FOUNDATION

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THE REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION

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FOUNDATION

THE REVIEW OF SCIENCE FICTION

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Editorial

The death of Philip K. Dick in March was very saddening. It leaves American sf much the poorer, particularly as seen from this side of the Atlantic. For Dick was an author whose work appealed enormously to European readers: perhaps it is not too much to claim that he seemed to us the most humane of American sf writers, and the one least affected by the illusions of the American imperium. He presented one of the best faces of America to the world. His wry fantasies of the near future were expressions of ordinary Americans' doubts and weaknesses as well as being celebrations of their hidden strengths. Although he wrote of far planets and global dystopias Dick's novels were really all about the USA (and especially California)—yet at the same time they were about our common experience, heightened by being set in that particularly advanced sector of late 20th-century reality. He was a sometimes cranky and always idiosyncratic writer; but that is probably the most important sort of writer to be, at a time when every author has to compete with the overly-fecund mass media. Dick had a genuine vision to offer: he was in the business of altering our pre-conceptions rather than merely reinforcing them. In his own sly, underhand way he was a great myth-maker.

The tributes to Philip K. Dick in the May issue of *Locus* are fulsome indeed, and demonstrate that he was capable of inspiring the admiration (and love) of an extraordinarily wide range of readers and fellow-writers. Unlike bigger-selling contemporaries, he will be remembered for a long time to come. We have not had sufficient opportunity to compile a proper tribute to Dick for this issue of *Foundation,* but we do hope to run some articles on his work in the next couple of issues. There is much for the critics to explore. Dick's last sf novel, *The Divine Invasion,* has just been published in Britain (Corgi Books, 1982, 244 pp, £1.50). It is a dense blend of humour and mysticism. His non-sf novel *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer* will be out in America by the time this editorial sees print. We hope to cover these books, and much else from Dick's large output, before long.

There are a number of unpublished Philip K. Dick novels, and I for one hope that some publisher sees fit to issue the best of them. According to an article by Willis McNelly which appeared in *SF Studies* No. 5, the following manuscripts are in the Special Collections Library of California State University, Fullerton:-

1 *The Man Whose Teeth Were All Exactly Alike.* 358 pp.
2 *Mary and the Giant.* 315 pp.
3 *Gather Yourselves Together.* 481 pp.
4 *Puttering About in a Small Land.* 416 pp.
5 *In Milton Lumky Territory.* 293 pp.
6 *The Broken Bubble of Thisbe Holt.* 350 pp.
7 *Voices From the Street.* 652 pp.

Several other unpublished novels are said to exist, although they are not in the Fullerton collection. *Confessions of a Crap Artist* (written in 1959 and eventually published by Entwhistle Books in 1975) was 294 pages long in manuscript. Therefore it can be presumed that all of the above-listed novels, with the exception of number 5, are longer—in most cases considerably longer—than *Crap Artist.* They were written in the

late 1950s and early 1960s, during that period when Dick was attempting to break away from the sf field and establish himself as a "straight" novelist (not that he could ever have been that, in truth!). The publishers of the day did not permit him to succeed. In my view, *Confessions of a Crap Artist* is one of his finest novels, and if any of the other items approach it in quality they will be eminently worth bringing to the light of day.

This month I am moving house from Leeds to Brighton. I was pleased to discover, when I started work down there, that Brighton Museum is planning an exhibition, "Out of This World: Science Fiction Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" to run from 5th October to 5th December 1982. The exhibition will attempt to trace the history of sf "from the earliest speculative writings up to the blockbuster space movies which are so popular today . . . There will be an audio-visual introduction to the subject and exhibits will include paintings, illustrations, designs, film stills and posters." The sculptures on display will include a robot by Eduardo Paolozzi. A one-day seminar is also being planned, with a variety of speakers on different aspects of sf. A local cinema will show a season of sf films, and a stage production of Capek's *R.U.R.* will be presented. Anyone who wants further details may ring the Exhibitions Office, Brighton Museum—0273 603005, extension 44.

