, *Gilbert & Sullivan Journal*, *Opera News*, and *ERA Headlights* (a fanzine about subways). I went with what was available and started reading *Scientific American*, *Natural History* and *Smithsonian*. Magazines have come and gone on record and tape and I had for a while many different titles. I gave up *Natural History* and *Smithsonian* for lack of time but do get *Scientific American*, *Science News*, *Skeptical Inquirer*, *Analog*, *Omni* and excerpts from *Byte* and *PC World*.

Anyone who enjoys reading always has more on hand than he or she can handle. It is doubly so because of my blindness. Sf and fsy books are recorded by a number of agencies, mainly the Library of Congress, Volunteers of Vacaville, and Recording for the Blind, though a number of other agencies have a few titles. If I tried to listen to every book ever recorded I would not have the time! On the other hand I hear about many other printed books which I want to read more than those that have been recorded. VoV and RfB will record books on demand, and then friends have recorded many books for me, especially John Board-

“

Anyone who enjoys reading always has more on hand than he or she can handle.

”

man, Anne Braude, Marsha Jones, and Phyllis Randall. Many others have also done some recording for me. I want to share these books with other blind folks so I set up a small library myself, SF & Fsy for the Blind, and have a little over a hundred titles in my catalog. I got a \$5000 grant from Worldcon Atlanta to buy a tape duplicator and additional recording equipment and supplies. I would like to make these books more widely available but do not have the time. My library was mentioned in a blind magazine and I received over 200 inquiries which totally broke down my system. I am circulating books to a small number of readers (about 50) and occasionally take on a new one but cannot handle many more. I need a group to help handle circulation. Also, when the UMass SF group gave up running its tape library they gave me all their tapes, mailers, and equipment, which added 30 titles to my collection. I have not yet completely integrated their collection. A few years ago the Northwest Foundation for the Blind in Seattle went out of business and they had about 300 SF titles. I understand they turned everything over to the Seattle Talking Book Library which has done nothing with it. If I could get hold of their master tapes I would like to put their titles back in circulation, but I cannot do this alone.

Then there are fanzines. . . . I tried to have fan volunteers tape zines for me but this system has always broken

down. I advertised for volunteers in several fanzines and among NESFA members and I got a very enthusiastic response each time. I would get more tapes of fanzines than I had time to listen to, and then I would go away to a meeting or have a high priority task to accomplish and I would fall hopelessly behind. I wouldn't respond to narrators or return blank tapes and they would give up. Now I pay a HS student to come in and read for me two hours a week. With a live reader I can tell him or her to skip the rest of a paragraph or article that is of marginal interest. I can speed up a tape to about double speed but cannot select which articles or parts of articles to skip. I wish I could get someone to do a little taping for me or a second reader for two more hours a week. Then I would have a chance to keep up with the most important fanzine articles.

Two blind folks, Mary Lou Lacefield and Bill Hedl, put out a talking fanzine, *Sci Fi See*, but the project died a few years ago.

Trying to apportion time is very difficult. I tried to participate in several APAs since losing my sight, namely APA NESFA, APA-Q, FAPA, and the Cult, but I couldn't keep up with the reading on a timely basis in order to do mailing comments. After several months of participation I would give up. An APA takes up an awfully large amount of time and I would have to give up too much else for it to work for me. Of the prozines I only get *Analog* on phonograph records, which I hate to be tied down to so I am way behind. *Asimov's* is available in Braille. When I first lost my sight I got *Galaxy* in Braille and almost kept up with it. However now I have too many other activities to take the time for *Asimov's*. Tapes I can listen to at double recorded speed while doing household chores, so I do about 400 words a minute, but I can only do about 50 wpm in Braille. If nothing else were available I would put more effort into Braille and get my speed up to 200 wpm, which is normal for blind adults. Some Braille

readers greatly surpass this speed. Dr. Jernigan of the NFB reads two lines of Braille at a time and his subconscious integrates it, the way a sighted reader can read a whole line at a glance.

New technology could make print more accessible. For about \$5000 I could get one of three machines which will scan text into computer memory and then read it out loud but the systems are cumbersome to use and it would take too much time to read a single page this way. Systems are improving and prices are coming down (the first Kurzweil reader cost \$50,000 in 1977). If I had a more advanced machine than my XT clone I could get a scanner and OCR board for about \$3000. Some day. . . .

I continued to teach for four and a half years after losing my sight but since then I could only find temporary part-time assignments which left me with much time. For a while I read *Galaxy* in Braille and could keep up with what books were recorded. The time opened up by not working and not reading the print stf let me do a lot of other things. Slowly more is becoming available and I am taking on more and more responsibilities. I have now been president of the NH chapter of the NFB (a civil rights movement which I refer to as the "Blind Panthers") and am taking on more responsibilities in my Lions Club. I am also on the Governor's Commission on Disabilities and its task forces, which eat more and more into my time. I am no different from most fen who have more than they can handle and am having a very hard time deciding where to make cuts. *Niekas* is very important to me and it will *not* be cut, though it is now less frequent than I like. No matter what happens I am committed to do at least five more issues because of the material I have on hand or promised to me. And, with luck, I will continue *Niekas* long after that!

When I was sighted I still tended to take on more than I could handle and would drown in papers. Charlie & Marsha Brown, Tony & Suford Lewis, Cory Seidman (Panshin), Frank Prieto, and others used to come up for a weekend about twice a year and try to help me sort out my papers. . . . *Niekas*, Tolkien Society, personal, and the like. I still drown in papers and lose track of them. I have lost mss & art, subs, important NFB legal documents, and the like. I try to label everything in Braille

but get lazy at times, so it is a major job to try to get sorted out. Todd, Sandy, and Stanley have all tried to help me get out from under at times but it is a lost cause. And now I also have a great mass of cassettes to sort through! I probably have 1000 unsorted cassettes to go through some century and simply do not know how I will do it. These include letters, magazines, books, con speeches I recorded to listen to later, and music. If I got nothing else I probably could not process everything I have in the rest of my lifetime. To put it mildly, I get depressed at times contemplating this mess. I *WILL* eventually find *your* manuscript. Please be patient and occasionally nudge me with a postcard. **[For really timely response try a letter bomb.—AJB]**

### As Others See Us?

The "Books" department of the 23 Feb 1991 issue of *Science News* lists the following:

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS: SCIENCE AND SCIENCE FICTION, Robert Lamburn, Michael Shallis, Michael Shortland. A study of the role of science and scientists in the development of science fiction, and conversely, of the effects of science fiction books and films on the public's view of science. The authors trace the roots of science fiction and examine its cultural impact focusing on major themes such as time-travel, politics, religion, and ecology. American Institute of Physics, 1990, 184 pp., illus., paperback, \$26.

The book sounds interesting, coming from the scientific community. For the authors to do such a book they must have an interest in our field. (Their names might be misspelled as I took them from an audio tape.) I only wish the price were more reasonable! \$26 for a paperback under 200 pages is ridiculous!

### Bringing Back the Classics

I have been reading science fiction for over 40 years and over that time the genre has evolved considerably. In his 1960 Worldcon GoH speech James Blish made the point that every decade brought a new kind of SF. In a recent *SFC* Andrew Porter commented that younger readers find SF published over 20 years ago unreadable. For this reason little SF from that period is ever reprinted. OP paperbacks are getting hard to find because of price inflation and the way the used book market



works. When I was building up my collection there were many second-hand bookstores which had hardcover books at prices set by rarity but which sold paperbacks and magazines at about half cover price. Now chains like Anne's Swap Shop dominate the used paperback market and will not accept any book with a cover price under \$2. People who do not know what else to do with the older titles simply throw them away destroying the chances for the next generation of fen to find copies.

While our tastes evolve we can usually still read some of the stories we started with, though some of the earliest which had awakened our sense of wonder do not survive re-reading. Classics are, of course, stories which DO outlive their generation. I can still reread Wells' *The Time Machine* which was first published in 1905.

Schools where SF is taught and researched need the older titles in durable editions and Gregg Press filled this need. I believe Gregg has discontinued this service and remaindered its stock. Early in the '80s Crown Books also reissued a number of classics in hardcover. Former *Niekas* co-editor Sherwood Frazier received review copies at the time and they were mentioned in "Review & Comment." I do not know whether they are still in print or whether new titles are being added.

Now Collier books is reissuing "oldies" in mass-market and trade format. During the year from mid-1990 to mid-1991 I have received review copies of seven titles:

*The Big Time* by Fritz Leiber

*Legion of Space* by Jack

Williamson

*Man in his Time* by Brian Aldiss

*Steps to the Sun* by Walter Tevis

*The Whole Man* by John Brunner

*Witch House* by Evangeline Walton

*Year of the Quiet Sun* by

Wilson Tucker.

The Tevis and Tucker are priced at \$4.50, the rest at \$4.95.

The Leiber I read as a magazine serial when it was first published in the late '50s. It was very well received and won the Hugo. It was part of his on-going series of "Change War" stories where two entities, the Snakes and the Spiders (if I remember the names correctly) are fighting a war by going back into the past and changing it. While I like much of Fritz Leiber's work (his first two novels, *Gather, Darkness!* and *Conjure Wife* are among my favorites) I found this book good but not spectacularly so. *The Legion of Space* goes back some 50 years and while the characterization was stiff, to put it mildly, I still found the book very enjoyable. I had read it when I first started reading SF in the early '50s and recently reread it when it came out in an omnibus volume with its several sequels. Aliens are trying to take over the solar system and our hero, John Star, with a few companions, has to stop them. One character, Giles Habibula, is there for comic relief and is always looking for a good bottle of wine and moaning that he is about to die. He is also an expert lock-picker. The climax involves the use of AKKA, a planet-smashing ray. In this first book the baddies are temporarily defeated but the battle goes on for several more stories. In the second volume, *The Cometeers*, the companions invade the aliens' home world. Jack Williamson, John W. Campbell, World Wrecker Ed Hamilton, and Doc Smith were the top space opera writers of the '30s and '40s, in the era before Luke Skywalker.

I had not read previously any of the other Collier titles though I knew of most of them by reputation. I had Volunteers of Vacaville record *Steps to the Sun* and found it a strange book. It is

the sort of book that one would expect of someone unfamiliar with our genre but dabbling in it. I know this is *not* the case with Tevis. Nuclear power of all forms has been made illegal because of its danger, and interstellar travel has been banned because it is so expensive in energy, which is in short supply. The hero is fabulously wealthy and bribes his way onto a mothballed starship. He goes off in search of a safe nuclear fuel (the details of which are scientific nonsense) and finds it and a wonderful analgesic. He returns to earth with his booty and carefully gets in contact with industry but is caught by the authorities and incarcerated for using a starship and for bringing back nuclear fuel. His wealth is impounded and he does not have access to his lawyers but, after a period of forced sexual service in Red China, re-establishes himself. The book is good but the plot tastes funny after our usual diet of SF.

From the blurb I am not sure whether *Witch House* is a horror-fantasy about an evil influence on a house and its inhabitants, or a gothic thriller about an outsider who must return to a family manse where other family members and retainers are plotting against her. I loved her Mabinogion tetralogy (which Collier has re-issued in trade paperback) and plan to get this book recorded. I had not heard of it before but its copyright date is 1945. Originally I only read *The Virgin and the Swine*, later reprinted as *Island of the Mighty* (1936) because Charlie Brown had recommended it to me. I read the other three volumes many years later. About ten years ago the author had mentioned in a letter to me that a mundane novel of hers, *The Cross and the Sword*, had been long out of print and she had not been able to get the rights back from the original publisher to try to market it elsewhere. I wonder if she did eventually get them back. I know of one other book by her, *The Sword is Forged*, published about a decade ago, about the Amazon queen and Theseus of Athens.

Since I wrote the above Collier has brought out a number of other titles and seems to have switched to the trade format. Maybe these can stay in print longer than mass market books.

### More Classics

The ROC division of Viking has just brought out the latest re-gathering of Asimov's robot stories. The original

ones were collected in *I, Robot* and a decade later the new ones together with the first two novels were put together in *The Rest of the Robots*. When the latter was paperbacked the novels were left out. More stories have come since then, as well as several novels and a tie-in with the Foundation series; and now *Robot Visions* (\$4.99) brings virtually all the shorts together, along with a new one written especially for this book. In his long historical intro Asimov explains that a few stories were very recently reprinted in another robot book and he felt it wasn't fair to the reader to reissue them again so quickly. I wish he hadn't done that so that all the robot shorts could be available in one volume.

NESFA is also getting into the act. The 1991 Boskone had several panels on "forgotten authors." I attended the ones on James Blish and C.S. Lewis which were very good. Now they are working on a series of collections of works of such forgotten authors, and the first is a collection of James H. Schmitz stories, simply called *The Best of James H. Schmitz*. He is best known for the novelette "The Witches of Karas" which was later expanded into a novel with the same title, and his Telzey stories in *Astounding*. The second volume is a collection of all the Cordwainer Smith short stories, *The Rediscovery of Man*. As mentioned elsewhere in this the third will be a collection of all the "People" stories of Zenna Henderson.

Bridge Publications (4751 Fountain Ave., Los Angeles CA 90029), the Scientologist publishing house, is bringing back some of L. Ron Hubbard's classic stories. A while back they put out *Fear* and now they are about to issue *Slaves of Sleep* and *The Master of Sleep*. I read the first many years ago but have never read the Sleep books. They will also be put on cassette, complete, so I am looking forward to reading them. I hope Bridge puts out some of my other Hubbard favorites, *Return to Tomorrow*, *Typewriter in the Sky*, *The Triton*, and *The Case of the Friendly Corpse*.

### Extrapolation

Recent events in Eastern Europe and South Africa have confirmed Don Wollheim's ideas, expressed in his 1988 New Orleans Worldcon Guest of Honor speech reprinted in *Niekas* #42. He looked at the closing decade of each of the last few centuries and

found in each developments which could not have been extrapolated. Each changed the world in a way unimaginable before the event, and this would have made any seriously extrapolative SF totally wrong. Now it has happened again.

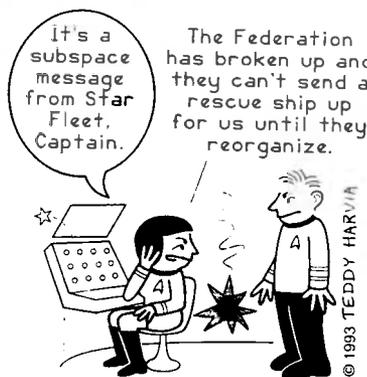
In 1988 Don could not have imagined the dissolution of the Soviet Union or the overthrow of apartheid in South Africa. The former has made as much SF obsolete as the fly-bys, orbitings, and landings on Mars. Bradbury's *Martian Chronicles*, Heinlein's *Red Planet*, or Burroughs' John Carter stories can still be enjoyed as stories; but their setting is as unreal as the swamps of Venus or the hollow earth of Pellucidar.

South Africa does not exactly play a pivotal role in SF. The only mentions I remember were passing references in two Arthur Clarke stories. In a short story he mentioned acres of military graves of soldiers killed in the eventual revolution, and he referred to reverse discrimination in a post-revolution South Africa in *Childhood's End*. I am sure that there are a few other stories which I have forgotten or not read, but as I said they are a minor part of the genre.

The Cold War was pivotal in so much SF! There were stories of Soviet conquest ranging from the farcical *The Liberation of Manhattan* to straight stories like C.M. Kornbluth's *Not This August* and the TV mini-series "Amerika." Next are the nuclear war stories from Judy Merrill's *Shadow on the Hearth* to modern stories like Dean Ing's *Pulling Through*. Finally there are the cold-war-going-on-forever stories. A number of Andre Norton SF novels of galactic exploration assume a perpetual cold war, which seemed extremely unlikely, even without the collapse of the Soviet Empire. If I remember correctly, Heinlein's *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress* had assumed competition between the Americans and the Russians but without military conflict. Could this have happened if the empire had not collapsed? Or would competition have led inevitably to armed conflict? And how close to collapse was the US economy? A few years ago I had the sinking feeling that the US was losing the Cold War. How quickly things turned around!

Where did all this start? The Western World hated and feared Communism right from the revolution and made several efforts to subvert it. This

resulted in paranoia on the part of their government. Stalin was as much a madman, murderer, and tyrant as Hitler and some countries, like Finland, feared Russia more than they feared Germany. On the world scale Russia was not yet a serious player and the US came into conflict with Germany and Japan. Russia (and the Soviet Empire was really no more than an extension of the old Russian Empire) just happened to be on the same side as us, and FDR did all he could to cement relations while we were al-



lied. Also a number of his advisors had matured believing in the Communist idealism and had not assimilated the reality of the 1938 show trials. Then the Soviet conquest of half of the remainder of Europe sent us back into our previous state of paranoia, and our mutual fears built on each other.

Why did we fear Communism to begin with? In principle it is idealistic, believing in the brotherhood of all mankind and the fall of all national boundaries. Their anthem is even called "The Internationale." Senator Joe McCarthy was not afraid of Communism only because of the fall of Eastern Europe and China. It all started with the exploitation of working people by wealthy industrialists. Carnegie, Rockefeller, Morgan, and the like, as well as owners of smaller manufacturing facilities, made people work long hours under appalling conditions for little pay and encouraged the labor of small children. Efforts of workers to organize unions were brutally suppressed. America's might was built on the backs of poor workers, adult and child. A reform movement came close to passing a constitutional amendment forbidding child labor. The British upper classes so hated the labor movement that during a general strike they volunteered to perform the tasks

of the strikers and so help break the strike. Communism was born in this milieu of conflict and sided with the worker.

Incidentally, before WWI the Royal Family of England still regarded itself as German as in the time of George III. It was only with the accession of Victoria that the British monarchy was separated from that of Hanover, and the family still had strong German ties. The British aristocracy, particularly the Prince of Wales, had strong sympathies with the fascists, which is one reason the Baldwin government was determined to push him into abdicating; and Mrs. Simpson, the future Duchess of Windsor, while living in Washington and in China had love affairs with Italian diplomats, one of whom later became Mussolini's son-in-law. [For a fascinating account complete with all the juicy details, see *The Windsor Story* by J. Bryan III and Charles J.V. Murphy and *The Duchess of Windsor: The Secret Life* by Charles Higham.—AJB] I was very surprised when I learned this.

But there was more. Some people found its idealism, like that of the Christian monastics, extremely appealing. The state was supposed to wither away under Communism but instead with time became more powerful and authoritarian and afraid of its own population. (Diehard Marxists say the Soviet Empire was not really Communist but State Capitalist.) The old underclass, and their intellectual supporters, hated any of the old aristocracy who used to have power and wealth, and inflicted unspeakable atrocities on them. Stalin murdered millions of Ukrainian *kulaks*, that is, prosperous peasants (and others), to force the collectivization or unification of small farms into state-owned units. Is the bankruptcy of small family farms in America and their absorption into agribusiness conglomerates any different in outcome? Our small farmers were not murdered but were driven into bankruptcy.

The slavery under Communism was similar to but worse than that under capitalism. Both destroyed small farmers for the sake of "efficiency." Both built manufacturing infrastructures on the backs of exploited workers. But worst of all, Communism was supposed to be on the side of the laborer but exploited him or her more than in the worst turn-of-the-century sweatshop.

The real power was in Russia and later the Russian Federation and its capitals (Moscow & St. Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad), but every effort was made to integrate the empire into a unit. The old borders merely marked administrative zones. A glass factory in Lithuania could not function without natural gas piped in from Asia. The separation is now very difficult because each of the new republics is dependent on the others.

The Russians colonized the other republics and did everything to suppress native languages and cultures. This suppression was but a continuation of that from Tsarist times. My mother's guardian hired students and old people to secretly teach her and her brother to read and write Lithuanian but Russian agents found out and arrested the teachers.

In the 1940s Russian soldiers murdered or deported a large portion of the native populations of the Baltic states, some hundreds of thousands, to Siberia. To be exact, the Swedish Consul to that area, Dag Sebastian Ahlander, said in a letter in the December 6, 1992, *New York Times* that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania lost respectively 33, 36, and 32% of their populations in the '40s, killed, deported, or driven out. Guna Bite-Dickson put it well in the *N.Y. Daily News* for November 19, 1992, in his column, "The Bear That Moved into the Neighbors' Homes," in which he likened the situation to an alien force taking over N.Y. City, forcing the natives to learn a new language in a new alphabet, changing all the street signs to the new alphabet, taking for themselves all the better jobs and housing, and forcing the natives into small, shared cold-water flats. Then fifty years later, when the New Yorkers regain their independence, saying that they want to remain. Also, the natives already learned their language and can communicate with them, so why should they bother to learn the native language? (Thanks to John Boardman for the clippings.)

The standard of living was higher in the Baltic states than in Russia and homes there were a reward for service to the state. Schools were in the local language only for the first four grades but after that more and more was in Russian. Russian-speaking colonists were moved into the Baltic and other states and were given preferential treatment, and the colonists (for the most part) made no effort to learn the

local languages. They had special schools so their children could be educated totally in Russian. It is no wonder now that the republics are independent the stranded colonists are having problems with the natives. Estonia passed laws that only persons speaking Estonian could participate in local government. The Russians must learn the local language or be second-class citizens. In fact they are hated by many of the natives. These Russians are in the same position as the French who had settled in Algeria or the English who had settled in India or Ireland. (I wonder what happened to the Japanese colonists settled in Manchuria and northern China in the '30s?) I cannot blame the natives at all for their resentment of the colonials. The Russians in Russia are upset about the treatment of their fellow countrymen in the former colonies and the army has threatened to intervene in Estonia. I believe that Estonia has grandfathered in those Russian-speaking families that were there for more than 50 years, that is, since before the Soviet occupation.

As a side issue I look at the problems in the Balkan area and Turkey. Turkey has suppressed the Kurds and Armenians for at least a century, and massacred unbelievably large numbers of the latter. Both hate the Turks for the suppression of their freedom and every so often some Armenian group will blow up a Turkish airliner or something to get revenge. In Israel the Stern Gang and Irgun massacred Palestinians in the '40s (the most famous incident being the massacre at Deir Yasin in April, 1948), and later the Palestinians massacred the Jews. Fifty years ago the Croats massacred the Serbs, and now the Serbs are massacring the Croats. Both also hate the Slavic Muslims in resentment of the former Turkish (Ottoman Empire) control of their area. These Muslims are descendants of Slavs, and not imports. They were heretical Christian Bogomils who converted to Islam and so retained their lands. (This group was known as the Albigensians in France and the Cathari in Italy, and were strict unitarians so had little trouble with Islamic theology.) Some landowners, who were mainstream Christians, also converted in order to retain title to their lands. And of course there were all the massacres of Native Americans at such places as Wounded Knee. We don't hear much about or-

ganized groups of Native Americans who want revenge but I am sure that there are some. When will it ever end? I hope the resentments in the former Soviet Empire do not develop into such genocidal pogroms.

Finally, on the Soviet front, we basically won the Cold War. The policy of major military buildup helped drive them into bankruptcy because their economy was already so shaky. I am only sad that this reduces the world space exploration effort. Russian cosmonauts were stranded in orbit for a long time while the ground crews and government got sufficiently reorganized to send up a rescue ship. In their chaos and poverty will they have the resources to continue their program, even a little? Is the dream of a joint Mars mission just that, a dream? I have heard hints that the Russian Federation government wants to continue their space program because they need the stimulus of the engineering enterprise for the future of their economy. If they abandon all research they will sink to below the level of a third world country. As I write this our own country is considering again cancelling the space station and has cancelled the supercollider. Can't we get the same message?

In Germany the collapse of the economy under the Weimar Republic led to Hitler and the Third Reich. I think that Jerry Yulesman was wrong in the novel *Elleander Morning* about an alternate timeline after the assassination of the young Hitler. Perhaps he brought all the madness together but an explosion was inevitable. Germany was not ready for the democracy that was imposed on it. The economic chaos, depression, and hyper-inflation that followed the loss of the First World War, not to mention the degrading peace treaty with reparations, had to lead to a strong man. I remember German stamps in my collection with face values in the MILLIONS of Marks to mail a single letter! Inflation in Russia is 1000%. Will the same thing happen? What science fiction will be written examining possible futures of this new world order? Communism, in principle, was idealistic and could attract people of the right bent. (It could also feed on the resentments of various underclasses, which is why it still has some popularity in the Third World.)

In *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* the hero met a British woman

who said that she believed in history, and from that he knew that she believed in the idealism of Communism. I didn't understand this until John Boardman explained to me that from the beginning Communists believed in the historical inevitability of Communism, that if every Communist in the world were to be killed conditions would bring about a new generation which would eventually triumph. But the idealism has failed because it doesn't work with real people, real dictators, real KGB agents, and the like. There are many other idealistic "isms" from Liberalism on one end to Libertarianism on the other. They give their believers a hope and a vision. As Fred Lerner said in his fanzine *Lofgeornost*, much good science fiction was written on the Libertarian model. If men were perfect, any of these could form a perfect society. But if men were perfect we would not need *any* ism.

Why did WWII occur? Propagandists tell us it was because of Hitler's madness. But what about Japan? From what I understand Japan was trying to establish a world market and colonies for its population. It established colonies in China and Manchuria where the natives were treated cruelly but no more so than those in the early period of the British Empire in India, Africa, and elsewhere, and always in Ireland. Look at the suppression of the Uller Uprising . . . I mean the Sepoy Mutiny! (Actually I know little about this except by analogy to the Piper story which I understand to be a transplantation of the Mutiny to another planet.) Western powers were afraid of Japan's aggressive commercial exploits, just like today, and did their best to bottle up Japan. Various economic blockades confined Japan until it exploded. Where will today's economic conflict with Japan end? Will the "Japan bashing" eventually lead to another armed conflict? Science fiction authors have already been examining these questions for several years. In many stories it is the Japanese who dominate the space colonies. When will they, in reality, establish their own manned space program and leapfrog over us, Russia, and Europe? What author will guess the real train of events? Tune in next week. . . .

After WWII we thought we had peace for our generation and demobilized, gutting the military. We did not stay at peace very long. In less than five years the Soviet aggressive con-

quest of central Europe threw us into a panic and started the cold war. When will we start a cold war with Japan? Can't we *ever* have real peace?

We are only at the end of the third year of the last decade of this century. What other Wollheim surprises await us before 2001 and the beginning of the third millenium?

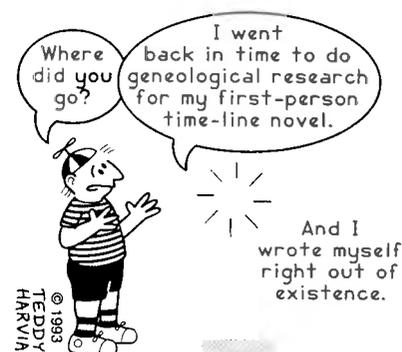
## On Cheating

As I say in R&C, I am not a Trekker but do watch Next Generation and Deep Space and have read some Trek fiction. (I understand that "trekker" is the preferred term among Trek fen, who feel about "Trekkie" about the same way as we feel about "Sci Fi.") Two of the major libraries for the blind, the Library of Congress and Volunteers of Vacaville, record a fair number of the Trek books but still only a small fraction of those published. Vacaville has a "book club" where they send you one pre-determined title a month and several of these have been Trek novels. I just finished reading Vonda McIntyre's *The Entropy Effect* (Pocket Books, 1981). This book, while otherwise an interesting and enjoyable story, is *very* annoying! Here, as in several other novels, a major character is killed or the ship is destroyed and then everything is undone by resorting to time travel. In this case it is Kirk who is killed by a demented time traveler and the crew go on for pages and pages moaning and weeping and gnashing their teeth. This is supposed to make the reader feel sad but s/he knows that in the end Kirk will be back.

There were interesting ideas, e.g., that the amount of energy needed for time travel is proportional to the square of the time traversed, and improper permanent displacements of objects leads to an accelerated rate of the increase of the entropy of the universe and the creation of a naked singularity. However these ideas do not make up for the feeling that I was cheated by the plot.

## Outlander

In June, 1991, Delacorte published Diana Gabaldon's *Outlander* (xii+627 pp., \$20 hc), an excellent time-travel novel. It is her first novel and is set in Scotland in 1743. It is really a historical novel with a heroine from our era to give it a contemporary viewpoint. Claire Beauchamps Randall was a combat nurse during WWII, working



on the front line helping treat wounded soldiers under trying conditions. She also is an amateur herbalist. She and her husband are vacationing in the part of Scotland where his family originated and he is doing genealogical research. There is some mumbo-jumbo, strange palm and tea leaf readings, and while she is investigating a ring of standing stones she falls through a time warp from 1945 to 1743. She is captured by some Scots who are subtly fighting the English and the events are building to the attempted return of the Stuart Pretender, his defeat, and the destruction of most of the clans in 1745. Over a period of a year she gets involved with the clan, marries a family head, and eventually flees to France with him. It is an excellent historical novel which makes me believe in the Scotland the author is presenting.

The heroine believes she cannot change history and has a feeling of foreboding about the coming destruction of the clans. She wants to return to her own time and cannot tell people of her true origin. She is forced to marry the chief but comes to really love him. Then she is torn between her love for him and her yet unborn original husband. Finally she has an opportunity to return to her own time but chooses not to do so.

While I enjoyed it as an excellent historical novel, it was the speculation on divergent timelines and changing the future/past that fascinated me. Most of the book is a straight historical novel with little relevant speculation. The heroine meets another time-gate victim who originated in the 1950s but does not learn this until after the woman was burned as a witch. For the most part Claire accepts her situation and the future as she knows it, dreading the impending massacre of the

Scots in 1745. Only after she accidentally kills the villain, who is her original husband's ancestor, before he had the opportunity to father any children does she really think about changing her original past. She realizes that she has already done so by merely being here and healing some people who otherwise would have died or been maimed. The book ends with her pregnant and ready to return to Scotland with her husband Jamie. She has hope of saving him from the disaster and perhaps even preventing it from happening.

A sequel, *Dragonfly in Amber*, was published in November, 1992. Sandy tells me that the changes in history peter out, but will not say more. I sent it to Vacaville to tape for me. I hope that their narrator, Brian M. Santo, is still in the program. His Scots accent fit the first book wonderfully.

Marsha Jones told me that Dell published a paperback edition of the first book for \$4.99 late in the summer of 1992.

## Floppy Porn and Sleaze

I received review copies of six hard-core porn SF novelettes on floppy disk. The accompanying literature suggested that the reader could enhance his enjoyment of the stories by doing universal search and replace operations on character names to one's own. Another advantage of the floppy medium is privacy from postal inspectors or the wrong people opening your mail. Each disk contains three stories and costs about \$12. (The accompanying literature did not give a price and I am going from memory.) I read three stories. Each has a fantasy or SF setting and after several pages of set-up goes into describing a marathon session of copulation. All of the action was straightforward arousal and copulation, and much of the description was of the response of the female partner.

"Arena" has much the same concept as the Fred Brown story of the same name and the old Trek episode that ripped it off. Humanity and a totally inimical race are about to encounter each other and fight a long war to extermination. A god-like super-race intervenes and selects a representative of each race to fight it out and the loser will lose for his entire species. In this story the encounter is to be sexual, the alien taking the male role.

In "The Droth Child" a female graduate student is called into another dimension where she, as a descendant of a great warrior, must help the inhabitants defeat a monster which had been molesting them. In a straight-forward sword & sorcery plot she defeats the monster but then she is waylaid by a satyr who forces himself on her. This incident seems irrelevant to the start of the story and occurs only in its last third. He intends to copulate with her until she dies but she is stronger than he, and he dies.

In "Tara" a human woman and a bird-man fall in love and consummate their relationship. This is the only sex scene which was not a rape and is the only one I found in the least bit erotic. They then go look for her missing mother and separate to make a more thorough search. She fights and is captured by a snake-woman who turns her over to a tribe of some little creatures. These creatures sacrifice her to their sex god who rapes her until her lover rescues her.

The writing is fairly good and the stories are interesting in their own right. The porn is of male power, concentrating on the ability of the male to send the female into such ecstasy that she loses all control of her will and must have more. There is little mention of the physical pleasure of the male but only of the female response to his manipulations.

The sex is ordinary and leaves no feeling of revulsion. On the other hand another review book, Emil Hoffmann's *The Underground* (Bookman, 1991, vi+216 pp., \$8.95 tp) has little overt sex but leaves this reader with a feeling of distaste. A human is captured by a race of gnomes and taken underground where he is a slave. They have a social-insect type of society and the queen devours her mate after copulating. The princess falls in love with the human and copulates without eating him, becoming pregnant. He does not understand how this can be as they are such divergent species. She leads a swarm to start a new hive. I was not alone in having a reaction as to sleaze. Volunteers of Vacaville, which recorded this book for me, has had no objection to the sex scenes in most best seller type books or fantasy books which have much more in the way of explicit sex. However, I got a letter from the administrator asking me never to send another book like this for recording. (The readers are inma-

tes of a medical prison in California.) But how am I to know if another review book I get is like this?

The porn disks can be ordered from The BTS Company, RR #2 Box 82, Salem NJ 08079-9714.

Triad Software, a division of Triad Pictures Corporation (P O Box 1299, Sequim WA 98382) sent me a review copy of "Time Warp: The First Adventure" (67 minute cassette, \$12.95 from bookstores or direct). The tape is written and produced by Dwayne Osterbauer. They said this was the first of a series of recorded sexually explicit adventure stories. The sex is extremely low profile, nothing at all explicit. Most Hollywood movies are rougher.

The opening is the cliché of people driving in a car at dusk and seeing a strange light which they investigate. They are listening to the radio and there is a very nice touch to the news bulletin they hear. The Israeli government has rebuilt the Temple and the Muslims are rioting. Twelve hundred have already been killed and one of the kids in the car has a brother in the Army who might have to go there to help keep peace.

The kids are returning home from college for summer break, and investigating the strange light they find a bunch of perfectly built nude humans dancing around a bonfire. The most adventurous of the kids, Billy, starts dancing with Kyra but gets scared off when she sits on top of and starts undressing him. The Malobites have fun scaring and chasing away the kids, after which they discuss their program. They imply they are from another world because they refer to the kids as Terrans and Earthmen. Their leader tells Kyra that if she wants Billy she must be subtle and not aggressive. They want to bring "this world under our loving dominion," but fear interference from the Anami.

Billy arrives home and finds Kyra waiting for him. She talks him into returning to her home. He finds his college companions on the ship, too. It takes three days to reach their home world of "Eden."

Up till now it is all a mildly suggestive romp of the sexually liberated aliens trying to liberate us. They are perpetually dancing and giggling. Only their leaders know how repressed we are and the others are constantly amazed at our inhibitions.

After returning from a romp in a flying machine Billy overhears a conver-

sation between the top female general from his time, Isabel Flores, and Little John, one of the "aliens," to the effect that they are planning to use time-travel to change the timeline and prevent all the wars, crusades, Dark Ages, etc., from her history, from ever happening. This would also prevent thousands of years of ancestors of her timeline from having ever lived. Besides the flying saucer itself, there was only one time-travel device, called the Satari, in existence and Billy has to steal it to prevent this genocide. Then things get confusing with an aerial dog-fight ending with the chase ship crashing, a fight with light-sabres, and the General finally coming over to the "good" side and helping save the day. Little John is left stranded 6000 years in the past and the kids return to their original time. It was implied earlier that a nuclear war would destroy most of humanity a short time later but this is not addressed any further. The Malobites are supposed to be descendants of the survivors of this war.

The production values and sound effects are excellent. On the first side the changes of scene are very clear and easy to follow. They only get confusing in the rush to the climax.

The tape ends with about five minutes of coming attractions for the second in the series, "Time Warp 2: The Forbidden Power."

## Computer Problems and the Future of Niekas

Several months ago in the readers' question column of either *Byte* or *PC World* I found the solution to a problem. I am using an old XT clone with 360K disk drives. When some authors submitted columns on disk, especially Tamar Lindsay, my computer would say the disk is unreadable. On the other hand, Mike Bastraw had no trouble with it. I had the same problem with books and zines on disk that NESFA sent me to read, using my screen-reading program and speech synthesizer. Well, it seems that the newer disk drives, which can also write 1.2 MB disks, use narrower recording heads and leave a lighter impression on the disk, even when in the 360 K mode. Fortunately a friend, John Parker, has both a 360 K and a 1.2 M drive on his machine and can re-do disks for me.



I use PC-Write which keeps its files in ASCII, so if you use a different word processor and want to submit material to me please do so in ASCII, preferably on a 360 K 5.25 inch disk. Please indicate bold face, underlining, and italics in braces because the control symbols can get lost in translation if you are not using PCW. When I bought my system with its special talking software and hardware for close to \$2.5K, I was not going to spend another \$500 each for the likes of D-Base and MS Word. I went the shareware route where I could try out the programs at nominal cost, and pay a much more reasonable price to register if I liked them. I have settled on PC Write from Quicksoft and PC File from Buttonware and am very satisfied with both. Final costs were well under half those of the name brands. I will be very glad to share copies of these programs with anyone who wishes to try them.

My son now has a Macintosh for school use and can translate disks for me, and others can convert 3.5 inch disks to 5.25 inch ones, so I can take almost anything, but 360K ASCII disks are most convenient. We have a new person, Nancy Hanger, helping with the production of *Niekas*. She was introduced to me by Jane Yolen when Jane heard that we were having production problems. Nancy is a freelance copy editor and typesetter who does typesetting for Baen Books and copy editing for just about all the other SF imprints in New York. For page making she uses an MS-DOS system with Windows and can read virtually any format of PC disk using most commercial word processors. She lives in a

suburb of Manchester, NH, about 70 miles south of me. She is doing the typesetting for this issue and I welcome her to the *Niekas* family.

We still have not finished *Niekas* #43B, the second volume of 50-word stories. As soon as I finish this I will give that the highest priority. *Niekas* #45 will be our Dark Fantasy and Horror issue edited by Joe Christopher. It is almost ready for illustrating and typesetting #46 will have a mini-section on baseball fantasy, the way we had one on Kipling this. We have an excellent lead piece by Nan Scott and are looking for additional items. We also have tentative plans for 47-49 but will not speak of anything that far off. Because of available help and other commitments *Niekas* will have to be less frequent than I would like, but I hope to average two issues a year from now on. ❄

## A Note From the Typesetter:

Greetings to you all—I am filling in as typesetter for *Niekas*, and have a few requests and admonitions for submitters, above and beyond the needs that Ed has detailed in the past for you all. Please continue to submit on disk whenever possible. Please also try to be consistent with your style and typing, both for Ed's sake as he runs it through his own computer's vocal programming and for me when it comes in for final typesetting. I am simply setting this in my spare time between professional copy editing jobs and so am not proofreading this magazine at all—I am leaving that to the fine hands of other production people at *Niekas*. Please help us all out by submitting your contributions in the easiest possible format for me to convert and clean before setting. If you have any questions at all, please feel free call me: (603) 483-0129 (not after 10PM EST). I will be glad to go over basics on submitting disks with you. Or write to: Nancy C. Hanger, Windhaven Press, 23 Hunting Rd., Auburn, NH 03032. INTERNET: nhanger@mv.mv.com ❄

# Across the River

By Fred Lerner

## What I Did On My Vacation

In 1953, Robert and Virginia Heinlein set off from their home in Colorado Springs on a trip around the world. Juvenile novels from Scribner's generated a royalty stream more lucrative than the word rates of the science fiction pulps, and Heinlein's talent for marketing had led him to the well-paying slick magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post*. The money was there, and perhaps there was another motive as well. The consummate professional writer that Heinlein considered himself to be might do well to write and sell a travel narrative.

Today a trip around the world is usually done by airliner or cruise ship. Those options were open to the Heinleins, and the costs would have been similar. A round-the-world cruise on American President Lines was their first choice. But it was the first choice of too many other travellers; no bookings were available. The long hours of over-water flying required in that pre-jet era repelled Mrs Heinlein. Fortunately, a third option existed: both scheduled and unscheduled shipping services linked the ports of the world, and like train travel, travel by ship was a perfectly normal way of getting from one place to another.

So the Heinleins took a train to New Orleans, sailed on a freighter for Valparaiso, flew across South America to Montevideo, and boarded a liner for Cape Town. After motoring to Kruger National Park, they travelled (again by liner) to Singapore, then to Sydney. A disappointingly short visit to Australia was followed by a flight to Auckland, and then in desperation by the long flight to Honolulu, San Francisco, and finally back to Colorado.

It doesn't sound like a very exciting itinerary, and it wasn't. The wildlife of Kruger Park and political unrest in Jakarta provided the only real excitement of the trip. The rest of it was shipboard life, sightseeing in port, and frustration with sordid hotels,

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One doesn't learn much about the world and its wonders from *Tramp Royale*. . . . One doesn't learn that much about Robert Heinlein, either.

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wretched food, and bureaucratic stupidity.

One doesn't learn much about the world and its wonders from *Tramp Royale*. In 1953 customs and currency restrictions still reflected the austerities of World War II. There was still a British Empire, and many of its white inhabitants didn't much like America or Americans. There was little opportunity for an American traveller to meet many of its nonwhite inhabitants, and the Heinleins didn't try much to expand those opportunities. They were more interested in Tristan da Cunha than in Zululand, and the deepest regret Heinlein records over missed opportunities was the M.S. Ruys captain's decision not to risk landing passengers on Tristan. A story on that remote island and its people, illustrated with the author's photographs, might profitably be sold to a slick travel magazine, Heinlein explains; but I can't help wondering if the author of "Universe" and "Common Sense" might not have another reason for wanting to visit Tristan. A remote, inbred island community well away from the world's trade routes might provide a pretty good analog for the passengers and crew of a generation starship.

One doesn't learn that much about Robert Heinlein, either.

*Tramp Royale* was written in the hope that a mainstream publisher might buy it and that Americans planning their own travels might read it. The overlap between this audience and Heinlein's science fiction readers could be expected to be almost nonexistent. Thus there is nothing about science fiction in *Tramp Royale*, and no autobiographical details other than those needed to elaborate the incidents of the voyage. We never even learn Mrs Heinlein's name: she is called "Ticky" throughout. Though in 1953 Robert Heinlein's imagination had roamed the stars and planets, had journeyed through times past, present, and future, and had explored alien dimensions, the writer of *Tramp Royale* is very much the white-collar American whose days have been spent indoors at a typewriter and whose evenings have been passed in the company of other middle-class midwesterners. His shipmates are no more interesting, nor are the people he meets on his journey.

*Tramp Royale* is, alas, the story of a dull American couple who bring their dullness with them around the world.

How much better a travel narrative Heinlein might have written can be seen by looking at the first few pages of *Job: A Comedy of Justice*, one of the more readable of his later novels. And even in the early 1950s, Heinlein was describing in loving detail the exotic landscapes of Mars (*Double Star*) and Venus (*Between Planets*). We can ascribe *Tramp Royale*'s dullness, I think, to the audience to which it was addressed: middle Americans to whom a South American seaport or the Transvaal veldt or the Raffles Hotel in Singapore was the most exotic place to which they could imagine themselves travelling in the flesh.

And that was why *Tramp Royale* languished unsold for forty years. It chronicled the misplanned journey of two Americans whose most notable characteristic was a grumpy dissatis-



faction at not encountering the standards of courtesy and comfort to which they felt entitled. It is not a book that would have taught their contemporaries anything useful. And to the better-travelled denizens of the 1990s, it offers even fewer lessons. Robert Heinlein was, in those days and for decades thereafter, a great storyteller. But he was no John Gunther, and no Jan Morris.

If a world creator turned world traveller makes a hash of the task, is the result any better when the situation is reversed? In *Last Letters from Hav*, we have the opportunity to find out.

Hav, a small city-state on the Levantine coast, has been conquered by every passing army since before the Crusades. During the 19th century it was claimed by all the great powers of Europe, before being ceded to Russia to provide the czar with an outlet to the Mediterranean. The population of Hav is a layered one: whatever genes were indigenous to the place have been irretrievably mixed with those of all Europe and Asia: Slav and Turk, Greek and Armenian, Arab and Jew. The occupying Powers have left their mark on the city's architecture and its demography: English and French, Ger-

man and Italian, Austrian and Russian. There's even a Chinese colony by the casino. It's the sort of place where fading aristocrats and remittance men serve as bit players in the game of international intrigue; the slogans might have changed, but the game really hasn't. There's more than a chance resemblance to Durrell's Alexandria.

Jan Morris brings to Hav the same powers of observation that she does to Sydney or Oxford or Manhattan, the same ability to link past and present. The economy and politics of the place are well explained, and one can readily imagine what living there must be like. (Excruciatingly dull, these days!) The only inconsistency in her account comes at the end: as Morris hurriedly departs one step ahead of an invading fleet, one must wonder why any would want the place. But how many of the small wars of our time make much sense to anyone not intimately involved?

The only thing that differentiates *Last Letters from Hav* from other good travel writing—from, say, the sort of thing one might read in *The New Yorker*—is that Hav does not exist. It is wholly the creation of Jan Morris's imagination. Its nearest literary cousin

is the utopian novel: a tale in which an imaginary society is the focus of attention, and the narrator merely the lens through which the writer's and readers' attention is focused.

"It's a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there." There is no good reason that utopia must be a perfect country, or even a desirable one. Remember that Thomas More's title was a pun: "utopia" can mean "no place" as well as "good place." From the perspective of the traveller, for whom excitement outweighs comfort and a lively history is of more interest than a settled constitution, Hav offers the perfect combination of the familiar and the exotic. And, just as the science fiction tradition subordinates character to plot and setting, so the ideal travel narrator is a self-effacing one. In *Last Letters from Hav*, Jan Morris transcends this tradition.

In his *Saturday Evening Post* stories, Robert Heinlein won over an audience unused to the concepts of science fiction by focusing on the day-to-day details of human life in an exotic environment. The details that concerned him while on his *Tramp Royale* had little to do with the far-away places that he visited. Bureaucracy and discourtesy are all-too-familiar discomforts of daily life at home, and are hardly worth travelling across the world to experience, even vicariously.

To Jan Morris, travel and its incidents are part of the great adventure of life; and, just as an autobiographical anecdote often gains handsomely from a burnishing of the truth, so a traveller's tale is all the richer for taking some economy with the facts. ("Truth is a precious thing, not to be squandered idly on chance-met strangers," as Kimball O'Hara once said; and who would know more of travel or of adventure?) We read travellers' tales in the hope of sharing the traveller's ability to appreciate the infinite variety of the world around us, and we read science fiction for the excitement of imagining worlds beyond.

*Last Letters from Hav* captures the adventure of travel, and something of the cosmic adventure of science fiction as well.

## Books Discussed

Robert Heinlein, *Tramp Royale*. New York: Ace Books, 1992.

Jan Morris, *Last Letters from Hav*. New York: Random House, 1985. \*

# Linkages

By Patricia Shaw Mathews

## Pre-revolt in 2100: A Handmaid's Tale

[This article is dedicated to Amnesty International.]

In 1940, Robert Heinlein wrote a classic tale of revolution against a theocracy, called "If This Goes On—," later reprinted as *Revolt in 2100*. Forty-five years later, Margaret Atwood wrote a perfect prequel called *The Handmaid's Tale*. Rumor has it Atwood denies having either written a science fiction novel or having read any. It may be she has no idea Heinlein's story exists. But the two stories go together like the halves of a responsive reading.

Heinlein shows the downfall of what Atwood named the Republic of Gilead through the eyes of a young man. Atwood shows its founding through the eyes of a woman in her thirties.

Atwood's Kate—we never know her last name—renamed "Offred" by her new masters, is a former librarian trying to escape to Canada. Because she tests fertile in a world of chemical-caused barrenness, she is trained as a handmaid. Her job is to bear children to barren couples of the Republic's aging aristocracy, conceived in a deliberately repulsive, bizarre ceremony humiliating to both the handmaid and her owner's wife. If she fails, she is sent to a labor colony to shovel toxic waste under hazardous conditions. If she revolts, she faces the crushing of her hands or her feet. "You don't need hands or feet for what you do" is the merciless logic of the state.

Heinlein's John Lyle is a soldier, a member of the honor guard of the Prophet Incarnate, whose revolt begins when he falls in love with one of the prophet's handmaidens. Reared in the official puritanism of their culture, both Lyle and Sister Judith are shocked to find out that their duties in-

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There is nothing new  
about any of this; nor is  
any form of victimization  
less legitimate than the  
others.  
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clude sexual service to the Prophet. As Lyle's friend Zeb Jones explains, "God commands man to be fruitful. The Prophet Incarnate, being especially holy, is required to be especially fruitful. That's the gist of it; you can pick up the fine points when you study it." Atwood's theocracy offers precisely the same rationale. Offred and his Sister Judith are in precisely the same position.

Form follows function, and two worlds, described two generations apart, are very much alike. Both theocracies are what Americans call fascist. Atwood shows the new dictatorship rounding up African Americans. In Heinlein's, they simply are not around, though Hispanics have been left alone. Heinlein shows the mature dictatorship persecuting Jews; Atwood shows a TV newsclip from the regime rooting out "Baptist terrorists in the Appalachians." Presumably the Jews have long since been rounded up and shot, forcibly converted, or deported.

Both worlds are, of course, thoroughly totalitarian. Both have sealed borders guarded by soldiers, dogs, and physical walls. In both of them, torture and execution are routine. Both hang political prisoners under the pretext of criminal offenses. Human values are ignored, or become items of barter. Offred, whose daughter was left stand-

ing in the snow at the Canadian border when she was arrested, has nightmares about the child's fate. Only a whim of the owner's wife, Serena Joy, lets her know.

Nor is Serena Joy any happier. Her misery shows through in every line of the book, every scene from the excellent movie made from the book.

Form follows function in small things as well. Heinlein's Prophet and his household, handmaidens included, are attended by a lesser order of women called lay deaconesses, "who kept house around the Temple and the Palace. Most of them were dowdy old creatures who reminded me of my aunts." Atwood calls them Marthas. Heinlein's Virgins are policed by senior sisters, postgraduate virgins themselves; in Atwood's story they are called Aunts. Both use the same devices. "How would you like to be prayed over in relays?" Zeb Jones asks.

Form follows function in matters both public and private as well, and both theocracies make private matters public. In one horrifying scene, a trainee Handmaid's feet are mutilated for the "crime" of masturbation. In Heinlein's Zeb Jones explains why. "Take sex away from people, make it forbidden, evil, limit it to ritualistic breeding. Force it to back up into suppressed sadism. Then hand the people a scapegoat to hate. The mechanism is ages old."

The devices of rebellion and survival are the same as well. Atwood's Handmaids, faced with a lingering death for failure to become pregnant, find ways of accomplishing it—ways for which they could be hanged if caught. And Heinlein's innocent hero is told "... it is just a case of following well-known customs. There is a present to be made to the Eldest Sister (Atwood's Aunt Lydia?), and to be renewed as circumstances dictate. There are some palms to be brushed—I can tell you which ones."

And, in both stories, the Handmaidens are a very active part of the resis-

tance. Offred, already ready to run or fight, is immediately approached by Moria, who manages to escape temporarily. Heinlein's equivalent is Sister Magdalene—Maggie. Both are admirable women. Both run grave risk. Maggie escapes; Offred (in the movie) escapes, both to join the rebels. Sister Judith and John Lyle are tortured; Moria's hands are mutilated and she is sent to a private brothel for the leaders of Gilead.

Moria's jaunty cry of despair from the brothel is haunting. "You get all the drugs you want, you work nights, and you can (sleep with) whoever you please." Maggie adds, "After the Prophet has tired of her, a woman doesn't seem very valuable even to herself."