I'm afraid that once more it proves necessary to raise the subscription rates for *Foundation*. The last increase was in January 1981, and we are proposing the next increase for October 1982 (January 1983 for institutional subscribers). That means we will have held the rates steady for a year and nine months—which is quite a long period in times of inflation. With effect from *Foundation* 26 the standard annual subscription for British and European subscribers will be £6 instead of £5. North American and other rates will go up accordingly, and full details will be given in the next issue.

There is still time for readers to renew their subscriptions at the old rate (do so by 1st October please). And if you are not already a subscriber now is the time to become one: it always works out cheaper than buying *Foundation* in the shops. This is an expensive journal to produce; although we have received a limited subsidy from the Arts Council in 1982, there is no guarantee that such funds will be forthcoming next year, and North East London Polytechnic can no longer afford to under-write all our expenses. We hope that readers will understand and will continue to find *Foundation* good value.

David Pringle
May 1982

Recently Received:

The Patchin Review No. 3 (January 1982) and No. 4 (April 1982). A lively magazine of sf criticism, reviews and chat, edited by Charles Platt. No. 3 has contributions from Gregory Benford, Arthur Byron Cover, Edward Bryant and others, as well as such regular columnists as "Cousin Clara" and "Gabby Snitch". No. 4 brings us F. Paul Wilson, Norman Spinrad, A.A. Attanasio, David Hartwell, etc.

Available from 9 Patchin Place, New York, NY 10011 ($12 for 6 issues). British subscriptions to David Pringle, 124 Osborne Road, Brighton, BN1 6LU (£6 for 6 issues, or £1 for a sample).

Dr William Moy Russell is Reader in Sociology at the University of Reading, a member of the British Social Biology Council and President of the Folklore Society. He is also a longtime aficionado of sf, and indeed a story of his, "The Three Brothers," appeared in A.D. 2500 *(Heinemann, 1955), the volume of* The Observer *sf prize stories of the previous year. The following witty and lively piece is Dr Russell's second Presidential Address to the Folklore Society, delivered on 21st March 1981, and appeared first in the Spring 1982 issue of the journal of that society,* Folklore. *Based at University College London, the Folklore Society is the oldest one in the world for the study of traditional culture; it had its centenary in 1978.*

Folktales and Science Fiction

W.M.S. RUSSELL

I may as well begin by quoting a passage from a science fiction novel, that describes the landing of visitors from an industrialized interstellar empire upon a technologically backward planet.

> The mighty space-liner descended majestically through the atmosphere, spurting before and beside her the puffs of flame that steadied her unerring course, loomed over the port, and settled with a splendid flourish upon a group of warehouses, which she totally incinerated, to land, swaying slightly at first, at a jaunty angle; when the dust and smoke had settled, the great ship seemed to preside over the port like a new and loftier tower of Pisa. She had about as much hope as that tower of taking off again; most of her business end had paid its tribute to the Second Law of Thermodynamics.
>
> A philosophical mind might have rejoiced in the opportunity to repeat, on a new planet, the alleged experiments of Galileo. Nothing, regrettably, was further from the thoughts of the captain, who sat in his cabin gibbering with incoherent emotion. In fairness to this worthy officer, let it be known at once that his computations had been faultless—except in one respect: as this was his first visit to the world, he had made the mistake of relying upon Ground Control.
>
> It was a fitting introduction to the space-port of Methonium, pinnacle of technology and civilization on the planet of Toxicurare[1].

I have used this specimen because I know for certain the use of folktale material in the novel concerned was partly conscious and partly unconscious. When I wrote it, in 1954 – 5, I quite deliberately used, for instance, the motif of the resourceful servant, that standby of comedy from the Greeks through Beaumarchais to Wodehouse; it appears in folktale types such as the one in which the servant frightens away robbers and secures a treasure for his master[2], or, of course, fused with the helpful animal, in Puss-in-boots[3]. However, as this was a science fiction story, I naturally made my resourceful servant a robot barber. I also explicitly referred to the Barber of Baghdad from the *Thousand Nights and One Night*[4], and I had the motif of the Sorcerer's Apprentice[5] so consciously in mind that I even played Dukas's Scherzo *L'Apprenti Sorcier* for inspiration. How I used all these motifs is, as they say, another story; for my present purpose, I want only to emphasize that they were all quite consciously used.