Much nonsense has been written in connection with *The Handmaid's Tale* largely confusing Offred's helplessness with passivity. There is, simply, very little she can do about her situation—her masters are very skilled at squashing revolt. What she can do, she does. History is written by those who managed, somehow, to win.

The novel has been called an "extremist feminist nightmare," because it deals with a woman's experience of a repressive society, and because she

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and two worlds,  
described two  
generations apart, are  
very much alike. Both  
theocracies are what  
Americans call fascist.”

undergoes confinement and sexual exploitation. This criticism ignores the real nature of repressive societies throughout history. (Check out our former ally, Saudi Arabia!) It ignores the fact that women have always, in the past, been the first victims of that repression, right along with dissidents, minorities, and the poor. (Often some exceptions have been made for well-socialized female members of the ruling class.)

And it ignores the classic forms repression takes for each class of victims. In brief, the poor are worked to death. Women are confined and sexually exploited. Minorities are killed, enslaved, or driven out—occasionally forcibly converted. Dissidents disappear, are denounced, and are either hanged in a great flare of publicity or become un-persons.

There is nothing new about any of this; nor is any form of victimization less legitimate than the others. To say so is to argue that Offred's rape is less important than Winston Smith's clash with the Anti Sex League in 1984—or that Smith's liberating affair with Julia is more significant than Offred's with Nick. That stripping away her name, so that she is no longer Kate, but "of Fred," is more grotesque than turning Kunta Kinte into "Toby," less moving than Alex of *A Clockwork Orange* being addressed by number while in prison. That Offred's pain is less than Winston's—or less significant in the scheme of things, i.e., that *she* is less significant.

It's all of a piece; it's just in whose story you tell—and whether the regime is rising or falling. And how important it is to be free. ✱

## Nihil Humanum

By John Boardman

### No, You're Not Going To the Stars

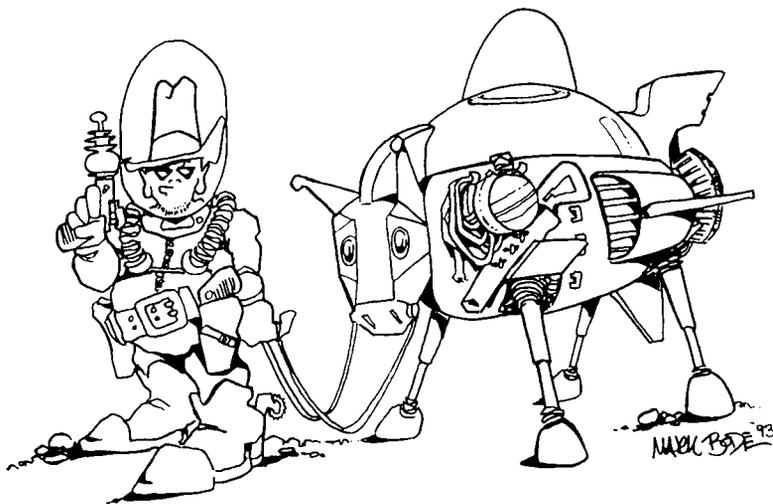
The relationship between science and science fiction is like a marriage between two compatible but strong willed people. Things are generally congenial, but when differences of opinion develop, they are likely to be deep and difficult.

Much science fiction takes a didactic approach to the sciences. The author has some scientific principle or speculation which she or he wishes to

present to the reading public, and uses the story as a teaching device. This is an approach that can be mishandled, and in the older science fiction, frequently was. Paper characterizations and unconvincing plots frequently decorate a fictional exposition of a scientific idea. Hugo Gernsback's "classic" and unreadably awful novel *Ralph 124C41* + over 75 years ago was the father of this lineage, and he sought out similar stories when he founded *Amazing Stories* in 1926. In his honor,

this approach to science fiction was later called "The Gernsback Delusion."

But the opposite approach can be just as bad. Many of the early science fiction "pulp" writers sent stories around to all the popular fiction magazines: detective, western, romance, sports, and fantasy. If a story wouldn't sell as a western, for example, the author would rewrite it with the cowboy as a spaceman, the horse as a rocketship, the pistol as a ray gun, and the sinister Indian chief as something



green, Martian, and elaborately tentacled.

Since literary rather than scientific considerations were important to this class of author, no boring scientific ideas were allowed to get in the way of the plot line. This approach could be acceptable as long as the travel was limited to within the solar system. As of 1930 or 1940, the best astronomical information seemed to indicate that Mars, Venus, and the satellites of Jupiter might be plausibly habitable by human beings, and therefore could have indigenous populations. Hermann Oberth's orbital calculations were available, and so Northwest Smith plotted larceny along the canals of Mars while the blind Rhysling sang in lunar cabarets and Ham Hamilton courted his English sweetheart through the steaming jungles of Venus.

But in the 1930s new ground was broken, as E.E. Smith took the backyard spaceship "Skylark" completely out of our galaxy, and Isaac Asimov and Edmond Hamilton then designed Galactic Empires. It was well known by then that the speed of light is a "speed limit" in the universe, and if you were limited to this slow crawl, it would take you over four years to get to Alpha Centauri, the nearest star system, and centuries to reach the singing crystal mountains of the planet Canopus.

Here, science fiction parted company with science, producing not a few mutual recriminations. The spe-

cial theory of relativity, first published in 1905 by Albert Einstein, demonstrated that the speed of light in a vacuum—300,000 km/sec—is an absolute upper limit. Huge amounts of energy would have to be expended to get a particle even close to this value, which is conveniently called "c" for "constant" by physicists. An infinite amount of energy would have to be used to obtain "c", let alone to exceed it.

However, if science fiction writers limit themselves to this slow crawl, no plot could ever take the hero outside of the solar system. Several writers tried to work within this limitation. In 1941, Robert Heinlein's novelette "Universe" introduced the "generation ship," a huge self-contained spaceship aboard which generations of human beings would live and die as the ship slowly plodded onward, at below the speed of light, towards its destination. An alternate form of this story, the "freezer ship," loaded the passengers aboard at cryogenic temperatures, to be thawed out when the ship got to a habitable planet of another star.

The same physical theory which makes "c" a speed limit, means that duration and length change with the speed of the observer. For example, a spaceship which travels from the Sun to Alpha Centauri at 99% of the speed of light would take over four and a third years by the clock of an observer on Earth. However, elapsed time would be only 7 months for the spaceship's crew. Still faster speeds would shrink the travel time, as measured on

the spaceship, even more drastically. A spaceship that travels at 99.9% of the speed of light could make a round trip to a planet 100 light years away in only 9 years as measured by the spaceship's clocks. However, 200 years would have elapsed on Earth.

There is raw material for a number of good stories in this effect. And several have been written. L. Ron Hubbard, who was a good science fiction writer before he founded Dianetics, handled the effects of this time-dilation very well in his 1950 novel *Return to Tomorrow* (serialized in *Astounding* as *To the Stars*). Space travelers become a society unto themselves, detached from all planet-bound concerns. In some stories such as Poul Anderson's "Ghetto" (1954), they become not the elite but the scorned scapegoats of planet bound society. Other authors, like de Camp and Busby, have also made good use of this effect.

Still, the limitations imposed by the special theory of relativity bother many writers, including some with good scientific backgrounds, such as Isaac Asimov, Larry Niven, and Jerry Pournelle. After all, every other type of adventure story has a hero who leaves for six months, fights all kinds of sinister menaces, and returns home to find that his girlfriend has spent six months waiting for him. Why should this change, simply because the sinister menace is a slimy megalomaniac, intelligent octopus on the ninth planet of Rigel?

## Beating the Speed Limit

Maybe a flaw can be found in the special theory of relativity? Poul Anderson, in his 1958 novel *We Have Fed Our Sea*, attempted to find in Einstein's general theory of relativity a way around the "speed limit." Unfortunately, at just about the time Anderson was writing this novel, Vladimir Alexandrovich Fok was writing a paper which proved that "c" is just as much a speed limit in the general theory as it is in the special theory.

Other attempts to "get around" Einstein by both physicists and science fiction writers, have been equally fruitless. A quarter-century after Einstein's death, as more experimental tests of his ideas become technically feasible, his ideas still stand against all opposition.

The "space-warp" is a popular way to beat the "speed limit." In any num-



ber of stories, the inventor of the space-warp persuades a skeptic by marking two dots on a piece of paper. "Observe," he says, "these dots are quite far apart. But now I bend the paper, and these two dots are now next to each other. My gizmo does the same thing with space—it warps it so that we are actually quite near to our destination, the planet Fornak VIII.

It sounds good. Unfortunately, we know from the general theory of relativity what it takes to "warp" space. What it takes is mass. Unless the inventor has some way to drag in a huge amount of mass from the hind end of the universe, space will obstinately remain unwarped.

Some writers remain unconvinced. Arthur C. Clarke believes that a way will be found around the "speed limit." He bases his belief on nothing more than the fact that, in the past, many generally accepted scientific ideas have been abandoned in the face of better evidence. This, by itself, does not constitute a proof, or even a valid inference.

How about tachyons? These were particles that were first hypothesized by the physicist Gerald Feinberg about 30 years ago. They do indeed move faster than light—if, of course, they exist. They are already moving faster than light, and an infinite amount of energy would be needed to slow them down to below "c". But if these particles cannot even interact with our normal universe of speeds below "c", there is no sense in speculating about

them. Trying to infer the properties of tachyons by analogy with known particles is like trying to infer the breeding habits of unicorns by analogy with known ungulates.

Wigner and Hawkins, among others, have speculated about worm-holes and black holes but this is extremely speculative! When Wigner first discussed worm-holes at a lecture at the American Physical Society about 30 years ago he showed mathematically that they would pinch off before a signal could get through. Even if rotating black holes were gateways to other parts of our or other universes

the tidal forces in their vicinity would be prohibitive. See Larry Niven's story "Neutron Star" for a graphic description of these forces. Also the hero's technique of saving himself would not help.

And so, on this issue scientists and science fiction writers have come to a parting of the ways. If the exigencies of plot development require that Dexter Farnsworth spends three weeks in travel from earth to the fourth planet of Sirius, then the writer hokes up a method of space travel that keeps Our Hero en route for three weeks. Never mind that light takes more than eight years to get from here to Sirius. (Also, never mind that Sirius is highly unlikely to have planets. But that's a whole other story.

Since scientists like good adventure fiction as much as anyone else, few nasty letters from them are likely to follow publication of a story in which the Upchuck Horde takes a month to travel in from the Magellanic Clouds for the purpose of ravaging Earth. Science fiction editors are just as glad about this, because scientists are likely to write in with vigorous protests of errors of just about any other sort. If a flying creature with a mass of much more than 25 kg takes to the air on a Earth-like planet, the editor who published the story is likely to be hearing about it for weeks from engineers, physicists, biologists, psychologists, and ornithologists. But the continuing tide of stories about faster-than-light



**Table I: Kinematics of a space ship that accelerates from rest at 9.8 m/sec<sup>2</sup>**

final speed	time req'd		distance traveled	mass ratio
	earth	ship		
0.1	.10	.10	0.005	1.11
0.5	.56	.53	0.150	1.73
0.6	.73	.67	0.242	2.00
0.7	.95	.84	0.398	2.38
0.8	1.03	.85	0.647	3.00
0.9	2.00	1.43	1.26	4.36
0.99	6.81	2.57	5.91	14.10
0.996	10.82	2.99	9.89	22.30
0.999	21.70	3.69	20.70	44.70

travel has apparently deadened the critical impulse in science fiction readers.

### A Slow Jaunt

Still, most anticipations of space travel assume that Our Heroes will get into their interstellar ships at or near Earth, go wandering off across light years of space, and eventually return in their own lifetimes and not significantly old by the ship's clocks. In order to do this, they first have to speed up their ships to a suitably higher speed. This means that the ships have to be accelerated, and here slightly different dilations of time take place from those we have already discussed. Let us suppose that the ship begins at rest, on Earth. (Oh, I know that Earth isn't at rest, but its orbital speed around the sun is something like 30 km/sec, which is about .0001 that of light.) It then accelerates until it reaches some large fraction of "c". This is likely to take quite a bit of time, so we will assume that the ship travels with the same acceleration that we experience daily, right here on Earth, from gravity—9.8 m/sec/sec. In astronomical terms, this is 1.0 light years per year per year. Now, how much time will be required for the ship to get to some pre-selected fraction of "c", both by Earth's clocks and by the ship's? And how far will the ship have traveled by the time it reaches this speed? See table I for examples.

At last we seem to be getting somewhere. Considering that Ferdinand Magellan's expedition took three years to get around the Earth, times like these seem to be reasonable. Of course, Magellan lost his own life, four of his five ships were lost, and very few of his crewmen saw Spain again. But the expedition returned a hand-

some profit to its backers, and that seems to be what most people want out of the space program.

Just to have a number to talk about, let us assume that a starship makes a round trip to a planet 20 light years away. This is a good guess, as the nearest single sun-like star is Delta Pavonis, at approximately this distance. Since we already know of one single sun-like star which possesses a habitable planet—the sun itself—Delta Pavonis seems a good objective for

further speculation.

So we accelerate our ship at "one g" until it is at some desirably large fraction of light speed, and then coast under "weightlessness" until it's time to decelerate at "one gee" to rest, and see if anyone near delta Pavonis wants to buy our baubles, bangles, and beads. (Columbus found that hawks' bells were highly prized by the West Indians. With falconry currently undergoing a revival this might not be a bad idea for an item of trade.) Then, after loading up with raw materials, we head back the same way. How long would this take by Earth clocks and by ship clocks? See table 2.

However, the time required for the round trip will not be the most important consideration for the planners of the voyage. The energy required to produce this acceleration and deceleration will be the biggest problem involved in planning interstellar travel. Let us assume the most energetic nuclear reaction available in contemporary physics—the complete annihilation of ordinary matter with an equal mass of anti-matter. This will produce an enormous flux of gamma

#### By The Numbers

Suppose that a spaceship begins from rest and accelerates at a constant acceleration, **g**, until it attains a speed **u**. By the time the ship reaches **u**, it has traveled a distance, **x**. The time that has elapsed in this process is **t** according to a planet's clock, and **t'** according to the ship's own clock. If **c** is the speed of light, these quantities are related by the following equations:

$$t = \frac{Ku}{g}, \quad t' = \frac{c}{g} \sinh^{-1} \frac{Ku}{c}, \quad x = \frac{c^2}{g} (K - 1) \quad \text{where: } K = \left(1 - \frac{u^2}{c^2}\right)^{-1/2}$$

(Note that the fraction  $u/c$  is usually designated by  $\beta$ , and  $K$  by  $\gamma$ .)

In metric units, **c** = 300,000,000 m/sec, and **g** = 9.8 m/sec/sec. Using these values will give **x** in meters, **t** and **t'** in seconds, and **u** in meters/second. If "universal units" are used, **c** = 1, **g** = 1.3 light years/year/year, **x** is in light years, **t** and **t'** are in years, and **u** is a fraction of the speed of light.

Let us consider a round trip to a planet whose distance from earth is **d**. The spaceship will accelerate from rest to **u**, and continue at the constant speed **U** until it is necessary to decelerate. Having reached its destination, it will return by the same process. Necessarily, **d** must be greater than or equal to **2x** for this to be possible. Let **t** be the time for the round trip by a planet's clocks, and **t'** be the time by the ship's own clocks. Then:

$$T = \frac{2}{Kgu} [2c^2 (K - 1) + Kgd], \quad T' = \frac{4c}{g} \sinh^{-1} \frac{Ku}{c} = \frac{2}{Kgu} [gd - 2c^2 (K - 1)]$$

The mass ratio **m** is the ratio of the initial mass of the ship plus fuel to the mass of the ship alone. If the ship travels by matter-antimatter annihilation, emitting gamma rays and traveling on the reaction energy of these gamma rays, then **m** is given by the following equation:

$$m = \left(\frac{c+u}{c-u}\right)^{1/2}$$

This is the **m** required to get **u** for a round trip. With refueling, the mass ratio is **m**<sup>2</sup>. Without refueling at the destination, it is **m**<sup>4</sup>. \*

Table II: Time in Years for Round Trips (1) of Various Durations

max speed	10 LY		20 LY		40 LY		80 LY		mass ratio req (2)	
	earth time	ship time	no refuel	refuel at dest						
0.1	100.2	99.7	200.2	199.2	400.0	398.0	800.0	796.0	1.49	1.22
0.5	21.0	18.4	41.0	35.7	81.0	70.4	161.0	140.0	9.00	3.00
0.6	18.0	14.7	34.6	28.1	68.0	54.7	134.6	108.0	16.0	4.00
0.7	15.9	12.0	30.2	22.2	58.7	42.6	115.9	83.4	32.1	5.67
0.8	14.4	9.8	26.9	17.3	51.9	32.3	101.9	62.3	81.0	9.00
0.9	13.5	8.1	24.7	13.0	46.9	22.7	91.3	42.0	361	19.0
0.96	13.3	7.6	23.7	10.5	44.6	16.3	86.2	28.0	2401	49.0
0.986 (3)	--	--	23.6	9.7	43.9	13.1	84.4	19.9	20200	142
0.99	--	--	--	--	43.8	12.6	84.2	18.3	39600	199
0.996	--	--	--	--	43.7	12.1	83.9	15.7	249000	499
0.999	--	--	--	--	--	--	83.8	14.8	4000000	2000

**Note 1:** A round trip includes travel time out and back thus a 10 LY trip would reach a point 5 LY away from earth.  
**Note 2:** The mass ratio does not change over distance; i.e., a trip of 10 or 80 LY would use the same mass ratio at 0.1 the speed of c. On all the ship is assumed to accelerate to the desired speed, coast a certain distance, and then decelerate for the rest of the trip.  
**Note 3:** At the bottom end of the chart there is a variation on the speed reached. A ship undertaking a 10 LY trip would be unable to achieve 0.99 c, for it would not have enough time to slow down before reaching its target.

radiation, which can be expelled out the back of the spaceship, rocket-style, to push it forward. (Be careful that nothing important, such as the Earth, is in the way of that blast of gamma rays.)

**Energy Crisis**

Where you get the anti-matter is a good question in itself. There may be chunks of it lying around some corner of the universe, though this appears increasingly unlikely. But it can always be created, together with an equal mass of ordinary matter, out of whatever source of energy you have available near your home base. It won't come cheap, though. To make one kilogram of anti-matter requires 5704 megawatts of power, operating for one year—about 1.8% of U.S. 1991 electric power output. (One ton = about 18 years of U.S. electricity production.) Then, once you have the anti-matter, it has to be suspended magnetically in a vacuum to prevent premature ignition by contact with ordinary matter. The spaceship's fuel will consist of equal amounts of matter and anti-matter. Difficult as this reaction will be to arrange and control, it is far more energetic than any mere nuclear fusion.

If we assume this method of pro-

pulsion, the "Mass Ratio" columns of Tables I and II apply. This is the ratio of the initial mass of fuel plus payload, to the final mass after all the fuel has been expended. This ratio rises sharply as the maximum speed rises, to the place where a small increase in speed may not be worth the huge additional expenditure in fuel.

If we cannot count on finding any filling stations away from Earth, then the fuel required for the return trip must be carted along. This gives us the Mass Ratio for the second to last column in Table II. For example, to take a five-ton payload on a 20 light year round trip with a maximum speed of 0.99c, we would need a blast-off mass of 198,000 tons. And five tons is a very small estimate for the capsule. Equipment would be needed for separating matter from anti-matter, and for shielding the passengers against cosmic radiation. At a speed of 99% that of light, every hydrogen atom at rest in interstellar space would be coming at the ship with 6 billion electron volts of kinetic energy.

There might be some relief if we could arrange in advance for refueling. If we set up, in advance, a radio contact with our destination and if they have a technology that can produce

anti-matter, then we can refuel when we get there. That will reduce the necessary Mass Ratio to the figures given in the "Refueling" column of Table II. Our five-ton payload would then need a blast-off mass of only about 1,000 tons.

In the end, some government expert would have to run his finger down such a chart as Table II and see where the desirability of speed and the cost of fuel meet at an acceptable value of maximum speed. (It would *have* to be a government, too. Any private agency, corporation, faction, or foundation with the money and power to undertake interstellar flight would have long since become a government. (We have long since passed the era of Robert A. Heinlein's film *Destination Moon*, in which the first lunar flight was accomplished by passing the hat in a suitably filled board room.) I would be partial to some such figure as 0.8c. If an anti-matter technology is feasible at all, and the crew begins in their twenties, the expedition comes within range of reasonable expectations. However, a source of energy for producing all that anti-matter will still have to be found. \*

# PATTERNS

By Diana L. Paxson

## Remember The Ring?

Long ago, in the days when Ed and I and George Washington were all young, I was introduced, more or less simultaneously, to Wagner's Ring operas and Anna Russell's unique summary of them. I had first encountered the original Germanic legend a little earlier in a summer school course on the Early Middle Ages at UCLA. Recently I was a guest at Enigmacon, which is put on by UCLA students. It was the first time I had been back to the campus since that summer, and it felt strange to look down the long staircase below the Romanesque hall, seeing there the ghost of a girl who dreamed of ancient heroes and of the young man who sat next to her in class with equal chances of having her affection returned.

Although in those days I had some vague notions of writing fiction, I could not have imagined that thirty years later I would have just published the first book in a trilogy on the Ring myths (*The Wolf and the Raven*, Morrow). And yet, the seeds of the work I am doing now, like the legend of Tristan and Iseult which I dealt with in *The White Raven*, were planted in that past. It is probably significant that my first introduction to the story was through a course in history, since what seems to fascinate me about the legendary material I have been dealing with lately is the interrelationship between myth and reality.

In the case of the Ring cycle, the historical kernel around which the rest of the mythology grew was the destruction of the Burgund royal house and many of their warriors by the Huns in A.D.437. But in the turbulent history of the Migrations Period this was only one of many tragedies. Why was the great epic of the Germanic peoples not inspired by Ermanaric or Theodoric or Arminius? One would have expected the story of one of the great peoples who founded the nations of modern Europe to achieve that posi-

“  
Though our paradigms  
may be different, it is still  
possible to look at the  
world with a sense of  
wonder, finding the  
fascination in knowing  
how things are done and  
the magic in  
appreciating the moment  
of insight.  
”

tion, instead of an obscure incident from the history of one of the lesser tribes.

Perhaps it is just this relative insignificance which allowed the story to flourish, transcending the evolving nationalism of the established tribes. The kingdom founded by the surviving Burgunds in what is now south-east France did not survive the Dark Ages, although the Duchy of Burgundy continued to play an important role into the Renaissance. But the Burgunds of the *Volsungasaga* are another breed, closer to their barbarian roots than are the Visigoths of the *Poema del Cid* or the Franks of the *Chanson de Roland*.

I think that the other, and more important reason that the legend flourished was because the story of the fall of the Burgunds became intertwined—in fact motivated and explained—by the story of Siegfried. It was the insertion of a typical Indo-European hero-tale into the historical moment that allowed both to assume

the tragic dimensions of great literature.

Siegfried is the kind of hero folklorists love. The story of his youth, in particular, is right out of the Stith Thompson motif index. Like Fionn MacCumhal and Parsifal, he is of noble ancestry, but his father has been killed before his birth, and he must grow up hidden in the forest for fear of his father's enemies. As a result, he remains a somewhat liminal figure, given great, almost magical physical abilities by his upbringing, but lacking the social skills he needs to interact with humankind.

Wagner admired the wild child, valuing his innocence and his boisterous refusal to acknowledge any kind of restraint or obligation. Given the repressive nature of 19th century German society, one can understand Wagner's yearning for freedom. Unfortunately, today we are more sophisticated or perhaps more jaded, and the "Li'l Abner" type no longer works as a hero. One challenge confronting anyone who tries to tell the story anew is therefore how to portray Siegfried as something other than "...very strong, very handsome, very brave—very stupid. . . ."

Since Wagner's time, our relationship to nature has profoundly changed. In the 19th century the wilderness was still something to be tamed, though Romantics might long for its freedom. Today the wildlands, like their creatures, are in peril, and so for me, even the youthful Siegfried is a more tragic figure than he was for Wagner, torn between his needs for freedom and for kinship, his wealth and power making him all the more vulnerable to exploitation.

The Germanic tribes, though not the noble savages Tacitus would have them, did indeed put less pressure upon their environment than the Romans did. This made them more vulnerable to natural hazards such as climatic change. It may have been increasing cold weather that originally started some of the Germanic peoples

who had migrated to the shores of the Baltic and Scandinavia moving south again. By the fifth century, the domino effect, exacerbated by the arrival of the Huns, was well underway, impelling these peoples towards the warmer, well-tilled lands ruled by Rome.

Strangely enough, a similar phenomenon is occurring today—a recent issue of *National Geographic* featured a map with arrows to indicate the recent migrations of Turks, Slavs, and others who are now moving in considerable numbers into Europe, which reminded me powerfully of similar maps in my histories of the fifth century. This is the first time since then that Europe has had to absorb (fortunately more peacefully) large numbers of people who are ethnically different from the majority. Like the Romans, they are struggling to acculturate people who are alien in language, customs and religion.

At the beginning of the century, all the tribes were still in motion. By its end, they had for the most part found permanent homes in the lands which were to become the nations of Europe.

Like today's migrants, they both changed and were changed by the culture of their new home. They adopted much of the Roman language, legal and economic systems, all dedicated to maintaining human productivity and control. They also were converted to a religion which (at least at that period) despised the physical world and feared the wilderness.

Siegfried can be seen, therefore, as a representative of this vanishing world in which the lifestyle of the Germanic tribes was comparable to that of Native Americans. Even in the first book of my trilogy, his wildness makes it hard for him to fit in. In writing the second, (*The Dragons of the Rhine*, 1994) the conflict became even more acute as the Burgunds who hailed him as a hero find him incompatible with their ambitions to fit into the Roman world.

However, dealing with Siegfried's wild nature is actually the simpler and more straightforward part of the task.

Not only his wilderness upbringing, but the frankly magical aspects of the story must be dealt with—the forging of the sword, Siegfried's invulnerability, the sleeping princess, the dragon. The reviewer for *Publisher's Weekly* was unhappy about the lack of a real

could be portrayed in this way. It is not his body, but his spirit which changes, but like the mime who convinces us that he is really pushing against a glass wall, his own belief in the dragon-identity is so powerful that those he encounters believe as well.



dragon. But the point is not to ask "if a man turned into a dragon how would people feel about him?" but rather, "what would make people feel that a man had turned into a dragon?" The basic assumption is that folklore is not simply wishful thinking, but has its origins in the actual beliefs and practices of the culture from which it comes.

Stories of shapechanging are widespread in hunting and agricultural societies. Such changes are especially typical of cultures with shamanic practices. In Northern Europe, the best known examples are the berserkers, who entered a battle frenzy in which they acted like bears or wolves. But there are many other examples of metamorphoses: Valkyries become crows or swans; shapechanging is one of the skills attributed to Odin, and Freyja had a falcon plumage which she could use to become a bird. Accounts of shamanic rituals indicate that the participants are convinced that the shaman has "become" the animal whose cries and movements he performs. It seemed to me, therefore, that Fafnar's transformation

One might call this approach "hard fantasy." SF writers are prone to look down their noses at writers of fantasy and accuse them of not having to do any research. It is certainly true that some fantasies are spun off from sheer imagination—but that is true of some space opera as well. Whether the invented element is scientific or magical, its credibility depends on convincing the reader that everything else in the story is true. This means that not only must the dragons or unicorns or whatever obey the laws established for them, but the horses must act like horses, the falcons fly like falcons, etc. As in science fiction, it is the realism of the supporting material that persuades the reader to believe in the gimmick, the magic, etc.

My solution to the problem of the Ring, for instance, was to make it part of an ancient Celtic votive hoard. The Celts traditionally placed such offerings in pools or rivers, which may explain why the Ring is always found under water in the traditional versions of the tale. In this case, its magic comes from the belief of the people

who encounter it. Like the flag, it is a symbol, whose associations can have a powerful impact on the minds of those involved, irrespective of any actual psychometric energies it may acquire.

One of the more interesting challenges in writing *The Wolf and the Raven* was how to handle the forging of the sword. The problem here was to identify a smithing technique which would have been within the technological capability of Iron Age Germany, but which would be perceived by the characters as magical, and which would produce a sword so superior it would be considered supernatural. Many years ago this question was the subject of some spirited discussion in *Amra*, and Sprague de Camp, I believe, suggested that the famous magical swords of legend might have been made from meteoric iron, which is a natural alloy.

I spent some time exploring Iron Age metallurgy, and eventually I discovered *The Complete Bladesmith*, by Jim Hrisoulas of Salamandra Armouries (Paladin Press, Boulder, CO, 1987), which was an excellent introduction to hand-forging. It turns out that the difficulty with meteoric iron is that each piece contains a different mix of metals, and in order to successfully work the steel, one must know what it

contains. Because Ragin does not know the composition of Sigmund's sword, when he reheats it he only succeeds in making the pieces so brittle they shatter. The magic is the knowledge of just what temperature will cause the metal to soften so it can be reforged.

Knowledge is always the greatest magic. In the Eddas, the High One typically says, "This spell I know. . ." and the Seeress ends her answers with the words, "This thou dost know, wouldst thou know more?" Wodan, who dominates Wagner's opera as well as my trilogy, is a god of wisdom and consciousness. He is also a god of wandering and change—a good model for those who are involved in the kinds of changes faced by the migrating tribes of the fifth century, and the peoples of Europe today.

Thirty years ago, the Civil Rights movement was establishing the possibility of transformation. But America was still the economic and military leader of the Free World, menaced only by the threat of nuclear Ragnarok and the Evil Empire. No one could have guessed that the bogeyman would wither away without a war, or that the United States could find itself struggling for economic survival. But neither individuals nor peoples can withstand history. It seems to me that

the linking of myth and history occurs because these stories are at the same time personal and universal—they allow us to relate to the impersonal events of history through individual experience while at the same time making of that experience something which transcends history.

In some ways the present in which I live now is closer to that of Siegfried than that of the girl who stood on the UCLA stairs thirty years ago. Today, as in the past, we are faced with global change. How we react depends not only on the facts of history, or technology, but how we choose to understand them. The Ring still holds power. To the people of the fifth century the world was a place of magic (for good or ill). Though our paradigms may be different, it is still possible to look at the world with a sense of wonder, finding the fascination in knowing how things are done and the magic in appreciating the moment of insight.

But beyond that, the embedding of myth in history has survival value. Siegfried could not avoid his tragedy, but he could choose to face it in a heroic way. We may not be able to alter the conditions of our lives, but we can choose how to live. ✱

## Haunted Library

By Don d'Ammassa

I was going to pose the question this time, whither horror? I'll even discuss the future of the genre a bit as I go along. But there's a more important issue for this column, which we'll get to in due course. First, the state of the field as I see it.

Despite the continued popularity of Stephen King and Dean Koontz, the horror genre as a whole seems to be in its doldrums, both popularly and intrinsically. For that matter, King's last two novels are essentially contemporary thrillers, and Koontz's work has often been straight SF marketed as horror. The desire of publishers to

back away from commitment to horror as a separate genre is shown not only in the dramatic dropoff in the number of titles published, but also by the movement away from supernatural themes to psychological horror, serial killers, and the labelling of such books as thrillers or, simply, fiction. Vampire fiction remains a clear exception, but constitutes almost a genre in itself at the moment.

This isn't all a bad thing. There was a flood of horror literature during the height of its popularity, some of it truly badly written, but most actually quite competent regurgitations of familiar

themes. When I was finishing up the manuscript for a forthcoming book describing the plots of modern horror novels, I was appalled at the number of repetitions of vampires coming to terms with their new existence, pregnant women suspecting their unborn children were fathered by supernatural creatures, reincarnated enemies playing out old rivalries in a new setting, wrongly killed children/adults returning for revenge against a subsequent generation, small and isolated towns disrupted by a new arrival, and other clichés.

That's not to say that there isn't

room for fresh, exciting stories providing fresh variations of these patterns. The most interesting horror novel I've read this year is Mark Frost's *The List of Seven*, and it's essentially the kind of occult adventure that was in fashion in the days of Seabury Quinn, Dennis Wheatley, and Dion Fortune. But the Frost is an exceptional work. Most of the horror novels I have read recently are content to change the cast of characters, rearrange the order of events slightly, but make no effort to chart a new course. They're safe novels, and horror fiction isn't supposed to be safe. Whether this is the fault of a lack of imagination on the part of the authors, or a lack of vision on the part of editors and publishers is another question entirely. I've heard editors complain that they keep getting the "same old thing" and I've heard writers say that when they try something different, they get asked "what is this?"

Views differ about the disappearance of the word "horror" from the spines of paperbacks. Some are concerned that the field will lose its identity, that horror fiction will be lost in the flood of mainstream thrillers. Others welcome such a change, arguing that this will avoid the ghettoization that stunted the growth of science fiction for so many years, that it will help horror writers reach wider markets, and therefore result in more money for the authors. The truth is, we don't know the truth. Probably some authors will suffer, finding themselves unable to sell with their former ease, others will gain because their advances and sales will improve. The results for the reader may be equally mixed. The horror fiction that does still appear will theoretically be of higher average quality in a tighter market. But even if that's the case, it might be harder to figure out just where it is.

There are two notable exceptions to the downsizing of horror. Vampire fiction has suddenly become extremely popular, drifting over into the romance and mystery genres as well as horror fiction. In David Skal's excellent *The Monster Show*, he suggests that the fascination with vampires is a reaction to fear of AIDS, because vampires can have sex with the kind of physical contact that spreads the disease. Indeed, the vampire has always been a fairly overt sexual symbol, and the popularity of Anne Rice and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro has resulted from

their ability to exploit this fascination against the background of a well told story line.

The other area where horror fiction is doing quite well is in the young adult market. A recent publicity flyer advised me that all ten of the top selling YA titles at the time of this writing are horror, and the continuing popularity of Christopher Pike, R.L. Stine, and others has led other publishers to consider launching similar programs. Young adult may in this case be a misnomer. Although ostensibly aimed at high school aged readers, my observations have been that most of these are bought and read by individuals too young to drive. The sixteen and up



group has already moved on to Koontz and King and Barker and the rest, and wouldn't be caught dead reading a "kid's book."

Unfortunately, the shift in reading tastes of the younger generation has spurred to life a new wave of would-be censors, and I'm afraid indications are that they are winning the fight this time. Challenges to books in libraries, particularly horror and fantasy, have risen sharply for the past two years. Although many of these have been turned back, enough have been successful to put pressure on publishers, librarians, and bookstore owners to make them wary. I recently attended a panel on YA horror fiction that featured writers and editors. Essentially, they advised against having the Devil appear in any clearly defined religious context, no satanism, no Christian-based witchcraft, nothing that might upset the sort of people who wouldn't be reading these books in any case. It was even mentioned that the word "demon" was effectively barred from all YA horror titles because that would interfere with their distribution in several midwestern states.

Overt censorship is usually turned

back because it is public, odious, and spurs a counterattack. Quiet resignation and concessions to keep the censors happy provide no real warning, and our choices about what we can read, and write, slip away without our even realizing it. I have little doubt that the same creeping appeasement will spill over into adult fiction as well, and I'm not optimistic that there will be enough of an outcry to reverse things. As a society, we've fallen into the trap of slipping from the belief that people have the right to be protected from offensive intrusions by others into our privacy to belief that people have a right not to be offended. The difference isn't subtle.

Let me take an actual incident. The local zoo opened a dinosaur exhibit a year ago. As part of their advertising campaign, they put up a billboard that sported a beautifully drawn pterodactyl with the legend "Thank God for Evolution". Shortly after it appeared, they received a letter from one of a small congregation of Baptists insisting that the sign was blasphemous and should be removed. The zoo demurred. The man wrote again, threatening legal action on the basis that every time he drove past the sign, he suffered from spiritual pain caused by the blasphemy. The zoo caved in and removed the sign.

The same thing is happening from coast to coast. I've seen a wave of stories recently about school boards being pre-empted by the religious right, usually running as stealth candidates, not revealing their intentions until after the elections. The future of New York City's public school system may well lie in the hands of fanatics, and fanaticism, whether of the left or of the right, is diametrically opposed to what education is supposed to be all about. My only consolation at the moment is that most kids are so ardently opposed to what they're forced to listen to in schools, the more they censor, the more likely kids are to hide bootleg Clive Barkers and Jane Yolens in their lockers.

But when they start coming after adult fiction, the censors have an advantage. If Christopher Pike and his fellow writers are driven from print, kids will simply start reading adult fiction sooner. But if King and Koontz and Skipp and Spector are no longer published, where do we go, friends? \*

# Between the Lines

By Tamar Lindsay

I have seen the movie *Darkman* just a short time before writing this. It seems like another movie made from a comic book. In this case I think the comic book hasn't been printed yet. The movie is like issue #1 of a series, telling how the hero got that way. They don't leave a continuing villain but since the hero is basically The Shadow mixed with the Phantom of the Opera you don't really need one. It is rated R for excessive graphic violence on the scale of underground comix and *Heavy Metal*. Nevertheless, it was nice to see a sort of happy ending for this equivalent of the Phantom of the Opera.

I also recently watched *High Spirits* on video and discovered it was also very good of its kind, though it takes a while to get the ghost activity started. I mention it because one of the actors in it, Liam Neeson, plays the hero in *Darkman*. This proves he can do at least two accents and four expressions (rage, interest, lust, and anguish). I preferred *High Spirits* to *Darkman*.

*Darkman*, ©1990, is rated R for extreme violence or R for really gross. Fifteen stunt men, no sex, and not that much bad language. Liam Neeson plays Dr. Peyton Westlake. He was previously seen as the handsome male Irish ghost in *High Spirits*.

Relax. In this review I do not tell you everything.

*Darkman* is from Universal. It opens with a sequence of three Universal Studio logos, the oldest black-and-white, the full-color middle period, and the newest done with computer imaging which makes you think of computer science in the future.

Dr. Peyton Westlake is an independent medical researcher and his ladyfriend Julia is an ambitious attorney who is still too naive for the Big Time. We don't see them until after the gratuitous violence during the opening titles which establishes the villains. The local gangs are fighting over the waterfront and his laboratory gets involved when Julia leaves a

damaging piece of evidence on the premises. His research, by the way, is on truly living artificial skin, but so far it lasts only 99 minutes. Oddly enough, this movie (including credits) is just about 99 minutes long.

If you were trying to create a new horror-comix cult superhero, you might start by taking equal parts of the Phantom of the Opera, the Invisible Man, Batman, the Joker, a reverse Freddy, the Mummy, the Shadow (or is it the Spirit?), Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and a dollop of digital holography and medical research. Mix well, add Lois Lane, and—screw it up by adding graphic violence. Fortunately it isn't realistic graphic violence. I'm certain that the results of the violent acts committed would not look like the ones so carefully shown on screen. What we see is the sort of fantasy gore that has been put on for years in underground comics and *Heavy Metal* magazine.

I dealt with it by closing my eyes and ignoring most of what I heard while I waited for the story to resume. And I found to my surprise that otherwise the movie was pretty good. Danny Elfman's score is not too much like his score for *Batman*. The visual ties to other famous characters are not excessive and added to my enjoyment. The film had a distinct style. The camera angles and techniques are taken as a whole from comic art. Film is a visual medium so comic art visuals for emotional reactions are not totally out of place. But I would have preferred more subtle facial expressions to a lot of red overlay work.

I will restrain myself since there have been complaints about my giving away the plot. This villain thinks much faster than they usually do. There is some very creative use of holography, some creative plotting, and some character development for Julia and Peyton. The romance contrasts tragically with the revenge motif as the flawed hero works out his problems. The end is sort of happyish. And if you can stand the violence, this is a good movie for adults who appreciate even

tiny bits of character development and creativity.

It's a pity they didn't do more with the theme of dark vs. light; there seems to be an underlying theme of western Ying/Yang, which reverses the Oriental associations of Dark and Light. That is, in the Oriental view, Dark is female and light is male. But in the West, we have traditionally associated Dark with Evil. In the current decade we have also associated the kind of active domination of the world that is traditionally masculine with evil. Conversely, we have associated Earth-positive life-centered behavior with the feminine (Mother Earth and so on), and labeled it Good. Since we now associate traditionally masculine behavior with evil and therefore Dark, we associate traditionally feminine behavior, "good," with Light. So the western Ying/Yang has become a reverse of the Eastern. In this film, *Darkman* begins as a blond innocent who is trying to create life as a means of healing—traditionally feminine association; he takes on the violence of his attackers and becomes blackened, actively violent, and traditionally male. The still-normal patch of skin around his left eye may be a deliberate reference to some normal right-brain function, or it may simply be traditional "Shadow," "Spirit," and "Phantom of the Opera" imagery.

I predict that Comix fans will love the movie, but I can't report much real-world audience reaction. On Sunday of Labor Day weekend, there were five others in the theater; I think they were the owners and counter staff. The three middle-aged people were silent; the young counter staff were laughing, sometimes nervously, during the violent scenes.

The hero is tall and has blue eyes, by the way. \*

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Tamar Lindsay & Richard H. Eney were married the summer of 1993.]

# What Is Past

By Sam Moskowitz

*Science Fiction the Early Years*, Everett F. Bleiler (with the assistance of Richard J. Bleiler), Kent State University Press (Kent, Ohio 44242), 1991, 998 pp., \$75.

This is, in my opinion, the best reference work produced by Everett F. Bleiler, who has a number of distinguished efforts to his credit starting with *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* (1948) and including *Science Fiction Writers* (editor, 1982); *The Guide to Supernatural Fiction* (1983); and *Supernatural Fiction Writers* (editor, 1985). It ranks as one of the very best in a field glutted with science fiction bibliographies, biographies, encyclopedias, histories, and other specialized references.

What Bleiler has done (with some assistance from his son, Richard) is to give—sometimes very elaborate—plot outlines of 3,000 works of science fiction of all lengths from Lucian through to the year 1930. What is remarkable is that descriptions are given of hundreds of magazine stories that have never been collected into books and exist only in their original periodical publication. In fact, where he is aware of it and has access, he works from the periodical publication in preference to or in tandem with the later book publication. This is not to claim that he has done a comprehensive job of the magazine listings—that would probably take another book—but it is greater than anyone has done before and done rather well. This is something that academe should have given priority to decades past, not left to a single researcher with minimal assistance either physical or financial. The only redeeming point is that an academic press comprehended its value and put it into permanent form. There is a great danger that academics will feel that all their research has been done for them with this book. Though Bleiler has included a commendable portion of works known as science fiction in hardcover, his plot outlines of stories in the magazines before 1930

“  
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”

are seemingly unplanned and haphazard. Therefore, while one will find a number of Edmond Hamilton's stories from *Weird Tales* he will not necessarily find everything there that can be listed as science fiction nor is this true of *Amazing Stories* and *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, though he is likely to find more than he can easily locate anywhere else. For that reason, would-be scholars are cautioned to do some of the research themselves.

Nevertheless, to indicate the magnitude of the resource offered here, the book contains approximately 1.2 million words, *not counting* introductory matter, textual keys and indices which add another 150 pages to the volume on a page size 11 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> by 8 <sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub>, which makes it a low priced reference at \$75.

The entries are presented alphabetically by author, with each individual book or story given a chronological number. In the case of anthologies or collections, there is usually a single number for the compendium and individual stories are discussed following listed according to letters of the alphabet. Biographical information about each author is given where known. Where nothing has been discovered “no information” is stated. There is no separation of books from individual magazine listings; they are lumped together, though the publication and

date are given wherever known, even in the case of books. No preference is given to first editions, but the initial date of publication is usually presented and the printing that Bleiler read listed. The book is set in two columns, and the type, though small and apparently a computer face, is quite readable. Under the individual author headings books and magazine appearances run together when the latter have never been collected in hard or soft cover editions. Both American and British books are listed and some other foreign. On books, the publisher, city, and date are offered. If the story has appeared before 1930 in magazine form and not until after 1930 in book form, the story is included. The first publication date is the criteria. If a book has been published first in a foreign language, the first *English translation* is the one that Bleiler prefers. Pen name information is provided and a number of pen name conjectures offered.

Though no index of this type can ever be complete, the coverage of *books* is excellent. Dozens of volumes generally overlooked in other bibliographies and encyclopedic works are included here. Collectors who up to now have been able to show items that have never been reviewed, will find their quantity of such rarities greatly constricted. Of course, as in previous cases, this offers the dealers a greater scope in their offerings and an excuse to raise the price. On the other hand, it may bring books into the market that were previously almost impossible to find. The plot outlines of the works included are in most cases very comprehensive. It is not unusual for some of the entries to run 1500 words and very brief statements of the plot of a story are in the minority.

Where this reference is unusual is in the high percentage of magazine coverage it represents. Reviews of stories appear that, as I previously said, have never been seen before. The magazines covered are both American and British and among the inclusions



are numerous stories from *Argosy*, *All-Story*, *Popular*, *Bluebook*, *Pearson's*, *Strand*, *Weird Tales*, *Amazing Stories*, *Amazing Stories Quarterly*, *Argonaut*, *Chambers Journal*, *Windsor*, *Pall Mall*, *Cassell's*, *Munsey's*, and a number of others. These are very numerous, but far from complete. It is useful to have any at all, and may force future bibliographers to be more competitive if they want their efforts to be taken seriously. Up until recent times, when the paperback book has become dominant, the magazine was usually the major location for the first publication of fiction, and failure to understand and acknowledge that fact has made many references with a claim to historicity nearly hopeless. It should be understood that this is true for all fiction, not just science fiction.

Another unusual plus in this reference is the generous amount of space given to reviewing *dime novels*. Bleiler has previously edited a collection of the Frank Reade series, which are an early form of science fiction, and this undoubtedly impressed on him the fact that these evanescent forms of popular literature could simply not be ignored if one wanted to fill in all the chinks in the background of the structure of science fiction. While again, no claim can be made for completeness when it comes to dime novels, no other science fiction reference work includes more. To even have skip-read scores of science fiction dime novels in their characteristic microscopic type is a chore not to be envied.

There are really outstanding indices in this volume, which make the mass of information readily accessible. There are, as might be expected, an author and a title listing. What is unique is a *motif and theme index*. I recently sent titles of science fiction

about Antarctica to a woman who is doing a book on stories with the theme. In the Bleiler index, she could have found 59 listings, many of which she may never have heard of previously. There is a chronological listing of the books published by *year*. There is a magazine index of all the publications referred to in the volume. There is a bibliography of other books on the subject, which while useful, is very inadequate considering the number of volumes that have appeared to date.

That is not to say that this volume is the last word. It has many deficiencies, but one does not feel inclined to dwell on them when there is not something superior along the same lines to compare it to. But a few points can be lightly touched for future refinement. First, the very many authors labelled "no information" does not mean that none exists. It merely means that Bleiler has not found any. Therefore, someone else consulting Bleiler should make a little effort on his own. Sometimes Bleiler's biographical information is misleading. He often gives emphasis on minority reports, the source of which he infrequently offers, casting doubts on the authenticity of information he has available. For example, in his entry #555 on *The Consolidator* by Daniel Defoe, he states, "despite the indication on the title page ("as by the author of the True-Born Englishman"—a book written by Defoe) the attribution to Defoe has occasionally been questioned." I own a copy of the first edition dated 1705 and it is autographed by "Daniel Defoe." In the case of Nictzin Dyalhis, appreciated *Weird Tales* author, he raises doubts as to whether Dyalhis is the author's real name. I have Dyalhis's death certificate, that *is* his real name, his father's name was Dyalhis, he was born June 4, 1880 in Pima, Arizona, one of the largest Indian reservations in the United States; his father was also born in Pima and Nictzin married a Toltec Indian woman. His death certificate listed him as "white" but it indicates that Nictzin Dyalhis is an Indian name.

Bleiler sometimes guesses at possible pen names, but he is not always right. *Weird Tales* has an author who wrote under the name of R. Anthony, some four stories. Bleiler presumes that this is merely a reversal of Anthony Rud, who also wrote for *Weird Tales*. Actually R. Anthony is the pen name of Richard A. Muttkowski of De-

troit and my source is *Weird Tales'* magazine's pay records. Under Tyman Currio who wrote for *Physical Culture* a novel titled *Weird and Wonderful Story of Another World* (1905-6) Bleiler lists as "probably" a pen name for John R. Coryell, but this confirmation as an "absolutely" is offered by his son Russell M. Coryell (page 502, "The Birth of Nick Carter," *The Bookman*, July 1929). Bleiler becomes a lengthy apologist for M. P. Shiel's extreme anti-Semitism in *Lord of the Sea*, citing Ben Indick, a Jew, as defending the book. He apparently does not know that when Indick loaned the book to his daughter to read, she figuratively hurled the book back at him in absolute horror, forcing Indick to characterize himself in chagrin as "an anti-Semitic Jew." Bleiler questions whether the L.A. Eschbach editions of Edgar Rice Burroughs' *Beyond Thirty* and *The Man Eater* can be considered formal publications. They are both very attractively produced and bound, photo offset, soft cover 57 and 50 paged booklets respectively. Leading into his review of *Eric of the Strong Heart* by Victor Rousseau, Bleiler suspects prior serialization but cannot locate it. (It was in *Railroad Man's Magazine*, in five weekly installments from November 16, 1918, to January 15, 1919.) His Hugo Gernsback biographical sketch is carelessly put together. In context he has Gernsback "swindling authors before 1930, whereas bankruptcy records show no authors in arrears on payments at all in 1929; he has Gernsback selling *Wonder Stories* in 1935, whereas it was in 1936; he has *Science Fiction* published in 1959, when it was in 1953. He claims Gernsback "undoubtedly read Kurd Lasswitz," when there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever of that fact either from Gernsback personally or from his writings about his background.

Most of the stories outlined also have opinions by Bleiler attached to them. This makes for interesting reading. The largest percentage of them I agree with, but he has a strong bias against the scientific romance of the Munsey magazines and few who have read even their reprints in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*, *Fantastic Novels*, and *A. Merritt's Fantasy Magazine* would be likely to agree with him. He regards the *Darkness and Dawn* trilogy by George Allan England as probably the worst thing the Munsey magazines

ever published in the line of fantasy and Homer Eon Flint's stories as the best. Naturally, he bashes A. Merritt and Edgar Rice Burroughs as the opportunity offers. Though he tempers criticism of many dated stories by insertion of phrases like "for their period," he is not inclined to be as merciful for the Munsey fantasies, judging them by a much harsher standard, possibly to counteract their great popularity when originally published and when reprinted later.

There is a temptation to continue examining in detail hundreds of points



that Bleiler touches upon in his review and opinion on so many stories, but that frequently has the effect of making the reader believe that the book is sub-standard when taken as a whole, as is not the case; it is a superior compilation. Amplifying the positives, the attempt to give, howsoever brief, some biographical background of the authors reviewed is much appreciated and valuable and not something commonly found in other bibliographies. One is tempted to fill in where information is known that has not been included but after the book is published it is a little late for that. Detailed descriptions of some of the German and French translations that Hugo Gernsback used, by Otfried von Hanstein, Otto Willi Gail, Ludwig Anton, Curt Siodmak, Eugene Thibault, and S.S. Held, helped bring these continental authors into the mainstream of science fiction history and make us realize that Hugo Gernsback was rendering a service in searching out and arranging for their appearances. He used to contact literary agents in France and Germany and have them send him titles they thought might be suitable, and since he could read both French and German, he was capable of judging their suitability for his maga-

zines and seemed to have no trouble getting translations from Francis Currier and Fletcher Pratt. The generous and lengthy reviews for the dime novels are not likely to be attempted by anyone else and they definitely belong. It should be noted that most of the leading juvenile books have been embraced by Bleiler.

There is no question that Bleiler's earlier work on *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature* gave him an advantage over other bibliographers in the important process of selecting the works to be included. He seems to have gone to considerable effort to locate and read volumes that frequently are not in the libraries of even major collectors. Comprehensive as this work is, it implicitly provides suggestions for further scholarship. For example, there are German language books that give outlines of stories in that language just as Bleiler does here. It would not be an impos-

sible job to translate them into English. There is no reason why someone might not select a number of the scores of magazines that Bleiler has reviewed stories from and do a comprehensive coverage. For some of them title and author indices already exist. If Bleiler can include dime novels, why cannot someone else widen the approach? For both researchers and libraries I would regard this reference as one of the basic "must have" works in the field. A good deal of its material is not to be found anywhere else and in addition to its usefulness, the work can be opened at random and read for entertainment. It is an admonition to dozens of writers of interpretive papers on the field who publish before doing the basic research. When a single researcher, like Bleiler, can add 1.2 million words of original reference material, which opens up avenues for hundreds of authors and themes, the need for psychological speculations still rests in the future after groundwork has been established.

*The Index to Adventure Magazine*, (2 volumes), Richard Bleiler, Starmont House, (P.O. Box 851, Mercer Island WA 98040, 1990, vol 1, 504 pp., vol 2, 576 pp., \$120 for the set.

*Adventure* has become a pulp magazine legend, primarily for the issues published between its initial number, November, 1910, and June 15, 1927, when Arthur Sullivant Hoffman took a job with *McClure's Magazine*, and to some degree when Popular Publications assumed ownership with the issue of May, 1934. While Popular Publications maintained a respectable standard, the magazine lost almost all the aura of distinction that had lingered up until that time and it became just another pulp. When collectors speak nostalgically of the halcyon days of *Adventure*, they almost unanimously refer to the period before Popular Publications took over; and that is the era predominantly collected. Nevertheless, the magazine continued on until April, 1971, with a long period as one of the large group of publications referred to as "men's magazines" and though it was then substantially a periodical of fact articles and cheesecake, some of the fiction under the editorship of Alden H. Norton in the '50s was far from reprehensible and it was a companion to *Argosy* during that time, which was a "men's magazine" with a standard only inferior to *True*, the leading publication of its type of that period. Its last few issues were in all-fiction digest format, terminating with the April, 1971, number.

Where Richard Bleiler, the son of the fantasy indexer, Everett F. Bleiler, has performed a dynastic service is in including *all* the issues of the magazine—except six which he could not locate—including those with a "girly" emphasis, which are not generally collected. What the publishers, Popular, had done, was to keep the name alive during a period when no general adventure magazine survived, by including sensational "true" features, going to a larger format, adding a great deal of feminine "physical culture" and humor in the form of a generous number of cartoons.

It would have been a worthwhile project merely to have included the early period in the index, because most of the purchasers are going to be collectors of that era, but to have the entire run is a bonus commendable in the objective of comprehensiveness.

It does not seem to be general knowledge, even among collectors, that the magazine provided an index to its contents every volume—six issues—from the beginning through 1950. For most of that period the index was letter press though in the late '40s it went to typewriter offset. With the use of these indices and a computer, a story and author master could have been put together for 1910-1950 *at any time*.

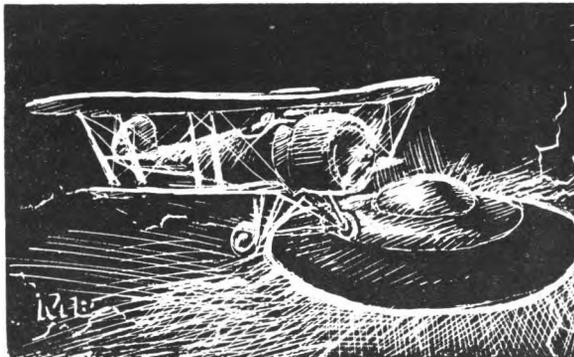
Bleiler, however, has provided us with a much superior compilation which includes a chronological, issue-by-issue listing of all the material in the magazine, including the editor, cover artist, interior artists—where known—and departments. What he has failed to do, which really was of great importance, was to index the letters in "The Campfire" department. Each issue the authors offered autobiographical sketches and background on the writings of the various stories which contains information available nowhere else. The bibliographical value would have been incalculable and it could *still* be done as a supplement either by Bleiler or by an enterprising collector.

This department survived the transition into a men's magazine for a number of years and then was brought back again near the end of the magazine's life.

First, let us address what Bleiler has done. The volumes open with a history of *Adventure*, which, while it contains a good deal of important information, is spongy when it comes to interpretation. This is valuable for what happened, but leaves open *why* it happened. Not because Bleiler doesn't try to give the answers, but because he does not seem to have rallied enough associational material about the publishing world of the period he describes to buttress his speculations. Despite this, having a moderately substantial history of the magazine definitely enhances the book.

As has previously been stated, an issue-by-issue listing of the contents is a great attraction. Too often bibliographers of magazines will present merely an author and title index, which, while useful, does not offer historical perspective of the periodical or periodicals being indexed. This is especially true of the pulp collector who has a familiarity with contributors of 50

to 75 years past through accumulating a wide spectrum of publications. It also permits browsing. For example, opening the book at random, someone with an interest in science fiction and fantasy finds a story by Oscar J. Friend in the March 30, 1923, number. Friend was an editor of *Thrilling Wonder Stories* and *Startling Stories* in the '40s, as well as a contributor of fiction to those magazines. Later he became a literary agent with authors as popular as Murray Leinster, Eric Frank Russell, and Robert E. Howard on his roster. On the opposite page, the April 20, 1923, issue contains a story by Douglas M. Dold, whose brother Elliot Dold was an artist for *Astounding Stories* in the '30s and who edited the short-lived publication *Miracle Stories of Science and Fantasy* in 1931. Flip backward and in the December, 1914, issue is J.U. Giesy, some years before he wrote *Palos of the Dog Star Pack* for *Argosy* in 1918. Those whose concern was primarily in fantasy can begin to learn where those names were coming from before they entered his



realm of interest. Therefore, the bibliography has a border use beyond merely assisting collectors of the one magazine.

In Volume One there is an illustrator's index, giving the artist for covers and interiors wherever known, and as an added fillip, a few lines of information about many of them. Even here we locate historical information of value; for example, Howard V. Brown who previously had done the cover work for Hugo Gernsback's *Science and Invention*, who was popular as a cover artist for *Astounding Stories* in the '30s, did the cover for the March 1, 1930, *Adventure*; and Hubert Rogers, a major cover artist for *Astounding Science Fiction* in the '40s, did 53 covers for *Adventure* from 1928 to 1936 and a

number of interiors. The superb master of the line drawing known as Lawrence, admired in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* in the '40s, was a "regular" inside *Adventure* during the same period.

The foregoing features comprise 405 pages in Volume One of the index, but arguably the most valuable part opens with Volume Two's author index. Here are all the contributors to *Adventure*, and here Bleiler has worked very hard in trying to give a few lines of biographical information, utilizing an impressive array of references. As in the other segments there are numerous tidbits to be gleaned, even if your primary interest is only fantasy. For example, Fred Allhoff, who had the sensational serial in *Liberty* in 1940, *Lightning in the Night*, about Hitler's invasion of the United States, had a piece called "Icewater Pilot" in the March, 1950, *Adventure*, proving he was not a house-name of Macfadden's Publications; Burroughs Mitchell, the son of Edward Page Mitchell, the 19th century science fiction

writer whose book of short stories *The Crystal Man* (Doubleday, 1973) I edited, has a piece, "Maine Man," in the January, 1942, issue. Fascinating as well is the fact that Carl H. Claudy, who wrote the fine juvenile science fiction series, "Adventures in the Unknown," (1933-4) had two fact articles in *Adventure* as far back as 1913. It is also of interest to know that Paul L. Anderson whose superior series of prehistoric man stories ran in *Argosy-All Story Magazine* from 1920 to 1926 was contributing to *Adventure* during the same period and that his middle initial stood for "Lewis." This is not to claim that this section is a paragon of scholarship, but merely to justify that it is very valuable in spite of the errors and wrong guesses. For example, Nictzin Dyalhis, the strange-named but very talented author who wrote for *Weird Tales* ("When the Green Star Waned," etc.) is listed as "an English born world traveler, born 1874" and his name might not have been Dyalhis, and a question mark as to whether he died in Salisbury, Maryland. Well, the documented facts are that he was born June 4, 1880, in Pima, Arizona. (See the previous review for more details.)

Under George Bruce we have the line "no information." This is inexcus-

able, since George Bruce was unquestionably the most popular author of World War I stories that ever lived, had two magazines named after him, *George Bruce's Squadron* and *George Bruce's Contact* and went on to write the scripts for some of Hollywood's biggest smash hits.

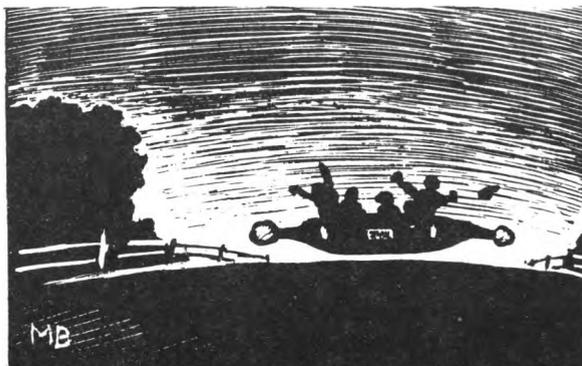
Under Ferdinand Berthoud we have "no information; perhaps a pseudonym using the name of a noted French clock-maker." Berthoud was for 40 years a very popular writer for the leading pulps who lived at 348 W 21 St., New York City. Bleiler surmised correctly that Caddo Cameron, of La Jolla, California, might have been a pen name. He was the "cover" for Charles Mather Beeler. There is "no information" on Thomas Byron, though he had a fantasy in *All-Story Magazine* which was reprinted in *Famous Fantastic Mysteries* and "no information" on Richard Ashby who had seven stories in diverse science fiction magazines, but he does locate a story by the elusive William L. Chester ("No to the Swift," October, 1938) who has been a mystery to fans of his Kioga series in *Bluebook*.

There are some questions raised by Bleiler's biographical history to *The Index to Adventure Magazine* which requires some clarification. He lists the "first" editor of *Adventure* as Trumbull White, whose reign ostensibly extended from the first issue, dated November, 1910, until the January, 1912, number. In the process he goes into considerable detail about the nature and philosophy of the "White" period, conjecturing where White's influence ended and Arthur Sullivant Hoffman's began. Yet on page 22 he quotes Hoffman himself as writing: "To have been with *Adventure* since it was born in 1910." Robert Kenneth Jones, in his account of the magazine, *The Lure of Adventure* (1989), also published by Starmont (and not listed in Bleiler's bibliography), makes the statement: "Hoffman had served under Trumbull White, *Adventure's* first editor, for about a year or so before becoming editor himself, when White went to *Everybody's*." Volume V of *A History of American Magazines* by Frank Luther Mott (p. 72) says that White went to *Everybody's* in 1911. Can Bleiler reconcile these apparently conflicting statements?

Was there more than one editor

working on *Adventure* from the beginning? Were there possibly more than two? T.S. Stribling in his autobiography *Laughing Stock* reports visiting *Adventure* and going to lunch with the "staff."

Bleiler states that Joseph Cox became top editor of *Adventure* when Hoffman resigned from the magazine in 1927, but he fails to mention anything further. We know that as early as 1920 T.S. Stribling left the manuscript



of *Birthright* with Cox, who placed it for him in the *Century Magazine*. Cox evidently had been on the staff of *Adventure* even earlier than that date so he was well qualified to be promoted to editor.

Arthur Sullivant Hoffman in a letter in "The Campfire" department in the February 1, 1935, issue of *Adventure* states that Cox had returned to the magazine at that time. Proof that he had returned was given to me by Alden H. Norton, one of the later editors of *Adventure*, in the form of a friendly "How are you!" letter from Cox.

There were other editors of *Adventure* that might have been rewarding sources of additional information if living; in their memoirs, if dead. Among them Victor Weybright, who in his book *The Making of a Publisher* (Reynal & Co., 1967) speaks with great pride about his days as associate editor of *Adventure* in the twenties (he left in 1929). "...*Adventure* and *Romance* flourished," he wrote, "largely because they were intended to entertain and, in doing so, to maintain standards of style and quality. One of the secrets of these wood-pulps was the curious group of editors, the *Adventure* boys, of which I was a marginal member. They included Lawrence Jordan, who edited 'The Pamphlet Poets' for John Day; Myles Tierney, an expert on Joyce and Irish

literature; Anthony Rud, a protege of Burton Rascoe and an alumnus of the Doubleday magazine department at Garden City; and for several years Geoffrey Hellman, who immediately after graduation from Yale reviewed books for *The New Republic*. He began covering tennis and then all racquet games for *The New Yorker* when Harold Ross became weary of John R. Tunis, and eventually Geoffrey went to *The New Yorker* and achieved a notable record as a writer and reporter.

"There were others—Albert Proctor, Bill Corcoran, Henry Lacosit (editor of *Romance*) and the talented Max Wilkinson. The *esprit* was dominated to the high devotion to the discovery, development, and promotion of authors. The editors were as enterprising as a pack of fox terriers, those keen stubby-tailed dogs which handled the pursuit of quarry in terrain beyond the competence of foxhounds.

"It became obvious around New York that, paradoxically, the wood-pulp group was more respected in literary and social circles than the second wave of smooth opportunists at *Delineator* and that the Butterick Company as an enterprise was ultimately going to slip downward...Max Wilkinson was the first to leave—to become fiction editor at *Colliers* and later to serve as right-hand man to Sam Goldwyn in Hollywood before becoming a literary agent. His loss was irreparable."

Many of the editors mentioned by Weybright are not even noted in the account of the history of *Adventure*. Though the list of resources consulted is impressive, at least in one case speculation takes the place of a minimum of effort. Peter Hill Gannett was listed as editor of a number of later issues. Bleiler ponders whether or not he ever existed or was an unrecorded pen name of an editor he replaced named Gil Paust. Gannett was superseded by Bruce Cassidy, now executive vice president of Mystery Writers of America, who worked for the publisher the *entire time* Gannett was listed as editor. A single letter or phone call would have resolved this far from sticky question. So I called up Bruce Cassidy. Cassidy, who edited the last few issues of *Adventure* under the pen name of Carson Bingham, told me that Gannett was a house name, han-

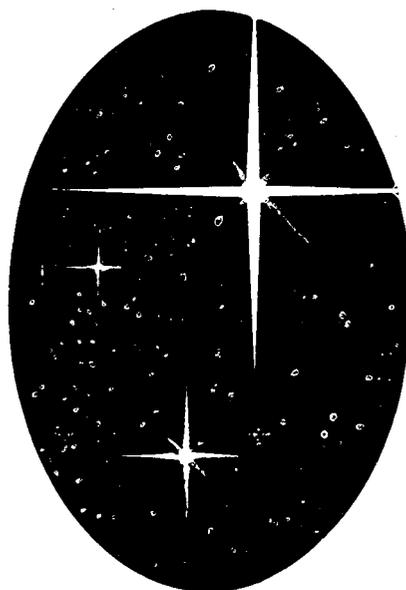
dled by anyone who happened to be around, including a number of issues by Alden H. Norton. Gil Paust had been made a field editor and no longer had anything to do with the magazine in an editorial capacity, though his contributions still appeared.

In evaluating a breakthrough, truly monumental effort of this nature, one cannot base judgement on lapses of research in an historical introduction. That introduction is just a bit of frosting on the cake. As an index, this work is of a magnitude that I had given up any hope of ever seeing. I would have settled for merely the issues from 1910 to the early fifties, but to work through another almost 20 years of men's-type policy (which period contained considerable fiction) indicates intestinal fortitude on Bleiler's part, far beyond that expected of any reasonable person.

To anyone owning even a partial collection of *Adventure*, and there are a great number of pulpsters who are very strong in the 1910 to 1930 period, this is an invaluable work. I recently obtained a partial set of the office bound volumes of *Adventure*, not to mention the issues already in my collection previously, and this index greatly increased their reference value. Additionally, for purposes of research, frequently it is enough to have materials properly indexed even though the issues are not on hand.

For libraries, this is a work that may be frequently utilized by students researching a term paper, for so many famous authors got their start or made their early reputation in *Adventure* that it is important to find a source where this facet of their careers may be established. Hard cover editions are completely unreliable in determining when a piece of fiction may have been written. Prior to the advent of the original mass market paperback, first magazine publication was the rule rather than the exception even in the case of the greatest authors.

Because of the comfortable-sized, highly readable type, these volumes may be perused for pleasure and entertainment as well as reference. The pebbled, navy-blue bindings with the title in gold and red are extremely attractive and would enhance the ap-



pearance of a library or a collector's den.

When 15 sets were shipped to the pulp convention in Wayne, NJ, the summer of 1990, they sold out at the \$120 price within a few hours. The reason was obvious. The volumes are not only worth the price from content; but in size, weight, and appearance they convince one that is the case. The printing is very limited and to those that have any interest in pulp collecting or in magazine reference, buying a set would be a sensible thing to do.

### A Personal Note

I recently completed two book-length manuscripts. The first, which I tentatively titled, "The Return of Hugo Gernsback," was an 80,000-word opus of the creation, publication, and demise of *Science-Fiction* + of which I was editor during its brief existence. When I left the magazine I took with me all the author correspondence, memos, and associational matter related to the magazine. The result is the most comprehensive story told by an insider of the publication of a science fiction magazine. Not a memoir or a group of anecdotes, but the entire thing. *Amazing Stories* has purchased first serial rights and they have the manuscript and have sent me a substantial advance. It is not decided yet

whether they will publish all 80,000 words or segment it. Inevitably, it gives more personal information about Hugo Gernsback than is likely to appear anywhere again. After *Amazing* I will place it for a book.

The second manuscript is 100,000 words long, titled "Inside John W. Campbell." From 1936 to 1952 Campbell sent a letter a week to his close personal friend R.D. Swisher. These letters were mostly about radio, photography, and physics, but in every letter Campbell would include several paragraphs to several pages about his personal life and career, including his meetings and arrangements with authors as prominent as Robert A. Heinlein and L. Ron Hubbard. The reasons the letters were released to me was that the Swisher side of the correspondence was not available. Therefore, the hundreds of allusions Campbell would make to magazines, stories, people, trends were like an elaborate puzzle. But I was able to reconcile *every* off-hand reference and produced the most elaborate work on Campbell's life and career that is likely to appear. This was set to be published in hardcover by Richard Kyle, owner of *Argosy* magazine, but the riots in Los Angeles set him back and he was unable to finance it.

I just finished a poignant 6,000-word manuscript, "Derleth's Lament to Love." August Derleth, when 44, married a 15 year old high school girl, who bore him his two children. What made a seemingly mature and respected man make so untypical a marriage? I researched his non-fantasy books and came up with overwhelming evidence for the reason, supplementing it with a short interview with his son Walden.

I have edited a book made up predominantly of unpublished William Hope Hodgson fantasies to be published under the title of *Terrors of the Sea* by Don Grant, probably before the end of 1993. This also contains 13,000 words on the experiences of his *sister* in placing his work after the death of his wife. The book of uncollected fantasies I did for Grant a couple of years ago, *The Haunted Pampero*, contained 20,000 words on the marketing of his work by his wife (this went out of print in 30 days). \*

# *Focus on Kipling*

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**ART BY JANE T. SIBLEY**



# Rudyard Kipling and Modern Science Fiction

by Fred Lerner

No writer, living or dead, has had as great an impact on modern science fiction as Rudyard Kipling. We think of Jules Verne and H.G. Wells as founders of the genre; our historians trace its origins to Mary Shelley and Edgar Allan Poe; some even profess to see primitive science fiction in the Book of Ezekiel and the Epic of Gilgamesh. But how many of us have actually read these? Where can we see their influence on today's science fiction? If Verne and Wells and Shelley and Poe disappeared tomorrow from the shelves of libraries and bookstores, would the future of science fiction really be any poorer for it?

A few years ago, David Drake and Sandra Miesel put together two anthologies of science fiction and fantasy whose authors acknowledged their literary debt to Rudyard Kipling. More recently, John Brunner assembled two collections of Kipling's own contributions to the fantasy and science fiction genres. These books were not academic exercises in the tracing of literary influence: they were issued by commercial publishers expecting to earn a profit by providing books that customers would willingly buy to read for pleasure. What is it about the writing of Rudyard Kipling that has created such an impression within the science fiction community?

To ask that question in other words, what has Kipling's work got in common with modern science fiction? There is obviously a shared interest in the impact of science and technology upon society and upon the individuals who constitute it. "With the Night Mail" and "As Easy as A.B.C." are obviously science fiction, portraying as they do future forms of transport and their societal consequences. "The Eye of Allah" is a more subtle exploration of the impact of new technology upon a society unprepared for it.

There is also a shared problem in storytelling. Both Kipling and modern

SF writers need to provide readers with the background information needed to understand the unfamiliar environments in which their stories are set, whether these be Kimball O'Hara's India or Hari Seldon's Terminus. And both employ similar solutions to this problem. John Campbell claimed Kipling as the first modern SF writer, because in "With the Night Mail" he included material extraneous to the plot but intended to help the reader understand the workings of the world of 2000 in which his story was set. Modern science fiction has sublimated this technique into a set of narrative protocols that to some observers both defines the genre itself and renders it opaque to untrained readers. But all this is elaboration of Kipling's innovation.

This may explain why so many of today's science fiction writers read Kipling in their youth, but it does not tell us why they continue not only to read him today but also to quote his verse in their titles and allude to his prose in their stories. (I can think of at least three recent science-fictional retellings of *Kim*!) I believe that we can find the answer to that question, and to the equally interesting question of why both Kipling's work and that of most modern science fiction writers

are studiously ignored by the literary establishment, in the same place.

Rudyard Kipling's writing, whether prose or verse, is characteristically concerned with work and with duty: with the day-to-day work of the world and the men and women—and machines—that perform it; and with an attitude toward that work that places its satisfactory completion above convenience, desire, and comfort in the scheme of things. This attitude toward work and duty is also characteristic of modern science fiction. It places men and women in the role of creators and maintainers, rather than victims. It prefers exploring the intricacies of the craftsman's vision to indulging the subtleties of the narrative voice.

This exaltation of work and duty may be unfashionable in literary circles today, but no technological society can flourish without it. I would not claim that science fiction is essential to the survival of Western civilisation; but I am certain that some literary tradition that embodies its essential attitudes will always accompany humankind on its road to the stars. And I would not be the least bit surprised to see the influence of Rudyard Kipling writ large upon that literature, whatever form it may take, for many years to come. \*



# The Kipling Legacy

by Anne Braude

***A Separate Star*, ed. David Drake and Sandra Miesel. Baen Books, 1989, \$3.50, 278 pp., pb**

***Heads to the Storm*, ed. David Drake and Sandra Miesel. Baen Books, 1989, \$3.50, 273 pp., pb**

This duology is billed as "A Tribute to Rudyard Kipling Created by David Drake and Sandra Miesel" and collects stories similar to and/or inspired by Kipling by a number of the most distinguished members of the SF and fantasy field, with a few items by Kipling himself. (And why, prithee, do the editors call themselves "creators" rather than "editors"? It's all very well for Andre Norton to do so in her anthologies of Witch World tales by others; after all, she created the entire secondary universe in which they were set. People like these have to be watched; next thing you know they will be calling themselves "executive producers," and none of us will be safe.) They are not new stories—some of them indeed have been anthologized to within an inch of their lives, like McCaffrey's "The Ship Who Sang" and at least three of the four Kipling short stories included—but the standard is high. The first volume contains stories concerned with soldiers and soldiering and with colonies in alien places; the second is more varied, with material influenced more by Kipling's fantasy and history.

I have long had a theory that Rudyard Kipling is the true father, or perhaps grandfather, of science fiction, *pace* Verne, Wells, and Gernsback. He was the first writer to create stories in which the main interest was the protagonist's relationship with his work—task-oriented or problem-solving fiction, the matrix of modern SF. The themes of realistic fiction before Kipling were the protagonist's romantic involvements, as in the novels of Jane Austen; family relationships, as Butler's *The Way of All Flesh*; and the individual in contention with

society, as in the works of Stendhal or Dickens; of course, many of the great novelists (Tolstoy, James, Eliot, for instance) dealt with all of these at once. C.S. Lewis, who owned to decidedly mixed feelings about Kipling, pointed this out in his essay "Kipling's World" [1948; reprinted in *They Asked for a Paper* (Geoffrey Bles, 1962)]:

Kipling is first and foremost the poet of work. . . . With a few exceptions imaginative literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had quietly omitted, or at least thrust into the background, the sort of thing which in fact occupies most of the waking hours of most men. . . .

For, as Pepys once noted with surprise, there is a great pleasure in talking of business. It was Kipling who first reclaimed for literature this enormous territory.

. . . Even when we are taken into the remote past, Kipling is not interested in imagining what it felt like to be an ancient and pagan man; only in what it felt like to be a man doing some ancient job—a galley slave, a Roman officer.

. . . What Kipling chiefly communicates—and it is, for good and for ill, one of the strongest things in the world—is the peculiar relation which men who do the same work have to that work and to one another; the inescapable bond of shared experiences, and, above all, of shared hardships. . . .

. . . There is nothing Kipling describes with more relish than the process whereby the trade-spirit licks some raw cub into shape. . . .

For Lewis, Kipling's writings embody a morally ambivalent truth:

. . . It is a brutal truth about the world that the whole everlasting business of keeping the human

race protected and clothed and fed could not go on for twenty-four hours without the vast legion of hard-bitten, technically efficient, not-over-sympathetic men, and without the harsh processes of discipline by which this legion is made. It is a brutal truth that unless a great many people practised the Kipling *ethos* there would be neither security nor leisure for any finer *ethos*. . . . Unless the Kipling virtues—if you will, the Kipling vices—had long and widely been practised in the world we should be in no case to sit here and discuss Kipling. If all men stood talking of their rights before they went up a mast or down a sewer or stoked a furnace or joined an army, we should all perish; nor while they talked of their rights would they learn to do these things.

In addition to the potential justification for cruelty and exploitation—dangers to which Kipling seems to be blind—Lewis feels that the central ideal presented in the stories is the master passion of the Inner Ring, of which he has written himself, notably in *That Hideous Strength*:

The pleasure of confederacy against wicked Baboons [a reference to the sort of story Kipling said he enjoyed as a child], or even of confederacy *simpliciter*, is the cardinal fact about the Kipling world. To belong, to be inside, to be in the know, to be snugly together against the outsiders—that is what really matters; it is almost an accident who are cast for the role of outsiders (wicked Baboons) on any given occasion. . . .

The great merit of Kipling is to have presented the magic of the Inner Ring in all its manifold workings for the first time. Earlier writers had presented it only in the form of snobbery; and snobbery is a very highly specialised form of it. The

call of the Inner Ring, the men we know, the old firm, the talking of "shop", may call a man away from high society into very low society indeed. . . . Nor is Kipling in the least mistaken when he attributes to this esoteric spirit such great powers for good. The professional point of honour . . . the firm brotherhood of those who have "been through it" together, are things quite indispensable to the running of the world. . . . Without it, no good thing is operative widely or for long.

But also—and this Kipling never seems to notice—without it no bad thing is operative either. The nostalgia which sends the old soldier back to the army . . . also sends the recidivist back to his old partner and his old "fence". The confidential glance or rebuke from a colleague is indeed the means whereby a weak brother is brought or kept up to the standard of a noble profession; it is also the means whereby a new and hitherto innocent member is initiated into the corruption of a bad one. . . . The spirit of the Inner Ring is morally neutral—the obedient servant of valour and public spirit, but equally of cruelty, extortion, oppression, and dishonesty.

Here I think Lewis, who has acknowledged that this particular temptation is his own besetting sin, is not quite fair to Kipling, whose Inner Rings are not quite as morally equivocal as he implies. The most powerful pull is exerted by organizations which draw together all sorts and conditions of men in the service of a higher ideal. Private Mulvaney praises the Roman Catholic Church because "she's mighty regimental in 'er fittin's" and will bury him by the same rites whether he dies in Belfast, Bombay, or Baffin Land. A dedicated Mason, Kipling celebrated similar qualities in the "Faith and Works" stories, showing a London Masonic Lodge in wartime opening its doors to Masonic soldiers and sailors from all over the world (and in one of those stories, "The Janeites," he depicts a shared love of literature exerting the same bond). Rightly or wrongly, he saw the skilled trades and the British Army as exhibiting the same refining and ennobling powers. In "The Mutiny of the Mavericks," an American-financed

IRA-type agitator tries to persuade an Irish regiment quartered in India to rise in rebellion. The soldiers are about to lynch him when an old hand points out that there is a dearth of entertainment to relieve the boredom of encampment—and he's providing a lot of free beer. The Mavericks then conspire to the top of their bent, as only the Irish can do—until they are ordered into action. Off they go, dragging along the reluctant subversive, who is

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I have long had a theory that Rudyard Kipling is the true father, or perhaps grandfather, of science fiction, *pace* Verne, Wells, and Gernsback.

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assured that, one way or another, he is not coming back alive. He has entertained the Mavericks well—but he has slandered the honor of a regiment that has fought at Waterloo, at Sebastopol, and in the Indian Mutiny, an honor so revered by the men that the stain must be wiped out by blood. In "The Walking Delegate," a story in which the characters are talking horses and the subject is socialist-unionist revolution, the yellow plug from Kansas is kicked half to death by the others when he urges the brotherhood of horses and the destruction of Man the Oppressor; skilled, self-disciplined hard workers all, they feel much more brotherhood with the men who labor with them than with this ill-bred, ill-conditioned shirker. It is in the stories and poems that impute the same qualities to the British Empire that he comes a cropper in the eyes of anyone well acquainted with modern history and economics, and lends credibility to Lewis' stricture.

This emphasis on professionalism,

on the task at hand, on the shaping of the unlicked cub—in fact, this concentration on means to the extent that some very dubious ends get achieved without the author's seeming to care too much—have all played their part in shaping the SF field; it is to our credit that most contemporary writers, including those represented here, are trenchantly and often ironically aware of the nature of the ends as well. If we compare Kipling with two other sensationally popular and influential novelists, Sir Walter Scott and Jules Verne, we see contrasts as notable as the more commonly cited similarities. Both wrote tales of romantic adventure: the fact that the Waverley Novels were set in the past, usually in medieval times, and Verne's books in the realm of science fiction, is a distinction without a difference. Like them, the task-oriented fiction of Kipling is distantly descended from the quest epic; but the hero of the quest-romance succeeds because he is destined to, because he is the long-lost prince or because his strength is as the strength of ten. Kipling's heroes accomplish their goals because they are properly trained in their craft and they take care of their tools, because—like the best heroes of modern SF—they use their hands, their skills, and their brains.

Someday I would like to put together my own anthology of Kipling stories illustrating seminal SF themes, of which the interesting feature would be that by no means all of them would be SF themselves. For instance, Kipling's best first-contact story is not about meeting an alien species; it is not even about the English in alien, exotic India. "An Habitation Enforced" deals with a wealthy young American couple who take up residence in darkest rural England, eventually mastering the folkways of the natives so well that they accomplish a small feat of one-upmanship. "The Bridge-Builders" could stand as the prototype for all the stories of launching the first space vessel, building the first space station, etc. He also wrote a number of the snarking-the-enemy stories, featuring the few, the brave, and/or the wacko defeating superior force or authority, on which such tales as Eric Frank Russell's "Nuisance Value" and "Chaos, Co-ordinated" by John MacDougal (Robert Lowndes and James Blish) are modeled. I refer particularly to the adventures of Petty Officer Emanuel Pycroft and his cohorts,

narrated in "The Bonds of Discipline," "Their Lawful Occasions," and "Steam Tactics." (Incidentally, Kipling also invented the rule that the ship's engineer must always be Scottish, still observed in the *Star Trek* chronicles, but it was hardly a stroke of imagination: at the height of the great Age of Steam of which he wrote, Britain was the center of steamship building; and the heart of that industry was the Firth of Clyde and the great shipyards located there, which provided trained engineers for the ships. I wonder if even non-Lowlanders affected the Glaswegian accent, as in our day the astronauts adopted the southwestern twang of the famous early test pilots like Chuck Yeager?)

Outside the SF field, Kipling's reputation has varied with intellectual fashion. In 1907 he became the first English-language writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, and only the second novelist and short-story writer to be so honored, the prize having gone previously to poets and dramatists. His works have been admired by critics as diverse in taste and temperament as G.K. Chesterton and Dorothy Parker, George Orwell and T.S. Eliot. Most of the condemnation of his work has been not on account of moral and artistic strictures like those of Lewis and Orwell, but on account of his perceived imperialism, militarism, and racism. He cannot be acquitted of the charge of imperialism, though to his credit it is the hard work and sacrifice of the empire-builders, military and civilian, and not the power and the glory that he emphasizes. His glorification of soldiering as the best possible life for a young man is a piece of romanticizing for which he paid dearly: one of those who bought into it was his only son John, who fell in France early in the Great War and was hauntingly memorialized in the poem "My Boy Jack." As for racism, the charge cannot be proved beyond a reasonable doubt. Unquestionably Kipling saw the white Anglo-Saxon as inherently superior, and most native races as at best childlike; but the single noblest character in all of his fiction is Teshoo Lama in *Kim*, a story which also gives us a heroic *babu* or native civil servant, a type usually portrayed by him as comic or contemptible; the Sikh narrator of "A Sahib's War" is far more admirable than the Boer farmer who treacherously kills his beloved Kurban Sahib; the famous

reference to "lesser breeds without the law" in "The White Man's Burden" is actually an allusion to the Germans, whom he saw as an irresponsible, exploitive colonial power; and he made it clear more than once that he considered William Ewart Gladstone to be the lowest form of human life. Whatever one's opinion of his views, Kipling remains a storyteller *par excellence*, mesmerizing young and old alike with sheer narrative power.

The stories collected in *A Separate Star* mainly emphasize warfare and soldiering (though not the selections from Kipling himself, the inevitable "With the Night Mail" and "As Easy as ABC" and a delightful interview with Mark Twain): good stories, I would say, though of a type I personally don't care for, which may cast doubt on my competence to judge them. It isn't until the fifth tale in the book, Gordon R. Dickson's "Carry Me Home," that we find a story focused on a wider conflict, an encounter between differing cultures rather than merely opposite sides, though Poul Anderson's "No Truce with Kings" does have an ET dimension. Richard McKenna's "The Night of Hoggie Darn" has a very Kiplingesque interaction between an advanced civilization and the persisting primitive element, with both sides making myths about each other. It and Heinlein's "The Long Watch" are the only pieces in this volume that I can readily believe that Kipling himself might have written if he were alive today. Unlike many of those collected here, he was less interested in soldiering than in soldiers, less in what fighting is like and its whys and wherefores than in the psychological dynamics of men under stress.

In his introduction to his own story, "Under the Hammer," David Drake, like Kipling himself, oversimplifies the social situation when he remarks, "If they hadn't liked their work, they'd have done something else." Like what? Starved to death in the slums of Whitechapel or on a rackrented Irish tenant farm? Killed themselves with overwork in a mill or factory or mine? In the Victorian age of rampant social Darwinism, the Army or Navy offered a highly desirable alternative for the "surplus population" so unbeloved of Ebenezer Scrooge. Kipling may have been sentimental about the Irish troops, loyal servants of Her Majesty the Queen to a man; but less than a decade after her accession, when the

failure of the potato crop resulted in the death or emigration of a third to a half of its population, Ireland continued to be an exporter of food throughout the famine, as the rich absentee landlords saw no reason to share their profitable crops with their starving tenants, who had literally nothing except potatoes to eat. To the modern reader, Kipling's smug middle-class Victorian imperialism strikes a false note. His usual assumption that Irish advocates of home rule or independence, "natives" restive under colonial rule, socialists and trade unionists, and insubordinate inferiors of all types were either fools, dupes, or rotten cads to begin with—"lesser breeds" one and all—recalls the assumption by the propertied classes that the working poor didn't need to be paid enough to afford warm clothing because they didn't feel the cold as their betters did. His attitude is a tribute to the power of social conditioning to overcome contact with reality; Kipling, as a journalist, did himself come into contact with working-class people.

When you stop to think of it, Kipling's most memorable and famous stories about soldiers, especially those told by and about Privates Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd, are not about battle at all: "The Courting of Dinah Shadd" and "On Greenhow Hill" are love stories; "The Incarnation of Krishna Mulvaney" is farce; and while "The Taking of Lungtungpen," "Love-o'-Women," "The Drums of the Fore and Aft," and "The Mutiny of the Mavericks" all have battlefield settings, the first is farce, the last is political satire, and the intermediate pair are tragedies, the first of life's moral and medical revenge upon a conscienceless seducer, the second of a raw regiment's momentary act of cowardice under fire that could never be lived down. When he writes of men in battle, it is often with the view of the technician, as in this description from "The Mutiny of the Mavericks" of a regiment lying down on a hillside under enemy fire, waiting for the order to engage:

Mulcahy groaned and buried his head in his arms till a stray shot spoke like a snipe immediately above his head, and a general heave and tremor rippled the line. Other shots followed, and a few took effect, as a shriek or a grunt attested. The officers, who had been lying down with the men, rose and

began to walk steadily up and down the front of their companies.

This maneuver, executed not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith, to soothe men, demands nerve. You must not hurry, you must not look nervous, though you know that you are a mark for every rifle within extreme range; and, above all, if you are smitten you must make as little noise as possible and roll inward through the files. It is at this hour, when the breeze brings the first salt whiff of the powder to noses rather cold at the tips, and the eye can quietly take in the appearance of each red casualty, that the strain on the nerves is strongest. Scotch regiments can endure for half a day, and abate no whit of their zeal at the end; English regiments sometimes sulk under punishment, while the Irish, like the French, are apt to run forward by ones and twos, which is just as bad as running back. The truly wise commandant of highly strung troops allows them in seasons of waiting to hear the sound of their own voices uplifted in song. There is a legend of an English regiment that lay by its arms under fire chanting "Sam Hall," to the horror of its newly appointed and pious colonel.

And what catches his journalist's eye and ear when he looks at fighting men is likely not to be their behavior in battle, as in Mulvaney's vivid narrative of the return of an expeditionary force from a frontier campaign (and here I am forced to agree with Orwell—or was it Eliot?—that Kipling would have been better advised to render the scene not in dialect but in straightforward English prose, as in the preceding excerpt) in "Love-o'-Women":

"Mother av Glory, will I ever forget that comin' back? The light was not fair lifted, and the furst we heard was 'For 'tis my delight av a shiny night,' frum a band that thought we was the second four comp'nies av the Lincolnshire. At that we was forced to sind them a yell to say who we was, an' thin up wint 'The wearin' av the Green.' It made me crawl all up my backbone, not havin' taken my brequist. Thin, right smash into our rear, came fwhat was left av the Jock Elliot's—wid

four pipers an' not half a kilt among thim, playin' for the dear life, an' swingin' their rumps like buck rabbits, an' a native rig'mint shrieking blue murther. Ye niver heard the like. There was men cryin' like women that did—an' faith I do not blame thim. Fwhat broke me down was the Lancers' Band—shinin' an' spick like angels, wid the ould dhrum-horse at the head an' the silver kettle-dhrums an' all an' all, waitin' for their men that was behind us. They shtruck up the Cavalry Canter, an' begad those poor ghosts that had not a sound fut in a throop they answered to ut; the men rockin' in their saddles. We thried to cheer them as they wint by, but ut came out like a big gruntin' cough, so there must have been many that was feelin' like me. Oh, but I'm forgettin'! The Fly-by-Nights was waitin' for their second battalion, an' whin ut came out, there was the Colonel's horse led at the head—saddle-empty. The men fair worshipped him, an' he'd died at Ali Musfid on the road down. They waited till the remnint av the battalion was up, an' thin—clane against ordhers, for who wanted that chune that day?—they wint back to Peshawur slow-time an' tearin' the bowils out av ivry man that heard, wid 'The Dead March.' Right across our line they wint, an' ye know their uniforms are as black as the Sweeps, crawlin' past like the dead, an' the other bands damnin' them to let be.

"Little they cared. The carps was wid them, an' they'd ha' taken ut so through a Coronation. . . ."

Aside from the fact that the principal theme of this book is one that doesn't particularly appeal to me, which is not a legitimate criterion of criticism (except when criticizing the critic), it is the sameness here that bothers me. Why must anthologists always include the same Kipling fantasies, "They" and "Tomlinson"? Why not the often mentioned but seldom reprinted "The Finest Story in the World"? Or the classic horror tale "The Mark of the Beast"? Or the quintessentially Kiplingesque animal fantasy "The Maltese Cat"? Or the marvelous blend of SF and fantasy "Wireless"? And why always "With the Night Mail" (here seriously flawed because the book does not include—presumably

because of the reproduction costs—the mock advertising and news reports that appear with the original and give a solid SF backing to its setting) and "As Easy as ABC" as if they were Kipling's only futuristic SF? Why not use instead—especially considering the theme of the anthology—the visionary "The Army of a Dream," which gives away the secret of how Kipling can write so much about soldiers without being a true militarist: his tendency to regard soldiering as a cross between a Test Match at Lord's, a gentleman's club, and having a flutter on the Derby, that singularly English attitude toward sport best summed up in Flanders and Swann's reprobation of foreigners' inability to "play the game":

They argue with umpires,  
They cheer when they've won,  
And they practice beforehand  
Which ruins the fun. . . .

My other objections center on what is left out. I don't mean just fantasy, an omission taken care of in the second volume; one would think from both these books that Kipling never wrote a funny story in his life, or for that matter a detective story (see "The Return of Imray" and "The House Surgeon").

Moving on to *Heads to the Storm*, I found its emphasis on Kipling's influence on fantasy much more to my taste, even though there is nothing from the author of my candidate for the most Kiplingesque novel since Kipling, Robin McKinley's *The Blue Sword*. There is a particularly fine tale about what happens when an imperialist theocracy tries to conquer a primitive alien culture it cannot understand, George R.R. Martin's "And Seven Times Never Kill Man," which reminds me that reading Kipling attentively leads to being unsurprised by things like the inability of the Soviet Union, with all its military power, to conquer the primitive Afghans, and the South African Boers' invincible self-righteousness about *apartheid*. Other pieces indicate the influence of historical fantasy, as in the Puck books (Miesel's "The Shadow Hart" and Drake's "The Barrow Troll"). McCaffrey's "The Ship Who Sang" in the context of this anthology reveals a debt to such tales as ".007" and "The Ship That Found Herself" which I had not previously thought about; and John Brunner's "Mowgli" is a straight SF

piece which is at the same time a splendidly satirical take on *The Jungle Books*. (Incidentally, one of the best features of these volumes is the inclusion of introductions to each story by the writer or, if the writer is dead, a friend or one of the editors, and sometimes additional comments by an editor, remarking on the author's view of Kipling and his relevance to the story at hand. In answer to Brunner's trivia question, the Mowgli story not part of *The Jungle Books* is "In the Rukh." Now, for a ten-point bonus, what was the subject of the first story Kipling wrote for what eventually became the Puck books, and why did he discard it?) I also very much admired a story Kipling would probably never have been able to write, C.J. Cherryh's "The Haunted Tower," set in a future haunted by the ghosts of the past and centering on a very present-day protagonist, a Barbie Doll/Playboy Bunny type who becomes a genuine heroine. And they do have a not-overly-anthologized Kipling historical fantasy, "The Eye of Allah," one of many of his stories which blur the category boundaries between historical fiction, science fiction, and fantasy.

I would recommend both these books, especially the second; but I'd really rather create my own anthology, unfettered by such trivial considerations as royalties and copyright permission. For allegorical fantasy I'd have my favorite short story, E.M. Forster's "The Celestial Omnibus." For historical fantasy, something by Stephen Vincent Benét, "A Tooth for Paul Revere" or, if I wanted to leave out the magical element and make it straight imagined history, as most of the Puck stories are, either "Jacob and the Indians" or "Freedom's a Hard-Bought Thing." For imperial/colonial conflict, Peter Dickinson's "Flight" and Christopher Anvil's "The Gentle Earth," a variant of the snarking-the-enemy story in which the alien invaders are snarked by Terra itself. For animal fantasy, Andre Norton's "Noble Warrior." For a snarking-the-enemy story, Russell's "Nuisance Value"; for pure fantasy, Ursula K. Le Guin's "The Rule of Names"; and for a tale of cultural/moral conflict, Avram Davidson's "Or the Grasses Grow." For best Kipling-esque poem not actually by Kipling, the nomination is . . . G.K. Chesterton's "Lepanto." And for a rep-

resentative Kipling piece? Any of the stories I've cited above will do; but on the whole I think I'd go with "The Little Foxes," which includes most of his themes except fantasy and is hilarious to boot.

In commenting on Kipling, most of the writers included in these anthologies mention having read him with delight in childhood or adolescence. I may have set some sort of record in this respect, as I learned the delights of Kipling even before I could read, when my grandfather used to read the stories aloud to me. And not the *Just So Stories* or the other tales intended for the young, either; the ones I asked for over and over were ".007" (an earlier and better avatar of "The Little Engine That Could"?) and "The Maltese Cat," which despite its title is about a championship polo match as seen by the polo ponies. And even more oddly, when I began to read the books for myself, my favorites were "The Mother Hive" and "A Walking Delegate," beast-allegories which exemplify Kipling's worst side, being anti-union and social-Darwinist in theme. I cannot remember reading the real Kipling-for-kids, Mowgli and Puck and the *Just So Stories*, until I was much older. Go figure.

There is something in Kipling's own life that, I believe, accounts for his appeal to so many, especially among the young. Like many children of the English in India, he and his sister were sent back home at an early age for schooling. For some reason they were left not with relatives but with a woman who made her living by boarding such children being educated at a local school. While she made a pet of the little girl, the young Rudyard endured a nightmare of bullying and persecution both in her home and at school (as he records in his autobiography and in the story "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep"), finding his only escape in reading during long hours locked in the cellar as punishment, which is how he ruined his eyesight. Rescue finally came when his mother arrived unexpectedly before his landlady and her son could put up a front to hide the true situation. The oddest thing about the story, to an adult mind, is that the children used to spend their holidays with relatives, the painter Burne-Jones and his wife, in a delightfully chaotic household where the adults were

ready at the drop of a fez to dress up and play at Arabian Nights with the children, and William Morris was likely to pop in to discuss his translations from the Norse and, if he couldn't find an available adult, to sit down and tell the children the story of Burnt Njal; yet he never mentioned his mistreatment to them. Having undergone a similar experience in my own childhood, although to a far lesser degree, I think I can understand why. To a child, the world around him, the people and things and what effects they have on him, are bedrock realities of the universe; it does not occur to him that an act of his could change them, could affect adults, which is probably why children are so vulnerable to the injunction of an abuser not to tell. I daresay it never entered young Rudyard's head that if he had told the Burne-Joneses what was being done to him, they'd have had him out of there before he could take a deep breath.

The sort of child who grows up to be a writer is likely to be, like Kipling, a solitary: perhaps lonely, perhaps rejected by his peers if not actually bullied, who finds solace and refuge in reading. There he can find not only escape in the sense of wish-fulfilling daydreams, which presumably children who do not read can also have (but the sets and costumes will be a lot tackier), but a vision of alternate possibilities, places and times and even worlds where things are different from the way they are for him in the here and now. Such glimpses can afford him the hope that even the here and now are not immutable, that they can change for him—perhaps he can change them himself—and he need not despair. Few writers have opened so many magic casements as Kipling. It is strange, in a way, that he is remembered primarily as a jingoistic, reactionary imperialist, when he has done so much to expand our minds, our imaginations, and our hearts. ✻

[P.S. Like many of my reviews in R&C, this was actually written several years ago. I told Ed over and over again not to deal with that printer in Brigadoon, no matter how great the deal he was offering. . . .]

# A Galactic Great Game: DEEP SPACE NINE and the Kipling Tradition

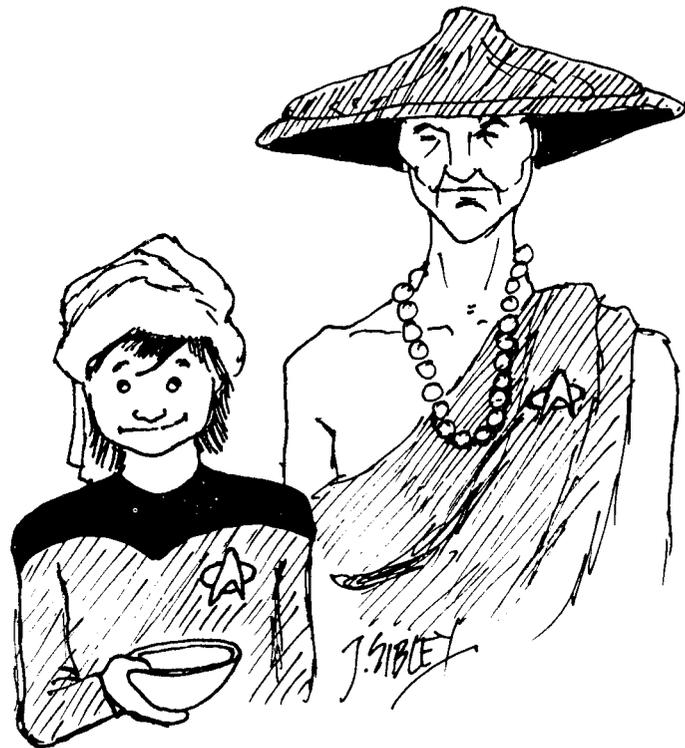
By Russell J. Handelman

When *Deep Space Nine* first aired in late 1992, many critics and viewers, mindful of Gene Roddenberry's high-concept characterization of *Star Trek* as "*Wagon Train to the Stars*," were quick to define *Deep Space Nine* as "*Guns moke in Space*." While there may be some superficial similarities—a remote "frontier" community with a motley population often in conflict with itself, prone to violence and with a single strong male figure attempting to keep the peace—I contend that the overall situation of *Deep Space Nine* more closely parallels the Anglo-Russian competition for dominance over the lands of Central Asia throughout the mid-nineteenth century, a quasi-"cold war" known among the British as "The Great Game."

Kipling employs the term "the Great Game" most notably in his novel *Kim*, leading many readers to imagine that such a romantic characterization was his own invention. Instead, in a recently published history of this aspect of Anglo-Russian relations, *The Great Game* by Peter Hopkirk (Kodansha America, 1992), the author indicates that the expression was actually coined by a British agent serving in India during the period. It specifically refers to the time of Russian and British expansion in Central Asia during the post-Napoleonic period through the early 1880s, when a series of treaties inspired by the geopolitical implications of an ascendant, united Germany stabilized the situation into the twentieth century. During this era, the Russian Empire was marching east and south from its European dominions at the same time that the British Empire had achieved hegemony over India and was concerned with securing its northern and western frontiers there with a buffer of friendly states while facilitating profitable trade therein.