Now the passage I quoted introduces the adventures of visitors from a highly developed industrial civilization on a technologically backward planet. This is, as I knew, a common theme of science fiction, developed most systematically by Sprague de Camp,

in his novels and stories about technologically backward planets such as Krishna, and the Brazilian organization that controls space travel, the Viagens Interplanetarias[6]. My own hero was trying to find a new market for the robots produced by his Company on the backward planet of Toxicurare. Despite all my conscious uses of folktale material, it never occurred to me that trade with technologically backward societies accounted for several folktale motifs and types, such as introducing sickles[7], or saddles, bridles and stirrups[8], to societies unfamiliar with them. My hero was accompanied by his faithful robot barber as combined aide and sample, but, despite Puss-in-Boots, I never even thought of the most famous of all the motifs known collectively as Lucky Business Ventures—Dick Whittington's cat[9].

The presence of this theme in folktales is no wonder, for such opportunities have always been a major incentive for long-distance trade. The encounter with backward peoples off the beaten track is probably responsible for another group of folktale motifs and types, those concerned with foolish peoples or communities[10]. Ethnic jokes about whole foolish peoples have been told, according to Peter Clayton[11], since the ancient Egyptians were telling the one about the Egyptian who fell in the Nile and got wet, and the Nubian who fell in the Nile and got eaten by a crocodile. Then there are the stories of foolish communities, such as the ancient Greek city of Abdera in Thrace[12], the legendary German town of Laleburg[13], and the forty-five foolish places in Britain listed by Katharine Briggs in her *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales*[14], the most famous being Gotham in Nottinghamshire. Some of these stories may have ritual or mythological backgrounds[15], but the foolish peoples, as Christie Davies has shown[16], are characteristically those believed to be technically and economically less advanced, and I have no doubt this is also true of the foolish backwater communities. The transition can be seen in tales of peoples who pay a lot to acquire a sickle for the first time and then, after someone is accidentally killed by it, drown it as a punishment or give it back to the trader for nothing[17].

Now people of technologically advanced societies or communities are not really wiser than those of backward ones. As individuals, they may not even be technologically more advanced. During the war in north-western Europe, I was trained to operate a radio set. Back in England after the war, emboldened by this achievement, I rashly agreed to stand in for the camp telephone switchboard operator while he went to the NAAFI. There was a wall covered with black rubber snakes which had to be fitted into various holes. It looked rather like the Wall of Serpents in the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*[18]. The experience was a traumatic one, and my only memory is of sitting there, entwined like Laocoon with black rubber snakes, and listening to a voice of thunder shouting down the line: "Get that man off the switch-board!" The point is that no tribal food-gathering savage could possibly have done worse than I did.

Even the folk sometimes admit that the foolish groups are not really so foolish: the men of Laleburg, Gotham and Devizes were said to have played the fool deliberately, in order to deceive foreign powers, King John and the Customs officers, respectively[19]. But most jokes about foolish peoples and communities do seem to reflect a belief that groups less technologically advanced are individually more foolish. The fact is folktales transmit folk fantasy as well as folk wisdom, and the writer's business, conscious or unconscious, is to sort the wheat from the chaff. When more and less advanced peoples meet in good stories, there is wisdom and folly on both sides, and De Camp's Krishnans, like W.S.

Gilbert's Utopians, are certainly not represented as more foolish than their visitors. Neither, I am glad to say, are my Toxicurarans.

I hope I have shown that a science fiction story may involve not only conscious but unconscious use of folktale motifs, just as G.F. Dalton showed for other kinds of fiction in a recent paper in *Folklore*[20]. I shall now take a second example, conjectural but probable, of both kinds of use. We are moving from the ridiculous to the sublime, from my light comedy to a masterpiece by the man who was, by common consent, in the words of Sam Moskowitz, "the greatest science fiction writer of them all"[21].