Inevitably, the two Great Powers found their respective interests colliding in what became the cockpit of Great Game intrigue and conflict, the lands lying northwest of India's Kashmir province amidst the Pamir mountain range where Afghanistan, Tadjikistan, China, and Tibet all met in a mosaic of petty independent khanates. These impoverished, underpopulated statelets often held only a single asset that would value them far beyond any intrinsic economic worth: they controlled vital mountain passes that could provide lucrative trade routes or highways for invading armies. Each side approached control of this region differently. The Russian

method was to support a claimant for a throne, encourage him to "request" Russian aid in suppressing his rivals, and send in an army that would stay until the situation had "stabilized." Unsurprisingly, in many cases the khan would be overcome with gratitude and pledge allegiance to the White Tsar, paving the way for outright annexation. The British were economically and politically less willing to take on further colonial burdens—managing India was enough of a task—and preferred to develop "spheres of influence" by cultivating friendly khans, who would have titular independence but with a pro-British foreign and economic policy, with perhaps a British



garrison and Indian Civil Service bureaucrat to man an outpost astride a vital pass to "protect" against a Russian invasion.

It is compared against this imperialist dynamic that the analogy between the Great Game—Kipling's most fruitful fictional *mise en scène*—and *Deep Space Nine* becomes most plausible. From the viewer's perspective, the United Federation of Planets takes on the role of the British Empire—the "good guys," with their sense of fair play and concept of autonomy within their hegemony—at least in an ideal sense). The authoritarian, militaristic Cardassians—brutal annexationists, subjugating those they have overcome—take on the role of the Russian Empire. Bajor, like one of the Pamir khanates, after a period of Cardassian (Russian) control, has won ostensible independence with Federation spon-

sorship, just as the British often forced Russian withdrawals through backing catspaw rivals and through economic and political pressure in other arenas. The Bajorans, sensitive about regaining their autonomy, are necessarily wary of exchanging Cardassian chains with what might be a silken noose of Federation rule, while pragmatically aware that they are currently too weak to remain unaffiliated in the face of their former overlords' frustrated ambitions.

The Deep Space Nine station's location at the Wormhole's access is clearly comparable to that of a trading town guarding the entrance to a mountain pass, such as Peshawar in what is now Pakistan protecting the mouth of the Khyber Pass from northwestern invaders and providing an entrepot for merchants traveling in both directions. Deep Space Nine remains

legally Bajoran territory while under Federation administration, just as in Kipling's time the British would oversee vital chokepoints in the technically independent khanates within their self-described "sphere of influence."

While *Deep Space Nine* has not presented yet (first season) any direct pastiches of Kipling's stories, the setting is essentially identical, imbued with the same tension informing Kipling's works: a "benevolent" hegemony in somewhat uneasy stewardship over a restless and proud indigenous population that both requires and resents the intrusion, standing against a mephitic, expansionist power that considers itself only temporarily checked. Underlying the storylines exploiting imagined futuristic technologies and nonhuman, alien cultures, the Great Game continues. ✽

## Kipling On Tape

by Fred Lerner

***Cold Iron.* Leslie Fish, with Catherine Cook. El Cerrito, California: Off Centaur Publications, 1986.**

***Keep on Kipling.* Peter Bellamy, with Chris Birch and Anthea Bellamy. Workington, Cumbria: Fellside Recordings, 1987.**

***Rudyard Kipling Made Exceedingly Good Songs.* Peter Bellamy, with Jamie O'Dwyer and Sharon and the Students. Keighley, West Yorkshire: [Peter Bellamy], 1989.**

***Rudyard Kipling's Puck's Songs.* Peter Bellamy [with others]. Keighley, West Yorkshire: [Peter Bellamy], 1990. (Re-recorded from the earlier LP records *Oak, Ash and Thorn* and *Merlin's Isle of Grammar*).**

***Soldiers Three: Rudyard Kipling Songs.* Peter Bellamy, with Jamie**

**O'Dwyer, Maggie Boyle, Steve Tilston, and Keith Marsden. Keighley, West Yorkshire: [Peter Bellamy], 1990.**

***The Undertaker's Horse.* Leslie Fish, with Dominic Bridwell, Margie Butler, Catherine Cook, Ellen Guon, Frank Hayes, Paul Macdonald, Keith Marcum, Arlin Robins, and Kevin Roche. El Cerrito: Off Centaur Publications, 1985.**

Rudyard Kipling is famous as a poet, but it would be just as accurate to call him a songwriter. Ever since the Boer War—when his poem "The Absent-Minded Beggar," set to a tune by Sir Arthur Sullivan, raised large sums for the relief of soldiers' families—Kipling's verse has been sung as often as it has been recited. In every decade of this century Kipling has been musi-

cally interpreted in contemporary idiom, whether it be that of the turn-of-the-century music hall, mid-century swing, or the folk-inspired singer-songwriter tradition of our own day. For as long as I have been involved with science fiction, I have heard Kipling's songs sung at parties and conventions; but the tunes to which they were set were passed on only by word of mouth. In recent years, both in Britain and America, contemporary settings of Kipling poems have been released on tape cassette. Two very different singers have made a good start of displaying Rudyard Kipling's incredible virtuosity and versatility to the folk audience.

Leslie Fish has a crisp voice well suited to Kipling's verse, though her vocal range is not all that it might be. She is not always exacting in her fidelity to the words that Kipling wrote: I don't believe that her substitution of "bastard" for "rogue" in the chorus to

"The Sergeant's Weddin'" (*The Undertaker's Horse*) improves either Kipling's scansion or his argument. I would also quibble with her two-syllable rendering of Lalage's name in "Rimini" (*Cold Iron*); but perhaps my preference for the more latinate three-syllable pronunciation comes from hearing Karen Anderson sing it that way. All of which proves that the richness of Kipling extends to the near-infinite variety of ways to sing his songs. There is something precisely right about her interpretation of "We and They" (*The Undertaker's Horse*) and "The King" (*Cold Iron*); it is obvious that Leslie Fish not only knows and loves Kipling, she truly understands what he is saying in his verse. Certainly the poems that Leslie Fish has selected for *Cold Iron* and *The Undertaker's Horse* represent the immense range of Kipling's thematic concerns and metrical forms. I find myself humming, whistling, and singing many of her adaptations of Kipling as I go about my daily business, and whenever I take down my copy of *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: The Definitive Edition*, I find her tunes popping into my head.

The late Peter Bellamy brings a wider variety to the business of singing Kipling. On his four cassettes he ranges from madrigal to music hall in his interpretations, with frequent detours into ballad, marching-song, and sea-chantey. A microcosm of this versatility may be found on my favourite of these cassettes, *Keep on Kipling*, which demonstrates as well the wide range of themes, voices, and techniques that Kipling employed in his verse. I was delighted by Bellamy's steady rendering of "The Land," Kipling's tribute to the English yeoman's love and respect for English earth; this is a poem that I had long known and loved. And I was blown



away by "A Pilgrim's Way," in which Bellamy transforms an obscure poem—at least, I had no memory of it—into an ebullient celebration of the human spirit.

Of *Puck's Songs* my own choices would include "Philadelphia" and "Our Fathers of Old," lively tributes to the changeability of things. On *Rudyard Kipling Made Exceedingly Good Songs*, "The Roman Centurion's Song" is a stirring love-song to England, reflecting Kipling's own discovery of his ancestral soil; Bellamy fittingly renders it unaccompanied, with the bluntness of a forty years' soldier. I don't care for his setting of "Recessional," which sounds more like a dirge. (I prefer the one found in older Anglican hymnals, a tune that Americans may know better as the Navy Hymn.) And I'm not all that fond of most of the songs on *Soldiers Three*—these settings of the *Barrack Room Ballads* don't show the variety that I admire in the other tapes. (But I'd very much like someday to see Tony Perin's play for which these settings were written.)

An officer in the Kipling Society as well as a member of the folk group The Young Tradition, Peter Bellamy

was uniquely qualified to interpret Kipling. It is a pity that these four tapes are all that we shall have; it is our good fortune that we have them. Together with Leslie Fish's two recordings (and may we someday soon have more!) they add another dimension to the enjoyment of Rudyard Kipling's polymorphous verse.

*Cold Iron* and *The Undertaker's Horse* are available by mail from M.R. Hildebrand, P.O. Box 82400, Phoenix, AZ 85071. They are \$11 each (postage \$2 for first tape, plus \$1 for each additional). A third tape has been made since this review, reputedly with excellent recording values, produced by Joe Bethancourt: *Our Fathers of Old*, for \$12.

The four Peter Bellamy tapes are available by mail from Jenny Bellamy, 16 Agnes Street, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD20 6AE, England. *Keep on Kipling* is £8.50 in the United Kingdom and \$18.00 in the United States. *Soldiers Three* and *Puck's Songs* are £8.00 each (\$18.00 U.S.). *Rudyard Kipling Made Exceedingly Good Songs* is £5.50 (\$12.00 U.S.). In all cases postage is included in the quoted price. There is as yet no American distributor of these tapes. \*

## The View from Mole End

by Anne Braude

### The Female of the Species

In recent issues of NIEKAS there has been a debate, sometimes conducted with unholy acrimony, over

"women's fiction" and "men's fiction" versus plain old fiction. The common-sense conclusion is that really good books can't be shoved into a gender category (though, come to think of it, I've never heard a woman wax really

enthusiastic over Hemingway or a man over Elizabeth Gaskell). Still, we tend to think of certain authors in gender terms because their subject matter seems to be more appropriate to one gender in particular: Jane Austen, for

example (but see Kipling's "The Janeites"). In this sort of rough-and-ready categorizing, Rudyard Kipling would seem at first glance to be a man's author—after all, he is usually writing about soldiers or engineers, isn't he? But leaving aside for the moment the point that today many women are becoming soldiers and engineers, the fact is that Kipling created quite a few vivid and credible female characters. He seldom depicts convincingly what might be considered the conventional Englishwoman at home; I don't care much for Miriam or Mrs. Cottar in "The Brushwood Boy," for instance. But he writes very well about *memsahibs* abroad, who after all are atypical simply by virtue of the fact that they are tackling the difficulties of living in an alien culture, often under hardship conditions. Mulvaney's wife Dinah Shadd and the heroine of "William the Conqueror" display as much courage and strength of character as any male protagonist; even Mrs. Hauksbee and her friends, bored grass widows at Simla manipulating the lives of those around them for what they decide is the others' own good, are at least clever puppeteers—and Kipling is not averse to showing their flaws and failures, which makes them more real. Stories like "Without Benefit of Clergy" and "Lispeth" sympathetically depict women of color. His two best female characters, however, are English, though not at all conventional: Queen Elizabeth in "Gloriana" (*Rewards and Fairies*) and the title character of "Mary Postgate" (*A Diversity of Creatures*), a tale which I think every woman will understand at gut level and most men will regard as a horror story.

But as I pointed out in the gender/genre debate, most real readers don't read just to identify with a character of the same sex; they can take an interest in, and even identify with, all manner of beings if they are well created. And Kipling in particular often has protagonists that are not even human who come alive for us and delight us all our lives. I personally would rather spend time in the company of Akela or The Maltese Cat than with anyone Henry James ever dreamed up. Interesting persons, good plots, exotic settings, all vividly realized—who wouldn't like to read such stories? It is no wonder that there are female writers who have been strongly influenced by him. In the rest of this column I am

going to discuss female fantasists who have set stories in Kipling's own world, albeit a fantasy version of same with more than a touch of Rider Haggard.

Anyone sufficiently interested in my subject to have stayed with me this far has at least heard of, and probably read, Robin McKinley's *The Blue Sword* (Greenwillow, 1982), set in Daria—virtually indistinguishable from Kipling's India—and the ancient Hill kingdom of Damar, a hidden land of magic. The Homelander (read English) heroine, Harry Crewe, is carried off to Damar, where she is trained as a warrior, learns to wield the magic that is part of her heritage from a Damarian ancestress, and becomes the savior of both Damar and Daria from invasion from the North (here half-demon barbarians rather than Russians) and the means of making peace between them. (The second book in a proposed trilogy, *The Hero and the Crown*, is set hundreds of years in Damar's past and does not come within the confines of this essay; in an interview in a recent issue of *Hailing Frequencies*, the Waldenbooks newsletter, McKinley mentioned that she is currently at work on a third volume set shortly after the events in *The Blue Sword*.)

Less familiar is Margaret Ball, a comparative newcomer to the SF/fantasy field but already an accomplished historical novelist. *Flameweaver* (Baen, 1991) is set in a version of Kipling's India that is so close to the real thing that a certain sub-editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* actually makes a brief appearance in its pages. In this timeline, the Forbidden Empire of Chin has closed its coasts and borders by magical means (thus winning the Opium Wars) and access to its fabulously valuable trade is possible only along the Silk Road through Central Asia and is controlled by the Russians. England, a second-rate power whose overseas empire is basically limited to India, is continually pressing northward to find alternate trading routes; the Russian Empire, conversely, is pressing southward, its greedy eyes on India. Caught between the two is the ancient kingdom of Gandhara; once rulers of all northern India, the Gandharans retreated before the White Huns to a remote valley in the Pamirs, where their wisewomen's powers of illusion have guarded their borders. But now these illusions are failing; the Russians' use of long-range

weapons and captive demons to attack the defenders has decimated the ranks of the wisewomen as well as the fighters. One of the latter is Tamai, a young woman with immense potential for magic which she is unable to control, because a wisewoman gains control of her gifts only if she is grounded properly in the material world, which comes through bearing children, and Tamai is barren. Determined to do *something* to save her people, she journeys south to the land of the Angrezi, hoping to buy some of their fabled Martini-Henry rifles. Here she is reluctantly befriended by Louisa Westbrook, a young Englishwoman whose husband, gone missing on an exploratory journey in search of Gandhara, had been compiling a Gandharan dictionary. Naturally the English not only don't believe her stories about demons but have no intention of selling rifles to "native tribesmen"; instead they intend to trick Tamai into leading an expeditionary force back to her home, whereupon it will be forcibly brought under the sway of the Raj. There are several obstacles in their path: Tamai is not as stupid and naive as the negotiators assume; Louisa, acting as interpreter, is increasingly unwilling to tell Tamai what the conversations among the English reveal to be outright lies; and Tamai's training in the Disciplines of the wisewomen enables her to learn English very quickly, a fact that she does not bother to mention. Unexpectedly, the two women form a close bond of friendship when Tamai discovers that the Englishwoman has latent magical power, too, and begins to teach her the Disciplines; the two manage to outwit the authorities and come up with a treaty that provides for British military assistance without compromising Gandharan independence. After a series of adventures, surprises, and reversals, the British and Gandharans jointly defeat the Russians and their demon allies, chiefly by the magic of Tamai, who finds that by joining with Louisa, who has now passed the wisewomen's initiation and who is grounded by her two children, she can Weave the power of Flame.

The sequel, *Changeweaver* (Baen, 1993), owes less to Kipling than to Rider Haggard and to Sir Richard Francis Burton; the hero, Lord Charles Carrington, is in fact a prim version of Burton (now *there's* an oxymoron to conjure with), an adventurer, explorer,

and travel writer who has been entrusted by the Indian Government with a secret mission—to travel in disguise with a caravan along the Silk Road to Peking, there to meet with representatives of a mysterious revolutionary faction in hopes of forming a trade alliance. Since previous envoys have come to a sticky end, he is to be provided with a guide capable of protecting him; he is decidedly disconcerted when this proves to be Tamai, since he cannot accept that a woman can be strong and competent enough for the ordeal, let alone that he is in need of a qualified magician. Tamai in turn is not entirely sure what use *he* will be. She accepts the mission, since she is restless now that the battle for her homeland is over and she has reverted to having only intermittent control of her powers and her kinsman and sometime lover Paluk has perished while guiding an earlier English emissary. In the course of the journey they come to value each other's abilities and to learn about each other's worlds, and eventually to fall in love, although Tamai's most intense relationship is with the young albino dancing girl Shahi, whom she adopts emotionally and spiritually as a daughter. In an inventive but not wholly convincing conclusion Tamai, who has been trained in control of her gift by Buddhist monks who have befriended the companions, and who finds that she is grounded by her emotional bond with Shahi as surely as if the girl were actually a child of her body, is able to gather the power of all the wise to reweave history to cancel the existence of demons, thus leaving the world essentially as it was in our timeline—Kipling's India and all that comes with it. Some things are entirely too tidied up—since there was no war, Paluk and Tamai's friends and kin who died in it are conveniently alive again, but not Louisa's abusive husband who was also a war casualty—but Ball sneakily avoids awkward explanations of the existence of the now entirely superfluous Gandharan-British alliance by having everyone remembering that it happened but, except for the protagonists, muzzy about why and how.

What these novels have in common besides background is a similar theme: the juxtaposition of an ideal society in which men and women are equal with a much more reality-based one in which women and other lesser

breeds are subjected to various degrees of oppression and cruelty. Both Gandhara and Damar seem to hark back to the egalitarian societies of pre-Indo-European Old Europe as described in the works of Marija Gimbutas, though there is something of a cop-out in that neither Ball nor McKinley shows her ideal land as a fully functioning peacetime society. The Old European cultures worshipped the Great Goddess and her consort, the Horned God, and according to Gimbutas men and women lived and worked together on terms of equality. Patriarchal religion and the subjugation of women seem to have gone together ever since. We see nothing of Damarian religion, though the existence of priests is mentioned, and Gandharans worship four goddesses and apparently no gods. Actual repression is not an issue in *The Blue Sword*, though the intelligent and active Harry Crewe is frustrated by the essentially idle life she leads as the unmarried dependent sister of a young officer; the family wealth, such as it is, is entailed on her brother. In Damar apparently every occupation from stablehand to war hero is open to either sex, and Harry is not the only woman to fight for her country.

In Ball's novels, on the other hand, such oppression is seen as endemic. Louisa is a battered wife, but the men who know it, the army doctor who treats her "accidental" injuries and the commanding officer who observes Westbrook's treatment of her after he is rescued by the expeditionary force, prefer to look away and pretend it isn't happening. The only one who defends her is a young British officer, James McAusland, who is falling in love with her (they marry in the interval between books), who decks Westbrook a couple of times; and even he, when he encounters Tamai and Paluk en route to Peshawar, hears Tamai telling Paluk what to do and concludes that Paluk isn't very "manly" by native standards because he doesn't clout her for her impertinence. The brutality of the Russians to captives is matched only by that of the Hill tribes and is eclipsed by that of Chinese officials and the Red Hat priests who control the demons toward peasants and foreign subjects as well as women. All three heroines are brutalized: Louisa is not only beaten by her husband but so psychologically abused by him that she feels that it is all her fault; Tamai is

barren because at eight years old she was raped by a band of marauding enemy tribesmen; and the various physical and sexual abuse inflicted on Shahi is horrific. Although each of the women finds a good man to love and respect her (Shahi only after the timeshift; in the world of the story she longs to become a Buddhist nun), the most important relationships are those they form with each other. In bonding with Tamai, Louisa not only discovers and learns to wield magic but also recognizes and respects her own strength as a person, so that she has the courage to confront alone, knees quaking but head unbowed, both her abusive husband and the hostile Council of Wisewomen. Shahi, who has been abandoned or betrayed by everyone she has ever loved or trusted, and who despises herself despite her remarkable if strange beauty and her brilliance as a dancer, is remothered by Tamai, finding in her someone who loves and values her and will not only not betray her under any circumstances but will even risk her own life for her. Tamai too has much to learn, and great difficulty in learning it. When we first meet her, she is so obsessed by her inability to use her magic that it poisons her whole life, even though she is a superb hunter and fighter, the best shot in Gandhara, and telepathically bonded with a magnificent golden eagle. Her marriage has broken up because, as her husband says, he can live with a barren woman but not with a bitter one. She sees her lack of children solely in terms of what it means to her magically. After she and Louisa become friends and join to experience the magical Overworld, she begins to comprehend maternal love through her sharing of Louisa's feelings for her children, whom she has allowed to be sent back to England, even though it breaks her heart, to protect them from her husband's violence. But it is through her fierce maternal love for Shahi, in which she is totally concerned with saving the girl and totally indifferent to any possible benefit accruing to herself, that she forges her truest and deepest relationship. Ironically, in the new timeline that results from her Changeweaving, Shahi is a happy young wife and artist, who has never been abused—and who has never met Tamai. But although she has lost her daughter in one sense, she is now grounded simply by the existence in the world of her heart's child;

by virtue of this and of the Buddhist techniques of manipulation of appearance and reality that she has learned, she is able to be initiated as a wise-woman; and as a result of the healing baptism that is part of that initiation, she is no longer barren.

Just as Kipling's tales are not for men only, I think these books will be enjoyed by readers of all possible sexes. The description I have given above may seem to imply that Margaret Ball's books consist of relentless male-bashing, but this is not really fair. Like Kipling, she sees cruelty and injustice more in terms of cultural conditioning than as gender-based malevolence, except in the cases of a few characters, mostly Cossack officers or Red Hat priests, who relish the pain of others in an almost aesthetic sense. There are a number of decent chaps both British and Gandharan in *Flameweaver*, especially McAusland, who is cut from the same cloth as Kipling's young officers. And Charles Carrington, whose role I have scanted here (he is almost an equal protagonist with Tamai), is a strong, complex, intelligent, and able character who is a fit mate for her, even able to aid her on the astral plane of the Overworld in

the final Changeweaving. The interaction between the English gentleman, to whom women are the gentler sex to be sheltered from the harshness of reality, i.e., long journeys under primitive conditions and anything more mentally challenging than fashion magazines, and the "native girl" who proves to be just as tough as he is, a fighter, hunter, and sorceress who considers it her duty to protect *him*, and to whom he winds up teaching mathematical logic, is both entertaining and convincing. The common theme is one of people learning to overcome their limitations, whether self-inflicted or imposed by others or by their upbringing, and developing mutual respect based on intrinsic qualities rather than conventional norms, thereby becoming stronger, more free, and part of a larger community of humanity. The title of this essay comes from a familiar Kipling quotation; its conclusion can best be summed up by a slightly altered version of an equally famous one:

Oh, East is East, and West is West,  
and never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at  
God's great Judgment Seat;

But there is neither East nor West,  
Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,  
For two strong women, hand in  
hand, though they come from the  
ends of the earth!

P.S.: With this issue, the name of this column is being changed from Mathoms to The View from Mole End. The first couple of Mathoms were not in fact written by me but were compiled by Ed from my comments on books in various taped letters; the name seemed appropriate for a column composed of small items hopefully presented to an audience. But once I started writing it on a regular basis, extended single-topic essays became the norm. The new name thus seems more appropriate (and those who don't care for my opinions can comfort themselves with the truism that someone who lives in a burrow doesn't get much in the way of a panoramic vista); besides, I will have another use for the name Mathoms, more in line with original intent, in the upcoming Tolkien Centennial issue (now scheduled for the centennial of my birth rather than Tolkien's). ❀

## The Captains and Kings Depart: (Rudyard Kipling, 1865–1936)

By Patricia Shaw Mathews

He was a young man in the golden afterglow of Empire. He came of age during the unquestioned sovereignty of the British Raj over land and sea, and cultures both ancient and wild. Yet, one of his most memorable works is his "Recessional," with its recurrent theme of Empire's twilight: "The tumult and the shouting dies; the Captains and Kings depart." For if he came of age in Empire's golden afternoon, he spent most of his adult life in Empire's sunset, and came to middle age in a world turned upside down and gone totally mad—even as ours is today.

Victoria's Britain thought hers was a moral sovereignty as well as a military one—that they had brought peace, prosperity, and progress to the "lesser breeds without the law."<sup>1</sup> But those who dismiss Rudyard Kipling as a gung-ho Imperialist should re-read his work with fresh eyes, and the memory of what it was like to grow up as an American after World War II. The British Raj not only claimed to bring the same blessings to the East as the Pax Americana did to an exhausted post-war world, it often did. And in the heyday of its arrogance, it suffered the same flaws—flaws Kipling reflected,

saw, and heartily protested.

Kipling could be as sentimental as an old teenaged love song (*The Light That Failed*). He was as distressed over the inherent unfairness of life in British India ("Without Benefit of Clergy") as others were by life in the American South half a century later. Like the American Progressives who were his counterparts, if not his exact contemporaries, he had a weakness for child heroes (*Kim*, *The Jungle Books*, "Toomai of the Elephants"), and a keen feeling for animals ("Toomai of the Elephants," "Servants of the Queen").

He cried out against seal-clubbing in "Lukannon" and "The White Seal" long before Greenpeace, using the same weapons of humanizing his seals and evoking not only pity, but fellow-feeling for them. His outrage at his country's conduct during the Boer War and World War I (poems "The Old Issue," "The Lesson," and "The Deathbed") foreshadowed the anti-war heroes of *M\*A\*S\*H*, and it has been said that, like many a wisecracking subversive of my own generation, he threw away a chance to become Poet Laureate of England with one instantly classic dirty ballad nastier than anything Tom Lehrer ever wrote.<sup>2</sup>

Rudyard Kipling's Edwardian Age was the rough equivalent in spirit, if not in time, of Teddy Roosevelt's Progressive Era. To tame and refine the wild conduct of its frontier heroes, or at least comment ironically on their peccadillos ("The Man Who Would Be King") was one of its primary missions.

So was his drive to protest, humanize, and loosen up the insensitive rigors of his own child rearing ("Baa, Baa, Black Sheep"). Contrast this with his indulgent treatment of children in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, the *Just So Stories*—and Tegumai's indulgence of his daughter Taffy in such tales as "The Cat That Walked By Himself."

However, like many a man of his generation and mine, his indulgence did not extend to women, whom he largely saw as domestic tyrants ("Baa, Baa, Black Sheep," "A Wayside Comedy") or—especially if native or young—as hapless victims ("Beyond the Pale"). He also tried very hard to emulate and admire—and hymn—the martial, get-it-done spirit that built an

empire (most of his poetry!), but his own sense of irony and compassion added a softer dimension to these martial hymns that escapes most readers today—consciously. (Or why was it not used to greater extent to whip up the same spirit and virtues in our fighting men in World War II?) Unconsciously, this added dimension is what sets them apart from the great mass of Victorian prosing, and has kept his work immortal for so long.

He was middle-aged when the atrocities of the Boer War—the second modern war in which concentration camps were seen<sup>3</sup> and the first to imprison civilians in them—were followed by the horrors of World War I, which was Britain's Vietnam, but worse. His was the task, in the carnage and blood and mindless stupidity of elder officers still trying to win a Twentieth Century war in Nineteenth Century style, of trying to find some kindness in a future of unforeseen brutality ("Trench Angels," "The Gardener"). He lived long enough to see World War II on the horizon, but not long enough to have any idea whether it would end in a flaming Nazi darkness, worldwide destruction, or victory and peace.

In fact, mediating between Victorian certainty and Lost Generation madness was the greatest, most futile, and finally, the most honorable duty of his post-Victorian, pre-World-War-I generation, just as mediating between the post-World-War-II certainty and the madness of today's post-Vietnam world was that of mine. As the bard and representative of his age, Kipling proved an admirable bridge between the last century and this—as well as an immortal storyteller. ✱

## Notes:

1. Kipling scholars agree that Kipling was referring to the Germans when he used that phrase. However, most people from his time forward have applied the reference to the various native peoples Britain had conquered at the time.
2. Fred Lerner comments that Roger Lancelyn Green, the late editor of the *Kipling Journal*, has proved to his satisfaction that "there is no justification for ascribing 'The Bastard King of England' to Kipling." However, the story persists.
3. The first was the American Civil War, on both the Confederate and Union sides. See also Seymour-Smith, pp. 292-293.

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# The Brunner Anthologies

By Anne Braude

**Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling's Science Fiction*, presented by John Brunner. Tor, 1992, \$17.95, 178 pp. hc.**

**Rudyard Kipling, *Kipling's Fantasy Stories*, presented by John**

**Brunner. Tor, 1992, \$17.95, 206 pp., hc.**

I got no further than the tables of contents of these two comparatively slim volumes before I wanted to pick a fight with John Brunner along the lines of "Why this?" and "How could you bring yourself to leave out that?" This

is not to be considered definitive criticism: selecting from Kipling's fiction is like being given a gift certificate for a couple of pounds of assorted gourmet chocolates, in that no two consumers will come up with exactly the same selections. Given my remarks elsewhere in this issue ("The Kipling Leg-

acy"), Brunner's choices are actually pretty close to mine. He includes the standard chestnuts, about which I won't repeat myself except to say that the simulated newspaper-of-the-future frame is again missing from "With the Night Mail" (but at least JB has the grace to apologize). He also includes several of the stories I suggested, so I obviously can't fault him there. Of his choices that weren't mine, I approve on the whole.

In the SF volume, "A Matter of Fact" is indeed a grand sea serpent story; and although I have always considered both "The Ship That Found Herself" and ".007" fantasy rather than SF, he makes a credible case for including them here. I personally would have picked only one of them and used logic similar to JB's to include either "Marklake Witches" or "A Doctor of Medicine" (*Rewards and Fairies*), both stories of science appearing to be witchcraft or astrology. I don't share his enthusiasm for "Unprofessional," but it is unequivocally science fiction.

In the fantasy volume, I liked all the stories except the ubiquitous "They," which I consider to be Victorian maiden-lady sentimentalism (so how come Brunner and David Drake pick it and I don't?). I still feel "The Mark of the Beast" is a conspicuous omission, and I would have liked to see "On the Gate," set in the Afterworld during wartime, included. "The Village That Voted the Earth Was Flat," one of Kipling's funniest tales, is snuck in on the grounds that it is a wish-fulfillment fantasy. I think that if Brunner had observed the 1992 presidential elections before making his selections, he might have put it in the SF volume on the grounds that it accurately predicted the future. (Kipling was good at that; see the remarks of the foreign correspondent known as The Nilghai, in *The Light That Failed*, for alarmingly accurate forecasting of the present situation in Yugoslavia and how it is likely to develop in the immediate future.) And for an *envoi* poem to each volume, I would have picked "The King" for the SF volume and "Puck's Song" or "The Way Through the Woods" for the fantasy volume.

I fault Brunner less than I did Drake and Miesel for including familiar material, as his collections are apparently

intended to introduce Kipling to a readership unfamiliar with his work, while the other two are presumably editing for the converted. Brunner is admirably inconspicuous as an editor, providing only a list of titles, a capsule biography, brief prefaces, and extremely useful notes to each story instead of the all-too-usual pompous "let me tell you exactly what to think of this" type of introduction. Even Brunner nods, however, in a few transatlantic misapprehensions: he never explains that a character in "Unprofessional" is called "Taffy" because his name is Vaughan and therefore he is Welsh, a relationship that may be lost on modern Americans brought up on SESAME STREET instead of Mother Goose. And the Grange movement indeed began as a fraternal organization, as he says, but after the Panic of 1837 it became primarily a farmers' lobby to fight the monopolist and extortionate policies of the railroads; so when the pony-engine in ".007" calls a fellow locomotive a "granger," it is a much deadlier insult than it seems. I am also uncomfortable with his assertion, made more than once, that "nigger"

used to be a more or less proper noun, at least in British usage. I am continually surprised by the complacent acceptance of anti-Semitic and racist language in supposedly highly civilized writers like the classic detective novelists—the ultimate example is in John Buchan, where Richard Hannay (I think in *The Three Hostages*) remarks of another character, "For a Jew, he was a white man"—and I suspect that those who were being so referred to did *not* assume that no offense was meant. But on the whole this is an excellent introduction to Kipling's writings for those unfamiliar with them—O brave new world!—and John Brunner has not only chosen well, he has edited with skill and admirable concision. (I wonder if he followed Kipling's own maxim for editing one's own writing: "Whenever you come across something that strikes you as particularly fine, *take it out.*") I feel the volumes are slightly overpriced as to quantity, but the quality, for those underprivileged souls who don't already own a complete edition of Kipling, is well worth it. Recommended. ✨

## The Kipling Society

by Fred Lerner

The Kipling Society is a nonprofit literary and historical society for those interested in Rudyard Kipling's prose and verse, his life and times, and his influence on world literature. Since its founding in 1927, the Kipling Society has brought together men and women from all over the world to share scholarly study and enthusiastic discussion of Kipling and his writing. It conducts a program of meetings in London and occasional programs in America, maintains active chapters in Victoria, British Columbia and Melbourne, Australia, and publishes the quarterly *Kipling Journal*. The *Journal* contains both scholarly papers and informal reminiscences, as well as news notes, book reviews, and a lively letter column exploring all aspects of Kipling and Kiplingiana. Recent issues have included several pieces on Kipling and science fiction.

Individual membership costs \$24 per year; those under 24 years of age can join as junior members for \$7.50. Please send your check, along with your name and mailing address, to the Secretary for North America: Dr Enamul Karim, Department of English, Rockford College, 5050 East State Street, Rockford, Illinois 61101. I have been a member of the Kipling Society for more than thirty years, and I can say that it has immeasurably increased my enjoyment of Kipling. ✨

# the lonely witch of the southwest

By DAVID M. SHEA

It is certainly gratifying to observe that in recent years the science fiction community has done much to rectify its gross neglect of Andre Norton. It is especially satisfactory that this has taken place in the author's own lifetime and that Miss Norton has therefore been able to experience for herself the affection and respect which we in the field have for her.

It is a pity the same cannot be said concerning science fiction's treatment of Zenna Henderson, who died some years back, as she had lived, in reclusive obscurity. At the time of her death Miss Henderson was essentially a forgotten figure and the years have done little to alter this injustice. Aside from one panel and a dramatized reading of "Subcommittee" at the 1985 NASFIC in Austin, Texas, it is difficult to recall even a mention of her in SF or fannish circles.

To avoid pressing the comparison beyond validity it must be immediately noted that Zenna Henderson was never as famous, as influential, and certainly never as prolific as Andre Norton. During the period roughly from 1950 through 1970 Miss Henderson published something like 50 stories, many quite brief. A high percentage of this material appeared first in *Fantasy and Science Fiction* magazine. Nowadays, however, the stories are mainly available in the four books into which they were assembled: the two books of "The People," *Pilgrimage* and *The People: No Different Flesh*, which can generally be found, and two more general collections, *Holding Wonder* and *The Anything Box*, which are out of print and may require a diligent search among the rare book dealers.

The most famous, possibly the only famous remark made about the author, was Harlan Ellison's snotty

comment in the introduction to Sonya Doorman's "Go, Go, Go, Said the Bird" in the original *Dangerous Visions* that, "Zenna Henderson writes just like a woman, all pastels." That there is an element of truth in this gratuitously cruel and sexist jibe does not disguise the fact that Ellison missed the point entirely.

Miss Henderson's most lasting creation will certainly be the extra-terrestrial "People." When their native

gment could be made against Andre Norton's *Old Race*, Katherine Kurtz's *Deryni*, or Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Comyn*, to name just a few conspicuous examples. For all intents and purposes the People are witches.

In "Angels Unawares" in *No Different Flesh* a group of People are murdered by religious fanatics who leave posted on the door the biblical reference, Exodus 22:18, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." A traveler angrily confronts the killers and leaves Exodus 22:21 nailed to their gate, "Thou shall neither vex a stranger nor oppress him."

Despite their origins the People are not so much aliens as idealized Christians. If one discounts the technological ban, a comparison to the Amish, Mennonites, and other "Plain People" of our own time is not too farfetched. The People are, apparently by nature, as swans are said to be, monogamous heterosexuals.

Despite a lack of rigid dogma they are a profoundly religious folk. The Christian burial service's, "the sure and certain knowledge of the resurrection and the life to come" express their beliefs rather neatly.

They are kind, clean, thrifty, reverent, helpful, all those obnoxious Boy Scout virtues. It is easy to see how such characters in such stories might be dismissed as saccharine and irrelevant in the turbulent "attack anything" mood of the late '60s when Zenna Henderson's career was winding down.

It does indeed require a close reading of the material to see the darker side of the People, the flaws which render them human and deserving of our empathy, and therefore credible as characters. The rebellious Francher kid in "Captivity" in *Pilgrimage* is a disruptive influence because it is the only means he has found to exercise the



world, "The Home," self-destructed for reasons never clearly explained and the People fled in all directions, many arrived on earth as early as the late 19th century. The People have your basic psi powers, telekinisis, teleportation, limited telepathy. No attempt is made to rationalize this. The People have special powers because they *are* the People, and because the People have special powers. Q.E.D. This may be shaky logic. The technical term is "circular reasoning." But it's a long-accepted fantasy premise. The same ar-



talents he himself possesses. The pregnant Debbie in "Return" in *No Different Flesh* is a snotty, arrogant, spoiled brat who condescends to accept the charity of others and then criticizes them for not being more generous. Most affecting are the sad, oppressed children of Bendo ("Pottage" in *Pilgrimage*), whose parents have retreated behind a wall of fear and paranoia. When the children's teacher discovers their secret and attempts to expose them to their heritage, one child turns in a brutally succinct paper. "If anyone finds out we are not of earth we will die."

There is also an inescapably sad quality about those few Terrans who know about the People. Dr. Curtiss, a trained physician, finds that the People know more about neural surgery than he does. Melodye Amerson compares her doomed attempts to learn the People's skills to being a child peering in the window of a forbidden store and mournfully sums it up, "We're still outsiders."

Of the author's other stories some

are undeniably trivial, Ellison's "pastels:" the dippy "Love Every Third Stir," the inconsequential "Crowning Glory," or the encounter with angels in "Three Cornered and Secure." The author's largely conventional views on religion undoubtedly contributed to the decline of her popularity.

On the other hand, some stories are hilarious. "The Closest School" is a hoot, not so much for its simple premise, aliens register their child at a rural elementary school, as for its delightfully goofy juxtaposition of the mundane with the strange. The alien child appeared in the school Christmas pageant and received puzzled comments on her costume from the human parents. In "The Effectives" a stubborn rationalist attempts to quantify the efficacy of prayer. "Ad Astra" is an uncharacteristic broad farce about an erratic experiment in biochemistry. And there is humor even in the otherwise grim "J-Line to Nowhere" when a frustrated teenager pours a sludgy beverage into the slots and orifices of an obnoxious computer.

All of this tends to support the conventional view of Zenna Henderson. However, let us not leap to conclusions before we have examined the full picture. The author's courageous ability to face the inner dark can be seen by the attentive reader. For instance, many of her stories involve children interacting with adults, often teachers. "The Believing Child" gets a gullible but magical child to dip into her special powers to pay back the classmates who tease her, to the dismay of her teacher. Another teacher learns more, a great deal more, about a student's home life than she ever wanted to know in the morbid "You Know What, Teacher?" "Come On, Wagon" is a typical wondrous child's story told from the point of view of an adult who dislikes children in general and this child in particular. "Walking Aunt Daid" is so strange that it could be sold now to Gardner Dozois.

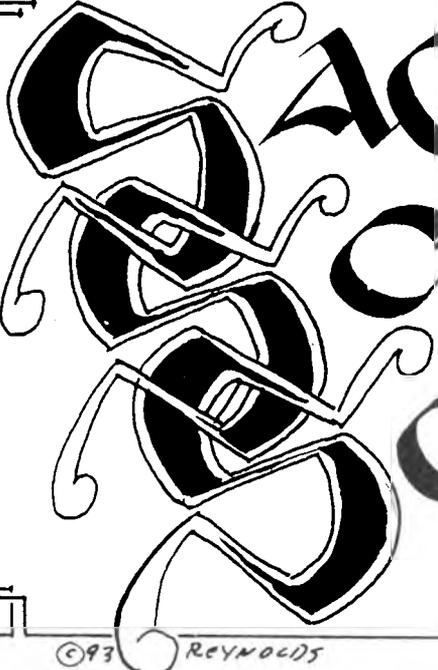
There are further depths to be plumbed, however. "As Simple as That" and "Sharing Time" both start out as simple teacher and children stories and mutate into something progressively darker, weirder, and more ugly. "The Grunder" is a bleak tale of love gone sour due to irrational jealousy. Particularly horrifying is "Swept and Garnished" which, in a few short pages, conveys a chillingly convincing portrait of a girl tortured by an obses-

sive-compulsive disorder. Each of these situations is done so believably that if they did not spring from personal experience they are certainly a tribute to the author's sheer storytelling ability.

It would be futile to attempt to argue that Zenna Henderson was a major stylistic influence on the order of, for instance, Cordwainer Smith or C.L. Moore. However, the competence to spin simple, lively tales about real human beings coping with real human problems is an ability that should not be disparaged. Zenna Henderson deserves better of us than to be relegated to oblivion. \*

[*Editor's afterword:* Was it Heinlein who said that when it is time to railroad, people will build railroads? I think the time for Zenna Henderson has returned. Since we received this article Corgi Books brought out *The People Collection* for £5.99. This book contains the complete contents of *Pilgrimage* and *No Different Flesh*, as well as five "People" stories not originally published in those two books. It has an excellent introduction and homage by Anne McCaffrey. Also NESFA has announced that they will bring out a similar volume in hardcover in 1994. Now if someone would collect her non-People stories!]





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# AGAS, CROLLS & ORCERY

A SURVEY OF  
LITERATURE  
IN THE  
HYBORIAN  
AGE  
BY  
ERIC LEIF  
DAVIN

Of all the ancient civilizations, only Atlantis holds more mystery than the Hyborian Age. Unlike all other vanished societies of which we know, not a single Hyborian archaeological site has been uncovered. All that is known of these intriguing people is deduced from their surviving literature—which is itself meager, fragmentary, and obscure—translated and passed on by later societies. Even the originals have long since been lost, leaving only reproductions to us.

This, in itself, is not entirely without precedent. The fame of Sappho, one of history's first known female poets, lives on, but most of her work has not survived. Aristotle's Constitution of the Athenian People is the sole remnant of the work he, or his assistants, prepared on all the Greek city-states—and we have this work only by the sheerest accident. Irreplaceable literary treasures were lost forever in the burning of the Alexandrian Library by Caesar's troops. The Etruscans, who ruled the Italian peninsula before the rise of Rome, left no literature of their own; and what we know of them is derived largely from the written records of the Greeks and Romans. It is believed that the Roman Emperor Claudius, a respected historian in his own time, wrote a comprehensive history of the Etruscans—but this, too, has vanished utterly. All else that we know of the Etruscans is gleaned from an archaeological study of their tombs.

Of the Hyborians, however, not

even their tombs remain, due to the massive geological upheavals between their time and our own. Since the close of the Hyborian Age, new lands have risen from the sea and others been buried beneath oceans. Therefore, we must turn to their written records, sketchy though they be, for whatever knowledge we have of them.

## *the nemedian chronicles*

Outside of a few ritualistic and religious inscriptions, the Hyborian record is composed almost entirely of a single historical work, The Nemedian Chronicles. Although paleolinguists have been able to decipher ancient Nemedian, the fundamental structure of the language remains a mystery. Though it predates even early Indo-European sources, no convincing linguistic affinity between Nemedian and other languages has been shown. Although some scholars have made claims for ancient Nemedian being the progenitor of Gaelic, Finnish, Albanian, and even Basque, no sufficient evidence for this position has been produced.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, much as Latin came to be the universal language of learning in medieval Europe, Nemedian can be presumed to have been the universal language of at least the literate in the Hyborian Age. One indication of this universality is the central

epic of the Chronicles: The Saga of Conan, King of Aquilonia. While only fragments remain, it is likely that the Chronicles dealt with a wide variety of subjects and heroes—yet from his story, surely King Conan must have been the greatest hero of a heroic age and he dominates the sections of the Chronicles which have come down to us, as he must have dominated his age. Indeed, some have speculated that it was the very emergence of Conan as the hero-king of Aquilonia which prompted the genesis of the Chronicles. Heroic adventures and war have often been an early stimulus to literature; witness the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Herodotus' history of the Persian Wars, the Peloponnesian War chronicle of Thucydides, and Xenophon's story of the March of the Ten Thousand, which inflamed the minds of Greek readers at the time.<sup>2</sup>

## *the physical record*

In the Chronicles, Conan often contemptuously refers to writings, most especially sorcerous writings, as "scraps of parchment."<sup>3</sup> As parchment is the skin of a sheep or goat prepared to be written on, this was probably a common medium of writing among the more barbarous tribes familiar to Conan. Indeed, the only examples in the Chronicles of writing by the savage Hyperboreans are on parchment.<sup>4</sup> As such—particularly in regard to mystic

books—it was probably meant as a term of derision when used by Conan. Still, it is possible that centers of learning in Nemedian and elsewhere may have retained the use of parchment—that is, sheepskin—for various ceremonial writing purposes, much as medieval European universities retained the use of sheepskins to produce academic diplomas.

Nevertheless, the large-scale use of sheep- or goatskins would have been unfeasible and a primitive form of paper—most likely papyrus—was probably more widely used. Indeed, the *Chronicles* seem to indicate quite strongly that the basic writing material of Argos and even Aquilonia, two of the most advanced nations of the time, was papyrus.<sup>5</sup> Papyrus itself (*Cyperus papyrus*) is a tall sedge plant of the Nile Valley, the pith of which was cut into strips and pressed into a writing material by Egyptian scribes of historic times. Prior to the cataclysm which ended the Hyborian Age, the Nile was known as the Styx and flowed through what is now the Mediterranean Sea toward what is now known as the Atlantic Ocean. There is no reason to believe that papyrus did not grow in abundance along the entire length of antiquity's most majestic river and, thus, must have been available in quantity to ancient scholars.

Beyond this, it is conceivable that scribes might have used wax tablets, baked clay tablets, and even carved passages (perhaps meant for posterity) into stone stelae—but for these possibilities we have no written reference and, of course, no surviving physical representatives at all.

### *the nemedian scholars*

Renowned even in their own time for scholarship,<sup>6</sup> the identity of the Nemedian authors of the *Chronicles* nevertheless remains a mystery. Much like our own Bible, the *Chronicles* seem to have been a composite work of which the original authors are anonymous. Indeed, the very concept of "authorship"—the "owning" of one's artistic creations—may have been as foreign to the Nemedian scholars as it was to the nameless artisans whose works accompanied the Egyptian Pharaohs on their journeys to the afterworld.

Still, the names of two Hyborian scholars are handed down to us. The first of these, Selem the Scholar, was

most likely a Nemedian.<sup>7</sup> Selem the Scholar discovered the fabled Mirror of the Manticore in a tomb excavation on the lower reaches of the river Styx. This mirror was reputed to have belonged to the Atlantean mirror-wizard Tuzun Thune. However, Selem the Scholar never returned this mirror to Nemedian for further study, as he and his daughter were overtaken by the outlaw riders of the desert chieftain Khemal Bey south of Khauran and slain. The mirror itself then vanished from history.

The other scholar of whom we know anything was F'Gahl Ben Akiff, a wizened Turanian captured as a young man by the white Amazons of Z'harr Hr'ann.<sup>8</sup> Sahriana, Queen of this uncharted island city-state in the Vilayet Sea, seized him and kept him alive for his esoteric knowledge after his "expeditionary vessel" capsized in a storm.

From what we know of these two scholars, and from more recent scholars of antiquity (such as the Emperor Claudius), we can surmise not only that they tended to be of the nobility, but that they also followed a more activist tradition than present academics. Their leisured wealth made it possible not only for them to find the time to conduct research in archives and to write, but also frequently to leave their ivory towers in search of arcane bits of lore or relics—much like the fictional Indiana Jones.

In addition, we have one recorded instance of a "royal scribe," this being to Akter Khan of Zamboula.<sup>9</sup> This scribe, Uruj, silently recorded the actions and words of his Khan, of Conan, and of the adventuress Isparana at an audience before the Khan in the Zamboulan throne room and at a following banquet. Indeed, Isparana encouraged Uruj to turn her and Conan's adventures into a "national epic," which might well have been incorporated, therefore, into *The Nemedian Chronicles*.

The existence of the scribe Uruj leads one to believe that there may have been a scribe class in ancient Hyboria similar to that of later Egypt. These scribes and scholars, however, seemed to have concentrated on official recordings and histories of their time. It is doubtful that a "literature" as we know it consisting of novels, short stories, and the like existed. This type of literature is associated historically with the rise in Europe of the educated and numerically large middle classes.

Authors then tended to be middle class and wrote for members of their own class.

Ancient societies, however, lacked the economic infrastructure to support such an educated "middle class." Additionally, the lack of literacy on the part of the populace as a whole would have militated against the spread of a "popular" literature. We find in the *Chronicles*, for instance, that Mitralia, a servant girl to Akter Khan's mistress, Chia, could not read.<sup>10</sup> If a personal servant to a member of the high nobility could not read, it would seem unlikely that the mass of people would be able to read, given the absence of any system of schools and education—as even historical times have borne out.

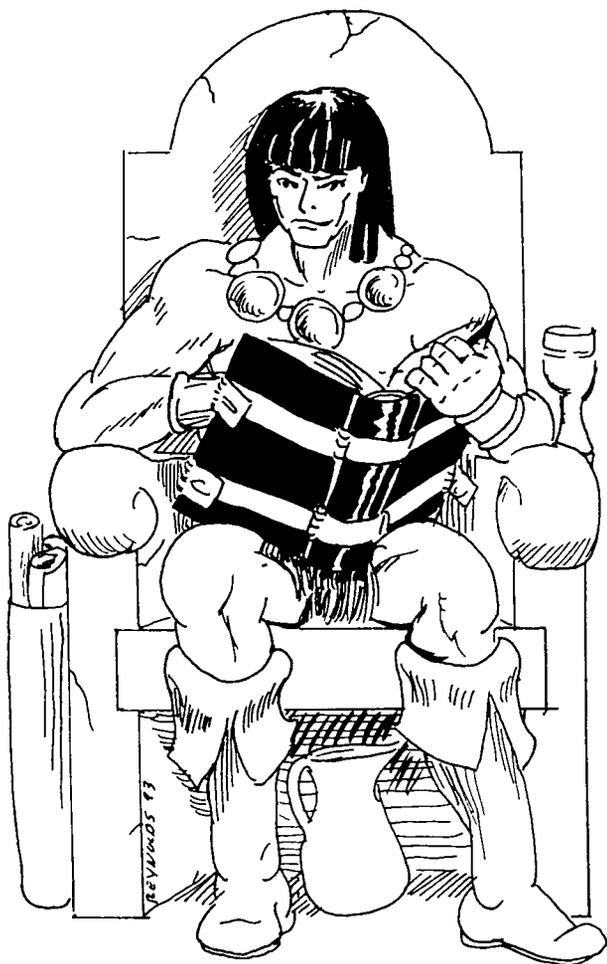
Thus, literacy was probably the prerogative of only the privileged classes: the scribes, the priesthood, and perhaps the nobility (though even the nobility of medieval Europe was often illiterate). This was a situation which would only have contributed to the absence of any mass base for a widespread written literature and to the awe in which this arcane skill was viewed by most people.

### *the oral tradition*

Histories such as *The Nemedian Chronicles* do not spring into existence full-blown, like Athena from the brow of Zeus. They are the product not only of a vast and ancient tradition of learning, but of an even more ancient oral tradition. But of this Hyborian Age oral tradition, which must have existed, we have scant knowledge. Clues to the cultural history of the age are so sparse and so scattered that it is difficult to reconstruct any accurate picture. Thus there is the danger of anachronistically modernizing ancient life and expression, and so distorting it.

We know little of the songs, dances, march-hymns, devotional prayers, dirges, entertaining narratives and epic sagas, or mimetic representations of the Hyborians. In general, there are few myths or fairy tales which have been handed down to us, although the semi-legendary stories of Atlantis, Valusia, and the Pre-Cataclysm are mentioned in passing by the *Chronicles*.

What of painting or mosaics? No examples. Tapestries? There must have been many and of intricate qual-



ity to judge by the animistic banners of the feuding Aquilonian factions referred to during the War of Liberation. But, again, no descriptions of them have survived.

And where is their drama? Certainly there must have been religious or semimagical rituals, accompanied by song, which would have evolved into drama. Indeed, outside of song, drama must have been the most accessible of the "literary" forms for the mass of the populace. But, again, there are no surviving traces. Thus with only scribes, scholars, and priests actually committing words to paper, it would seem that the main form of "literature" available to most people would have been traditional songs and ballads: the eons-old oral literature of the people. Indeed, ballads have traditionally been the earliest form of "literature," coming before any other form. Of course, we today cannot know the rhythm of Hyborian ballads, but, fortunately, the Chronicles have preserved six samples of Hyborian lyrics—the music to which we can only guess. All of them

are associated with the Conan Saga: "The Road of Kings," "Song of the Bossonian Archers," "The Ballad of Belit," "The Song of Red Sonja," and two compositions whose authors are known to us: "The Lament for the King," by Rinaldo of Aquilonia, and "The Dark Valley," by Laza Lanti, both of whom have their own sagas in the Chronicles.<sup>11</sup>

While this is a meager remnant of what must have been a rich oral tradition, nevertheless certain societal attitudes may be gleaned from scraps of poetry and song. "The Song of Red Sonja"<sup>12</sup> is typical in its exultation of a semi-barbaric world view of rape and pillage:

All the world's a gore-rimmed sea,  
Lo, the devil laughs with glee.  
Come and dance then, you with me—  
Come and caper wild and free!  
With red blood those fires are lit;  
Hades' smoke is tinged with it!

Most likely, the songs Conan sang

when in his cups closely resembled this fragment: moody, bloody, violent. Indeed, in the second chapter of the Chronicle tale of King Conan known as "The Phoenix on the Sword," the Aquilonian Count Prospero tells Conan that he never heard Cimmerians sing anything but dirges (although this was perhaps meant as humorous exaggeration).

We know, however, that Conan's ancient Cimmeria had a class of blind bards, a category fairly common among pre-literate peoples, as the repository of the oral tradition. Peoples bereft of the written word tend to compensate with much more powerful memories than we, coming from a literate tradition, are accustomed to, as the Spanish Conquistadores discovered to their amazement among the Aztecs and Incas. The Cimmerian bards might have carried this ability to even further extremes. Like blind Homer recounting tales of heroes and glory or West Africa's *griots*, who retained entire tribal histories in their heads, ancient Cimmeria's blind bards were probably the living libraries of their people. In the case of Cimmeria, the subject matter was perhaps limited almost entirely to mythic tales of battle and war. We have but one example, and it is indeed of this nature: According to the saga, Conan was born on a frozen battlefield where Cimmerians vanquished a raiding party from Vanenheim. Of that battle, Conan once said, "The blind bards have sung the story . . . around every campfire in Cimmeria."<sup>13</sup> One can only assume that this sole example of Cimmerian entertainment was typical.

An interesting consideration never elaborated upon in the Conan Saga is the training given these bards. It is known that they were blind. Was it an aspect of Cimmerian society to orient warriors blinded in battle or boys blinded in youthful accidents toward the bardic calling? If so, it would seem this tradition is a welcome humanitarian exception to the assumption that Cimmerian society held no place for the weak and lame.

Of course, an opposite and somewhat ghoulish interpretation, propounded by some younger scholars in the field, is that the bards were chosen in youth by some unknown logic and deliberately blinded and trained in their imposed profession—much as young boys were once castrated, par-

ticularly in the 17th and 18th centuries, to preserve their soprano voices for opera and church choirs. While the European tradition at least forces us to consider this grisly possibility, we must admit there is no evidence to support this rather extreme hypothesis.

In his youth, the ballads of Cimmeria's blind bards would have been Conan's sole exposure to a "literary" tradition. While a few other barbaric peoples, such as the Picts and possibly the Vanir, had no written language, Cimmerians seem to have been unique among Hyborian Age barbarians in viewing writing as a mystic skill to be held in dread and revulsion.<sup>14</sup> As a young man, Conan once came upon a wizard-king's sword in a tomb guarded by hieroglyphics. He is said to have exclaimed at the time, "The Elders of our tribe have whispered of this *magic* thing called writing. . . ." <sup>15</sup> His response highlights the superstitious awe in which this skill was held; and the association of writing with the despised handiwork of wizards goes far to explain why Cimmeria never developed a written language, despite bordering upon Aquilonia, the most advanced nation of the time.

Yet this very absence of a written language may have enriched Cimmerian cultural life in other ways. As the linguist Guenon was fond of pointing out, speech is nomadic in nature—but "literature," as we know it, the artistic creation of an *individual*, belongs to the city. Myths, however, the subject matter of the oral tradition from Homer to *Beowulf*, arise from "the folk." Their emergence and elaboration occur early in the oral traditions of a culture; they do not spring from the speculations of the *individual*. "Literature"—by which we now are indicating written expression—is too individual, too deliberate, too permanent for the sustenance of myth.

Thus, Cimmeria was truly a land of myth and legend. It was a land where the Frost Giant's Daughter still danced among men and the Red God stalked the battlefields. Illiterate Cimmeria may have been, in a sense, more "religious" than any urban and literate society. Being closer, more a *part* of mythology himself, Conan may well have viewed his principal god Crom as a supernatural being—yet, nonetheless, a vital, living, breathing, *existing* god who yet walked among men on the icy hills of Cimmeria.

While Cimmerians avoided writing,

such was not the case of other northern societies, including even the primitive Hyperboreans. We know the latter possessed a runic or hieroglyphic writing, as exhibited on the forehead of the mammoth skull demarking the border between Hyperborea and The Border Kingdom. The painted runes on this landmark, well-known in antiquity, warned, "The gate of Hyperborea is the gate of death to those who come hither without leave."<sup>16</sup> Obviously, not only did the savage Hyperboreans thus possess an alphabet, but this was shared with the barbaric Border Kingdom—else the warning was useless.

Additionally, at least some among the Hyperboreans, perhaps tribal "scribes," also understood the writing of other, more advanced societies as well—something never mastered by the Cimmerians. We can see this, for instance, in the "parchment" message "crudely scrawled in Aquilonian" left for King Conan by the Hyperboreans after kidnapping his son, Prince Conn.<sup>17</sup>

One puzzling postscript to the deliberate illiteracy of Cimmerian society was Conan's knowledge of written Thelic, an ancient language dating to Pre-Cataclysm times.<sup>18</sup> Scholars know nothing of Thelic—where it came from, who spoke it, what it looked like. We know only that it was the language of Conan's grandmother and that Conan could read it in adulthood. Was Conan's grandmother a war captive carried off by his grandfather? Did she, instead, come willingly, to Cimmeria?

And when and where—after his illiterate childhood and adolescence—did Conan belatedly learn to read his grandmother's language? Indeed, given the superstitious apprehension with which Cimmerians viewed writing, how did Conan's nameless grandmother even preserve her knowledge and overcome his superstitious resistance to pass it on to her grandson? Provocative as these questions are, they must remain forever a blank page in the history of Hyborian literature.

## Religious and mystic writings

Of course, the central epic of The Nemedian Chronicles is the saga of King Conan. Within this epic there are references to written works dealing with only two other subjects: religion and sorcery (though perhaps some

would see them as one subject in ancient societies). It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that these subjects were of central importance to whoever authored the Chronicles, if not to the society itself.

Of the religious works, no texts remain. Indeed, the Chronicles make mention of only one such work, the holy book of the Azweri known as The Book of the Death God, but of its contents nothing is known. The total obliteration of Hyborian religious works has long been a frustration to researchers and greatly hampers any true understanding of how Hyborians viewed themselves in relation to their cosmos and their gods.

Perhaps the most intriguing elements in the lost literature of the Hyborian Age, however, are the fabulous writings of the wizard-scholars of that time. Noted scientist and science fiction writer Arthur C. Clarke has stated that there is no difference between magic and a highly advanced technology to one who doesn't understand the technology. Seen in this light, ours was a magical society to members of South Pacific cargo cults during and shortly after World War II. Yet ours is also a society which has lost the understanding of a much different technology—the ancient science of sorcery, of which gypsy fortune tellers are only a pathetic reminder.

It is now acknowledged that ancient Hyboria was more advanced than our own age in the realm of sorcery. But, alas, The Nemedian Chronicles can only name the authors of that age's Six Mystic Works; it cannot reveal their long-lost contents. None of the Six Mystic Works have titles *per se*. Perhaps this was forbidden for sorcerous reasons. They are known, rather, by the names of their authors. Foremost of the ancient works was The Book of Skelos, closely followed in magnitude by The Books of Vathelos the Blind. The four remaining texts were The Tomes of Sabatea, The Book of Shuma-Gorath, The Scroll of Amendarath, and The Book of Guchupta of Shamballah.

Virtually nothing is known of these wizards but that two were blind: Vathelos the Blind, from his name, was sightless, while Skelos, the most important sorcerous author, is also known to have been blind.<sup>19</sup> As the Chronicles detail not a single instance of a practicing wizard being blind, one might guess that Skelos and Vathelos

were elder wizards who had retired, perhaps even due to their blindness, to the preservation and transmission of their knowledge.

An abiding mystery to scholars of Hyboria's literature is why only magical works appear to be in what we today know as "book" form. With the exception of sorcerous tomes, all writings of the Hyborian Age seem to have been in the form of scrolls. We know, for instance, that all the important documents of Aquilonia, one of the most progressive and powerful nations of the age, were in scroll format: Treasury accounts, legal petitions, deeds and wills, and so on.<sup>20</sup> Yet, although even blind Skelos is described by Conan as the author of "sorcerous scrolls,"<sup>[21]</sup> clearly the physical act of writing by wizards was done, perhaps for ritualistic reasons, in books, rather than in scrolls.<sup>22</sup>

The Chronicles repeatedly refer to magical works as "iron-bound books." Both the works of Skelos and Vathelos the Blind are described thus. In addition, Shu-Onoru, wizard of Kheshatta, Stygia's City of Magicians, refers to his wizardly texts as "my iron-bound books."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, with the single exception of the possibly fraudulent Book of Guchupta of Shamballah, which is ambiguously described as an "ancient python-bound tome,"<sup>24</sup> all Hyborian sorcerous works are referred to as "iron-bound books."

Originally, scholars believed this intriguing phrase from the Chronicles referred to sorcerous scrolls which were deposited in iron chests for either mystic reasons or for safekeeping. A more recent interpretation, however, which is gaining credence, is that the phrase means exactly what it says: that all truly sorcerous books actually were books, as we know them, rather than scrolls, and had borders and hinge-bindings of iron clasps.

An excerpt from the Conan Saga which had long hindered this interpretation was the tale of "The Children of Rhan."<sup>25</sup> Near Surhon, "a city just east of Vanaheim" (in the Asgardian wilderness?), Conan discovered an ancient Pre-Cataclysmic ship dating back to when Vanaheim was covered by waters. Inside the rotting artifact, Conan found the ship's log—the only such reference to a ship's log in the Chronicles. This log—known as The Rhan Log—was shaped like a book rather than a scroll. This is the only description in the Chronicles of any writ-

ten work outside of a sorcerous text being in book format.

For many years, the existence of The Rhan Log was viewed by one school of scholars as indicative of a widespread use of the book format, contemporary with and possibly supplanting scrolls over time. However, it is now possible to place The Rhan Log firmly within the mystic tradition, for there is reason to believe that Ehestes Rhan, the pirate captain who kept the log—was a sorcerer! Indeed, that very accusation was made against Captain Rhan by his own men as their justification of their mutiny against him after one of them discovered "a few tomes of ancient incantations" in his cabin. Rhan's crew marooned him along with his "books" of "ancient incantations" and the sorcerous-appearing log as well.

The Rhan Log itself reveals that Captain Rhan followed the solitary path of the wizard-scholar. "I have studied the teachings of Set and Mhur!" Rhan claimed. "I pray to the Dark Ones—to the Great Goat Gods and their brethren." The Conan Saga then details how the marooned and

now openly wizardous Captain Rhan created the "Children of Rhan"—beautiful young girls who metamorphosed into ravening monsters, eventually destroying Captain Rhan's crew when they returned.

Accordingly, it was only natural that a pirate captain-turned-apprentice wizard would have sorcerous "books" in his possession—nor is it strange that his personal diary, or "log," should have been of the same nature. Why else would his superstitious crew have abandoned the ship's very log along with their captain had it not been of a "sorcerous" appearance? Thus, it seems there may have been a certain proscription upon the very use of the book format—as we know it—as evil, unholy, or, simply, *unlucky*.

This would not be the only time an ancient people had working models of a "technology" which they never utilized. Scholars have hypothesized about an Industrial Revolution occurring in ancient Greece, which knew of and demonstrated the principle of the steam engine. The ancient Mayans knew of and used the wheel on many vehicles—all children's toys. The



wheel was never adapted by the American Indians for adult use.

But, just as historians will never adequately explain the failure of ancient Mayans to fully utilize the wheel, it is doubtful we will ever explain the exclusion of the book format from the secular writings of the Hyborian Age to our satisfaction. Like the people themselves, it remains a mystery, lost in the mists of time.

## the making of a sorcerer

But how did one *become* a wizard in ancient Hyboria? A possibility might have been by starting as a priest fallen from grace, or as a renegade scholar lusting for "profane," meaning "unholy," knowledge and power, much like our own Dr. Faustus. Indeed, there is reason to believe there may actually have been a close interchange between "profane" and "sacred" scholars. We know, for instance, that the Ibis Priest Karanthes, once of "wizard-haunted Stygia," chose exile among the scholars of Nemediā—where he sought the knowledge of long-dead Skelos.<sup>26</sup>

But, if such was the case, the pursuit of such knowledge must have been primarily an individual, solitary quest—as was that of Dr. Faustus. This would help explain the vital importance the Chronicles say wizards placed upon their books, these being their only guides and mentors. Indicative of the great value they placed upon these texts is the story of the Zul brothers, wizards both.<sup>27</sup> Akter Khan, Satrap of Zamboula, ordered the arrest and execution of Hisarr Zul and his brother Tosya Zul for plotting against his throne. They fled Zamboula in haste, regretfully abandoning a 15-year collection of sorcerous texts. The *only* remnant of their magical tomes which they could rescue—and presumably, therefore, their most precious wizardly accoutrement—was the single page which they possessed from The Book of Skelos.

In addition, the Chronicles mention the self-education of two minor wizards, Zafra of Zamboula and the black warrior Zula—the latter, actually, a novice. We know that Zula, Conan's warrior companion, had certain minor magical abilities. These he acquired, he stated, from stealthily studying, as a sort of unauthorized "sorcerer's apprentice," the works of Skelos,

Vathelos the Blind, and "time-lost Shuma-Gorath" in the library of his wizard master.<sup>28</sup>

Corroboration that the pursuit of sorcerous knowledge was isolated and solitary is found in the career of the wizard Zafra of Zamboula, the only "official" city wizard mentioned in the Chronicles (although there are, of course, several other instances of a mage allying himself with a king or ruler). Zafra, "a mere court magician," gained all he knew from his private perusal of "the unholy Book of Skelos, the evil-reeking Tomes of Sabatea, and the forbidden texts of Vathelos the Blind."<sup>29</sup> One might even go further and say that his was a clandestine study, as well, for he painstakingly concealed the contents of his books even from his confidante and mistress, Chia, the Khan's concubine. Zamboula must have been, at least at this time, a major center of sorcerous scholarship for Zafra, "a mere court magician," to have had access to all the aforementioned texts. Remember, also, this is the same city and time in which the exiled Zul brothers boasted of owning a page from The Book of Skelos, as well as many other mystic writings.

Nevertheless, one can deduce from the references to Zafra's studies that sorcery did not reign unchecked in Zamboula—even though it may have had the Khan's blessings. *Someone* or some *thing* labelled The Book of Skelos "unholy," The Tomes of Sabatea "evil," and succeeded in having the texts of Vathelos the Blind actually *forbidden* (the only such instance in the Chronicles).

## SORCEROUS SUBJECTS

What was the nature of the magics dealt with by these long vanished "unholy" tomes? Again, we can only guess. It is possible that The Book of Guchupta of Shamballah discussed in some fashion the quest for eternal life, for Thulandra Thuu, the nominal "servant" of Aquilonia's King Numedides, sought its secret therein.<sup>30</sup> However, Thuu dismissed Guchupta's work as useless, so eternal life, after all, may not have been its theme, or the book may not have even dealt with the mystic arts after all! Thuu also consulted The Scroll of Amendarath for the correct positioning of the planets, implying that the work was of an astrological nature and, thus, perhaps relatively minor.

However, the major tomes referred to again and again by sorcerer students were the books of the two blind seers Vathelos and Skelos. Of the two, The Book of Skelos seems to have been the major work. The exact nature of its contents is, of course, unknown, but it must have been the premier compilation of spells and general magical principles. Thus, for instance, Zafra of Zamboula states that he cannot ensorcel more than two swords at a time because, "It's a Law of Skelos."<sup>31</sup>

Of The Book of Skelos, the Chronicles say, "The direst whispers you have heard are true—for it contains dark secrets handed down from untold ages, before Atlantis sank . . . secrets to blast men's eyes—or tear their souls asunder!"<sup>32</sup> Of course, the Chronicles then go on to say that Conan disparaged this description as merely a "tradesman's pitch."

Nonetheless, a single page from a copy of The Book of Skelos, such as the Zul brothers possessed, was deemed a "treasure of treasures." In Conan's quest for one of those dread treasures, the Chronicles provide a tantalizing glimpse of the language and nature of The Book of Skelos.

A "page" looked like a scroll, rather than a page as we know it.<sup>33</sup> The language in which the book was written appears to have been a hieroglyphic language. The one image which scholars are certain was used in the text is that which the later Egyptians termed The Eye of Horus.<sup>34</sup> The Eye of Horus is a strange glyph to find in a tome of the Dark Arts, for Horus was the Egyptian god of light who overcame darkness and possessed the life-giving power of the sun. Yet, while we do not understand the presence of this glyph in The Book of Skelos, it might perhaps give us a clue to the ethnicity of Skelos himself.

Linguists generally consider the ancient Egyptian language to have been a remote descendant of Stygian, which in turn evolved out of ancient Acheronian. But, besides the linguistic clue, the nature of archaic Acheron itself argues for an Acheronian origin of Skelos. Grim Acheron was a land of darkness ruled by wizard-kings—a most appropriate cradle for the most sorcerous book of all.

It is in The Book of Skelos that we also learn of The Hand of Nergal, a mystic amulet bringing its bearer two gifts: power beyond all limit—then,

death beyond all despair. The Chronicles describe The Hand of Nergal at some length, the only such detailed example retrieved from The Book of Skelos. The Hand looks like

a clawed hand carved of old ivory, worked all over with weird glyphs in a forgotten tongue. The claws clasp a sphere of shadowy, dim crystal . . . They say it fell from the stars into the sunset isles of the uttermost west, ages upon ages before King Kull rose to bring the Seven Empires beneath his single standard. Centuries and ages beyond thought have rolled across the world since first bearded Pictish fishermen drew it dripping from the deep and stared wonderingly into its shadowy fires! They bartered it to greedy Atlantean merchants, and it passed east across the world. The withered, hoary-bearded mages of elder Thule and dark Grondar probed its mysteries in their towers of purple and silver. The serpent men of shadow-haunted Valusia peered into its glimmering depths. With it, Kom-Yazoth whelmed the Thirty Kings until the Hand turned upon him and slew him.<sup>35</sup>

The Book of Skelos, however, also speaks of a counter-talisman to this Demon Hand—the Heart of Tammuz. Later Tammuz was to evolve into the Babylonian god of vegetation who was reborn each Spring and was the husband or lover of Ishtar, the principal Babylonian deity. This incorporation of Babylonian—and Egyptian—symbols of life and light into the teachings of The Book of Skelos, however, merely serves to reinforce the accepted interpretation that this work was a tome of general principles. Therein, one could find the uses of “good” magics—as well as the misuses of “evil” magics.

Finally, it seems, The Book of Skelos was itself an actual vessel of sorcery, as well as a transmitter of sorcerous knowledge. The Chronicles relate that Conan failed in his quest for the Skelos page, as it spontaneously burst into flames once he possessed it.<sup>36</sup>

This posthumous protection of things Skelossian seems also to have extended to the mage himself. While

Conan's ultimate fate is lost to history, we do know the final resting place of Skelos.<sup>37</sup> The pirate Belit, beloved of Conan, seems to have cached her plunder on a “nameless isle” far to the west of the Shemitish coast, an isle not to be found on any Hyborian map. This isle scholars have come to call Skelos Island, for it was here that demons were set to haunt the Temple of the Toad and protect the Well of Skelos, wherein the long-dead remains of the Acheronian sorcerer were laid. The demon-guarded Grave of Skelos demonstrates, if nothing else could, the power of Skelos himself—most illustrious of ancient wizards! ❀

### notes:

1. Cf. *The Nemedian Connection*, Robert E. Howard, Hyperbolic Press: Cross Plains, TX, 1934.
2. Cf. *The Conan Chronicle*, L. Sprague de Camp, Gnome Press: N.Y., 1954.
3. *Conan the Barbarian*, #67. See also, “Battle of the Barbarians,” *Red Sonja*, #7, Marvel Feature, Marvel Comics.
4. “The Witch of the Mists,” *King Conan*, #1, Marvel Comics. 5. “When Madness Wears the Crown,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #49. During Conan's War of Liberation in Aquilonia, the spy Quesado sent all his messages to Thulandra Thuu on papyrus.
6. Cf. “He Who Waits in the Well of Skelos,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #73, Marvel Comics.
7. “Mirror of the Manticore,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #58, Marvel Comics.
8. “The Temple of the Tiger,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #62.
9. “The Eye of Erlik, Part II,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #57, p. 42.
10. “The Eye of Erlik, Part II,” p. 21.
11. Cf. “The Last Ballad of Laza Lanti,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #45. Laza Lanti was a companion to Conan during his wanderings while Rinaldo participated in a conspiracy against King Conan after Conan's ascension to the Aquilonian throne.
12. *Conan the Barbarian*, #24.
13. “The Corridor of Mullah-Kajar,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #117.
14. Among more recent “barbarian” cultures, however, this is not so uncommon. Among the Vikings, a

“rune” meant both a symbol used in writing and “secret.” Indeed, our very words “grammar” and “gramarye,” meaning “enchantment,” have the same root.

15. “The Shadow of the Tomb,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #31.
16. “The Witch of the Mists,” p. 30.
17. “The Witch of the Mists,” p. 17.
18. Cf. “The Children of Rhan,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #64.
19. Cf. “The Hand of Nergal,” by Robert E. Howard and Lin Carter in *Conan*, Robert E. Howard, L. Sprague de Camp, and Lin Carter, Lancer Books: N.Y., 1967, pp. 179-180.
20. “Conan the Liberator,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #52.
21. Cf. “He Who Waits in the Well of Skelos.”
22. The possible exception is The Scroll of Amendarath, which may have been in book format despite its title or may have been considered more an astrological almanac than a sorcerous tome *per se*. See the discussion below of Thulandra Thuu's consultation of this text.
23. “Of Swordsmen and Sorcerers!” *Conan the Barbarian*, #85.
24. “When Madness Wears the Crown.”
25. *Savage Sword of Conan*, #64.
26. “Beware the Sacred Sons of Set!” *Marvel Feature Presents Red Sonja*, #6.
27. “The Stalker Amid the Sands,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #54.
28. “Of Swordsmen and Sorcerers!”
29. “The Eye of Erlik, Part II,” p. 8.
30. “When Madness Wears the Crown,” p. 9.
31. “The Sword of Skelos,” *Savage Sword of Conan*, #56.
32. “Daggers and Death-Gods!,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #66.
33. Cf. the illustration in “Daggers and Death-Gods!”
34. Cf. “Daggers and Death-Gods!, Part II,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #67.
35. “The Hand of Nergal,” pp. 179-180.
36. “Daggers and Death-Gods!, Part III,” *Conan the Barbarian*, #68.
37. Cf. “He Who Waits in the Well of Skelos.”

# GINCAS

## Corrections

JOHN DALMAS

It was a pleasant surprise to find my letter turned into an article. I found one minor mistake which might cause a moment's confusion, a negative omitted. I'd written, "I tend not to be very self-analytical." This came out, "I tend to be very self-analytical."

PAT MATHEWS

In reviewing NIEKAS 39 I noticed one problem with my "Linkages" which you might want to check: errors that alter my *meaning*.

You printed "Watch Sandy watch." I.e., see Sandy looking at and noticing something. What I wrote was "Watch Sandy's watch." I.e., keep an eye on how his *timepiece*--the thing he wears on his wrist to let him know the hour and minute--changes.

You printed "One of Jack's colleagues, an impoverished old alcoholic . . ." NOT! A person who appeared on Jack's talk show, yes. One of Luke's *constituents*, yes.

## Timelines, Believability, and David Palter

MIKE ASHLEY

David Palter's piece, "Getting It Right," made me think. Nub of the matter is whether a story is still a good story regardless of a flaw, especially if the flaw is significant. I have found Card's "Alvin Maker" stories quite exceptional and haven't really given a thought to the fact that real people exist in this alternate reality. I don't think that that matters, regardless of its probability, because it is the tale and characterization that Card makes of his scenario that really matters. Nevertheless if I were to read a story where astronauts took off their helmets on the moon and were able to breathe, I wouldn't read it beyond that point. **[There IS a story where helicopters are used on the surface of the**

**moon!—ERM]** Although, of course, many early SF stories did do this, and they can be read as period pieces without any problem. Who, after all, cannot continue to enjoy the endless number of stories set on a Venus with a primordial landscape? And are we now to say that *The Martian Chronicles* is unreadable because that Mars cannot exist? I think, provided the story is plausible and accurate, within the period it was written, and any inaccuracies do not detract from the quality of the story or its overall plausibility, then it does not matter too much. I am, though, willing to concede that little errors can irk. Back in the '60s, we had a series on television called "Sergeant Cork," a police series set in the 1890s. I enjoyed the series, as I do anything set in the 1890s. As one of the police officers, there was an old boy who was a kind of clerk, tea-boy, and general factotum, who was often moaning about all the work he had to do. In one episode he said something like, "I don't know. I'm always expected to do everything like some blasted robot." Now since we all know the word "robot" did not come into existence until Karel Capek coined it nearly 30 years later, I found this really grated because it jarred with the period setting and the rest of that episode lost its plausibility. The little things so often do matter.

TERRY JEEVES

Palter's complaint about the Alvin Maker series by Card is a bit pointless. Why shouldn't an author postulate an alternate universe and then put people from this one into it? It's *only* a story, for crying out loud. Admittedly, drastic changes in the alternate world would mean differences from this one--but much would remain the same and it seems a feeble point to argue over. One can find quibbles in almost any yarn, but unless they are glaring enough to detract from the story, what does it matter? It brings to mind the plastic model buffs who complain if a model has a minute difference from its

full-scale prototype which *only a fellow expert* would notice. If 99% like the model and don't even know of the error, then the error is no big deal.

MARK BLACKMAN

I note the "conservation of history" working in Esther Friesner's Holmes pastiche, *Druid's Blood*, in whose world Napoleon, Wellington, Kitchener, and Byron rose to identical prominence as in ours--indeed, the British succession is all but unchanged. (She also makes the same mistake John Ford did in *The Dragon Waiting*--a non-Christian Britain would not have monarchs using Latin- or biblical/Hebrew-derived names.) At other times the conservation of history is a source of amusement, as in Pohl's *The Coming of the Quantum Cats*. In one universe Nancy Reagan is president, Ronnie the First Gentleman. In another Ron is a liberal blacklisted for his activities with the Actors' Union. (Incidentally, Isaac Asimov appears both as Soviet surgeon Itzhak Azimov and as a common noun for a popular science book a la Simenon.) **[I agree with you about Biblical names; but as I recall, Friesner's universe did have the Roman Empire in it, so the legacy of Latin as the universal standard language should be intact.--AJB]**

JOSEPH T. MAJOR

Considering some of the divers comments made in Tape From Toronto Palter says in defense of historical implausibilities in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK and THE PRINCESS BRIDE that the movies really aren't serious. Then he gets steamed up over a scientific impossibility in Piers Anthony's *Pthor*. Really, his thoughtful defense of the need for plausibility in fiction would suffer less if he did not so grandly exclude certain areas of knowledge. I will add that if anything, cyberpunk seems to me to be growing ever more implausible. (One cyberpunk who lived his life the cyberpunk way was killed by the KGB.)

WALTER A. WILLIS

I noted David Palter's reference to the principle of the "conservation of history" as being exemplified by human attempts to eliminate insect pests but merely producing new and invulnerable insects. The same principle was the theme in Dean Koontz' *Lightning*, which was the last thing I had read. That made me feel that humanity is edging its way towards an understanding of the principles of time-travel. This is a thought which has been in my mind already, prompted by the increasing public familiarity of concepts like "real time" through the use of VCRs and the fact that *A Brief History of Time* has been on the best-seller top ten for a record period. Already F.M. Busby has pointed out that the expression, "Tape my dinner; I'll have it later" almost seems to make sense. **[Especially if one has a tapeworm.—AJB]**

BUCK COULSON

Card isn't the only author who assumes that the same person will exist in an alternate universe. The various multiple universe stories, usually explained by the idea of a split caused by specific events having different endings, are full of duplicate personalities. The earliest I recall, offhand, is de Camp's "Wheels of If" in which the protagonist lands in a totally different version of his own body and personality.

## Free Market In Ideas

ARTHUR HLAVATY

I am always wary of arguments that we should ban relatively harmless behavior on the grounds that it will lead to worse behavior, whether it is marijuana leading to heroin or looking at pornography leading to murder and rape. I similarly disagree with Anne Braude's suggestion that attacks on symbols lead to attacks on the people symbolized. Here too I can serve as a counter-example. As an undergrad in the early '60s I was part of a group that indulged in smart-ass Satanism. I gave up that sort of thing around the time Anton La Vey started to do it seriously, or at least seriously enough to make money off those who were serious about it. I don't think I ever even considered killing Christians or burning churches.

Braude gives the example of making the Star of David a symbol of ex-

clusion and then killing those it symbolized. But it was a government that did that. When a government engages in, or just encourages, acts against a particular group's symbol, that's a dangerous sign. When it merely permits private expression of such feeling I'm a lot less worried.

THOMAS M. EGAN

I wish Anne Braude and others weren't so obsessed with political and social controversy in Mathoms. The fierce contentions of Miss Braude, Piers Anthony, etc., only invite fierce reactions from determined readers. I don't believe that the ideal of toleration by American society for all beliefs and all modes of conduct is something to be proud of. Homosexual cults, flag burning, abortions, are all signs of a lack of real beliefs by our people. The movement towards anarchy is slow, perhaps, but social decay is almost impossible to cure once it has advanced to a certain point. I fear we have reached that point!

MARK BLACKMAN

I fully agree with *The New Republic*--I think that the reality of the Bill of Rights is a more important statement of our freedoms than is a symbolic piece of cloth. Oliver North's shredding of the Constitution is far more anti-American than a protester's burning a flag (though some patriots display their ignorance in hailing him as a hero). In truth one might even claim that burning a US flag--thus exercising freedom of dissent--is a far greater tribute to what this country stands for than is waving one. "Flagellants" is an apt term--observe the religious fervor of their flag worship and their obvious belief in The Flag as a holy relic, each copy of which partakes of this holiness. However, the attempts of the "flagellants" to repeal the First Amendment are flagrantly flagitious. The US flag is "desecrated" every time a stamp whereon it's printed is cancelled. At a party around July fourth we noticed that our toothpicks had US flags on them--would discarding them therefore be "desecration"? (We burned them, in honor of the Supreme Court decision.) If you say "desecration" is solely a matter of context, of intent, then you are accepting that it's a free speech issue, and therefore a protected right. Anyway, as *Niekas* columnists note elsewhere, burning is a proper means of disposal for a flag

that has been soiled, such as after it's been wrapped around a slimy politician. Incidentally, here's an ironic footnote to Anne's final sentence: burning a Chinese flag was not a crime in China until months after Tiananmen Square when the government was apparently inspired to make it one by the Republican caucus in the US Senate. Some role model.

(By the way, Anne, you don't fully relate the questions of property and symbols. Synagogues do not belong to Nazis, the Pietà did not belong to that loony; however the crucifix in question did belong to Serrano and people are free, within the constraints of fire laws, to destroy their own US flags. **[True, but in *R.V.A. v. St. Paul*, the Supreme Court held, if I recall correctly, that burning a cross (on private property) is protected speech under the First Amendment. And the flag-burner in the Supreme Court case tore the flag off a bank.—AJB]** Yes, I know it's a symbol, but symbols are not the things they represent--the map is not the territory.)

JOSEPH T. MAJOR

The man who smashed the Pietà obviously lacked the proper legal defense. Clearly, his act was not an act of vandalism, but an act of conceptual art. He aimed at forcing the viewer to confront the formalization of faith into The Church and its loss of relevance and meaning thereby. Surely you would not support the punishment of an artist for being artistic, and requiring us to re-evaluate our basic premises. It is totally unfair!

That is, if you take the current definition of art. When you also take into account the fundamental nature of government, it becomes obvious that you cannot, from the State's point of view, make any legal distinction between the Pietà and "Piss Christ." Putting an American flag on the floor and inviting people to step on it is a valid artistic and political statement, but painting then Chicago Mayor Harold Washington in women's underwear is clearly explicit racism, and in pursuance of this Politically Correct vision the A.C.L.U. was quite correct in defending the flag-trampers and gaining the removal of the Washington painting. (Oh, by the way, those swastika-painters should say they were making an *anti-Zionist* statement. Then they would gain the protection of the laws and the manifest approval of the Politically Correct Agenda. Hating Jews for racial reasons is Politically Incor-

rect; hating Jews for political reasons is Politically Correct.)

As I write, Salman Rushdie has publicly (as best he can) embraced Islam and restrained the further circulation of *The Satanic Verses*. Well, he never was a very good spokesperson for freedom of speech, given his support of Sandinista suppression of *La Prensa* (so he howled all the louder when he was the one getting suppressed). Boardman is quite correct that the book is also a vicious attack on the West. Furthermore it is from someone who stands on the borderline between the Western and Islamic societies and uses ammunition from each to attack the other. Thus, the term "the Satanic verses" is in fact a Western description of polytheistic verses Muhammad supposedly considered inserting into the Koran to attract polytheistic support.

Thus we have the typus of the Liberal Intellectual: "Repress everyone else but not meeee!" And Rushdie even lacks the strength of his own beliefs. He asserted that "The Imam," a character in *The Satanic Verses*, was a trenchant satire of Imam Khomeini. Then the death sentence was issued, and Rushdie affirmed that "The Imam" had nothing to do with Khomeini. **[There is also a Big Lie widely believed in Chicago that the painter of the offensive Harold Washington portrait was Jewish; he was in fact of Swedish descent. It seems to me that you have no freedom-of-speech problem if (a) you permit all speech, including incitement to riot or lynching, or (b) you ban all speech except the official line promulgated by the Church and/or State in power. The problem, which seems to me well-nigh insoluble, arises when you try to define "legitimate" free speech. For a good example of a high-minded liberal trying (unsuccessfully) to muddle through this minefield, see Pamela Hansford Johnson's *On Iniquity*: she was prompted to consider the British permissiveness towards pornography and hate speech by her experience covering the trial of the Moors Murderers, who were heavily influenced by both. Her conclusion basically is the same as mine—no solution.—AJB]**

HARRY ANDRUSCHAK

I disagree with Anne Braude about the flag and the use of the word "desecration." Desecration is a religious word and turns the flag into a wholly

religious object. Well, as an atheist I am strongly in favor of a *strict* separation of church and state, of no official establishment of religion, and for freedom of religion to include freedom from religion. As such, I would strongly oppose any law that uses the term "desecration" as far as the flag, or any other secular symbol, goes. **[There is a long tradition of regarding patriotism as "civil religion" and venerating its symbols as such. In Imperial Rome, emperor-worship was so regarded, and the refusal of Christians and Jews to participate was the reason for their persecution. Patriotism as civil religion, with its symbols such as the flag as objects of veneration, has long been taken for granted in this country; but I don't believe it has any recognized legal status.—AJB]**

TARAS WOLANSKY

The whole notion of special German guilt, or special German tendencies toward mass murder, is a crock. It is revealed as a crock as soon as we remember that Lenin and Stalin perpetrated approximately ten Holocausts worth of murder. Who is it, then, what nationality is it that has a special tendency toward mass murder? Russians? Georgians? Ukrainians? Jews? Latvians? Individuals from all these ethnic backgrounds, and more, were among the killers (and the victims).

Note also that the Soviet mass murder mostly happened in peacetime, when the Soviet Union was not under any particular pressure from the outside, and on Soviet territory. By contrast, the Nazi killings took place during wartime and on occupied territory, a situation in which social oversight of state activity is at an absolute minimum.

Judging from the material quoted by Anne Braude, Neil Postman's book is a contemptible piece of tripe. hilariously, even the evidence he selects himself contradicts his position. He sees significance in the alleged fact that German lunatics rarely imagine themselves to be figures from their own history; unlike English or French lunatics, or Americans, who "specialize in Jesus Christ." **[Postman was being facetious on the last point, of course. The argument is not that any nation has inherently more homicidal tendencies than others, but that certain cultures, and the languages that express them, conduce to the dehumanization of out-groups and legit-**

**imization of mistreatment of them. Steiner is saying about Nazi German essentially what Orwell said of politicized language in general.—AJB]**

BUCK COULSON

I assume that West Germany's interest in the U.S. is connected with the fact that U.S. culture is very largely German. A big part of our problem is that we have an English legal system grafted onto a German culture. No, I don't have any statistics on that. I got it from living with Juanita who, in spite of her first name, is of German and Welsh ancestry, and from my own research if that's not too grand a name for it. Observations might be more accurate. U.S. citizens think a lot like Germans. Hence the evidence that U.S. troops in WWI and WWII liked the Germans they met personally much better than they did the French and about as well as or better than they liked the British.

I agree that we are required to tolerate flag burning. What we are not required to do is to support artists on government money if they desecrate national symbols. The artist still owes fealty of sorts to his patron. Michelangelo wouldn't have gotten far if he had offended his patrons. Encouraging people to bite the hand that feeds them is bad politics and it's certainly not practiced by anyone but liberal governments.

MARK BLACKMAN

Anne Braude jokingly says that as a reviewer she envied the Ayatollah's greater public influence. How do you think I feel? Here I work so hard writing mail-order ads to sell books and all the Ayatollah had, or Margaret Thatcher has to do is ban one—and it was the #1 on the *New York Times* Best Seller List. When I went to England in '87 I brought over a copy of Peter Wright's *Spycatcher*, whose publication in the U.K. was forbidden under the Official Secrets Act. And for John Boardman, who's both into history and wears an "I Read Banned Books" button, I brought back a copy of *Who's Had Who*, a sort of Langdon Chart **[a fannish chart of who copulated with whom—ERM]** of the famous (historical figures, celebrities), whose "roger" connections are called "Lay Lines," which is not available in this country—Britt Eklund threatened to sue any US publisher who brings it out. Obviously, I am gladder than Anne over Falwell losing his libel suit; while as a



writer I am well aware of the difference between wit/satire and juvenile name-calling, once you start puncturing holes in the First Amendment umbrella, it can't keep anyone dry. (Besides, as we learned from Lenny Bruce, shock may be the first step in intellectual inquiry.) Censorship (or suppression) is censorship, whether by government, church/mosque, Eklund, RJR pressuring newspapers to drop anti-tobacco *Doonesbury* sequences, or a preacher getting CBS to yank an episode of *Mighty Mouse*. (As it's by Ralph Bakshi, the guy who made *Fritz the Cat*, *Mighty Mouse* sniffing flowers simply can't be innocent—it must be a subliminal message encouraging kiddies to snort cocaine, insisted Rev. Donald Wildmon. CBS couldn't argue with "logic" like that and capitulated. Wildmon then crowed that this *proved* that his cocaine allegation had been correct! This is yet another reason why we can (and must) never give in to censors even on a seem-

ingly minor point.) If it's not already obvious, I support Rushdie's freedom of speech. Furthermore, it is false to compare *The Satanic Verses* to anti-Semitic tomes; those are outside attacks. It might be more apt to compare it to, oh, *Portnoy's Complaint* whose author, Philip Roth, likewise used motifs from his religion and culture irreverently. As for blasphemy, to a religion based on faith (Catholics believe in mysteries *because* they are impossible), there is no such thing as "honest intellectual inquiry;" one either believes or doesn't. Would those Moslems who want the U.S. to ban the *The Satanic Verses* because it's "blasphemous" to Moslems agree the US should ban the Koran because it's "blasphemous" to Christians and Jews? Perhaps it's 1409-10 on the Muslim calendar; we might not be too surprised to hear of fanatics declaring holy war on the Florentine Republic. (Still a century too late for Dante.)

Regarding censorship, I didn't say I

was taking issue with Anne; I did feel she was perpetuating a misapprehension about what freedom of thought is. (Richard Brandt is correct; the right not to listen is part of freedom of speech/thought. But there is no right to prevent others from hearing.) She does indeed say that it does not mean that all opinions are equally valid. The fault lies in her presented choice of toleration or suppression by government. This seems to be due to the structure of her article rather than representing her own opinion. I see this *Gincas* (#39) that she accepts the third alternative, debate or challenge.

## Sam

DAVID J. WILLOUGHBY

I recently read *After All These Years* and enjoyed it very much, as I have enjoyed all his books.

He mentioned several science fiction works by Jules Verne which have not been recorded in any reference book so far. I hope that he will rectify this oversight in one of his future books. Possibly he could even anthologize one or more of these in a future anthology.

SAM MOSKOWITZ

Full details on the two Jules Verne novelettes are revealed in the forthcoming volume in my *SF in Old San Francisco*, the second in the history of the movement. I will reprint one or both of them if a suitable medium presents itself. I've written about 50-60,000 words of the volume but I've delayed finishing it because I am not certain yet that Don Grant will want to do it. As with the first volume I hope to accompany this with a companion volume selecting some of the best authors of that forgotten period in literary history.

Several weeks ago I had a cataract operation and I am limping along with one partially clouded nearsighted eye. Fortunately I am a touch typist and though I make a few more errors than usual I will still be able to make contact with my correspondents, business and personal.

RUSSELL CHAUVENET

Thank you for the wonderful interview with Sam Moskowitz. Although I am a member of First Fandom I never met him. Now I'll have to try to get some of his many books.

## DICK LYNCH

It made for very interesting reading and is not the sort of thing you would find in very many fanzines. It was of special interest to me because I am a preservationist (I haven't yet earned the right to be called a historian). I plan to keep it on the fan history shelf of my bookcase.

While I have your attention I can let you know how the *A Wealth of Fable* project is progressing. The book is right on track for publication this August for first appearance at the Orlando Worldcon. It will run about 450 pages including the index which I am still working on and it will contain over 325 photographs. The price has not been set yet but it will be about \$25 which seems reasonable.

Research will start this year on a fan history of the 1960's.

## MIKE ASHLEY

Good to see SaM's autobiography--at least, it's probably the closest we'll come to one, unless SaM perseveres at one. Because of the way the questions went it only skims the surface of what has been--bibliographically speaking--a fascinating life of research. I'd love to know more of how SaM went about some of his research and what else he has found in his travels that he may now never get around to using in books and articles. I'd also like to see a full bibliography of SaM's writings. I did suggest to SaM that I might attempt one, though I am far, far from complete on his work, and am unsure that I could do justice to all of his work. But he may well have kept his own listings of published works and could produce his own bibliography to the edification of us all.

## THOMAS M. EGAN

The Moskowitz booklet was a great piece although the question of errors in his SF biographies still remains open, I think.

## PIERS ANTHONY

Sam Moskowitz is my type of man. He was there. He accomplished much and the critics can't stand him. It's hard not to appreciate a man like that.

## BUCK COULSON

Since I am fascinated by the people who began science fiction fandom I enjoyed it. Moskowitz' writing has

flaws. His style tends to be ponderous rather than facile and he's still arguing with people who have been dead for years. But if I want facts this is the place to get them. Moskowitz has access to more of the history of science fiction fandom than anyone else. I was surprised to see that his first published material was in Morris Scott Dollins' fanzine. Dollins eventually became a professional artist and also gave away a lot of material to fanzines including mine. I gave him some help in his business ventures and never knew that he'd been in fandom that long. One does learn things from Moskowitz.

## BEN INDICK

This is, as always, his honest voice speaking. I have known SaM for 40 years and we meet at times at Gerry de la Ree's home. The one quality SaM has which eludes his writing is his warmth and his humor. We often joke about our differences concerning M.P. Shiel's *The Lord of the Sea*. Indeed, E. F. Bleiler mentions us in regard to this in a huge tome of pre-1930s science fiction, *Science Fiction: The Early Years*. I have enjoyed *After All These Years*, and shall write it up in my FAPazine, BEN'S BEAT, after much praise to its editor and collator, fellow-FAPAn Fred Lerner.

## BRIAN EARL BROWN

This special volume devoted to Sam Moskowitz was an informative and delightful read but the format leaves much to be desired. This 11 x 4.25 booklet is awkward to handle and difficult to store being so much thinner than other books and pamphlets of its class. On the whole I cannot see any good reason why you chose this format. I think you would have been better off with either a digest format or even a thin saddle-stitched bedsheet.

I am, relatively speaking, a young fan so much of this is new history to me. I had not realized that SaM was the chairman of the '39 Worldcon. While I have read about that convention many times no one has ever thought to mention who had organized it.

I've read little about his professional writing career in SF prompting the question whether any of his handful of stories are worth reprinting. It is a shame that some of the stories he

worked on never saw it to print, especially the ones written closely to editorial demand because those have to be hard work and he probably wasn't paid for them once their intended market folded.

Reading this interview reminds me that there are several of his anthologies which I do not have that sound absolutely fascinating. I recently read his *Under the Moons of Mars* which prompted me to search out copies of some of the early *Argosy* serials mentioned in his historical section. *Masterpieces of Science Fiction* and its somewhat confusingly named companion volume, *Modern Masterpieces of Science Fiction*, would be well worth having, as would be *Science Fiction by Gaslight*. One can't help but commend SaM's policy of seeking out unreprinted stories to fill anthologies. It's one I wish were followed by more anthologists. These days it's hard to tell which volumes are worth getting as so many of them have so many of the same over-anthologized stories. It may be that there aren't any more good stories from the early days of science fiction left unanthologized. And something has to be said to the fact that a lot of earlier anthologies are not in print nor are readily available, justifying somewhat the policy of reprinting their very best stories, however often previously anthologized, if those earlier reprintings are no longer available. But still it would be nice to see some effort to dig up the gems that remain buried as well as the ones already mined, framed, and mounted on the walls in the hall of fame.

## JOE CHRISTOPHER

The description of Moskowitz' collection of books and magazines made me envious, indeed, but I would never find the time to read the old magazines even if I had them. I have too many commitments in other fields but in theory it would be fun.

I was also impressed by Moskowitz' defense of his accuracy. I have read Blish's *More Issues at Hand* and had unthinkingly assumed that the statement about errors was true. I have the horrible feeling I repeated it somewhere (perhaps in a review) but I don't remember where. I will at least avoid reprinting any such statement and will never make it again. ❀

Review

&

Comment

### The Women Men Don't Hear: Two Views of Male-Female Relations

*You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*, Deborah Tannen. William Morrow, 1990, \$18.95, 330 pp., hc

I occasionally recommend books that I think will enhance your reading of fiction. Here is one that I think will enhance your reading of this fanzine. Sociolinguist Deborah Tannen, author of a number of scholarly works as well as an earlier popular book, *That's Not What I Meant!*, documents the real reason why communication between the sexes, nonverbal as well as verbal, so often goes awry: the two are products of different cultures. This asymmetry of styles is a result of the fact that from earliest childhood, male communication is based on *contest*—contention for dominance—while that of females is based on *community*—on establishing intimacy and balanced mutual relationships. Contributing to the problem are *metamessages* about the relationships of the speakers to the content of the conversation and to one another; for example, expressions of

sympathy might imply condescension, and the giving of information might connote the speaker's sense that he is more competent than the listener. Thus a message is *framed* in such a way that frame often comes across more powerfully than content. Example: men in general are unwilling to ask for directions, even when lost because of no fault of their own, because asking a question puts one in an inferior position with respect to the person asked.

The confusion and conflict are exacerbated by the fact that often the same phrases or modes of framing can be used differently by each sex. When a woman says, "Let's go to a movie tonight," she is initiating an exchange of wishes and options in order to reach a consensus about what to do. A man, however, hears this as an instruction, an assertion of decision-making authority, and responds with resentment. The woman, who had no such assertion in mind, is equally resentful at being unfairly and inaccurately framed. Rancor results. Perhaps even more familiar is the ambiguity of "I'm sorry." Men are annoyed because women keep apologizing all the time, even for things that aren't their fault—but for women, "I'm sorry" is not an assumption of blame but rather an expression of caring and concern. There is a fascinating instance in the book of a young Japanese-American girl trying to write to her grandmother in Japanese to express regret on hearing of her grandfather's death. "She began in the appropriate way, 'I'm so sorry that Grandfather died.' But then she had stopped and looked at what she had written. 'That doesn't sound right,' she said to her mother. 'I didn't kill him.'" (p. 233) Only in trying to translate the phrase did she become conscious of its inherent ambiguity.

Tannen also has a fascinating discussion of interruptions. For ages, men have been complaining that women are always interrupting them; but almost every actual study of conversations has shown that men interrupt women far more often. (Studies also show that women are perceived as talking more than men in a group situation even when in fact they are talking less; but that is another story.) Tannen shows that sometimes an interruption is not an interruption, i.e., when it doesn't actually detain or derail the speaker (as in "More coffee, anyone?") or when the speakers are

used to cooperative overlapping (as when siblings tell a familiar anecdote by turns). She also demonstrates that there are two kinds of speaking styles, high involvement and high considerateness, which vary not only by gender but also by cultural background and geographical origin. High-involvement speakers expect the listener to intersperse questions, and they leave very short pauses between remarks, as a result of which they assume after a short pause that the previous speaker has finished and jump in. High-considerateness speakers expect to listen and to be listened to in silence, leave longer pauses, and don't begin to speak until the previous speaker has clearly signaled he's finished. High-involvement speakers stereotype high-considerateness speakers as slow and stupid, and are perceived in return as pushy and interruptive. Americans are perceived by Scandinavians as interrupting; but Swedes and Norwegians are so perceived by Finns.

A number of problems in our contemporary culture arise from these differences in gender style, especially since the masculine style (like the masculine gender) is perceived as the norm, the feminine as aberrant; so that women are compelled to adopt the masculine style—assertiveness, competitiveness, and informational rather than relationship-building speech (what Tannen calls report-talk vs. rapport-talk)—if they want to advance professionally. When they do so, they are put down for being "unfeminine." Tannen's point is that we should all become aware of the diversity of conversational styles, which would make us less insistent that there should be only one style for everyone to conform to as well as less ready to quarrel over unintended metamessages.

The research for this book is based on lengthy audio- and videotapes of males, females, and mixed groups conversing; the ages of the subjects ranged from three- and four-year-olds to adults. Tannen herself was surprised to find the gender patterns manifesting among such young children, as she had expected that cultural conditioning played a larger part. Having recently been reading books such as John McCrone's *The Ape That Spoke* which suggest that language was more responsible for the evolutionary success of our species than either bipedalism or increased brain

size, I wonder if this difference is so deep as to be genetic. Ursula K. LeGuin's essay "The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction" (in *Dancing at the Edge of the World*) makes a plausible case that even in neolithic times men and women used language differently, and that storytelling came directly out of what the men did (hunting); the female gatherers either would not have had stories as such or would have told them in a different, probably non-linear, manner. One can imagine that the different types of gender speech did in fact develop as evolutionary strategies. Male hunting behavior would probably have had a few set patterns (drive-the-herd-over-the-cliff, surround-the-straggler-and-spear-it, run-the-wounded-beast-until-it-collapses, dig-a-pit-with-stakes . . . that pretty well covers it). Coordinated activity would be vital, and hierarchy would be necessary to achieve that coordination; it would be based on skill at an important task (best spear-thrower, keenest scenter, best tracker, fastest runner, etc.), or rank in the tribal pecking order. Women's work, on the other hand, would be more varied and necessarily more flexible, as tasks might change. Women's language therefore would emphasize community and consensus so that everyone would feel valued, no matter what she was doing (e.g., "Today Oona will sit and weave baskets, because she is heavy with child; Alla will gather grain; Isa, who is having her moon-time, will watch the babies and help Oona; Marra, who is young and quick, will mind the older children. . ."). Later Isa, when she is feeling more fit, will gather, and Oona, when she is a nursing mother, will do sedentary work until her child is weaned. Other tasks, such as harvesting different foods or catching fish or insects, would also be shifted about as need arose. The male hunting group, moreover, would be made up of only the fairly young and very fit, while the women's working group could include everyone able to walk, and even the very old and very young might be part of a fairly stationary activity like fishing. It seems pretty likely to me that informational/assertive speech habits would have advantaged males and "small talk" to draw everyone into a bonded community would have been important for females at this cultural level. And perhaps at an even less evolved level: I wonder if

any similar distinction in communication based on gender has been observed by Jane Goodall among chimpanzees?

This is a fascinating, well-written, and very useful book; and, as I said, it may be applicable to this fanzine itself. Think, for example, of the exchanges of acrimony in our pages between Piers Anthony and Sandra Miesel, and the notorious incident of the DNQ, which appeared in a postcard from Susan Schwartz. Susan felt it necessary to apologize that it appeared in print and felt that she was herself owed an apology because *Niekas* printed it (by mistake) against her intentions; but Piers, whose remarks about Sandra and Susan have been equally unparliamentary, has never felt the need to apologize for any of them. I wonder if he would have felt a need to apologize if the situation had been reversed. I suspect that he would have considered such a remark as simply part of the normal give-and-take of hot debate (as he seemed to in his own reaction to it), whereas Susan (who is not exactly Uriah Heep in drag) was more sensitive to having given more offense than she had originally intended. And there is a certain correspondent who can be perfectly polite in taking issue with male writers, but whenever he disagrees with me quite pointedly does so as rudely as possible. Of course, *NIEKAS* is not really a fair test, because fans of both sexes tend to have more of a sense of community than, say, people who write letters to the editor of the *Wall Street Journal*; and female fans who write for publication even in an amateur magazine are more debate-oriented than the average woman; but for that very reason, the occurrence here of gender-based speech traits is significant. My only quarrel with Tannen's book is that it is, oddly enough, perhaps *too* reasonable and dispassionate, too ready to assume that increased mutual understanding will reduce the level of intergender hostility. She does not allow sufficiently, I feel, for the power component in such relationships. I freely admit that too many feminists tend to reduce all aspects of the male-female relationship to power (I came across one recently who referred to Newton's *Principia* as a rape manual), but Tannen at one point cites the horrors endured by a battered wife as if they could be reduced to merely a failure

to communicate. To give her her due, she gives references to articles in which feminists have levied precisely these charges against her. Nevertheless, despite minor flaws, I wholeheartedly recommend this book.

—ANNE BRAUDE

***Native Tongue*, Suzette Haden Elgin, DAW, 351 pp., \$3.50, pb**

The battle of the sexes goes back a long way in Western literature. The classic Greeks made it the stuff of tragedy and satire. The Romans made it a bit too bawdy. Except for Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, medieval poets generally ignored it for the joys of courtly romance. It existed as an underground current in the revolutionary ideals of 19th Century Europe. Our own age has given us the rise of that bitterness that marks industrial mass culture. In the sexual confusion of values and family breakdown on such a large scale has allowed the rise of a feminist revolution since the 1960s.

Suzette Haden Elgin is a part of that revolution, but she is a part that is alarmed, enraged, frightened. The signs of retreat for "Women's Lib" are everywhere. The chief symbol is the defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982. In taking up the cudgel she uses her literary imagination to extrapolate what could happen in the future. A neo-fundamentalist Protestantism gains total control of the USA. A constitutional amendment gives men total power over women in 1991.

Science fiction is her vehicle, for it is here that she has made her mark by some impressive novels and poetry since 1969. Her special strength lies in the exploration of language. She is a doctor of linguistics and has taught at the University of California specializing in American Indian languages.

She writes this novel as a quasi-allegory, a product allegedly of persecuted women of the 23rd Century where feminism is striving to be reborn. Each chapter is given a documentary feel with excerpts from diaries, newspapers, radio talks, manuals, official government bureaucratic memos, even the US Constitution. It sets you up for the author's many-stranded story of female characters.

Linguists of this near future have a practical importance for their world which is only matched by their fero-

ciously drab life-styles. No normal male could fail to feel sympathy for the lot of the teen and adult women treated legally and socially like hapless children. Physical cruelty is rarely shown in the plot but the condescension exhibited is horrible enough. Bit by bit Elgin depicts the varied aspects of women as objects in this coming world where the USA and varied nations survive. Russia and the cold war are never mentioned. There is a free market of greed and jealousy for capturing the trade of the innumerable alien planets whose folk can't wait to barter with us. Carl Sagan would love their variety but not their implausibility.

As a propagandist Elgin is shrewd with her word use. Language, she believes, is the basis for all human culture. Capture its use and eventually you can manipulate and rewrite every human society. It's part of the secret, almost Gnostic, tradition of woman's subversive longings and history.

The little girls heard the stories at their mothers' knees when their mothers had time to tell them, and the woman of the Barren House otherwise. How women, in the long ago time when women could vote and be doctors and fly spaceships—a fantasy world for those girlchildren, as fabulous and glittering as any tale of castles and dragons—how women, even then, had begun the first slow gropings towards a language of their own.

The tales were told again and again and embroidered lovingly with detail. Prominent in their ornament were the jewels of the Encodings, a word for a perception that had never had a word of its own before.

The four or five women protagonists were part of the Linguist culture—the thirteen Houses of the Lines—who serviced world governments by using their women and children in "Interface." The latter involves intimate encounters with true aliens, thus learning their languages and concepts of being. The philosophical underpinning of *Native Tongue* is how far pressure for a good end can go. The horror of using children, even test-tube babies, is almost unbearable for reader and protagonist alike. Yet so much of the secret culture of these elite women in the Chornyak Barren House is empty and cruel itself. Love

is truly dead in the world, literally dead as far as any interrelationship between man and woman is concerned. Artificial insemination seems to be the wave of the future for the spiritual descendants of brutalized Nazareth and Caroline, and Aquina and others. The details from Chapter X of the women's group simply reaffirm the latest nostrums of our late 20th Century: abortion, contraception, etc. There seems no basis for turning "The Encoding Project" into a moral revolution for justice and decency. It's just a linguistic trick. Something George Orwell would have understood with his "Newspeak."

It's in her many sketches of so many different characters that her mastery with the word shows. Take the most obnoxious of the men:

If anything could have tempted Aaron William Adiness Chornyak to such black blasphemy as the concept of a Creatress it was the seemingly irrational creation of females. Surely the Almighty could have had the simple gentlemanly courtesy to make women mute or to see to it that they had some biological equivalent of an on/off switch for the use of the men obliged to deal with them? If he hadn't had the ingenuity to do without them altogether?

You can despise her villains but the author knows how to make us beg for more detail. The women and men are never simply symbols or embodiments of Elgin's beliefs. Her prejudice extends to the Pentagon-Reagan middle-class cultures, traditional religion, etc. Her sarcasm, her satire, even her sympathies for her budding feminists are never allowed to weaken the structure of a good plot or the storytelling power of her prose.

But the end product? When we put the story down can we hope for a better world for her women? Or her children of both sexes? Given her assumptions, no. Language reflects assumptions about basic beliefs of good and evil and the purpose of existence. The ability to conceptualize new experiences is fine but the human soul needs something much deeper than linguistic analysis.

—THOMAS M. EGAN

## Men at War

*The Book of Soldiers*, ed. Robert Adams, Martin H. Greenberg, & Pamela C. Adams. Signet, \$3.95, 348 pp., pb.

*The Future at War, vol I: Thor's Hammer*, ed. Reginald Bretnor. Baen Books, \$3.50, pb.

Adams dedicates his collection to all those who have seen the elephant and paid their dues. He neglected to mention those who can take the theme of war, of whatever era, and give a good read. Too many on the market these days, especially in the by-the-yard paperback trade, revel in the "anything can be cured with a magnum" simplistic school of macho bloodletting. This is not to say these writers don't give good weapon; their characters, like all good craftsmen, have a sure familiarity with their tools, and they don't have them confused with their penises.

Old friends are seen in this collection. This writer was pleased to read the fourth version he has seen of Piper's Lord Kalvan story "Down Styphon." David Drake's "Dragon's Teeth," as well as other stories elsewhere, suggest that he should give Hammer's Slammers a rest and give us some more of the declining Roman Empire's answer to Bond. Larry Niven engages in some Lovecraft in the trenches and Gordon Dickson has another tale of Mother Graeme's gloomy son.

Bretnor's collection starts off with a classic tale of courage, moral or military, Heinlein's "The Long Watch." This tale of the refusal to obey an immoral order, when to obey is so much easier, is as ever-readable as its lesson bears retelling. In general this collection is more cerebral than Adams, not better or worse, just different. In "Marius," Poul Anderson explores the all-too-common error of assuming competency in war is a qualification for leadership in peacetime.

Nahin's "The Man in the Gray Weapons Suite" does an excellent job of climbing into the pseudosymbiotic relationship between a fighter jock and his craft. The technology in this story may be tomorrow's but the attitude is current. In addition to the fiction, several technical articles (political, economic, military) are in-

cluded; these were chosen well if the intention was to parallel the fiction.

Both collections are highly recommended, the differing foci complement each other and make for an enjoyable evening of book switching.

—ROB MOTT

## Reviews by W. Richie Benedict

***The Great Comic Book Artists, volume 2, Ron Goulart. St. Martin's Press, 1989, 113 pp., \$12.95***

"Real" artists have always tended to look down their noses at the illustrators of fantasy and science fiction, even though it takes a lot of talent and imagination to come up with new treatments of old topics. Ron Goulart, who is well known as an author of comic science fiction as well as being a historian of the comic book field, is an apt choice for the author of this book. Each page has a complete profile of the artist in question, while on the facing page is a sample of his/her work. I wondered why famed Disney artist Carl Barks or Marvel genius Stan Lee were not included, until I realized that this is the second volume of the set. It is unlikely I will ever see Volume One, as it never appeared in any of the book stores here in Canada. However, based on a viewing of Volume Two, I will have to see what I can do to rectify this.

Some of the names in this book will be familiar to fans of the genre immediately, but others dating back to the 1930s and 1940s will not be recognized by the comic book reading public of today. It is still mainly a male domain (only one woman is represented here—Mary Wilshire, and she came into comics in the 1980s). Among the "name" artists are such luminaries as Sergio Aragones, R. Trump, Al Jaffe, Will Elder, Bob Davis, Graham Ingels, and Milt Gross. There are 56 different artists represented, some of whom are no longer living. Others are the leading lights of the 1980s, as with Paul Chadwick who does the underground strip "Concrete." The thumbnail biographies include interviews with the person concerned (where possible) and the highlights of their early careers. Actually, I neglected to mention that Tarpe Mills is the only other artist noted in this book. This is understandable as she is no longer active in the comic

book field, and is almost as mysterious as Greta Garbo. She participated in creating Miss Fury, one of the first feminine super stars, even though she had no powers as such.

Paul Murry should be as well known as Carl Barks as he was responsible for drawing many of the Mickey Mouse plots of the late 1950s. I read many of his stories without ever knowing who was behind them (as a 10 year old, I had the now-naive idea that Walt Disney did his own drawings, although even then he was something of a super-corporation).

Pierce G. Rice is still active as an artist and a teacher in Manhattan, but although he drew such characters as the Green Hornet, the Shield, and the Black Cat, he has been largely unrecognized mainly due to the fact that he never signed most of his work. He was paid \$2 a page when he started out in 1939 and regarded the job as a temporary stop-over to something else, which instead became permanent.

Most of the comic book artists featured in this book were fascinated by super-heroes and science fiction themes, so nothing has changed in this area. Howard Sherman is known as the creator of Dr. Fate—sort of an occult detective best known for going up against ancient Mayan gods and all sorts of cosmic horrors.

It is refreshing to see that these men who have entertained millions are getting the reputation they deserve. SF and comic book fans alike will not want to miss this slim volume, particularly if they have any artistic ambitions themselves. A worthy reference source.

***Tales of the Witch World 3, created by Andre Norton. Tor Books, 1990, 467 pp., \$3.95, pb***

A created world can be so popular and strike such deep emotional chords with the reading public that not only does it develop a life of its own (as with Oz), but it becomes quite beyond the capabilities of the author to keep up with the demand for new material. This has happened with Marion Zimmer Bradley's "Darkover." If this anthology of 20 well-known fantasy and science-fiction writers becomes as popular as the first two books in this series were, the Witch World created by Andre Norton will begin to dwarf even Darkover. Most of the writers represented here are female with two exceptions being Michael D. Winkle

and K.L. Roberts. It is entirely appropriate that virtually all of the contributors are women, as Andre Norton was one of the first novelists to open new horizons for the female science-fiction/fantasy writer. The people you will find here include Patricia C. Wrede, Marta Randall, Juanita Coulson, Sharon Green, Elizabeth Waters, Mary M. Schaub, Patricia McKillip, and Ann Miller. Andre Norton herself provides the introduction.

Anyone who is unfamiliar with the Witch World may be tempted to dismiss it as just an extended Harlequin romance with dollops of magic thrown in for variety. This would be unfortunate, and a slight to Norton, who produced a landscape peopled with fascinating characters in which exciting concepts are explored. I know there are a good many male SF/fantasy fans among her readers. One of the things that has always been interesting about Norton is that she knows something about genuine psychic phenomena (notably psychometry) so you feel the magic in her stories has a real basis.

Any anthology presents a very wide variety of materials and differs greatly from contribution to contribution in terms of quality and content. The tales any reader will like best depends mostly on personal tastes and expectations.

"A Voice of Memory" reminds one of the TV "Beauty and the Beast" in that it concerns the relationship of a young girl known as Sibley with a cat-eyed man after she is abducted boarding a sailing ship. "Plumduff Potato-Eye" is a lighthearted entry looking into what attributes constitute a giant. "Heartspell" creates a marvelous atmosphere of magic wherein a girl who wishes to avoid becoming a witch attempts to divest herself of the powers through the aid of a man who has a touch of it himself. Sharon Green, despite her reputation for being the female counterpart of the chauvanistic John Norman of Gor, contributes a philosophical piece on the nature of good and evil.

An interesting part of many Norton stories is the idea of lost skills or knowledge being rediscovered in the present. "Knowledge" by P. M. Griffin features a woman called Aden trying to free her brother Jerre from the spell of an ancient device. "The Circle of Sleep" has not only wizards and shape-shifters but also a power strug-



gle and a gate between worlds. "Fortune's Children" also concerns a passage between worlds. In this instance there is a need to destroy the opening before a strange alien army can once again find free passage to enter and pillage. A stable girl, Lyse, may provide a means to do this through her innate psychic abilities. Sometimes it can be an advantage not to believe in magic, which is the thesis Marta Randall presents in "A Question of Magic."

I particularly liked "Candletrap" by Mary H. Schaub, which takes a unique approach featuring a male protagonist attempting to escape deadly magical traps in a ruined castle. It has everything a short story should have—suspense and pacing. "Wolfhead" shows that werewolves are not necessarily evil, even as "Were-flight" deals with the problems a woman must face in becoming one. Finally, "The Sword-Seller" has to do with the release of the power of an imprisoning curse. Each writer has an afterword explaining her or his motivations for the plot, and how it came to be written.

There is no doubt this book is pure escapism, but there is nothing wrong with that. Too much reality can be bad for anyone. There are a few stories that do not work particularly well

for me, but someone else may find the same thing quite enthralling. In short, you are certain to find something that will stimulate the imagination and set your speculative juices flowing. Fantasy fans in general, and Norton fans in particular, will not want to miss it. Each story is calculated to add something to the history and mythology of the Witch World.

### Reviews by Anne Braude

***A Sudden Wild Magic*, Diana Wynne Jones. William Morrow (AvoNova), 1992, 412 pp., \$22 hc**

This book reminds me of buffalo steak. For the palate accustomed to the author's much-praised juvenile fantasy, her first adult fantasy tastes at first a little "off"—near enough to the familiar to seem a flawed version of it rather than a different kettle of bison altogether. One misses the usual blend of intricate and interesting family relationships found in *The Ogre Downstairs* and *Fire and Hemlock* and the sheer wackiness of, for instance, the Chrestomanci books. The adult aspect seems to mean simply a lot of sexual and political intrigue.

But the book improves as it goes along. It seems that powerful wizards from another universe have been messing with ours: swiping ideas and technology to solve problems of their own and even inducing such problems here in order to exploit our solutions (hence Chernobyl, World War II, and now global warming). A band of kamikaze witches from Britain voyages to the other universe to stop them, and finds the situation—and the entanglements between the worlds—more complex than expected. The book gets funnier (I do like the idea of saving the multiverse by dancing the conga), and the plotting and magic are interesting and well done; but in many ways the YA-labeled *Fire and Hemlock* deals with more mature themes. Not one of her best, but even second-rate Diana Wynne Jones is worth at least one reading.

***User Unfriendly*, Vivian Vande Velde. Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich (A Jane Yolen Book), 1991, 244 pp., \$16.95 hc**

One of the nice things about HBJ's line under the Jane Yolen imprint is that as well as offering good YA novels by familiar names in the adult SF and fantasy field, it intro-

duces the adult reader enticed by the aforesaid into trying previously undiscovered writers of juveniles whose work is quite palatable to adults. I'm glad to have discovered Vande Velde. *User Unfriendly* recounts the adventures of a group of teens on their first attempt to play a computer fantasy role-playing game providing a full virtual-reality experience. Complicating the game is the inclusion of the narrator's mother, who makes up in enthusiasm what she lacks in knowledge of gaming. (Her expertise is on a par with that of your reviewer—which is to say, about as much as the average Chia Pet.) What is worse, they are playing a pirated version of the game; hence the title. This book reminds me of other fantasies in which characters with modern sensibilities find themselves in magic universes, such as Glen Cook's Garrett series, John DeChancie's Castle series, and some of Esther Friesner. The characters display intelligence and humor, and there are some real surprises about the players themselves along the way as they cope with real pain and hunger, authentic period smells, and actually *killing* people. This is very much a character-driven book, though the plot is well done too. Get it for your favorite Dungeons and Dragons-addicted adolescent, but read it yourself first.

***Dragon's Bait*, Vivian Vande Velde. HBJ (A Jane Yolen Book), 1992, 131 pp., \$16.95 hc**

One moment fifteen-year-old Alys is going along as she has all her life in the village of St. Toby's, caring for her ailing father and trying to carry on his tinsmith's business by herself; the next she is falsely accused of witchcraft by a greedy neighbor, tried and condemned by a venal Inquisitor with the tacit assent of her lifelong friends, and staked out as prey for a marauding dragon. This, the climax of most dragon tales, is only the beginning. The dragon proves to be a shapeshifter with the cunning of a fey and ancient beast, the glamour and good looks of a courtier, and the sincerity and reliability of a used-car salesman. Intrigued by his prospective dinner's lack of fear (born of despair), he offers to help her get revenge, which he regards as an art form. This is an engaging tale of justice and vengeance, in which good and evil are not as simple as they seem at first. Most fascinating

is the relationship between Alys and her accomplice and the vivid depiction of what it is like to be alone in the world except for your new best friend, who just might decide to eat you at any moment; you can't be sure because you don't know why he decided not to eat you in the first place. As in all good moral fables, both learn from the experience.

This is an even better book than *User Unfriendly*, and one I can recommend to the adult reader with more confidence. It is very like Tanith Lee's YA novels, though the prose has a Shaker simplicity that sharply distinguishes it from Lee's gorgeously Baroque effects. This is a vintage draught for the palate of the discriminating reader of fantasy.

***The Jedera Adventure*, Lloyd Alexander. Dutton, 1989, \$12.95, 152 pp. hc**

This is the fourth adventure of Philadelphia heiress and bluestocking Vesper Holly, a teenaged American version of Elizabeth Peters' formidable Amelia Peabody Emerson, as chronicled by her long-suffering guardian, Professor Brinton Garrett. Having discovered a slightly (15 years!) overdue library book, a rare volume of Avicenna, among her late father's effects, nothing will do but for Vesper and Brinnie to return it personally to the library of the ancient North African city of Bel-Saaba, encountering on the way slave traders, the French Foreign Legion, a bazaar conjuror, feuding tribesmen, a noble desert warrior cut from the same cloth as Saladin himself, entirely too many camels, and of course her personal Moriarty-like nemesis, the evil Professor Helvitius, with his plans to revive the slave trade on a major scale and to start the international arms race several decades early with his newly invented flying machine. Vesper's quick wits, flair for unorthodox solutions, and gift for making friends with all sorts of people bring about a satisfactory solution, though Helvitius of necessity escapes to scheme another day. Like the author's Westmark trilogy, the Vesper Holly adventures are not fantasy, unless you consider Ruritanian adventure as such, but they are highly entertaining to readers young and old. Recommended, especially for YA readers—and check out the earlier volumes of the series for such delights as exploding sausages and Central Ameri-

can Indians addicted to playing cricket.

***Arabesques 2*, ed. Susan Schwartz. Avon, 1989, \$3.95, 373 pp. pb**

In general the Oriental fantasy is not a favorite of mine, as what it gains by color and exotic incident is offset by what it loses by an amorality of tone that tends to distance the characters so that they become unsympathetic. (How could Scheherazade settle down happily with a mass murderer?) But the best modern practitioners of the genre, most of whom are represented here, refine and develop it to suit modern tastes without loss of exotic flavor. Most of the writers you would expect are here, including Tanith Lee, Esther Friesner, and Gene Wolfe, and a few you might not, like Marvin Kaye and Larry Niven. Susan Schwartz has supplied the framing tale: a caravan is entrapped in a bottle by a band of djinn, whom they must best at telling tales of law, illusion, trust, and love in order to win their freedom. The first *Arabesques* was on the whole better; but I recommend this sequel to anyone who likes color, variety, and fantasy in short story form.

***Catastrophe's Spell*, Mayer Alan Brenner. DAW, 1989, \$3.95, 320 pp. pb**

Another bit of good light reading for summer (a season which can last through Twelfth Night if you happen to live in Arizona)—a fantasy/thriller set in a world where science was developing normally until a bunch of gods moved in and took over, putting the lid on technical research. So magicians like Maximillian the Vaguely Disreputable and his friends are really closet scientists as well. (This is all explained in terms of the economy of energy exchange and quantum levels of power, enough to slip the gimmick past the average reader.) There is a complex plot involving three protagonists: Max, trying to rescue friends trapped in a bespelled castle; his friend Zalzyn Shaa, a physician—if you can imagine Conan as Dr. Kildare—trying to rescue prisoners from the dungeons of Roosing Oolvaya after the latest coup; and an unnamed private eye (surely he can't really be The Creeping Sword!) working on an insurance investigation—which, considering that the insurance adjuster is a god, he'd better get right or else. I enjoyed this; it has plenty of action,

likeable characters, plot twists galore, a lighthearted, humorous style, and some pretty good lines from time to time. ("Whenever you hear about someone dropping dead under questionable circumstances like this, certain things should run through your mind. Natural causes will run through just long enough to escape out the back.")

***Send Bygraves*, Martha Grimes (illustrated by Devis Grebu). Putnam, 1989, \$15.95, 96 pp. hc**

If you are attracted to the mystery genre by its Aristotelian qualities—the subordination of all other elements to plot and the clarity, logic, and order of the final resolution—*Send Bygraves* is not for you: it bears less resemblance to the author's excellent and very popular Richard Jury detective stories than to a collaboration among Agatha Christie, Vikram Seth, and Franz Kafka while smoking something illegal. It is a sequence of verses, ranging from mere police doggerel to an exquisite pantoum, which purports to narrate the criminal doings in one of those superficially cozy English villages so beloved of female mystery writers; but nothing remains straightforward for long. Who is the victim? Who the villain? And who the hell is Bygraves, the Scotland Yard investigator who communicates only in cryptic notes and seems to bear a suspicious resemblance to the sinister lurker in the Burberry overcoat (and who knows what he is up to)? If Mark Twain had not already done it with *Huckleberry Finn*, Grimes might have prefaced her book with the notice: "Persons attempting to find a motive in this narrative will be prosecuted; persons attempting to find a moral in it will be banished; persons attempting to find a plot in it will be shot." If, on the other hand, you enjoy ambiguity, wit, and parody, and can forgive a book for leaving you more bewildered at the end than you were at the beginning if it has fascinated you along the way, then you will enjoy *Send Bygraves*. I know I did. Once one gets away from objecting to the book for not being what it isn't trying to be (i.e., a straightforward detective story), there is only a single flaw: the illustrations are not by Edward Gorey. Not that Devis Grebu is not a talented artist and sensitive to the atmosphere of the book; but he isn't Gorey. And *Send Bygraves* really demands Gorey

illustrations—which perhaps tells you more about it than all the rest of this review.

***Sphynxes Wild*, Esther M. Friesner. Signet, 1989, \$3.95, 271 pp. pb**

Friesner, a comparatively new but prolific author, is a more than competent writer of straight fantasy and a brilliant writer of humorous fantasy. This is the third book in a series which began with *New York by Knight*, a dragon-knight-and-princess tale set in New York City, in which the princess is a J.A.P. and *60 Minutes* shows up to interview the dragon. In *Elf Defense*, which may be in a class by itself—Suburban Faerie—heroine Sandy is now a lawyer trying to negotiate a separation and custody agreement for the King of Elfland's mortal leman. ("Woman wailing for her demon lover may be all very well in New York, but we have zoning laws in Connecticut!" snaps one character.) *Sphynxes Wild* returns to Sanchi, the now-grown Puerto Rican kid who befriended the elfin knight in the first book, and his friends and family. Sanchi, working in an Atlantic City casino, does not know that the glamorous Greek shipping heiress who owns it is actually the Sphynx in disguise, plotting the ultimate riddle to do in mankind, until he is enlisted in her erstwhile captor/lover Vergilius the Mage's attempt to bind her once again. My favorite part of the story is Vergilius and Co.'s ploy to recruit expert help in countering her financial empire by conjuring up Caesar: by mistake they raise seven of them, who are subsequently set loose in Atlantic City. It figures that Julius would hook up with the Mafia, but Nero as an Elvis impersonator? Claudius lecturing on the classics at Princeton? Also along for the trip is Suetonius (author of the scandal-laden *The Twelve Caesars*), who takes one look at *the National Enquirer*, mutters the equivalent of "So much to do, so little time," and goes out and buys a fax machine (on Vergilius' American Express card). Friesner's gift for humor, vivid dialogue, characterization that makes even bit players memorable, her skillful plotting, and her ability to move from farce to horror within the compass of a few pages without sacrificing credibility, all make her one of the finest fantasy writers to emerge during the past decade.

***Howling Mad*, Peter David. Ace, 1989, \$3.50, 201 pp. pb**

The premise of this dark/humorous fantasy is that if a man bitten by a werewolf becomes a wolf when the moon is full, then a wolf bitten by a werewolf becomes a man at full moon. (In fact, I believe this is an error: while someone bitten by a vampire may become a vampire in turn, in all the legends I've heard of, if you're bitten by a werewolf you become merely a late—in every sense of the word—supper.) This transformation theme has been employed by Vercors (in *Sylva*) for a serious philosophical consideration of what constitutes humanness, and by Florence Stevenson (in *Ophelia*) as a vehicle for delightful satirical comedy. David does some of both (although he explores essential wolfiness rather than human nature) but is primarily interested in suspense and adventure, as we see the poor wolf battling the lycanthrope, escaping from a mental hospital after his first transformation, captured again after he reverts, and sold to a New York zoo. Escaping again, he must evade the real werewolf's vampire ally, cope with New York City (it's a jungle out there and he's only a *timber* wolf), and make his way home to Canada to kill the werewolf and be reunited with his mate. He is given shelter by Darlene, a pretty animal-rights activist who sympathizes with his plight as a wolf and has the hots for him as a man (though she is taken aback when he becomes a couch potato, the flip side of the domestication he has avoided as a wolf). Joshua Wolf remains more wolf than man in his thoughts and feelings, which makes the story interestingly offbeat, if more than a trifle grisly from time to time. (I occasionally felt as if I'd strayed into a Stephen King version of *The Wind in the Willows*.) Although plausibility is a bit strained at times—I can accept that being bitten by an English-speaking werewolf would allow Josh to understand that language even in his first transformation (on the analogy of a man-turned-wolf acquiring that beast's sense of smell); I can't see why he should be able to *read* it—*Howling Mad* is a suspenseful thriller, an amusing comic novel, and a thoroughly enjoyable tale with a likeable hero and heroine (or heroines, if you count his mate in Canada), hiss worthy villains, and interesting situations. It is a howling success.

***All Hallows' Eve*, ed. Mary Elizabeth Allen. Walker, 1992, 247 pp., \$19.95 hc**

When I was inducted into fandom back in the mid-sixties, Georgette Heyer fandom was a flourishing subculture. Alas, she is no longer with us (though currently being reprinted yet again); but the world of Regency England retains its appeal to fans, largely because Heyer's version of it is so fully and perfectly crafted a secondary universe. There is even a fantasy alternate-world Regency England with magic, created by Patricia C. Wrede and Caroline Stevermer in *Sorcery and Cecelia*, with a second novel by Wrede, *Mairelon the Magician*, set in the same universe. This anthology, part of the Walker Regency line, seems almost inevitable: a collection of tales of the supernatural set in the Regency period, by a mix of SF/fantasy/horror and romance writers. (The former actually predominate and include such familiar names as Marvin Kaye, S.N. Lewitt, Morgan Llywelyn, Andre Norton, and Caroline Stevermer. The absence of Wrede strikes me as a glaring error.) Listed as a romance writer but actually better known for fantasy and horror is Joan Aiken, whose "Peer Behind the Scene" is one of the best stories in the book and slyly summarizes both the romantic fascination with the period and its realistic obverse. It would be the perfect conclusion to the book—which unfortunately is organized alphabetically.

The themes include out-of-body experiences, time travel, witchcraft, curses, and of course ghosts—ghosts seeking to right wrongs, to avenge wrongs done to them, and to warn the living. The stories are too short, in general, to have much depth, but the most memorable ones are on the whole by the fantasists. The best story by a romance writer is Elizabeth Brodnax's "Oakdean," in which a gravely ill soldier left for dead in the Peninsula returns in spirit to his family home. Marvin Kaye's "A Portrait of Faith" is hardly supernatural at all but a moving vision of the transforming power of love. Andre Norton's "The Nabob's Gift" is frustratingly brief in its account of a cursed betrothal gift. Two writers use contemporary settings with Regency haunts: S.N. Lewitt's "Pipe Dreams" has a drug-hazed rock star encountering Mary Shelley, and Morgan Llywelyn's "The Mistletoe Bough"

is a startling revised version of the legend of the title. I think the best story of the book is Stevermer's "Waiting for Harry," in which a murderous heir waits to hear word of the slaying he's arranged and wonders why the family ghost hasn't turned up to announce his lordship's death—and finds out that ghosts are harder to fool than relatives.

This book is probably not going to inspire a Regency addiction in the uninitiated, i.e., those who can't understand why anyone would want to read *Pride and Prejudice* seventeen times. But I recommend it to my hooked-on-Heyer cohorts.

***Guards! Guards!*, Terry Pratchett. Roc, 1991 [1989], \$4.99, 350 pp., pb**

This is the eighth volume in Terry Pratchett's Discworld series, which just keeps getting better and better, developing from a combination of farce and knockabout action to a richer mixture of plot, character, and a broader palette of humor. The title characters are the members of the City Guard of Ankh-Morpork, an outfit somewhat lacking in esprit de corps since the Patrician has not only made crime legal but organized it, with annual budgets, production quotas, etc. ("unauthorized crime was met with the full force of Injustice, which was generally a stick with nails in it," to quote one of Pratchett's marvelous footnotes, which are as usual worth five bucks all by themselves). Captain Vimes can just barely cope as it is. He is not ready to cope with Carrot.

Carrot is a dwarf with problems. For openers, he's six foot six (he's adopted), a real misfit in dwarf society—and tunnels. So his father the king arranges for him to have a career in the City Guard. Off he goes, equipped only with an ancient sword, an industrial-strength codpiece, and a bound volume of The Laws and Ordinances of the Cities of Ankh and Morpork.

Said cities already have enough problems, what with the depredations of the dragon (not Errol) and the sinister if incompetent magical secret society plotting a coup. Carrot is a useful man (or whatever) in a fight, but his tendency to do things by the book, like arresting the head of the Thieves' Guild for theft, doesn't exactly help, though the guard does acquire an improved attitude (and Errol). The coup proceeds on schedule, leaving the Pa-

trician cozily ensconced in his own dungeon, playing Henry Kissinger to the resident rats; the magicians conjure the dragon, which proves to have imperial ambitions of its own; and the Librarian of Unseen University, whose efficiency has never been impaired by the fact that he was magically transformed into an orangutan several volumes ago, explores the mysteries of L-space, the distortion created by large collections of books ("a good bookshop is just a genteel Black Hole that knows how to read") in search of a stolen volume. (Errol falls in love.) There is the obligatory confrontation with the dragon at the end: Will the co-opted hero slay it? Will Carrot arrest it? Or will Errol save the day?

I've barely given you a sample of the verbal fun here—like the literal translations from the Dwarfish and the passwords and incantations of the Elucidated Brethren—let alone the characters. (I'm becoming quite fond of the Patrician, Lord Vetinari; this is about as sensible as training a cobra to sit on your lap). If you're already a Discworld fan, you don't need a recommendation; if not, get this as well as the other seven. They are more fun than a barrel of magically transformed orangutans.

***The Gnome's Engine*, Teresa Edgerton. Ace, 1991, \$4.50, 265 pp., pb**

This is the sequel to *Goblin Moon*, an alchemical fantasy whose setting resembles Holland in the 17th or 18th centuries, by an author who is in my opinion one of the brightest new fantasy talents to emerge in quite a while. Here she takes the principal surviving characters from the previous volume to the New World, where they seek a treasure of the antediluvian world: Seramarais, the Philosopher's Stone, believed buried on a sunken island which they hope to raise with the help of a magical machine built by a gnome artisan. All this is entangled with the fates of two pairs of star-crossed lovers: Sera the necromancer's granddaughter and the enigmatic Francis Skelbrooke, and her cousin, the aristocratic but frail Elsie, and Sera's childhood friend Jed, the poor wharf rat with a bright future in the Glassmakers Guild, who is rapidly transforming himself into a gentleman. The four are pursued by the vengeful half-fairy Duchess of Zar-Wildungen and her henchman (or rather henchtroll) Baron Skogskra. This sinis-

ter pair is accompanied by the even more sinister undead wizard Thomas Kelly, who has his own plans for the Stone—and for his temporary accomplices. And what about the hobgoblins of Nova Imbria, as the New World is called? Are they merely pests and predators, like Old World goblins, or could they be an intelligent race like men, gnomes, dwarves, and the like? All these skeins are neatly wound and woven into a well-patterned plot, as are the fates of lesser characters old (like Jed's Uncle Caleb and the homunculus Eirena) and new (like Izrael Barebones, the ghost of Mothgreen Academy, who persists in haunting Sera, the only resident of the Academy who does not believe in ghosts). But we are left wondering about the fate of the unfortunate young doctor who is brought by the Duchess to perform cosmetic surgery on the Troll King, since she has neglected to inform him of the regenerative powers of trolls and the King has a habit of eating humans who displease him. I'm afraid that malpractice insurance just isn't going to cut it here.

This is one sequel that really can't be read on its own, so be sure to buy *Goblin Moon* first. In fact, why not go the whole hog and buy her medieval Celtic fantasy series The Green Lion Trilogy as well? Edgerton is a writer whose work is reminiscent at times of many different authors, from Malory to Georgette Heyer, but whose use of such sources results in an original and unique product. Very highly recommended.

***The Last Camel Died at Noon*, Elizabeth Peters. Warner, 1991, \$17.95, 352 pp., hc**

This is the sixth adventure of Peters' indomitable Victorian heroine Amelia Peabody Emerson, a lady archaeologist who wields a mean parasol when necessary. Accompanied as usual by her irascible spouse and her impossible son "Ramses," she pursues her favorite vocations of excavating pyramids, solving mysteries, and arranging the affairs of young lovers. This time the Emersons set off into the far reaches of the Sudan (hence the camels), despite the threat of the Mahdi's army, in search of remains of the ancient Nubian/Egyptian kingdom of Meroë. They also have been asked to trace the explorer Willoughby Forth, who set off on the same quest fourteen years ago, taking along his beautiful

young bride, and hasn't been seen or heard of since—until his grandfather receives a cryptic message. Neither the grandfather, the wicked Viscount Blacktower, nor his young heir apparent is particularly appealing—Professor Emerson hates the aristocracy anyway—but the missing Forth was by way of being a friend of Emerson's, so they reluctantly agree to keep an eye out. What they find is a lost Meroitic city, where they are drawn into palace intrigues and from which they barely escape with their lives.

The novels in this series revel in the devices of popular fiction of the late 19th and early 20th centuries—animated mummies, arcane secret societies, accursed royal tombs, Napoleons of crime—and this book in particular is an unabashed tribute to the writings of H. Rider Haggard, a favorite of both Amelia and her creator. In addition to the well-crafted plot that is only to be expected of the premier writer of the historical adventure/mystery now practicing, and Peters' usual array of interesting characters (there is a new cat), the series is rendered unique by Amelia's first-person narrative style, which captures perfectly that mixture of practicality and complacency which is the hallmark of the English *memsahib* abroad. The subtle humor of irony adds a delicious flavor to the broader comedy of melodrama, the ingenuity of a puzzling mystery or three, and the rich historical background (the author has a Ph.D. in Egyptology from the University of Chicago). This is one of the better volumes in a series that is extremely, and deservedly, popular. (Peters, who also writes as Barbara Michaels, is in real life [more or less] Barbara Mertz, under which name she writes the nonfiction popular books on archaeology that are the only ones she produces that libraries don't have to lock up to prevent theft.) *The Last Camel Died at Noon* is very good value for your money, even at the prices they are charging for hardcovers these days. (It has come out in paperback since I wrote this.)

***Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections on Natural History*, Stephen Jay Gould. W.W. Norton, 1991, \$22.95, 540 pp., hc (also available in paperback)**

Carl Sagan is fond of remarking that science, properly looked at, is a lot more thrilling than science fiction.

This recent collection of paleontologist and polymath Stephen Jay Gould's essays provides plenty of evidence in support of Sagan's thesis. The two are among the half-dozen or so successful and skilled popularizers of science, and distinguished scientists in their own right, whom we have been lucky enough to have as our contemporaries, the others being Asimov, Sacks, Lewis Thomas, and [Your Choice Here]. Most of these essays appeared first as columns in *Natural History* magazine, and they cover the range of the author's interests, sometimes in surprising ways. His central theme is that humanity's persistent efforts to see purpose and pattern in nature is often a result of wishful thinking, and looking at phenomena more correctly may well reveal them to be even more interesting than we thought. As a teleological evolutionist myself, I can't fully agree with his notion that once we get rid of the idea of progress, we'll really be getting somewhere; but even so I find him extremely readable. His varied topics include the events that connect Charles Darwin and Andrew Jackson ("George Canning's Left Buttock and the Origin of Species"—Gould's only venture into fundamentalism); dinomania; why men have nipples; the dumbing down of elementary and high-school textbooks ("The Case of the Creeping Fox Terrier Clone"); Captain Bligh's ant eater dinner; why T.H. Huxley's famous victory over Bishop Wilberforce in the debate over Darwin was really no such thing ("Knight Takes Bishop?"); why William Jennings Bryan's efforts to ban the teaching of evolution were not a retreat from the progressivism that characterized his political career but rather perfectly consistent with it; and the wondrous epic of the Voyager space probes. And of course baseball, his passionate avocation, which he links with evolution in the debunking of "The Creation Myths of Cooperstown" (one being Abner Doubleday, the other being the Cardiff Giant). Even the dry bones of statistics and probability theory come to life when he relates them to DiMaggio's legendary 56-game hitting streak of 1941 ("The Streak of Streaks") and to his own fortunately successful bout with cancer ("The Median Isn't the Message"). This is science writing at its best, and it provides an opportunity to encounter the personality of a man who expresses the best of both scien-

tific and humanistic values: reason, compassion, understanding, humor, clarity, generosity of spirit, breadth of interest, elegance of style, and, above all, intelligence. It's a heck of a price—but then, it's a heck of a book. Recommended.

***The Jamais Vu Papers: or, Misadventures in the Worlds of Science, Myth, and Magic*, Wim Coleman and Pat Perrin. Harmony Books, 1991, 327 pp., \$15.00, oversized tp**

This book resembles a cross between Douglas Adams' Dirk Gently books and Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum*, as created by the sort of quantum mechanic who works out of a chop shop, perhaps after dropping acid with Joseph Campbell. *Jamais vu* is the sensation that you've never been here before, a sense of wonder greatly to be desired, especially by the famous movie star Hilary, who is suffering from terminal *deja vu*—the feeling that "eternity has gone into reruns." When she disappears (accompanied by a small green rug) from the office of psychiatrist Hector Glasco after taking a mysterious experimental drug, his desperate attempts to find her lead him in and out of the universe of lucid dreaming, whose inhabitants enter our world in their sleep. Along the way we encounter the sinister Imogene Savonarola; the ladies of the Elmblyght, Ohio, Book Club and Sewing Circle, who not only are in the book but are reading and discussing the book, dropping little notes to the author as to what should happen in the next chapter, and suddenly finding themselves confronting the same characters they are reading about ("There's a deconstructionist in our kitchen. . .and he's eaten all the brownies," said Ethel); and Professor Joseph Xavier Brillig of James Fenimore Cooper Junior College in Sequester, Missouri, the least imaginative being in the universe, who may or may not be God but in any case has suddenly begun to channel the Cardiff Giant in his Intro to Lit classes. There are also guest appearances by real people (at least they were real before they got into this book), including novelist Tom Robbins, philosopher Daniel C. Dennett, satirist Paul Krassner, physicist Fred Alan Wolf, and Timothy Leary; oddly enough, the newsletter THE JAMAIS VU PAPERS is also real and existed before the novel.

If you are the sort of reader who

believes that a story should begin at the beginning, go on to the end, and then stop, this is not for you. It is episodic, playful, and much of the time downright confusing. Hector does eventually locate Hilary; other than that you can't be sure of much. The action takes place against a background that is a bewildering puree of Jungian myth, speculative physics, and New Age moonshine. But if you believe that with reading, as with bus-ing, getting there is half the fun, and you like your fiction experimental and farcical (and sense of reality optional), you will find *The Jamais Vu Papers* just what you are looking for—and you'll have the strangest feeling that you have never read it before. . . .

***Mairelon the Magician*, Patricia C. Wrede. Tor, 1991, \$17.95, 280 pp. hc**

This book is not a sequel to *Sorcery and Cecelia*, the delightful epistolary fantasy co-authored by Wrede and Caroline Stevermer a couple of years ago, but it is set in the same alternate universe: Regency London with magic. The heroine is Kim, a clever street urchin disguised (in traditional fashion) as a boy, who is hired to burgle the caravan of a mysterious itinerant magician, who catches her in the act but decides to hire her, as he can use a good lockpicker. Accused of stealing magical artifacts from the Royal College of Wizards, Mairelon is trying to track down the missing items and discover the real culprits. Suspects and distractions include a Napoleon of Crime, a wicked baron, a French emigrée who is bewitching in every sense of the word, a Bow Street Runner in disguise, a standard-issue air-headed blonde Incomparable and her suitors, and a dingbat hellfire club playing at Ancient Druids. The plot climaxes in an epic confrontation scene that would not be out of place in *Tom Jones*. Wrede handles plot, character, and dialogue in her usual masterly fashion, proving she is not only one of the finest fantasy authors now practicing but also one who has read Georgette Heyer to some purpose. She stays in period so skillfully that one tends to forget that the period never actually existed. Developments in the end set up an awfully promising situation for a sequel, a consummation devoutly to be wished. Very highly recommended.

***Dealing With Dragons*, Patricia C.**

**Wrede. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990, \$15.95, 212 pp., hc [A Jane Yolen Book]**

This is the first of a new line of juvenile/YA fantasy from Harcourt under the Jane Yolen Book imprint. It is also the prequel to Wrede's delightful *Talking to Dragons* and, as it is subtitled "The Enchanted Forest Chronicles: Book I," presumably the start of a series; there is a gap of at least fifteen years between the events of *Dealing* and those of *Talking*. This book relates the adventures of Princess Cimorene,



who found the ennui of being a princess bad enough but the prospect of marrying a prince truly appalling. So she ran away to become a career girl—a dragon's princess. Fortunately she had the necessary job skills: Latin, cooking, and rudimentary magical ability. Being Kazul's princess is a little like being a sorcerer's apprentice, with increasingly interesting domestic duties interspersed with meeting other, captive princesses (one a victim of the peculiar fate that overtakes a royal offspring when the wicked fairy has a perfectly marvelous time at the christening); dealing with other dragons good, bad, and indifferent (and learning why it is very unwise for a dragon to develop a taste for strong Turkish coffee); and fending off the efforts of would-be rescuers. We also learn of the origin of the enmity between the dragons and the wizards. Cimorene caps her efforts by rescuing an enchanted prince and foiling an attempt to cheat in the choosing of the next King of the Dragons.

Like *Talking to Dragons*, this is a

charming light fantasy with humor, an intelligent and attractive protagonist, and witty variations on the traditions of the genre. If you liked the earlier book, you'll like this one. If you haven't read TTD, try his one first. Both are highly recommended.

*Dealing With Dragons* is now available in paperback from Scholastic Publications. The further books in the series are *Searching For Dragons*, in HC & PB, *Calling on Dragons*, in HC, and a revised edition of *Talking to Dragons*, in HC. This has just a few changes to make it fit the other books in the series.

**Andre Norton with P. M. Griffin, *Witch World: The Turning. Storms of Victory*. Tor, 1991, \$19.95, 432 pp., hc**

Pay attention: this gets complicated. *Witch World: The Turning* is the title of a new series of books dealing with events after the cataclysm in which the Witches of Estcarp exhausted their Power in pulling down the mountains upon their enemies. Each volume is to contain two novels, one by Andre Norton and one by another author. *Storms of Victory* is the first volume. The novels it contains are *Port of Dead Ships* (Norton) and *Seakeep* (P. M. Griffin). Each of them seems to call for at least one sequel. (Are these people trying to sneak a trilogy or two past us in disguise?)

The heroine of Norton's tale is half Sulcar, half Something Else—no one knows, and she is an outcast. She joins an expedition led by Simon Tregarth, Jaelithe, Kemoc, and Orsya to explore by sea to the unknown south, where they find a Bermuda Triangle-like area, a Gate guarded by a deadly Power, and an erupting volcano. At the conclusion of this adventure, she has gained the confidence to set off to seek her own true destiny.

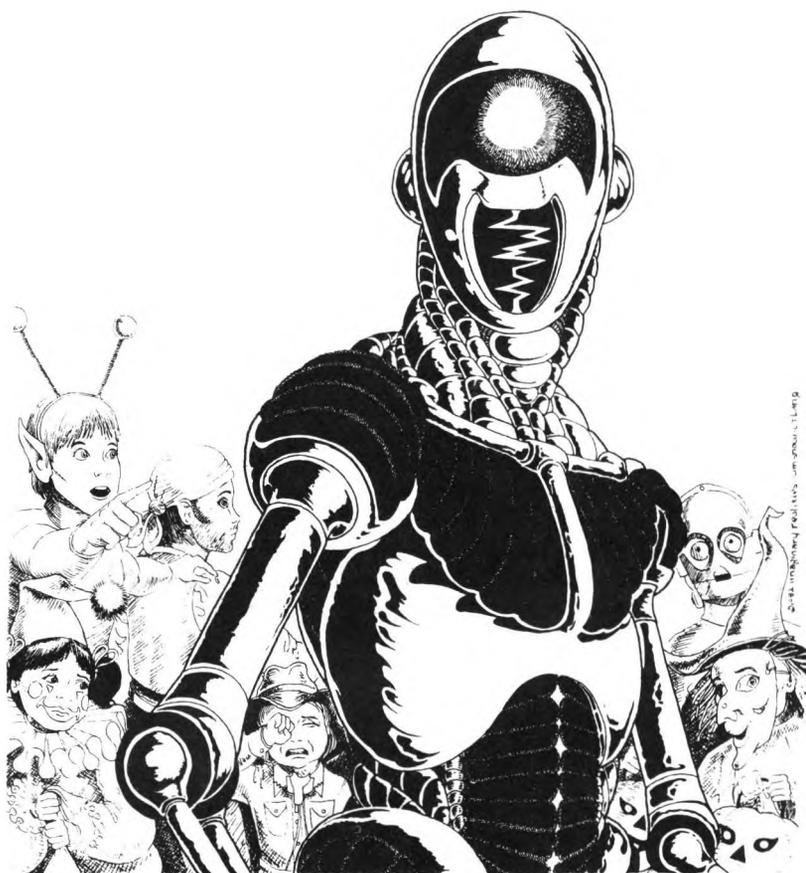
Griffin's *Seakeep* is the story of Una, a young widowed Holderlady of Hallack being courted by a sinister neighbor lord. She counters by hiring a troop of Falconer mercenaries lest he use force. Their distaste for being employed by a female is progressively eroded by her obvious competence, honor, and dedication to her land and people. Their captain Tarlach first comes to love the wild land of Seakeepdale, then to respect, to like, and finally to love its Lady—a love seemingly hopeless even though it is returned. After the safety of the Dale is assured, she offers land to the Falcon-

ers for a new Eyrie, and he returns to Estcarp to put the proposal to his kin. Again, a sequel would tidy some loose ends. The Falconers, because of their small numbers, the offensiveness of their social organization (females as chattels) to other WW cultures, and their losses when the mountains around the Eyrie were toppled, are faced with a choice between extinction and cultural change. (This story takes place either before the destruction of Jonkara by the Sulcar girl Taree ["Falcon Blood," *Lore of the Witch World*] or before news of this event has come north.) The stories are framed by the words of Duratan, an ex-Borderer turned scholar of Lormt, who is keeping a chronicle of the New Witch World Order which will presumably be the unifying element of the series.

One of the things that makes the Witch World such a popular secondary creation is that it is not static. Not only do new situations arise, new characters appear, and new places get explored, but familiar characters may change and grow with time and experience. For example, there are several factors that may influence Falconer society: the loss of their home Eyrie; the destruction of Jonkara, in fear of whose power to use women as instruments of domination they devised their peculiar social structure; and, in Judith Tarr's *Falcon Law* (in *Four for the Witch World*), proof that women are as capable as men of bonding with falcons—and the falcons approve. There is material for a couple of novels in that alone—we need not assume that all the Falconer companies will go in the same direction—let alone the opportunities offered by the new explorations to the south.

Another factor distinguishing the Witch World is the high quality of the stories by other authors set there, certainly comparable to the Friends of Darkover (would these writers be Subtenants of the Witch World? I think of them as "Norton's fosterlings"), though we of course don't know what wound up in Andre Norton's horizontal file. But is there any other group of secondary-universe subtenants (as opposed to shared universes, in which participants are involved in the original creation) that includes so many writers who are already successful and proprietors of fictive universes of their own?

As one expects, Norton's tale is a



good read; what is surprising is that I found Griffin's an even better one—allowing for my personal preference for stories concentrating on character (as *Seakeep* does) over stories concentrating primarily on plot and action (as Norton does in this instance). Fantasy fans won't want to miss this and the promised sequels.

***The Mark of the Cat*, Andre Norton. Ace, 1992, 248 pp., \$17.95 hc**

Norton's latest is set in the world of the Outer Regions created by Karen Kuykendall in her "Cat People" paintings and Tarot. It contains the usual Norton ingredients: a hero disdained and eventually outcast by his people who proves himself and triumphs in the end, and intelligent nonhumans (here feline) with whom he bonds and who aid him. (These are not clichés; they are among the basic ingredients of what Tolkien called the Cauldron of Story and what Joseph Campbell also described as the elemental quest. If you think I just made two allusions to soup, go to your room.) This is well-above-average Norton, with a complex and sympathetic hero and a fascinating new world and the diverse

cultures that scrounge subsistence in their varying ways from its arid realms. Norton's intelligent felines usually tend to display a snotty superiority toward their human cohorts; but here the sandcat Murri is barely out of cubhood, so he and the herdsman Hynkkel are much better matched, learning and rescuing each other by turns.

At the end of the book Hynkkel has won a crown, by brains and character more than by standard heroics, but his troubles are just beginning. There is a setup for a sequel at the end, promising more of Hynkkel's allies, the sorceress/dollmaker Ravinga and her young assistant Allitta, and perhaps an encounter with the sorcerer-ratlord Ylantilyn. Such a book will begin where Norton's usually end and promises to be unusually interesting. This one is definitely recommended to all Norton fans and is a good one for readers who don't know her work (or think they don't like it) to try.

***The Tokaido Road*, by Lucia St. Clair Robson. Ballantine, 1991, \$19.95, 513 pp., hc**

Of all the weird events I remember

from spending most of the sixties in Berkeley, one of the oddest—and most benign—is the fact that a Japanese film running five or six hours, with no subtitles, ran for a couple of years in Berkeley and San Francisco theatres. Admittedly they were small art houses, but from the vantage point of the Age of the Sound Bite, it seems incredible.

The film was *Chushingura*, called in English *The Forty-Seven Ronin*, and is based on an historical event that took place around 1700 during the Tokugawa Shogunate. Lord Asano, an austere and old-fashioned nobleman, having refused to bribe Lord Kira, the *shogun's* master of ceremonies, was provoked by him into drawing his sword in the *shogun's* palace, an offense for which he was forced to commit *seppuku*. His family was stripped of wealth and titles and, most shamefully, his *samurai* did not register an official vendetta. Their leader Oishi plunged into a life of debauchery; and the rest became *ronin*, masterless *samurai*. (According to the warrior code of *bushido*, a *samurai* may swear true allegiance to only one lord in his lifetime, though he may accept other employment if something happens to his master.) Two years later, Oishi and forty-six of Asano's *samurai* stormed Kira's house and slew him. Since this was not a licensed vendetta, it provoked an intense debate over the conflict between the requirements of civil law and the individual's conscience—a theme not entirely irrelevant to the sixties—which was resolved by the entire group committing *seppuku*. This story occupies a place in the Japanese imagination similar to that held by the *Morte D'Arthur* for the English, the story of Orestes among the Athenians, and the Civil War for Americans. *Chushingura* is shown on Japanese television every year on the anniversary of Kira's slaying and the Forty-Seven are regarded as national heroes. I have a feeling that if I could really understand why this is so, I could comprehend the Japanese mind (and perhaps acquire a controlling interest in Mitsubishi). Alas, I can't (and I won't). I will only note that like the three Western stories I mentioned, it involves a conflict between duty and the claims of the heart (or the conscience).

It is to this saga that Lucia St. Clair Robson has attached her story. Her protagonist is Kimune, the daughter of

Lord Asano by his "outside wife." His official wife has seized the occasion of the family disaster to ruin her rival; so in order to support her mother Kimune has become a high-class courtesan in the Yoshiwara pleasure district of Edo (Tokyo) under the name of Cat. As the story opens, Cat is faced with disposing of her current patron, who has just become a corpse thanks to a serving of imperfectly cleaned (and therefore deadly) *fugu* intended by Kira for Cat herself. Rather than remain a sitting target, she decides to travel to the imperial capital of Kyoto to seek the help of her *sensei* and foster-father Oishi. She takes to the Tokaido Road, the main highway between the two capitals, assuming a disguise to evade Lord Kira's assassins.

But they are not alone in pursuing her. Old Jug Face, the brothel-keeper, has hired the tiger-eyed *ronin* Hanshiro to retrieve her. Hanshiro is a world-weary swordsman who ekes out a precarious living in the Yoshiwara by retrieving lost people, goods, and honor rather than accepting more lucrative but less honorable employment—a *samurai* Philip Marlowe, in fact, though I never heard that Marlowe ever took out four armed thugs with no weapon but a fan; later Hanshiro disarms two of three sword-wielding bullies barehanded. (Cat is no slouch, either. She prefers the traditional *samurai* lady's weapon, the *naginata*—no dainty poniard but a six-foot, steel-bladed halberd—but in a pinch can make do with whatever comes to hand, including on one memorable occasion a chopstick.) Hanshiro assumes that his quarry is a spoilt beauty on an ill-considered jaunt but revises his opinion as she keeps dodging him (and as the trail of dead and maimed assassins in her wake mounts up), and even before he actually meets her he has fallen in love with her.

Cat is no damsel in distress needing a hero, however; in fact, at one point she rescues one—the peasant girl Kasane, at first an unwelcome responsibility but before long a loyal and useful aide. The three reach Kyoto after the *ronin* have started on their vengeance quest but get back to Edo in time to be witnesses to it.

This book has everything a good SF or fantasy novel should have—except, of course, science or fantasy. I review it here because it has much in common with C.J. Cherryh's *The Paladin*,

also a novel of Oriental feudal society with only a passing fantasy element. *The Tokaido Road* qualifies on exactly the same basis: there is one supernatural incident, wherein Cat, disguised as an itinerant priest, successfully performs what appears to be a genuine exorcism.

But the appeal of the book is very much to the sense of wonder. It is a terrific on-the-road story and a satisfying romance, but above all a fascinating alien world brought vividly to life, one in which characters actually have codes of honor and live up to them. In a society which combines some of the worst characteristics of feudalism, dictatorship, and bureaucracy, these two guide their lives by the warrior's code of *bushido* and, in Cat's case, by the principles of Zen Buddhism. The society and its values may disorient us (pun intended)—people need official permission to commit suicide (by no means an abnormal act), poets are the equivalent of rock stars, and lovers can experience more intense passion spending the night exchanging poems than in bed—and its strange sumptuary laws may outrage us—peasants are not allowed to eat rice, go to the theatre, or travel for pleasure—but we meet recognizable and admirable human beings. The panorama of society displayed in the typical road story is augmented by the variety of disguises Cat adopts, from mendicant priest to pageboy to *kabuki*-theatre stagehand to peasant lad.

One interesting variant is that Cat does not change or grow in any particular way, as typically happens in this kind of story. She simply hones and displays the skills she already has and remains true to her original values throughout. For example, she has never in her previous existence known any peasants and has regarded them as little more than furniture; but even before she comes to know Kasane as a person and to like and respect her, Cat feels responsible for her and protects her because it is enjoined by *bushido*. She remains determined to participate in the killing of Kira until ordered by her *sensei* not to, as she is Lord Asano's only child and his bloodline will die out unless she survives to bear children of her own. The attack on Kira's castle and its aftermath provide true tragic catharsis, with Cat and Hanshiro bearing witness like the chorus of a Greek tragedy.

This is a wonderfully well-re-

searched and -written historical novel and a splendid read, and I wholeheartedly recommend it. (Note: The hardcover is now remaindered and there is a paperback edition, which may in some bookstores be found in the romance section. Even if you feel you must wear a disguise to pick it up there, it's worth it.)

### Review by Mathew Alan Cheney

*The Magic of Recluce* by L.E. Modesitt, Jr. Tor, 1991, 440 pp., \$21.95, hc.

*The Magic of Recluce* is a major change of pace for L.E. Modesitt, known for his high-tech, fast-action, cardboard charactered science fiction novels. *Recluce* is his first hardcover and his first fantasy. Normally, I dislike fantasy tremendously (including *Lord of the Rings*), but there was something about this book that drew me in and kept me reading page after page.

It is the story of Lerris, a teenager growing up on the island of Recluce, a country where perfection is demanded and anything less is destroyed. Lerris is bored with perfection, bored with stifling order. "Perfection," Lerris's father tells him, "is the price we pay for the good life. Perfection keeps destruction away and provides safe harbor for the good." But Lerris cannot accept this. He is shipped off to his Uncle Sardit's woodworking shop where he is apprenticed. Soon he becomes bored there, too; unable and unwilling to produce the quality of work that his uncle demands. Imperfection and lack of order are not tolerated on Recluce. The only choices left for him are exile or dangergeld.

Dangergeld is a sort of bootcamp for misfits and people who lack direction. Its students are taught the basic philosophy of Order (versus the philosophy of Chaos—a little more complicated than Good vs. Evil, but the same idea) and how to defend themselves against the terrible world beyond, and finally are abandoned in a strange and dangerous country for months, possibly years. Lerris doesn't like the idea of becoming a dangergelder, but it seems more appetizing than total exile.

So he packs his bags and sets off to Nylan, across the island, where the dangergeld is stationed. Lerris isn't particularly angry or bitter toward his par-

ents and uncle for sending him away. Perhaps he realizes that in Recluce this is what must be done, or perhaps he looks forward to the adventure.

At the dangergeld he meets six other students: two men and three women. He is the youngest of the group, most of whom are in their mid-twenties. They all share boredom and dissatisfaction (almost distrust) with order. They are taught lessons in geography, order vs. chaos, and weaponry. Uncle Sardit gave Lerris a staff made of black oak as a going-away present, and soon Lerris learns that it is more than a simple staff: it has the strange power to warn him of danger. He finds that he is unable to attack well, but he is excellent at defense. A fellow dangergelder tells him, "You believe in order. You have to. Use of weapons conflicts with order. For you to make an attack, you have to fight yourself first, then your opponent."

And then, just as everyone seems on the brink of actually *learning* something, they go by ship to the country of Candar—a bleak, ruthless place seeping with chaos and chaos-masters. Lerris has thousands of questions that are left unanswered or are answered with riddles. He is willing to accept the fact that order is good, but he wants to know *why*. He is told that he will have to grow into the answers, come to it on his own, from experience. This is an excellent method of creating suspense, and Modesitt handles it like a great mystery author: slowly revealing fragments and clues that, in the end, come together as a grand revelation, pulling a smile from the reader and a whispered, "Wow."

Lerris wanders through Candar, not sure where he's going, though officials at the dangergeld advised him to head toward a set of mountains at the other side of the country (a map in the front of the book would be helpful). Along the way he meets a gray wizard (a wizard working between the white of chaos and the black of order) named Justin, who teaches him more practical things than dangergeld and accompanies him through much of the journey. Lerris learns that nothing is what he thought it was, not as simple or as innocent, including his parents, Recluce, and the dangergeld. In the end the triumph is not Order over Chaos, or Good over Evil - they still exist and continue opposing each other - but Lerris over himself.

*The Magic of Recluce* is far from

the ordinary sword-and-sorcery novel. There is very little physical fighting, and what there is, including the final showdown between order and chaos, is peripheral and incidental. The novel is a coming-of-age story, masterfully told and almost perfectly paced. The characters of Lerris and Justin are charming and multi-faceted. The writing is solid and transparent, a style which works well for this story.

The most annoying aspect of the whole book, and the fault that sticks out in my mind, is Modesitt's affection for onomatopoeia. He is not content to let a person walk without a *click*, *click*, *click* or a blow land without a *thwack* or someone sneeze with out a "ac . . . *chewww*." I was surprised that kissing didn't *slu . . . mack* and eating didn't *stop stop stop* and sleeping didn't *ZZZZZZ*. In a book that was meant to read aloud this wouldn't be much of a fault, but the eye stumbles over unconventional sounds—sounds that don't *mean* anything. He has to identify each sound as if it were dialogue. Why not just say, "She sneezed loudly"?

But its faults are minor and superficial. They don't get in the way of the story or make it unenjoyable. Modesitt attempts to write a "hard fantasy": a fantasy without dragons or magic cats, a fantasy where the magic of the world is justified and balanced. He attempts to establish a logical economy for the world (quite an undertaking) and a geography that wasn't all nasty mountains, rolling knolls, dark forests and creaky bridges. Each attempt succeeds admirably. This is a novel for people who haven't found high fantasy particularly appealing, but have thought it had potential. Modesitt realizes the potential.

### Review by Thomas M. Egan

*An L. Sprague de Camp Bibliography*, Compiled by Charlotte Laughlin and Daniel J.H. Levack. Annotated by Loay H. Hall. Underwood/Miller (651 Chestnut Street, Columbia, PA 17512), 1983 (1st ed.) 328 pp., Softcover: \$9.95, Library Hardcover, \$25.00. 6x9 1/2" size.

In his late seventies now, L. Sprague de Camp stands as one of the top three or four major success stories in the genre of science fiction/fantasy. An American with a dual attachment to practical science and exotic day-

dreams-in-print of far-off Never-never Lands and their folk, he spun his fiction from the age of the pulps in the late 1930s to his masterly use of the paperback revolution of the 1960s. His readers number in the millions worldwide; he has won a sizable bag of literary awards; he has seen his best works translated into the major European languages and into Japanese. He has made valuable contributions to the art of popularizing scientific works of invention, astronomy, geography, and engineering. His tales amuse and excite—as they subtly moralize, sometimes rather pompously, on human vanity and stupidity. And this volume gives us all, amateur dabbler into SF/fantasy and true-blue zealot, a chance to understand his achievement.

Beautifully printed in two different type sizes for contrast, this is a checklist for librarians, researchers, collectors, fans, and the curious newcomer to the field. All you could ever want to know from his first appearance in print in 1935 (popular science and phonetics) to mid-1982 (The planetary adventures of "Krishna" for *The Prisoner of Zhamanak*, Phantasia Press, Limited Edition—now printed by Ace Paperbacks, \$2.50, 195 pp.). The publishers have used durable acid-free stock for their text paper, all in "sewn signature" form. The covers are subdued half-tones of yellow and brown, reproducing the myriad gorgeous covers of books and pulps wherein he appeared and illustrating his tales. Inside, black-and-white reproductions by the dozens adorn the pages, forming a Who's Who of the art illustrators of his day—Alicia Austin, Ed Emschwiller, George Barr, Virgil Finlay, Tim Kirk, Murray Tinklemann, and Jim Steranko, among others.

The editors, Laughlin and Levack, are both experienced in their craft. They give a simple and very thorough listing of titles of books and articles covered, the history of editions (both U.S. and all known foreign) and all relevant publishing data, ranging into true esoterica. There are several different listings here (including one for Sprague's author-wife, Catherine Crook de Camp); but the bulk of the book alphabetically lists his ninety-five volumes of fiction and non-fiction, his fourteen edited works, his non-book appearances (essays, short stories, verse, interviews, radio speeches for the Voice of America af-

ter 1948, etc.). His translating work is noted, even his work in producing the TSR version of Roman checkers—as a role playing game!

Loay Hall's annotating performance is competent in his synopses, indeed, often quite good at getting to the major strengths and the themes of each published item. He often allows de Camp to speak for himself in brief quotes. His background is that of a fanzine writer and publisher who has corresponded with the de Camps for many years. De Camp's first published novel was *Lest Darkness Fall* in 1939 (which paid for his honeymoon), and it set the pattern for most of his work in fiction right up to his latest, *The Reluctant King* (1983, a trilogy consisting of *The Goblin Tower*, *The Clocks of Iraz*, and *The Unbeheaded King*, from Ballantine Books). A certain recurrent whimsy at the condition of *humanitas* in all ages of history, real and fantastic, mixes with a care for detail in background and an insistence on logic in each plot and character. Every hero turns out to be a bumbler—and thus links himself to the democratic imperfection of mankind. De Camp's treatment of both romance and medieval Catholicism leaves a great deal to be desired but he tempers his rationalism enough to let us enjoy the wonders of life—in old Atlantis or future-age Krishna.

### Review by Patricia Shaw Mathews

*Woodsman*, Thomas A. Easton. Ace Books, 1992, \$4.50, pb.

The difference between fact and fiction is that fiction must make some sense. Nor would I ask a Cambodian refugee to check Easton's latest novel out for plausibility. With that in mind . . .

Easton's universe of "genimals," animals bred to replace machines, made for an interesting series of short stories in *Analogue*. His genimal-world murder mystery, *Sparrowhawk*, was more memorable for his aircraft bred from birds than for the mystery. Now, in *Woodsman*, he has tackled racial prejudice and technological backlash—very poorly.

The hero is the universal decent fellow caught up in great events he does not understand. He tries, though the canine space pilot Renny is a more typically Heinlein hero—and Easton's model is pretty plainly Heinlein. In fact, all his characters could stand to

be a little more fleshed out, but hey, this is space opera. Good Guys vs. Bad Guys. And there, too, Easton has a bit of trouble.

We see a handful of good-guy victims; we see nothing of any powerful forces opposing the bad guys, retro-freaks who call themselves Engineers. The Engineer victory is too sweeping to be plausible, especially since it overturns the technology on which the entire world is based, with the usual dreadful hardships resulting. I say this even though, for all his talk about the Holocaust, Easton's model is directly lifted from the Khmer Rouge's destruction of Cambodia!

But—the forces that raised Hitler to power are quite well understood, from German child-rearing practices (Alice Miller) to economic depression and Allied punitiveness (any textbook) to an ongoing, prior tradition of anti-Semitism in Germany (any honest history book). Does anyone know yet what drove the Khmer Rouge to their excesses—and to victory? Until Easton, or any other author, has that answered, it's best not to use it as a model, except on a very small scale.

Wait till this one hits the used book stands.

### Review by Edmund R. Meskys

*The Best of Trek #15*, ed. by Walter Irwin and G.B. Love. Penguin, 1990, 207 pp., recorded for blind by Volunteers of Vacaville.

Coming across this book was a revelation to me. I had the impression that all media fanzines, be they *Trek*, *Who*, or other-series oriented, consisted mainly of fiction. This anthology of material from a zine called simply *Trek* did not contain one story. I am not a "Trekker" but still I found most of the articles interesting. Some of the scholarship reminds me of that found in the old *Tolkien Journal* in that the authors delve deeply into the imaginary history and try to draw conclusions from hints in the shows, films, and books. For instance, Kenneth Wheeler in "Time in Star Trek" uses hints in the old and new shows and movies to fix a chronology for events like Kirk's birth, the start of the original five-year mission, and the death of Kirk's son in terms of our calendar. The reasoning is very tight but some uncertainty remains, and other authors have come up with conflicting time-

lines. Just as many Tolkien scholars read more into the text than J.R.R.T. had intended, so Wheeler does here. For a non-Trekker the article was a little tedious but I strongly sympathize with what he is trying to do.

I know that every TV show has a "bible" which lays down details which must be consistent from show to show. I did not know whether this extended to novelizations. Back when Ted Johnstone was writing UNCLE novelizations an early volume said that no-one knew what THRUSH stood for, but in the next novel Ted (aka Dave McDaniel) gave one which he had invented. At least in this one case the TV studio didn't oversee things closely enough to avoid the inconsistency. At the NOLACon Trek panel one author mentioned that she wanted to invent some history for Yar but the studio made her cut it out because they wanted to retain the freedom to invent their own details in future shows. After Yar was killed off the author was told to go ahead and invent those details. From reading this book I gather that there have been a number of inconsistencies in the books.

When articles like "Same Sexism, Different Generation" by Tom Woolee criticize Roddenberry, they

do so almost apologetically. I was interested to learn that Roddenberry had been an airline pilot, and that the author sees most of the female ST characters as little more than airline stewardesses. The one exception was Uhuru and that was because she was black and thus ineligible to be Kirk's consort. I was puzzled by several references to Roddenberry as "The Great Bird" until a Trekker friend explained that in Trek fandom he is referred to as "The Great Bird of the Galaxy." The author of this very long and very well researched article ends by urging readers to write the studio asking for more equality for females. Apparently at least one letter-writing campaign has been successful in another direction, for press releases say that future installments will have gay crew members.

Niekas contributor Pat Mathews has a very interesting letter on the evolution of Vulcan breeding cycles. Other letters discuss errors like the use of impulse power and warp drive in the Earth's atmosphere in the fourth movie, and the nature of the photon torpedoes. Sanders does not seem to understand the nature of fannish discussion. Heesh complains that people finding inconsistencies in the stories are a bunch of wet blankets. Exploring

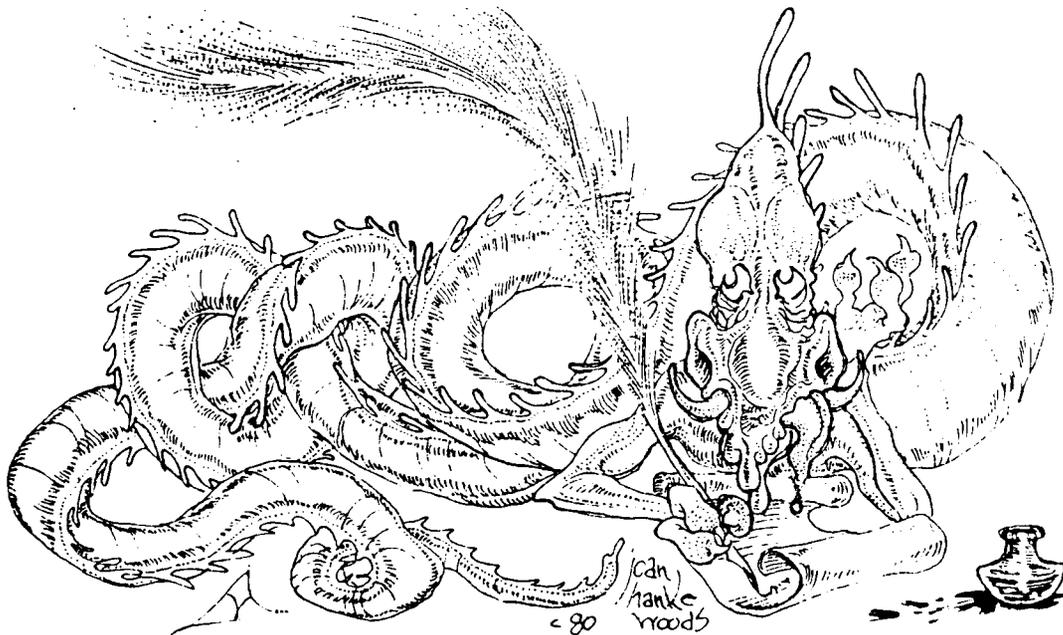
the errors and inconsistencies of our favorite stories has always been one of the most important aspects of the game of fandom.

"The Q of Gothos" has as its thesis that Q in the new Trek is a return of Trelaine, the spoiled super-brat of "Squire of Gothos." This article was written after the second appearance of Q on the show and is quite convincing. I do not like the shows involving Q, just as I do not like the ones involving the holodeck, so cannot say whether this argument still holds up.

I found some of the remaining articles interesting, and others not so, but I have no further comments. You can subscribe to TREK by sending \$13 to TREK at 2405 Dewberry, Pasadena TX 77502.

While I am recommending Trek zines, let me mention *Space Time Continuum* published by Bjo Trimble (\$8 for 6 from 2059 Fir Springs Dr., Kingwood TX 77339). It is a very personal zine dealing with all media though Trek predominates, and space advocacy.

Also some blind Trekkers have started their own club and zine. Send \$5 to Geordi's Engineers, c/o Lorraine Rovig, 5503 Ashbourne Rd., Apt 2, Baltimore MD 21227, and specify print or cassette. \*



# - Laiskai -

**Note: addresses will not be published if so requested or if omitted from letters—ERM**

ROBERT F. BAKER  
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We have enjoyed the many points of view on Arthur your zine gave us. Especially interesting to me were "The Last Temptation of Arthur" by Phyllis Ann Karr and "White Phantom" by Alexei Kondratiev. Good scholarship! John Boardman, however, shows more intellectual hauteur than research in his citations. While I share his fascination with Malory's story, if he has truly researched the Mabinogion, how can he deny the actual historic *fact* of Arthur's life? Anne Braude also makes historically inaccurate statements, for example, before Arthur's coming Britain was a wasteland of brutality. The question remains: are we ready even *now* to regard him and write about Arthur as anything more than allegory, metaphor, a figure of fancy to develop some *theme* that is dear to us? True incidents of Arthur's life would probably prove more startling and adventurous than all the fiction that has been cascading upon us for centuries. Long held names of places near Edinburgh and Stirling called "Arthur's Seat," "Arthur's Knot," and "Arthur's Oven" indicate that folk for many centuries already knew where Arthur's realm had been: not "somewhere down in southern England where the Saxons had already driven out the Brits." Intellectual integrity, it seems to me, would dictate scholars sifting through the available accounts for more probable historically likely events of Arthur's life. Then we could have some worthy account for us to enjoy, we readers who sense "more than myth" in Arthur. Some are at least trying, as are Geoffrey Ashe and Norma Lorre Goodrich. As we were cautioned in

Semantics I: "Be cautious of symbolism that begins on too high a level of abstraction," and I might add, it keeps us from "coming back to earth!" [The "wasteland of brutality" is Tennyson's depiction (for allegorical purposes), not mine; and the various Arthur-related place names are about as historically authentic as all the "George Washington Slept Here" inn signs.—AJB]

F. GWYNPLAINE MacINTYRE  
P O Box 2213, Grand Central Station  
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It was great meeting you and your wife again in Holland and I'm glad that you got a chance to tour some of Europe. It is possible that in the near future you may be able to visit England without having to worry about restrictions on your dog. No doubt you have heard about the progress on the Channel Tunnel between England and France. As soon as the Chunnel starts taking paying passengers the Home Office will review its existing policy about quarantining cats and dogs that enter the U.K. Good luck and I hope that one of these days you and I will get together in London.

Since you liked the SF story, "The Man Who Split In Twain," which I read in Holland, I'm enclosing a copy of it as it appeared in the 60th anniversary issue of *Amazing Stories* in February, 1986. You probably would have had trouble locating a copy of the magazine. I've noticed that in the last few years booksellers are giving less and less retail space to back number magazines. There are plenty of magazines which were published only a few years ago but which I just can't find at all. This seems to be the case on both sides of the Atlantic. [Try Pandora's Books Ltd., Box 54, Neche, ND 58265, USA—AJB]

In this story I claimed that I lived at 23 Tedworth Square in London. This is actually Mark Twain's old London address but I myself have never lived there. The current residents of the

house are a family named Johnstone. In order to avoid the possibility that readers might send letters to Tedworth Square address to me I took the unusual step of printing my real address at the end of the story in *Amazing*. At the time the story was published I lived at Number Six Albemarle Way in London over a cut sandwich shop but I no longer live there. One of the reasons why I moved out of Number Six Albemarle Way is because people kept getting the address wrong and writing me at Number Six Albemarle Street, which is the address of the Marlborough Art Gallery. Some day I could write a fairly hilarious article about my earlier days in London.

I really enjoyed the Arthurian issue of *Niekas*. I read it on the Sealink Ferry from Holland to England. It was well researched and well edited and managed to avoid the type of elf and unicorn illustrations which ruin so many other fantasy zines. I was very impressed.

When we last met in Holland I was in pretty bad shape. Between 1982 and '85 I spent almost three years of my life researching and writing a science fiction horror novel set in Victorian England which I expected some publisher to grab immediately. This did not happen. Between '86 and '90 more than a dozen editors rejected the novel including one extremely influential editor who kept the book for almost fourteen months before finally turning it down. Two days before I left Wales for Holland in August my agent informed me that yet another publisher had rejected the book. When I got to the World Congress Center in Holland I was quite depressed and angry. Well, good news, Ed. Last month the novel was finally accepted by Doubleday. They will be publishing it in trade paperback at some point in the next one to three years. Also this past month I've written and sold a young adult SF novel. I am amazed and delighted and thankful that my career has changed so thoroughly so quickly. I guess the moral is, never give up.

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Some late comments on #39. Indeed, Ed, more was accomplished in the first dozen years of the U.S. space program than in the twenty years since the first moon landing. I recently wrote mail-order ad copy for a book

about the U.S. manned space program from Mercury to Apollo-Soyuz, *All We Did Was Fly to the Moon*. Though the title, a quote, is meant to have an "aw, shucks," tone of modesty, those of us with greater visions of the future are prompted to respond, "Why is that all we've done?" I regard basic knowledge of science as part of cultural literacy (Fred Lerner, "Across the River"). Yet, according to survey, 94% of Americans are scientifically illiterate.

Interesting piece by Mark Sunlin on "The Haunted Woods." "The woods are dark and deep. . . ." In Norway, mounds of stone are pointed to as trolls who did not get to their caves before sunrise. Modern fantasy authors, from Tolkien to Piers Anthony, seem to shift around many of these creatures' attributes. For instance, Tolkien's goblins are evil, not merely mischievous.

In a question to me in "Gincas" Anne Braude brings up Melchizedek the priest-king (Genesis XIV, Psalm 110) as a possible Judaic instance of an undying prophet. This interpretation of him is Christian rather than Jewish, though it appears in the Epistle to the Hebrews (7).

In "Laiskai" Joe Christopher mentions Disney's *Three Caballeros*. It was indeed an offshoot of FDR's "Good Neighbor Policy" toward Latin America, a policy which also led to the renaming of New York City's 6th Ave. "Avenue of the Americas" (a name-change which has never really been accepted by New Yorkers).

To Fawn Fitter: How can you say Spider Robinson is "incomparable," then compare him to Heinlein? And I'm afraid I have to agree with Joseph Major re the later Heinlein and Asimov.

On #40, we thought that Anne and Mike were joking in "Laiskai" in *Niekas* #39 about staging a coup against Ed. Yet in the very next issue of *Niekas* we see Anne listed as editor!

I note also that your Special Issue on Andre Norton does not have a regular "Gincas" and "Laiskai." Their presence in the Special Issue on King Arthur has been remarked on by several reviewers. Anyway, a fine issue, though I must confess never being able to get into Norton's work myself.

*Niekas* #42 arrived, of course, a couple of months after German re-unification. Regarding the article on Ger-

man nationalism from which Anne Braude quotes, I note that a German-born US fan has (in his APAzine) claimed that 2/3 of Germany is under "foreign occupation" and called for the return of the Sudetenland, Silesia, and East Prussia. (He never specified further.) Given this one can only wonder what the German nationalists in Germany want.

John Boardman's review of *The Satanic Verses* was informative. I said Mohammed was just a Seventh Century Sun Myung Moon. Furthermore it is false to compare *The Satanic Verses* to anti-Semitic tomes. Those are outside attacks. It might be more apt to compare it to, oh, *Portnoy's Complaint*, whose author, Philip Roth, likewise used motifs from his religion and culture irreverently. [See also "The Ballad of Joking Jesus" in Joyce's *Ulysses*.—AJB]

I can see Joe Christopher worked very hard on his piece on Boucher's *Usuform Robots*—it is very well researched and written—but I'm tempted to label it "Usuform Lit-crit" due to the way ideas are grafted onto his thesis for functionality and convenience. I am unconvinced that Boucher produced a unified future history. Rather, I feel it's a matter of both self-allusion and simple self-consistency (regarding usuform robots as a sensible idea). (By the way, I don't regard a robot ass as truly usuform, which brings up my biggest quibble—not with Joe Christopher's article but with Larry Dickison's cover. That is clearly a humanoid, not a usuform, robot. Tsk, tsk.)

I was glad *Niekas* reprinted Donald A. Wollheim's guest of honor speech from Nolacon. I missed it then due to the con's sloppy scheduling of program items. But sadly *Niekas* 42 arrived weeks after Wollheim's death so it serves as a final memorial, far from the only or most lasting, to him.

It's ironic that my letter in *Lai-kai* follows L. Sprague de Camp's in which he laments a typographical error in a previous letter of his as I must do the same. The second sentence of my second paragraph should have read: "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is at times horrifying [unaccountably the typesetter altered this to terrifying] but at others wry [even more mystifying this was transformed into why which is a question I might well ask] (The irony of an anti-feminist getting the world she wants, a world which treats her as sec-

ond-class, [a parenthetical clause, not a sentence fragment])." [Either the tapeist mis-read it or I misheard the tape.—ERM]

I found Susan Schwartz's reminiscence of the '60s interesting. Like Pat Mathews I had enjoyed George R.R. Martin's *The Armageddon Rag*. It was a bittersweet nostalgia trip which brought me back to the times and music of the idealism of the lost generation of the late '60s. Perhaps my own nostalgia colored my opinion (though I was young enough to be an observer rather than an active participant) but I thought it very well done. More truth than cliché.

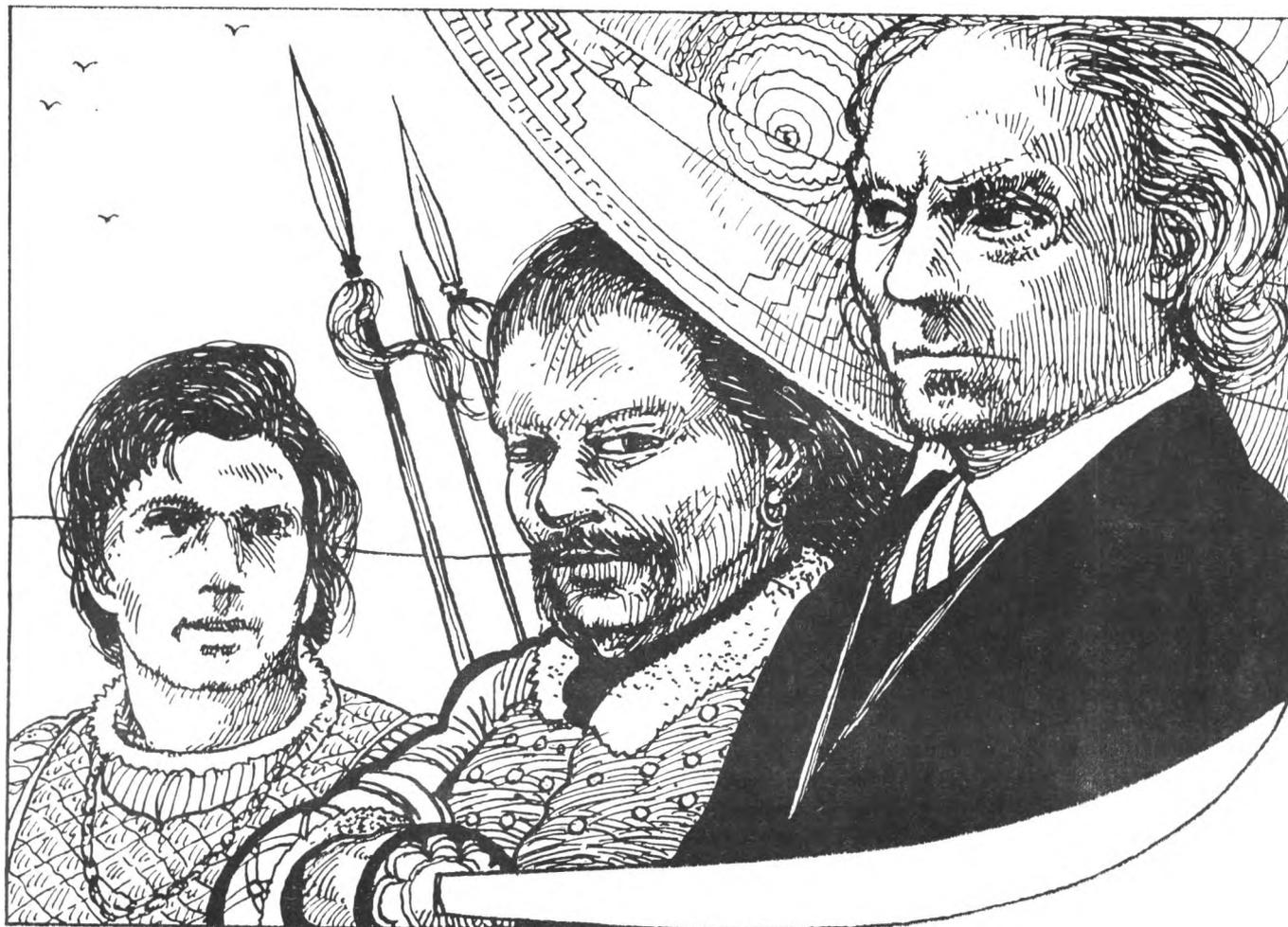
Anne Braude observes that Theda Bara's first name is an anagram of "death." She's not the first. The story that Theda Bara deliberately took that name because it was an anagram of "Arab death" was one of many silly, untrue publicity stories about her. In fact, Theda is short for Theodosia. (Her real name was Theodosia Goodman.)

DAVID PALTER

Considering that this issue contains not only my final column but also two other articles in whose titles my name is mentioned I feel that this comes close to being the "David Palter Special Issue of *Niekas*." So although I am officially retired as letterhack I am at least going out in a blaze of glory. I want to particularly thank Mike Bastrow for his kind parting words. Aside from my purely egotistical reasons for enjoying this issue I find many other things to like about it. Actually, I like everything in this issue. Every column, feature, and illustration is interesting and several are more than interesting.

Fred Lerner's proposal for the preservation of the Amazon rainforest is a purely political ecological discussion having no connection with science fiction. What does that remind you of? But I expect that Robert Knox, the official watchdog for thematic purity, will let him get away with it.

And David Shea's discussion of blood donation has only a very slender connection to SF, that being Robert A. Heinlein's former efforts to enlist SF readers as blood donors. But that, too, will pass. And, in fact, I applaud David Shea's sense of social responsibility as well as his lucid description of the way in which blood donation is now arranged. I have donated blood myself a number of times,



but not for the past decade; so my acquaintance with the procedure was out of date.

There is quite a bit of feminist literary criticism in this issue by Anne Braude and Susan Schwartz and both make their points very effectively. Joe Christopher's analysis of Anthony Boucher's future history is most impressive for both the scholarship and understanding of the subject which it shows. It seems to me that no better article on this subject could possibly be written.

Perhaps I should reply to Joseph Major's comment that it was odd that the *Niekas* editorial staff failed to insert into my article on John Dalmas any observation on the connection between the novel *The Playmasters* and the Macintosh operating system. I have read the novel but have never used a Macintosh, and Mike uses a Macintosh but, I believe, hasn't read the novel, so only Joseph Major could put together both pieces of the puzzle and reveal at last where this weird icon concept actually came from. Thank you, Joe.

Despite my official retirement as a

letterhack *Niekas*, which still has a special place in my affections, may continue to receive some comments from me, such as this very letter. I will try to not make them unduly incendiary.

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Issue #42 is beautifully designed in its graphics. The two covers are a joy to behold. Larry Dickison is an imp of satire for *Niekas*. He captures your attention, making you laugh and wonder at the same time. No pessimism there at all. The backcover by Robert H. Knox and Mac'N'Mike is a strange and terrible allegory of war and its dehumanization. The pessimism here is real but subtle in its figures. The enemy is nameless but the surreal quality makes him omnipresent. We have met the foe and he is ourselves?

John Boardman's essay on Salman Rushdie was finely done. He explains the Islamic cosmology of the author in comprehensible detail, better than most secular American media. I wrote essays on Islam and the Middle East for the

New York City Tribune and Boardman shows a real grasp of what makes Islam tick. Has he or any of your readers ever read the 1787 cosmological novel by William Beckford, *Vathek*, an Islamic version of Hell with Western satire enclosed in the tales of its occupants? [Yes.—AJB] Weird but strangely beautiful in a Dantean sense.

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I can tell you one thing your disk disaster has done. It has created a monster, a hybrid abomination with my name and a former address of David Thayer!

I enjoyed Diana L. Paxson's column. Of course she is not considered qualified to teach creative writing just because she can do it. I've heard from survivors that what most creative writing courses best prepare you for is, rather than what you might guess, teaching creative writing courses.

I note the continuing discussions of genre and category. This may indicate that I need to be deprogrammed after two years in library school for I think

there is much to be said for the Dewey Decimal System's principle of dividing fiction up only according to factual distinctions like author's nationality or century of birth—or even the practice of many libraries in lumping all the fiction together.

I found John Dalmas' remarks interesting. I was not surprised to see that *The General's President* represented Dalmas's falling away from Libertarianism. While the policies presented in the book are spoken of in terms of individual freedom and responsibility, in practice virtually *all* include giving greater power to the state. I greatly prefer the Dalmas books with more of Rod Martin's influence, *The Reality Matrix* and the collaboration *The Playmasters*. I take it from Dalmas' remarks that Martin has published little or nothing on his own, but if he ever does I'd be most interested in reading it.

Finally, I am puzzled by the Macintosh mysticism in Joe Major's LoC, but this may reflect only my own limited experience. While I imagine that the term "icon" was chosen for its traditional meaning in semantics, a symbol which in some sense participates in the reality of that which it symbolizes, the Mac icons strike me as being pictures which crudely represent what could be more precisely expressed in one or a few words. It's enough to make one an iconoclast.

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Many thanks for *Niekas* 42. Far too often I don't get around to acknowledging fmz these days, even the outstanding ones, since after Marjorie died I've discovered I'd inherited another full-time job, looking after me. . . .

But one more-or-less certain way of attracting a writer's attention, of course, is to mention his name. I find mine in Moskowitz' piece (p. 63) courtesy of his review of John J. Pierce's Greenwood books. I wonder whether I might request a photocopy of the relevant passage/s. I would be obliged, because I'm puzzled.

I'm not sure whether I've met John Pierce, but I've this vague notion at the back of my mind that he regards everyone who isn't declaredly to the right of Senator Goldwater as a com-

mitted Stalinist. Being as I am a fellow-traveling anarchist (in the idealistic sense) I'm unable to recognize myself as someone who called the Soviet Union a beacon of hope for the world. I'd like to find out why he thinks such a term applicable to a writer who, as far back as 1972, was prophesying the disintegration of the USSR (cf. *The Stone That Never Came Down*, published 1973 but drafted the year before) on the *a priori* grounds that any system that makes promises and then fails to deliver is automatically doomed.

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Lovely cover, an excellent Usuform Robot in its own right. When can I get one for my kitchen?

I enjoyed Bumbajimas, as having been to the 1980 WorldCon in the Sheraton, I was familiar with the places mentioned. Sorry to hear that the Sheraton wants nothing more to do with fandom but to be honest, the way some groups behaved there at the 1980 WorldCon, it doesn't surprise me. I thought the brainless group who put a sofa into one of the elevators to hold a poker session was utterly antisocial.

Also nice to see the Knights of St. Fantasy mentioned (I was made one at the 1957 WorldCon in the UK). I thought the group had faded away after the deaths of Knight Armorer Richardson and Prime Instigator Eric Jones. However, interested parties might try contacting Chronicler/Treasurer Keith Freeman at 269 Wykeham Rd, Reading, Berks RG6 1PL. He may still have details and interest. I don't see why the SCA should criticize the "non-authenticity" of the St. Fantasy ceremony. It was invented purely for the mythical Knights and was not meant to have any foundation in reality.

Anent Diana Paxson's piece, as an ignorant "Limey," just what is this "tenure" which seems so desirable to academics over there? Is it a job contract, or a right to an unsackable position, or what? As a former teacher, I'm curious. In my 31 years before the blackboard I taught just about every topic on the curriculum—maths, English, history, geography, science, art, P.E., games, R.I. craft work, and once I

even showed the needlework class how to use their sewing machines. The idea of taking only TWO English sessions being a work load is rather amusing. **[The differences between university and other teaching! After seven years you either get tenure—an unsackable position—or are expected to leave.—ERM]**

For me, the highlight of the issue was the Christopher article on Usuform Robotics. Not that I was particularly taken by the stories when they appeared, but I loved the nostalgia of being carried back to that era.

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I am returning your cheque herewith for a couple of reasons. Most important of all I am right out of the ATOM MEMORIAL. I did only a hundred and they were all sold for a fund to help ATom's widow. What happened was that I went up to the Wellington, the meeting place of London fen, about three weeks after he died with some half-formed plans in my head for doing this memorial. Pickersgill and others told me that they were thinking of holding a special small convention for ATom, with auctions and so on, in about seven weeks. I therefore hurtled around putting together this memorial zine to be sold at the con and in the circumstances only had time to do the hundred. I finished with only two days to spare. All that I could carry there were sold, about thirty. On that day itself we raised about £1600, all for ATom's widow. I sold the balance of the zine in two months with no trouble. With this and donations we raised a total of £2700 which was highly satisfactory. I had a few requests for a copy which I haven't been able to fill and I'll probably do a second edition in the near future, just as soon as the winter is over and the old body starts feeling alive again. (There's eight inches of snow outside as I write.)

But the second reason why I'm returning the cheque is that I do have someone in the states who'll handle it, Geri Sullivan of Toad Hall, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315. **[She lives at Toad Hall, I at Mole End. Does anyone live at River Bank?—AJB]** She's one of these highly active and successful femme-

fans that have virtually taken over fandom in the time we've both been around, and a friend to delight one.

A third and lesser reason is that there's a high premium charge by banks over here for changing cheques. I think it's about £2.50 per item. All British fen would prefer dollar bills if you ever want to buy something over here.

So I'll send Geri some second editions when I do them and she'll get in touch with you.

ATom's death had a pretty devastating effect on British fandom and London fandom in particular. He was more than an artist; he used to radiate energy and good will and general cheer. He was the life and soul of a party and I personally haven't tried to hold one in the year since he went.

He appeared in so many zines. I run a fanzine library (no charge, just postage) and it's absolutely amazing how many zines had ATom illos. I spent a day or two just leafing through various sources and at the end found myself having to select stuff for reproduction out of three times and more the quantity I wanted.

Who is it that said that egoboo never stales? Walter Willis? Your kind words about *Duplicating Without Tears* [a manual published by Vinç 30 years on how to create beautiful fanzines with a Gestetner (a mimeograph with a silk screen stretched over two drums instead of an ink pad over a single perforated drum) which was of great use to me when I started publishing fanzines in 1959—ERM] much appreciated. Over here the duplicating process is steadily falling out of use but hasn't gone as far out of fashion as it has in the US where I understand the old Twiltone [a fuzzy mimeograph paper which takes artwork very well—ERM] is in very short supply. [I have recently heard that while office supply outlets no longer carry such items they are available in church supply centers; many churches still use them for their bulletins. NOW don't try to tell me that fandom isn't a religion!—ERM] What worries some of us is that the old British quarto size paper (10 x 8) has been superseded by a larger size (A4, 21 x 30 cm), and it just doesn't seem right. You may be interested to know, by the way, that DWT is still useful. I've sent photocopies in the last six months to two British fen who were just starting out with second-hand duplicators.

Finally, thanks for promising a *Niekas*. As you so rightly surmise I don't go much for sercon fanzines. At my age, 68, you've heard it all before, but I do have about 15 in the library dating from about '64 and I've always given it a certain measure of respect. I think, actually, that a sercon fanzine deserves a well-thought-out, if not weighty, LoC. And really, I always end up feeling that life is too short for that.

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Is it my imagination or is funny fantasy funnier than funny science fiction? Is humorous fantasy easier to write than humorous science fiction?

This question is prompted by my thinking about Terry Pratchett's work—primarily, the Discworld series of side-splitting (at least, in my case) fantasy. He started with funny science fiction (*Strata*, 1981) [just reissued in paperback—AJB] but appeared to make the switch to fantasy in 1983 with *The Colour of Magic* and it has been guffaws and titters ever since. Of course, I'm talking about the books I've read and I understand Pratchett has earlier works than *Strata* but I have not had any access to them yet. When I read *Strata*, I recall some funny lines within the generally straight science fiction story: But, when I read *The Colour of Magic*, I kept rolling off the couch due to laughing so hard. I have read some of the de Camp and Pratt stories and found them wonderful. Another title that comes to mind is Gordon Dickson's *The Dragon and the George* which was another rib-tickler as far as I'm concerned. But, I cannot think of any really funny science fiction novels right now. The "Angel's Luck" series by Joe Clifford Faust has some moments, but, in that case, I think the humor serves more as a contrast to the violence and death taking place throughout most of the story; sort of, "get the reader in a light-hearted mood and then smack him right between the eyes with a bloody glob of flesh" technique. Anyway, just thought I would ask!

[Good question! I can think of plenty more funny fantasy ranging from those published in *Unknown Worlds* magazine, like *The Mislead Charm* by Phillips, *The Indigestible Triton* by Hubbard, and *The Enchanted Weekend* by John MacCor-

mac, to modern series like Anthony's *Xanth* and Asprin's *Myths*, while the only funny SF series I can think of are Dickson & Anderson's *Hoka* series and Padgett's drunken inventor stories like "The Proud Robot." The Garrett and Janifer Queen's *Own FBI* series, while published in ASF as SF, is really fantasy. I also came up with Anderson's *Bicycle Built for Brew* (or was it *Spaceship?*) and de Camp's novella "Divide And Rule." Then there are the rare funny shorts like Asimov's "Christmas on Ganymede" and de Camp's "The Merman." I think the first half of Heinlein's *Star Beast* and the flat-cat sequence in *Rolling Stones* were funny but my wife doesn't agree with me. How would you classify satire like Harrison's *Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers* which is funny only as satire of space opera? Anyhow, I had to really think to find even these few examples of funny SF and could quickly find LOTS of funny fantasy. Can readers provide other examples? Can writers comment on the relative difficulty of writing funny SF vs. funny fantasy?—ERM][Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker* series, of course; Harrison's *Technicolor Time Machine*; some of the stories mentioned in the Kipling piece; some if not all of Spider Robinson's Callahan's Place stories; some Frederic Brown and Randall Garrett short stories; and Simak also uses humor. Certain SF situations have inherently comic possibilities, like first contact between alien species (especially if one is significantly more advanced culturally than the other) and conflict between the practical man and the bureaucrat—both of which are often themes of mundane fiction.—AJB]

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One of my colleagues from Russian fandom somehow got the August, 1988, issue of your splendid zine with "The Haunted Library" by Don d'Amassa in it. I found it very interesting for the still-growing number of horror fans in this country and translated it into Russian. I am (or rather was?) an editor for the M.L. fanzine, which went belly up after the first issue because of lack of printing facilities—a more than usual thing here. Nevertheless I haven't lost my heart and now

do my best to find people who would be interested in the professional publishing of a horror magazine. I've talked to several groups which can afford this. Hope we'll do it at last. A year ago I had a huge response from American fiction authors and have gathered enough fiction for at least three issues. Yet I still need non-fiction and would be happy to reprint Mr. d'Amassa's article. One of my principles is to get permission for publishing any material. Please forward my letter to the author.

MARGARET LAMBERT

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I loved reading *Andre Norton: Fables and Futures*. I don't suppose anyone there has any idea where I might be able to pick up a reading copy of *Andre Norton's Rebel Spurs*?

BRIAN EARL BROWN

*Niekas* is its usual large and handsome self. Some articles particularly stand out; Joe Christopher's look at Boucher's *Usuforn Robot* stories, Anne Braude's view of three authors' biographies, and a letter column discussion by Susan Shwartz on gender and genre.

At times I find myself wondering how total is Ed's blindness, such as when he mentions as a worldcon item of merit a video loop of the *Voyager/Neptune* flyby or going to the *Batmobile* exhibit. These seem such wholly visual events that I wonder if Ed has extremely poor vision or absolutely no vision at all. **[I am totally blind. The Voyager loop is an item I heartily approved of even though I did not get to it. If I had not been tied down to the *Niekas* table I would have liked to go with a knowledgeable companion who could have described the loop in detail. In the same way I sometimes go to con art shows with a helpful companion. Bruce Pelz did give me an excellent tour of the fan-history exhibit. The handicap access committee had promised a hands-on look at the *Batmobile* but by when I went there it was gone.—ERM]**

There have been few repeat winners of Hugos in any category but those few have been persistent enough to raise the question of what

to do about people who dominate the award year after year. Some, like Tim Kirk, were embarrassing because in many years he was either ineligible or eligible on the basis of one or two drawings. It was a clear case of the voters voting for a name that seemed familiar rather than from any actual awareness of their work. Charlie Brown's perennial wins likewise prove that fans in general like market reports rather than literary publications, much the way that *TV Guide* is read by millions but *Harper's* by thousands. In the real world such disparate sales figures do not induce people to conclude that *TV Guide* is a "better" magazine than *Harper's*; in fandom, though, it does. Creating an award just for Charlie Brown is one solution but it somehow trivializes the Hugo to give it out year after year to the same person. Better Anne Braude's idea of a three-times-in-a-row-winner's getting a "Grand Master" special lifetime award which keeps her or him off the ballot. Or better yet just doing away with the fan categories entirely. Most fan activities covered by the Hugo categories are available to so few people that the whole election process is a joke. The loyalty of one's friends rather than the quality of one's fanzine is what gets the rocket these days. **[I guess it is the fan categories which have caused the greatest turmoil almost since the inception of the Hugos. Campbell/ASF took the prozine award for years with no controversy. I think the semi-prozine category is a valid addition to the ballot despite its dominance by one magazine, for many others have been found to appear, validly, on the ballot. Fan parallels to the Hugos have been proposed from time to time. Remember the proposed trophy based on the *If* cover of the lady with the spikes on her wrists and ankles? I have a vague memory of faan awards being given at a faanish convention for a few years about 20 years ago. Maybe Ted White was right when he proposed the Pongs in 1967? An award is recognition by your peers of a job well done and respected. But also an award means something when you can show it off or brag about it to your friends, family, and co-workers to justify your involvement in this hobby. I was unhappy with the proposal at the time because a "Pong" would have been meaningless to outsiders and perhaps even considered as ridiculous by them.—ERM]**

*Lan's Lantern* has never been mimeoed. Some early issues were in Ditto but George has never operated a mimeo. Current issues are photocopied. *File 770* was mimeoed but just this year switched to photocopying, then to desktop publishing/photocopying. By the way, the Sam Moskowitz reminiscence you mentioned needs clarification since it implies that SaM was a kid around the 1960s. He may have told that story in 1960 but surely he was talking about something he did back in the 1930s. **[That is correct—he talked about the '30s during an ESFA meeting in the '60s.—ERM]** Actually *Niekas* does have a professional look to it, something not hard to achieve anymore with desktop publishing. It's also offset-printed and saddle-stapled with trimmed edges and the works. Most fanzines are photocopied (although some are still mimeoed) onto regular letter-sized paper and stapled along the side. Some few are using dtp with laser printers but rarely follow the look and feel of professional magazines as *Niekas* does. *Niekas* is a handsome product and one worth being proud of, but don't be surprised if people do confuse it with a professional or at least semi-professional publication. It does look like one.

The third person who has repeated Hugo wins is Michael Whelan. While in some years he has been the stand-out cover artist, too often people don't realize how many other artists are out there (because their work isn't credited) or actually consider how good their works are. A solution here is to change from a "best artist of the year" to "best cover of the year." If it is fit and proper to nominate the best short story of the year surely we can nominate individual pieces of art, too.

Diana Paxson writes of her return to teaching part time. While she does mention a few negative aspects of part-timing she misses a couple which I consider the most important. In addition to lower pay often given part-timers, they often lack any kind of job security (a wonderful whip for sexual harassment). Part-timers generally don't qualify for health-care coverage or membership in pension plans. These two benefits can nearly double the cost of hiring someone over the cost of listed hourly wages. And for this reason many industries across the country are increasingly working with large numbers of part-time workers,

deliberately avoiding giving any one of them enough time to qualify as a full-timer. Thus part-timers have no protection from unexpected illnesses or medical expenses, have no protection in their old age when businesses will no longer hire them, and may not even be able to join or form unions to better their working conditions. And no matter how well paid a part-time job is, it is never a living wage because the hours are always too few. Allowing industry (and even community colleges constitute an industry) to continue to expand the use of part-time employees is a dangerous direction for our country.

Joe Christopher's article analyzing five of Anthony Boucher's stories was very interesting and informative, but when he says they belong to a Future History I have to raise my eyebrows in skepticism. The question that must be asked is, "What makes any collection of stories into a series?" I think there has to be a certain amount of deliberate intention. It may be that *The Time Machine, When the Sleeper Wakes, "A Dream of Armageddon,"* and "A Story of Days to Come" share a common vision of the future but for them to form a Future History there must be clear and deliberate linkages between each story, which in this case I don't think there are. Certainly the use of "Usuform" in "The Quest for Saint Aquin" without further linkages is inadequate. The more so since other references, such as to a Martian-American woman, is distinctly at odds with the depiction of Martians in "Q.U.R." The implication is that Boucher liked his idea of usuform robots but never felt committed to them being QUINBY Usuform Robots. The other stories, "Story of the House" and "Man's Reach" are themselves even more tenuously linked to this series. Which leads me to conclude that for all his close reasoning, there is no series, no Future History as Mr. Christopher contends.

Anne Braude doesn't give equal coverage to the three writers in "The Space Crone . . ." but then anyone who thinks it takes years to write a book really doesn't have much to say to either LeGuin or Heinlein. And while LeGuin does have some very interesting comments she is given short shrift in favor of Heinlein. Called "the Grand Old Man" in the title, a respectful title in contrast to LeGuin's demeaning "Space Crone," on the ba-

sis of his quoted comments Heinlein would be more accurately referred to as "the ghastly curmudgeon." There's an ugly quality to the quote on page 39 where Heinlein talks of trying to peddle clearly bad stories to lesser markets under a pseudonym. There's a sense of his trying to put something over on these people, of victimizing them in a way that can't be traced back to him. Somehow that makes his later arguments with Scribner's seem less credible as well as foretelling his decline in late years into an endless series of didactic sermons posing as novels. **[Heinlein had been called the Grand Old Man of SF for a long time before I borrowed the term; and in the essay "The Space Crone" LeGuin depicts that persona favorably and identifies with it. What is demeaning, as she points out, is the attachment of negative connotations to "crone"; society has no use for a woman who is no longer young, pretty, and fertile.—AJB]**

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For some reason I have just now "gotten around to" reading #39. Anne Braude has a knack for making rather off-hand remarks that raise most of the few remaining hackles I have left.

First, I seem to be at or near "the lowest form of reader." Reading for a plot—which I take to mean reading because I want to know what happens next, is not "low" in my opinion. It is certainly what editors want—I have many notes to prove it: "well-written, plot done too often," et al.

I have read 200 or more books a year since I was about 12. I have reread fewer than 1% of them. And those tend to be "feel good" books, not great masterpieces, (exception—LotR): *The Shy Photographer*, Carroll; *Pioneer Go Home*, Powell; *One on the House*, Lasswell. **[I can't find the exact remark you refer to, but I never said that someone who reads for plot is "the lowest form of reader." I probably said that the narrative level is the lowest—i.e., most fundamental level of fiction, equivalent to the instruction in the rabbit-stew recipe, "First, catch your rabbit." It is the minimum requirement the writer has to meet. I am not sure what you mean when you say that you reread "feel-good" books; it seems to be that you like what you enjoy (true but redundant).**

**I read a lot of mysteries; and if I am going to reread one, it had better have more appeal than just finding out whodunit, since I already know that. Characterization, description, symbolism, and style are best savored on rereading, when one can spare some attention from the plot. But if the writer doesn't tell a good story, I may never bother to finish the first reading. And I think that if you're going to rate readers by what they enjoy, those who read "just for the story" would rank higher than those who read just to criticize and show off their own superior taste or erudition. You might read C.S. Lewis's *An Experiment in Criticism*, where he suggests that instead of rating readers by the variety of pleasure they get out of certain books, the books should be rated by the type of reading they attract. On further thought, I may have alluded to Dante's four levels of meaning derived from Biblical exegesis: literal, moral, allegorical, and anagogical (mystical), of which the first is the lowest—but this is in terms of religious rather than literary values.—AJB]**

The other quibble is the statement that "Sherlock Holmes' deductive reasoning [is] actually a process of inductive reasoning."

There is some truth in this. For example when Holmes looks at a person's hands and deduces a typist because of fingernails and the location of finger calluses, that would be inductive reasoning. He has seen many such configurations and they were on typists). Inductive reasoning consists of looking at examples and making general conclusions.

On the other hand, the famous "dog in the night" is pure deductive reasoning. 1) The dog barks at strangers. 2) The dog did not bark that night. 3) Therefore, no stranger entered the stable that night.

Another famous quote epitomizes the indirect proof (also deductive reasoning). "When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever is left, however improbable, must be the truth." This is frequently used in advanced mathematical proofs (where there are generally only two possibilities—true or false). **[Fictional detectives like Holmes generally start with a collection of apparently unrelated or ambiguous clues and assemble a theory to account for them—thus reasoning inductively from the particular to the**

general. Deductive reasoning would be, for example, using Mendelian theory to predict the appearance of recessive traits from a given set of pairings.—AJB]

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Apparently it is becoming impossible to hold a WorldCon under the current arrangement. Every WorldCon held in the US (or surrogate thereof) has had at least one ghastly bungle or blunder, from Baltimore's going bankrupt to New Orleans' disorganization to Boston's Hugo problems to San Diego's apparently near-total collapse.

A couple of years ago Bruce Gardner, long-time *Fosfax* contributor, wrote up a proposal to the effect that a permanent professional organizer be set to the task of organizing the WorldCon. There are many specialized interests and needs that will have to be fulfilled; and the current WorldCon committees, and their aide the "Permanent Floating WorldCon Committee," apparently just are not up to it, going by results. Another FOSFAn once told me, in all seriousness that if an elected committee collapsed or otherwise failed to do its job, this "P.F.W.C.C." composed of all the volunteers who do the lesser jobs from year to year could step in. Fine, but what if they give up after having to step in so often?

In fact, neither the Gilbert & Sullivan operettas nor the First World War had much to do with the reformation of Parliament. In 1909 the Liberal government was trying to fund naval expansion, old-age pensions, and national insurance. (The naval expansion was powered by such compromises as a capital ship building programme where the "doves" planned to build 4 ships, the "hawks" wanted 6, and they compromised on 8.) In a clearly reactionary measure, the government proposed to pay for all this not by increasing the National Debt, but by raising taxes, particularly on land. This threatened the interests of the House of Lords which contained a substantial proportion of the monied class, and they in turn threatened to block the Budget.

After a further threat from King George V to pack the House of Lords, the House compromised and a new law which reduced the ability of the House to block such legislation was

passed. Further development has reduced this ability even more but not eliminated it, as in the most recent example when the Lords turned down a bill which would have given British courts the ability to prosecute British residents for war crimes committed abroad. The grounds were that retroactive legislation covering crimes committed outside of British jurisdiction was wrong, no matter how wrong the crime.

I was going to compare the plight of the Lithuanian government to the reception granted other groups and individuals who've had the misfortune to be opposed to the Soviet state, but I did not want to be dancing on a mass grave under these circumstances. It seems so different when you are involved.

Considering some of the divers comments in Mathoms: the left seemingly without exception loved Germany so much they wanted as many of them as possible. Consider, by way of example, Günter Grass's *Two States, One Nation* which calls for a preservation of the unique spirit of the "German Democratic Republic." This enthusiasm was emphatically not shared by those so fortunate as to live in that paradoxical state, with results such as the building of a wall to ensure that such impertinent individuals remained in the paradise that the Western liberals assigned to them and acclaimed from afar.

Or, after the fall of this palisade, a resounding electoral defeat for the parties dedicated to promulgating this belief. The Greens remain in the Bundestag only through the special relief granted the parties of the East, as does the Party of Democratic Socialism (formerly Socialist Unity Party, actually Communist Party). The reformist



parties of the revolution, who also opposed unification, have likewise disappeared from the Parliament. On the other hand (or side) the *Republikaner*, the far-right party dedicated to fulfilling the liberals' hope that there is a Nazi in every German, has also lost out in the polls and failed to gain representation.

From the near-final comment on the Katyn Forest Massacre: am I to understand that Ms. Braude believes that the Nazis did it? Looking it up in that sort of recent history book that (unless you read some pretty rare stuff) would be most likely available to the audience would inform you that the NKVD was responsible. Even the U.S.S.R. has now admitted culpability, that is the culpability of that evil cell of terrorist wreckers in the NKVD led

by Beria and Merkulov, and abominated by all the decent people of the Soviet Union, and its leaders as well. If, as the statement seems to imply, the tale of Soviet culpability is a Big Lie, then Ms. Braude had better check her grammar. **[The Big Lie I meant was blaming it on the Nazis; I was reacting to a story on how Soviet history books are now being rewritten to tell the truth—because the Party can no longer successfully suppress all versions but its own.—AJB]**

One error in Laiskai, in my letter on page 58: the admiral who supports defense except for every weapons and rearmament program is "Gene LaRoque," not "la Roque." And one in Gincas, in my letter on page 70: Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, is usually called "Kingmaker" with a capital "K." You folks short of capital letters? **[Another case of loss of data from having another person read the letters & mss onto tape. It would take forever to specify EVERY punctuation mark and capital, and would try the reader's patience, so I only ask that non-obvious punctuation be mentioned. What is obvious to one person is not to another.—ERM]**

After I read Ursula LeGuin's essay "The Stalin in the Soul" and saw that she explicitly denied any distinction between personal and state action, I decided that not only her opinions but also her fiction was of no value, and have not read any since. When I heard that on the basis of her research for her story "Sur" she had also written a widely-praised essay on Antarctic exploration, I was sure of it. (Note: one of the background items in "Sur" is actually correct; someone did leave the door of Scott's hut open sometime between 1909 and 1911. Remember Palter's comments on plausibility and see how much damage that would do to LeGuin's thesis, were it not insulated from such because of other considerations.)

After a study of the glowing descriptions of *Tehanu* and *Dancing at the Edge of the World* proffered in this issue, not to mention other sources, I see no need to reconsider my opinion or decision. **[It certainly saves time to decide on the merits of a work without bothering to read it first. Those who did read *Tehanu* voted it the Nebula and the Locus Awards.—AJB]** Of course, if you have a lot of trained seals like the reviewers, or the letter-writer on pages 48-50, **[he is referring**

**to Susan Schwartz whom he is avoiding mentioning by name for some reason—ERM]** who will automatically praise any work with the correct qualifications (for essentially political reasons), why should you care what I think?

Which brings us to that letter on pp. 48-50 **[by Susan Schwartz]** Evidently, going by the line of argument presented therein, it is strictly forbidden for men to have any opinions whatsoever about female characters. While I'm not surprised, given the author's historical record of adherence to the politically correct line, one would rather be denounced by that source than praised given its standards of praise.

As for Anne Braude's comment: Have you ever heard of "prior restraint?" Requiring opinions to be vetted by an outside party, given the concomitant problems of such approval, will mean that to save the expense and other problems such opinions will be silenced. Of course this is happening even now on our college campuses, where certain "manifestly false" opinions are so labeled.

Like the woman at the University of Connecticut who posted a sign on her dormroom door saying that "preppies, bimbos, men without chest hair, and homos would be shot on sight." She was expelled from the dorm and banned from all university dorms and cafeterias.

Or the biology professor who apologized for speaking about the work of DWM. The Dead White Male in question happened to be Charles Darwin. Thus we can clearly see that even science must be politically correct.

Or the moot court at New York University Law School which withdrew a moot court case on the custody rights of a lesbian mother. It is politically incorrect to present arguments against such a mother.

Yes, Anne can be proud of her proposal. It is already making progress, at least in the university environment. Also the Iranian government is asking that the manifestly false writings of Salman Rushdie be similarly treated. But it is a very different matter when YOUR ideas are under attack. Right? **[All of this is about opinion. I was referring to assertions of fact—the distinction between "Your ideas are crazy" (rude) and "You are an es-**

**capee from an institution for the criminally insane" (actionable). I disagree with every one of the opinions in the examples you cite, but I disapprove of all the punitive or censoring actions taken. You can't legislate attitudes. And if I'm all for prior restraint, why am I not editing out all these things you say about me?—AJB][Anne, as poorf reader, has final cut on what gets published and she has never cut out anything because she disagreed with the opinion, unless she felt it made a statement of fact that might be actionable and the author offered no supporting evidence.—ERM]**

JOE R. CHRISTOPHER

I recently ran across my copies of *Niekas* 6, 10, 18, and 20. I must admit that I had forgotten that I had them, but it was nice to see Diana Paxson's designs for protective covers for a couple of Tolkien paperbacks, as well as her "Patterns" column in 20—nice because she's still producing things for *Niekas*. Also in 20 was Donald A. Wollheim's 1968 Lunacon Guest of Honor speech—that was nice because *Niekas* 42 had one of his most recent speeches (perhaps his last speech?). It's an appropriate memorial for Wollheim, I'm sure—a sequence of Guest of Honor speeches. (Perhaps Advent: will some day collect the best of them?) Finally, in 18 Anne Braude has a fannish nursery rhyme. I hope *Niekas* never stops including verse and poetry, although I gather I am in the minority here.

I suppose the Philip K. Dick bibliographies list his contributions in these early issues—in #10 and especially his summary for fiction—"A Story to End All Stories for Harlan Ellison's Anthology *Dangerous Visions*"—in 20.

Ah well, too much nostalgia. Probably I ordered those issues for their Tolkien content, but I no longer remember the details.

Don d'Ammassa's column in the most recent issue, 42, was interesting. Perhaps he should give us a list of the ten best horror films—or twenty best, divided into classical and modern? I must admit that I seldom watch horror films today—but I seldom watch any films today. However, I remember the first horror film I saw—*Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*—and it gave me nightmares. Of course, I think I was about six years old at the time. I later

saw the movie *Bride of Frankenstein* at a midnight Friday the 13th showing—remember those pre-TV movie practices?—and it was great fun. I also have the dubious record of being the only person in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, to have seen *The Thing* in its original version five times in the same day—I went into the movie house at 1:00 and came out at 10:30 or so. But I must say I thought of it as a SF movie (and I knew of its origin in “Who Goes There?”), rather than horror. Sorry, this seems to be a nostalgic letter. Maybe I should write a ballade titled “Where Are the Monsters of Yesteryear?”

Diana Paxson’s column on teaching has a good description of the situation in college English departments. Since my school is out in the boon-docks we don’t work it quite the same way. But the Dean *has* said that no Ph.D.’s in English are to be hired because we have enough to teach the advanced courses. So we hire M.A.’s to teach three freshman courses and one sophomore course each. If we could get part-time teachers out here, probably we’d hire them for financial reasons. But the current situation does have its benefits. We don’t have the extreme inequality that most schools do with the part-timers. Here everyone is equal in the faculty room, departmental meetings, etc. We also have six of those with M.A.’s working on their Ph.D.’s which will upset finances, no doubt. At least four of them, maybe all six, will try for the tenure track when they get their Ph.D.’s. That’s when it will get sticky, partly because the four have been around here for a long time and are good members of the department. **[Do they get retirement and medical benefits?—AJB]**

The other thing I see coming in colleges, which Diana doesn’t mention, is an increasing tendency to try to produce measurable ways to prove that the students have learned the course content or skills. Of course, teachers are supposed to do that with grades; but this is an attempt to prove to accrediting agencies, and in the case of state schools, legislators, that education is going on. The flip side, equally emphasized, is to prove that the teachers are actually teaching. We are struggling with departmental evaluation of teaching at the moment; and it is mainly the younger teachers, whose positions may depend on the results, who are having fits over how

to do it.

I was interested in reading Sam Moskowitz’s column. Since he is writing for *Niekas* now I am emboldened to ask him a question through the letter column which he might make the subject of a column in the future. I wonder if he could suggest some early SF stories which C.S. Lewis may have read before he wrote *The Great Divorce*? In the preface to this religious fantasy Lewis writes, “. . . I must acknowledge my debt to a writer whose name I have forgotten and whom I read several years ago in a highly coloured American magazine of what they call ‘scientification’. The unbendable and unbreakable quality of my heavenly matter was suggested to me by him, though he used the fancy for a different and most ingenious purpose. His hero traveled into the past and there very properly found raindrops that would pierce him like bullets and sandwiches that no strength could bite because, of course, nothing in the past can be altered. I, with less originality, but I hope with equal propriety, have transferred this to the eternal. If the writer of that story ever reads these lines I ask him to accept my grateful acknowledgement.” Late in this small book, in the British edition but not in

the American, there is a footnote to a discussion of a bus which not only moved in space but also increased in size. The footnote read, “This method of travel I also learned from the ‘scientifictionists.’” (London, Geoffrey Bles, 1946, p. 112.) The use of “scientification” suggests that Lewis was reading the old Gernsback magazines, but of course that does not necessarily mean the stories that influenced Lewis appeared in those magazines, just that Lewis liked Gernsback coinage. At any rate, if there is anyone who can chase down those stories, or several possibilities for each, from Lewis’ allusions, it would most likely be Moskowitz. Thus I hope for a column discussing this topic.

I want to thank the two artists who illustrated my article in 42. The front cover by Larry Dickison is very professional, I think, well drawn, nicely shaded, and very smooth in its lines. Jim Laurier, in his interior drawings, does a delightful parody of the old *As-tounding* covers to begin the article and has neatly caught the the type of spot illos later: a Martian, a Venusian, a robot or two, what more could one want?

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I especially enjoyed Joe Christopher’s article on Boucher’s robots, as a long-time Boucher fan.

Diana Paxson’s comments about teaching remind me that I’ve been feeling increasingly irritated by articles appearing all over about the need to reform education. In this case what they have in mind for reforming it seems to be chiefly what they call Outcome Based Education—and from what I can make out from what they say, it’s a crock. It doesn’t help students learn or teachers teach. All it does is define more precisely what the students are trying to learn, and make sure that the students are held back if they have not learned it. It sounds like the old system of pass-or-flunk—abandoned because the shame and grief felt by the student made it difficult to impossible for students to get much benefit without getting a second chance to learn the material. Moreover, the students who had been held back were likely to have a hard time getting a job. The student who fails, or is delayed in completing, even one of



the "outcomes" from Outcome Based Education is likely to face similar difficulties. The O.B.E. may make life easier for employers who want an easy way to screen out job applicants, but it is hard to see how it will do anything to improve education. Well, it might do a little something. Supposedly, the outcomes expected of students will vary according to an individual student's abilities, and thus might lead to making demands more precisely geared to what the individuals are likely to be able to do than the old flunk'em system did. But mostly it sounds like a crock.

The speech "On the Brink of 2000" by Donald A. Wollheim includes in one of its illustrations a common misconception, in saying that in 1488, "While most learned men had begun to suspect that the world was round, it was not general knowledge." Actually, most learned men in 1488 knew the world was round, and knew it as far back as the ancient Greeks. Among the uneducated, most people who lived by large bodies of water knew well enough that the world was round—at least if they had tall-masted ships. Watching ships sink slowly over the edge of the world (and return safely) gave them a strong suspicion that the edge was actually a spherical curve. It was ancient peoples who didn't go down to the sea in ships, much like the authors of the Bible, or who went in not-so-tall oared ships, like the archaic Greeks of Homer, who went in for notions like the four corners of the flat, square earth, or the ocean stream running around the edge of the flat, circular earth. When Columbus set out, people knew perfectly well that you could get to India by sailing west around Asia. Columbus, however, had the stupid notion that it would be shorter to go that way than go around Africa. (He thought the earth's circumference was about half the size it actually is—and had been known to be since the ancient Greeks worked out the the geometry for measuring it with a comparison of shadow lengths.) He may have hoped also that even if the earth was as big as it is, it might be easier to sail straight west to India than to go around the Horn. So he lost out both ways, except that serendipity landed him somewhere other and potentially richer than Serendip. What might be called medieval SF did actually "predict" that there would be continents (or at least large islands) in

the way, although the legends of Huy Brazil and Brendan's islands and Vinlands and perhaps the Antipodes were probably influenced by actual, less well documented, explorers' accounts. (The Antipodes—where Dante comes out from the other side of hell—were perhaps more an aesthetic/geometrical extrapolation.)

This past weekend some of us had an interesting time talking about writing about cultures not your own (human cultures, that is—the kind where people who belong to the culture in question could come along and complain that you're not doing it right). This was one of the activities of the Minnesota SF/Fantasy Writers' Association which is a discussion group rather than a workshop (because there are quite a few workshops, and Eric Heideman, who belongs to more than one, thought it would be useful to have a group doing something that could be more generally open). Eleanor Arnason talked about her portrayal of the Asian-American woman in *Daughter of the Bear King*, and I talked about some things I've been trying to do in the last few years drawing on French fantasy (mostly, because I've been taking French courses, and wanted to find something to do with being able to read French that would tie into what I was writing). Kara Dalkey was supposed to talk, too (her *Euryale* takes place in the Roman Republic, and *The Nightingale* rather oddly sets Andersen's Chinese "Nightingale" in medieval Japan), but couldn't make it, because of job pressures.

And then this weekend the Rivedell Group is meeting with the topic of biographies of C.S. Lewis for discussion. I'm beginning to think that Lewis isn't really a particularly interesting writer—that is, not interesting from the point of view of fantasy/SF. It seems that *all* the books that came out about him (and there are a great many) are from the standpoint of Christian believers and most of them are specifically about him as an author of Christian apologetic works, although a few are by people interested in fantasy and SF as ways to express Christian ideas. People who are interested in fantasy and SF per se don't seem to be interested in Lewis. Still, I suppose one shouldn't hold marketing "niches" against a writer. He's probably a better writer than he starts to sound when commentators seem to

value him only for his successes in converting his fans, even if the process does tend to turn off those of the fans who remain unconverted. [Richard Purtill's *Lord of the Elves and Eldils* (on Lewis and Tolkien) is an exception to your generally correct strictures.—AJB]

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I must admit a little guilt when on page 2, column 2, you mentioned me as a *Niekas* associate who was not at Noreascon III. It reminds me that I have not done much for NIEKAS lately.

Of course, one of the problems is that I no longer work for the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. I now work for the United States Post Office. Who wants to hear stories about USPS? I have now worked 3 1/4 years for the PO, and I still miss the excitement of working for JPL.

OK, the pay at JPL was not so good, benefits were minimal, retirement plans a joke, and all that. But at least we were doing something wonderful, by exploring the solar system. Now I babysit letter-sorting machines, and can only participate in the Galileo mission by reading the newspapers and magazine articles about the program. JPL just will not hire a computer technician over the age of 40. Thank you, Ronald Reagan.

Working for the Post Office makes it difficult to attend worldcons. Vacation times are bid for in the preceding December. Slots are limited, and it is all a matter of seniority. Since I am way down on the seniority list, I have few chances of getting the Labor Day weekend off, or indeed any vacation slot from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

So I have been taking my vacations in October, early Spring, and for 1991 will spend 2 1/2 weeks in Chile, 30 January through 17 February. (White-water river rafting on the Rio Bio Bio, class V river that is being damned by dams this Summer.) I think I may try to attend the 1993 worldcon. By then I may have enough seniority to get the time off required. Maybe. For sure I will be able to attend the 1996 worldcon if it's held in Los Angeles.

And then I read in the local paper an editorial stating that we Post Office workers are overpaid drones who drink and drug on the job, so we should all be

fired and the Post Office privatized. Sure. Even though I am almost seven years sober in Alcoholics Anonymous, would any new, privatized postal service hire a technician over the age of 40? I have my doubts.

Fred Lerner's column makes sad reading. I mentioned the Rio Bio Bio in Chile earlier in this letter, and it is a fine example of the way things are done. The Rio Bio Bio would make any list of "the top five whitewater rivers of the world." Chile plans to dam the river for power and irrigation. True, a lot of Indians will be drowned out, but after all there is no need for Chile to treat its Indians any better than the USA does. So they don't.

And are we all that much better? Up in the Northwest, after having chopped down 95% of the ancient forests, all the loggers can think of is chopping down the remaining 5%, and trying to stop children from reading the Dr. Seuss book that could be considered critical of the logging industry. Things are really bad when you feel a need to censor Dr. Seuss.

I was amused by David Shea's account of blood donating. Until March of 1990, I was a 6 times a year donor. And here in Los Angeles, they asked us point blank if we were male prostitutes, or had relations with any prostitute of either sex!

However, I did go to Africa in March/April of 1990, and along the way I took anti-malarial pills. Chloroquine every Sunday, and Fansidar every Wednesday. I used plenty of mosquito repellent, slept under netting, wore long-sleeved shirts and trousers, and as far as I know not only avoided malaria, but any kind of mosquito bite at all.

Nonetheless, I cannot donate blood for three years. I think the idea is that you might have had so mild a case of malaria that you didn't feel it. The anti-malarial pills only suppress malaria, they do not prevent it. So the three-year waiting period is designed to see if you have been infected. If you have, you will probably have a relapse in that three-year period, and this time you will notice it. And when that happens you are permanently banned from donating blood, since there is no way to eradicate malaria from your blood. All you can hope for is control.

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The fanzine Hugo is getting more and more problematic as time goes on, what with *Mad 3 Party*, hardly a proper fanzine, winning this year. It's as if Noreascon Program Book had won Best Non-Fiction!

I greatly enjoyed Diana Paxson's lovely account of how Reagan's Perestroika converted her from a useless education *apparatchik* to a sort of "barefoot educator." Margaret Simon's illustration was delightfully apt.

"Nobody has asked the students whether they want" to learn to write saleable fiction. Why should anyone ask them? In a publicly supported education system, the educationists' aim is naturally to please the politicians who control their purse strings, not their helpless customers.

In "On the Brink of 2000," Don Wollheim's speech on the failures of prediction, Wollheim states rhetorically, "the writer of 1788 . . . certainly could not have predicted the rise of Bonaparte." Remarkably, someone almost did! In *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke saw that the French radicals were busily destroying all social institutions in the country, except the army. And in the end, he predicted, the army would pick up the pieces.

Let us honor that tiny company of successful prophets: Burke, who saw deeply enough to support the American revolution and oppose the French one; Alexis de Tocqueville, who predicted in 1835 that America and Russia would dominate the 20th Century; Ludwig von Mises, who described the collapse of socialism, 70 years early.

Speaking of successful prophets, Sam Moskowitz gives us some splendidly lucid reviews of material on SF history. I'll see if I can use them to persuade my local public library to purchase the J.J. Pierce titles.

Anne Braude's excellent review of *Tehanu* by Ursula K. LeGuin gave much food for thought. Is "a child beaten, raped, and thrown into a campfire to burn alive—by her family" really "the truth of women's lives!?" It sounds like a rather unusual occurrence, even among the Yanomama!

Continues Braude: Among "the ordinary realities of women's lives that are so uncomfortable for men to acknowledge . . . is powerlessness. A woman and a child . . . encounter a group of ruffians and are frightened." Men are frightened, too: only they try not to show it, and will never admit it!

And onward: "Men do not listen to what women say." Mulling over this, I began to wonder how much of what women perceive as men treating them differently, is actually men treating women the same way they treat men. In other words, men force other men to listen to them. Tentative whispers will be ignored, regardless of the sex of the speaker. [See "The Women Men Don't Hear" in R&C.—AJB]

Susan Schwartz's letter was delightful, and rather convincing. Except where she attempts to dismiss criticism of fantasy as nothing but sexism! Fantasy has come under increasing criticism because a) it is literally crowding out SF in the bookstores, and b) it appears to be correlated with the rising tide of occultism in society in general. Needless to say, rationalistic SF writers and fans are exasperated by both trends.

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I've been reading Niekas #42 over the last three days (that's about my reading speed these days) and was tremendously impressed. All the contents are literate, intelligent, and exactly the sort of speculation fanzine contributions should consist of but so seldom do.

From David Shea's piece on blood donations I gather that no money is paid, in Maryland anyway, for blood. It is commonly understood in the U.K. that blood is bought and paid for in the States and this difference is often advanced as evidence of British moral superiority. This is surely just another example of the fact that once something is generally believed to be true it generally turns out to be false. The first example I knew of this was the case of Cinderella's glass slipper. As a small boy I learned from some authority that the slipper was actually made of fur, the confusion arising from the similarity of sound between the French word *vair* (fur) and *verre* (glass). This sounded so plausible that everyone believed it until it became common knowledge when some other authority immediately produced evidence that the slipper was glass. This seems so right—who ever heard of anyone wearing a fur slipper to a ball?—that everyone now believes it. It is obviously time for another authority to pronounce. [Most blood is donated free through the Red Cross but

the shortfall is made up by commercial blood banks. The goal of the RC is to up voluntary donations in order to eliminate the commercial sources. The latter blood has to be screened for diseases much more than the voluntary blood, for many who sell it are alcoholics and other derelicts.—ERM] [The version of the *vair/verre* confusion I heard said that fur slippers were fashionable attire for Court balls in Perrault's time. I checked two histories of costume, which do not confirm this. However, the slippers in question were *pantoufles* or backless mules, which today are very often made of fur (never of glass).—AJB]

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My best friend and I are starting up a taping service for Star Trek fans, taping fan-written stories which are available in print at various Star Trek conventions. For about 15 years now I have been taping these stories for my friend privately. Now we are preparing to make them available to others. I wonder if you would be able to publicize this service.

LORAIN ROVIG  
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I have started a club Geordi's Engineers, and an associated fanzine, *Engineering Log*. It is a crossover between Star Trek fandom and blindness concerns. I plan to publish four issues. The recorded version will be ready soon.

Thanks for sending the issue of your magazine. I read every word. It was most interesting.

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I was quite surprised to learn I had apparently touched off a controversy over my review of the Jane Yolen book, *Sister Light, Sister Dark*. I feel that both Susan Schwartz and Anne Braude are close to understanding the intent of the review. First of all, I know how hard it is to write something and get it published, so I did not imply that the book is a bad book—far from it, or I wouldn't have bothered to review it. As to it having the feel of a book in-

tended for a female audience, there is nothing wrong with that. I could have just as easily said that William Gibson's *Neuromancer* has the feel of appealing to computer programmers or game players. Everyone, unconsciously or not, slants their writing to a particular audience. What I do find disturbing in Yolen's letter is an undercurrent of intellectual snobbery. Sure, *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Jaws* are not great works of art, but they are entertaining, have mass appeal, and do have a certain amount of underlying symbolism. (The only person on the ship who pretends no fear of sharks is eaten by the shark; while the chief of police, who is basically terrified, must face down his fears in order to grapple with the monster—and do so alone.)

I have noticed an undercurrent of superiority in a number of computer bulletin boards that one might even go so far as to term a form of intellectual fascism. Some operators look down their noses and refer to any beginners as "lamers"—in addition to less printable epithets. When I was learning to operate a modem, I was taken to task by someone at the other end of the line who was annoyed I didn't press a particular key when he wanted me to do so.

Unfortunately the writing field has some people like this as well, who seem to feel that unless a person has four PhDs and a doctorate in ancient mythology they should not be writing anything. If a person has talent it will come through despite any restrictions imposed against them. For this reason I am against the periodic writers' workshops, particularly for beginners. Just like any form of group therapy, they can be devastating for some individuals. You cannot make any progress by listening to a bunch of know-it-alls sitting on their posteriors. I believe you must learn by trial and error just what it is that appeals to the public and what sells. If you wish to narrow your appeal to one segment of the population, all well and good. Two of the best SF novels I've ever read are by women and they can be read with interest by either sex. I refer to *Dreamrider* by Sandra Miesel and *Infinity's Rub* by Sheila Finch. Jack Chalker has appeal as a male writer, on the other hand. Some of his images are not calculated to endear him to women. There is nothing wrong with leaning in a particular direction, but some writers go too far. By narrowing

their views they limit their imagination. This happens in political parties as well. Just recently, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada expelled two MPs because they did not go along with the party line on a tax measure 85% of the country opposes. I think we may need a new group, the Extreme Middle, which allows any and all differences of opinion. This is what is wrong with political parties—you have to toe the official line or be terminated. No wonder we regard politicians as such blind people—by joining a party they have sold out their right to free speech. At least this is the way it seems to go up here. Hopefully the US is still more enlightened in this regard.

While on the subject, this is not the first time one of my reviews has set off a controversy. About ten years ago, when I had just started reviewing SF, I sent a review to a now defunct fanzine in California which had a fairly wide readership. The review was of one of Harlan Ellison's *Dangerous Visions* books. There was one story I found somewhat pretentious and obviously calculated as an anti-Vietnam War protest. It had something to do with burning a dog with napalm. I said in the review that I found the imagery repulsive. While many of the stories were excellent, I had difficulty in reading this, especially as it was trying to make a point using overkill. (Sam Goldwyn once said, "If you want to send a message, call Western Union.") Anyway, I sent the review in, the editor liked it, and said he would use it. A few weeks later, I received a letter from the fanzine editor saying he would have to kill the review. Apparently Ellison had read it, threatened to pull his support from the fanzine, and all sorts of other dire consequences. I was outraged at this time, as Ellison was complaining about TV networks censoring his stuff. And then he threatens some little fanzine editor just because he printed a review he didn't like. I was also slightly annoyed at the editor for caving in under pressure and remember thinking: so much for free speech. Later I did find out that Harlan had had a medical condition at the time that he later said was causing him to overreact to a number of things, and he admitted such on a later TV interview. So I bear him no grudge as his reaction may have been quite understandable. I am still annoyed at that editor, however, for not

sticking to his guns, no matter what the consequences. Oh well, without differences of opinion, everything would be as bland as tapioca pudding. Maybe with this letter I might rattle a few cages somewhere else. I shall follow the proceedings with interest.

LARS TERJE ØLAND LYSEMOSE

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Danmark's Tolkienforening (The Danish Tolkien Society) greets the readers of *Niekas* and hopes for a good cooperation with like-minded enthusiasts beyond the Great Sea. We would be grateful to exchange views on and experience with Tolkien's marvelous world, and also to exchange fanzines, articles, and illustrations. The Danish Tolkien Society was founded on 30 January 1993 and is a non-profit organization. The Society also publishes a magazine called *Athelas*, the herb of healing power also known as Kingsfoil, and membership for a year including 4-5 issues costs 200 DKK (Europe) or 250 DKK (world wide). Although the main part will be in Danish there will also be a Westron page in English, being the Common Speech among all Tolkien enthusiasts. And once a year the Society will publish an anniversary issue in English, including the best ingredients of the year. Anar Kaluva tielvanna, Tolkiendili Dania-nóreó!

BUCK COULSON

2677W-500N

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I'm writing this on special radiation-proof paper suitable for special documents. Of course this lot was rejected because the coating didn't go on evenly, but then this isn't a terribly special document.

Not only is Noreascon III history, but so is Holland's Worldcon. However since we haven't been to a Worldcon since 1986 I appreciated the comments on Noreascon. People seem to have either liked it or hated it. I've seen very little luke-warm comment.

No, *Locus* didn't dominate the Hugos from '71 on. It won in '72 but then *Energumen* won in 1973, *Algol* and *The Alien Critic* tied in '74, *The Alien Critic* in '75, *Locus* again in '76, *Science Fiction Review* in '77, *Locus* in '78, *Science Fiction Review* in '79,

and *Locus* began its run in 1980.

Of course academics don't want to teach students how to write commercial fiction. The student might end up making more money than the professor.

*Raiders of the Lost Ark* may not be satire but it's definitely a parody of the old pulp and movie adventures of the 1930s. Offhand I'd class *The Handmaid's Tale* as fantasy rather than science fiction that is not logical. I can't believe that Atwood's society would evolve in the length of time she gives it, and I'd much rather call it very good fantasy than flawed science fiction. Suzette Haden Elgin's books on approximately the same subject are good science fiction though lacking some of the power of Atwood's book.

It was interesting to see the differences in procedure from the time I used to give blood to today's much more elaborate procedures, especially in the paperwork. Nobody but vampires with a sweet tooth would take my blood any more, and even they might get high blood pressure from it. Back in the good old days AIDS didn't exist and there were very few diseases then that could make them refuse the stuff. **[Are vampires primates? I don't think species other than homo saps. can contract AIDS.—AJB]**

I think Wollheim errs when he says that neither Japan nor Germany ever got close to landing a single soldier on North American soil. I suppose the Aleutians aren't technically a part of North America, being islands, but they are generally included with the rest of the continent. And I believe Germany did land a few people from submarines, not people in uniform, but soldiers under the general definition of the term. Lithuanian article interesting. I'd never heard of Lithuanian science fiction before, except for Budrys' novels of course. **[What about Walter Kubilius and Baltaduonis (I might have the spelling wrong) who are mentioned in fan histories and had some stories published in the '40s? The November, 1993, *Locus* carries an obit of Kubilius and lists the important SF clubs he helped found or joined in the '30s, says he was on the con committee for the First World SF Convention in 1939, and had a few dozen stories published between 1941 and 1952, some of which were later anthologized.—ERM]**

I agree pretty fully with Susan Schwartz, which won't surprise her. On

the other hand I'm afraid I'm part of a backlash against fantasy because so much of it looks and reads alike. I have fake medieval fantasies by both sexes coming out of my bookshelves. Just as in science fiction or westerns or mysteries or romances, the good writers are in a minority and a lot of the bad writers are all telling slightly different versions of the same story and not doing it very well. I do think that bad science fiction tends to have more variety in settings and characters.

Well, I can only comment to Martin Morse Wooster that the ten-room house also houses collections of science fiction, history, firearms, and phonograph records, though a fair amount of space is devoted to salvage, such as this letter paper I'm using. I've got reams of letter paper and boxes of envelopes, all salvage, as well as masonite and various other items.

To answer one of Anne Braude's questions, no, a story with a sympathetic vampire or werewolf is not a horror story. Horror is not defined by setting or character but by mood. Fred Saberhagen's *Dracula* isn't horrifying. Neither, I gather, was the Bela Lugosi movie, or at least my parents said they laughed at it. I'm not sure I've ever seen it.

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I was pleased to be able to read Donald A. Wollheim's Guest of Honor address at Nolacon II, "On the Brink of 2000." I was there, properly registered, but literally unable to get into the auditorium so I missed it.

I found the article on Lithuanian SF particularly interesting. For decades it has been claimed that science fiction was very popular in the Soviet Union and indeed I have about a hundred books from the former Iron Curtain countries translated into English plus some in the original Russian. However, I did not realize just how popular it was until Gorbachev invited Ray Bradbury to dine with him and letters began to arrive from various parts of the USSR inviting correspondence. Quite frankly I was afraid to answer them, not for myself but for the Russians. I remember back in the late '60s Gerry de la Ree had a Russian science fiction fan in Moscow buying books from him. He almost went out of his mind when he read my book, *Explorers of the Infinite*, about science fic-

tion. He sent de la Ree several boxes of Cuban cigars to get a copy of *Seekers of Tomorrow*. I had some extra copies so Gerry paid me to ship one to him, which I did. De la Ree got back a frantic letter. "What do you want to happen to me? Don't ever wrap your books in newspapers! The KGB is now investigating to see if the papers are a form of propaganda." I don't think we ever heard from him again.

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Ms. Anne Braude raises the question of "when life begins," and the hypothetical rights of "frozen embryos." Outside the admittedly controversial area of abortion, this whole area is pretty well settled; what the legal profession calls *res judicata*—"the thing has been judged."

The unborn is not a person. It has no rights. The unborn may not hold property, nor have a contract executed in its name. It has no name. It is not a citizen of the United States, nor may it be issued a social security number.

(True, the law does recognize the concept of posthumous paternity—after the child has been born. This is an extension of the principle of "presumption of legitimacy": a child born in lawful wedlock is presumed the child of the mother's legal husband. This is a *presumption* which may be rebutted by "clear and convincing" evidence, a standard less demanding than "preponderance of the evidence," which is the usual standard in civil cases, and much less demanding than "beyond the shadow of doubt," as per criminal cases. The presumption of legitimacy usually extends to protect the child born after the death or divorce of the presumptive father. How far it extends is a gray area. Generally, the presumption gets rather hazier as the interval between the death/divorce and the child's birth gets longer; and somewhere around 270 days the situation becomes positively sticky—but I've seen the presumption of legitimacy upheld after 313 days! Of course, if the mother can be shown to have been living in adultery, the whole thing goes out the window.)

Until relatively recently, historically speaking, the Church more or less recognized a similar concept. The defini-

tive test of whether a child had been born alive was to place a body in water: if the lungs had expanded to breathe, the body would float, therefore the child was a "person" and entitled to be buried with the full rites and sacraments of the church. The technical term is "docimasia."

If the unborn *in utero* is a legal null, it takes but a little extrapolation to conclude that the "frozen embryo," whose claim to humanity is considerably more hypothetical, would have a similar status. I suspect we won't have to face this problem until such an embryo actually comes to term. Admittedly it's an interesting question as to whether such a child could claim against the estate of the putative father. Possibly precedents concerning anonymous sperm donors, who are generally held to have no legal relationship to a child engendered from their "donation," would be applicable. Always glad to be of help. . . . [I believe the legal cases involving frozen sperm or embryos as possible legatees if brought to term focus on the rights and wishes of the parent/donor vs. those of other heirs who would stand to lose, rather than on the rights of the frozen entity *per se*—AJB]

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This letter is from the Vilnius SF Club "Dorado." I am enclosing a copy of our new club magazine, *The Contact*. I didn't answer your letter for two months because we were preparing our fanzine and I didn't think it would take so much time to publish it.

I, and our club, are interested in establishing good relations with you, and we seek contact with other Lithuanians and others in the USA who are interested in SF and fantasy. Because we need information about SF, SF fandom, in quantity. (We need such books as *Encyclopedia of SF*, books about the history of SF, fantasy, and fandom, about SF and fantasy films, and magazines.)

Soon we will found a joint stock company in order to establish a new SF magazine in Lithuania, and perhaps in the not-too-distant future we will have a video cafe, and go on to establish a small publishing house for SF and fantasy books, and finally to

make SF and fantasy games and toys. (Of course today it's only a dream . . . .) But for all this we need technical equipment such as computers.

But, as people say, we are poor but proud. We don't want to feel ourselves to be beggars! We want to have business relations with you and other Americans. We can send you something in exchange from Lithuania. We can send materials on SF, UFOs, and parapsychology. Perhaps we can send you for *Niekas* interviews, articles, cartoons from Lithuania. Perhaps we can publish something together, such as a book of cartoons from Lithuania.

We really need SF magazines like *Fear*, *SF Chronicle*, *Dragon Magazine*, *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, *The NY Review of SF*, etc., and the *Encyclopedia of SF*.

One more request. We heard that Robert Zameckis, director of SF films, is at least partially Lithuanian. If this is true we need help to communicate with him. (Maybe you can find his address and send it to us).

Now some words about me. I am 33 years old, a physicist. My wife, Ruta, is a specialist in Lithuanian philology. I have a nine-year-old boy, Benas. Sometimes I like to draw cartoons and some years ago I wrote some short-short SF stories. They were published in a newspaper and one was included in a collection prepared by our club president, Gediminas Beresnevicius. The stories were published under the name of Saulius Jusionis.

WAFH:

Harry Andruschak (enjoyed every word of the Moskowitz), Anon. (I am returning *Obsessions* and *Illustrated Bradbury* for credit), Robert Bloch (What wonderful work you did on the Moskowitz book and what a valuable addition to the literature on the field. My own autobiography, *Once Around the Bloch* is due from TOR next year), Teddy Harvia, Virginia Heinlein, Marc Russell (No, I am not the well-known satirist from Buffalo. I am the obscure satirist from Los Angeles. The other guy's name is spelled differently and my jokes are often funnier than his), Nan C. Scott (Just when one needs "escapism," it doesn't work! I have been so thoroughly immersed in the "cauldron of reality" for the past couple of years that I consider myself "fantasy-impaired."), Peter Shulin, and Phyllis White (It's good to hear from you with a reminder of old times). ❄

# Lost in Outer Gafia

## Bastraw's Bastion

by Michael Bastraw

*Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea a whole lotta culpa.*

Bless me Father for I have sinned. It has been three and a half years since my last regular issue of *Niekas*. These are my sins:

Over this time I have succumbed to the many temptations thrown in the path of a trufan. Business concerns may only be blamed for part of the distraction, as well as alternate (non-SF) recreational pursuits which gobbled up another chunk.

The rest must be written off to sloth and an aberrant spin of the ole moral compass that should have pointed me in the direction of my rightful obligation—getting the regular issues of *Niekas* out in a timely fashion.

Out of the mists has emerged a champion to lead us from this quagmire of non-publication. Nancy Hanger of Windhaven Press (Editorial Services) deserves a loud round of applause for getting this critter out of the gate. She has worked closely with ERM, AJB, and FL to massage all the material into a well-packed 88 pages of this, that, and the other thing.

Another patron of the magazine should be recognized for his continued exertions on our behalf. Our printer, Andy Johnson, defies conventional wisdom in the printing trade and good business practices in general by doing our work at a rate that makes it all possible. Thanx.

Which leaves me with no other course to follow but to get on the stick with the special publications we have coming up.

Next on the spike is *Attack of the Fifty Extremely SF\* Stories*, edited by yours truly. As with the previous FESF\*S, this is a collection of stories, 50 words or less, written and illustrated by many of your favorite fen and pros. With any luck at all, you'll be seeing it this summer.

The dark fantasy special publication is the next in the pipeline. This project is unique to us in many ways. It is being edited by an outside authority: Joe R. Christopher. He has approached this project in a very impressive manner. A professional academic,



Professor Christopher has solicited manuscripts from near and far; a wide range of topics are being addressed in a variety of voices. At between 150 and 200 pages, it will also be the largest item to ever come out of *Niekas* Publications.

In closing, let me say "How'd'y" to all my friends/associates/innocent bystanders who have written and not received the return correspondence that common courtesy

would dictate. I appreciate your continued attentions and you'll all get what's comin' to ya, see?

I will now say my 7 roseries, 12 *Act of Contritions*, multitudinous *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys*, and hope to do better in the future.\*



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