H.G. Wells wrote *When the Sleeper Wakes* in 1897–8[22]. In his own words, he "scamped the finish", in the hope of a quick sale, because he was suffering from kidney disease and feared he might be unable to earn for some time[23]. The whole book gave him great trouble, and even after rewriting it in 1910 as *The Sleeper Awakes* he was never satisfied. While working on it, in January 1898, he wrote to George Gissing: "its gotten just at the top of my powers or a little beyond em! So I'm midway between a noble performance and a noble disaster". And in the preface to the revised version in 1910, he described it as "one of the most ambitious and least satisfactory of my works"[24]. Whatever its faults, as J.R. Hammond has observed, it shows Wells at the height of his powers as a prophet: "television, broadcasting, aeroplanes, phonetic spelling, urban walkways—all these are described in convincing detail"[25]. Personally, I find it the most exciting of all Wells's novels.

The two versions are identical in respect of the points I shall mention, so I need not distinguish them. The story begins with the Sleeper racked by insomnia, the result of drugs taken to keep awake and write a progressive pamphlet under pressure. He falls into a trance, and wakes two hundred and three years later to a changed world. So far it is the venerable motif of Magic Sleep extending over Many Years[26]. This goes back at least to the story of Epimenides of Cnossus in Crete, who was sent to fetch a sheep, turned aside for a nap in a cave, and woke up after an interval ranging in different accounts from forty to sixty years[27]. Epimenides was probably a real person flourishing about 600 B.C.; the story of his sleep was first recorded by Theopompus in the 4th century B.C.[28]. The most famous literary example is, of course, "Rip Van Winkle" (1819); according to Alan Bruford, "Orcadians claim that Washington Irving got the basis of the . . . story from his parents, who had emigrated from Orkney"[29]. As I.F. Clarke has shown, the sleeper motif had become a regular means of introducing science fiction stories about the future, beginning with Sebastian Mercier's book *L'An 2440,* published in 1771[30]. The most famous of these books before Wells's was *Looking Backward, 2000–1887,* published in 1888 by Edward Bellamy[31]. This was immensely successful and influential[32]; as Patrick Parrinder has discussed, it provoked William Morris to write *News from Nowhere* (1890)[33], and as James Gunn has suggested, Wells's book may also have been "written in reaction to Bellamy's vision"[34]. Certainly Wells must have known what he was doing when he used the Sleeper motif. He actually mentions Rip Van Winkle in his novel[35], and he got the starting-point of insomnia from Bellamy, though he utterly transmuted it, presenting with all the force of Shakespeare or Coleridge the agony of sleeplessness.

Wells's Sleeper has been used as titular owner by the manipulators of a giant multinational trust, which has grown until, by the time he wakes, he is "Master almost of the earth"[36]. The trust is administered by an unscrupulous oligarchy, who keep the people enslaved in a vast Labour Company. When the Sleeper awakes, the oligarchs try to

dispose of him, but the people revolt. The revolution succeeds, with the backing of a discontented oligarch called Ostrog, who is out to become dictator. While Ostrog is consolidating his power, he tries to keep the Sleeper amused; luckily, the amusement that attracts him is learning to pilot an aeroplane. Eventually, the Sleeper realises what Ostrog is up to, confronts him, and drives him into flight from the capital, London. The dictator comes back, with barbarian troops from Africa, to attack the democracy the Sleeper is setting up. This is, I believe, the kind of odd specific forecast Wells often got as a fruit of his sustained imaginative efforts to envisage the future. For, thirty-eight years later, the rebel general Franco attacked the Spanish democracy with Moorish troops from Africa, whose barbarian proclivities included castrating the bodies of the loyalist dead[37]. In the Wells novel, with folktale simplicity, the Sleeper takes his aeroplane up to engage Ostrog's air transports single-handed. He wins the battle, but crashes to his death.

Now, imagine Wells, ill, anxious, finishing his work, like the Sleeper himself, under pressure. In these conditions, as he came to conclude his story, I believe this, in many ways, most English of writers returned quite unconsciously to the root legend of English literature. The groundwork of association was already laid at the beginning of the novel, when the Sleeper forced himself to keep awake for a battle against social injustice. Just so did Beowulf keep vigil to meet and overcome the monster Grendel[38]. Near the end of the Old English epic, the old king goes out alone to fight the Firedrake that is destroying his people. "You soldiers", he tells his men, "may watch from this hill . . . It is not your business nor any man's but mine to measure strength with the monster"[39]. As the Sleeper, too, goes out to slay a monster and die, he "would let no other man attempt it", saying: "he who takes the greatest danger, he who bears the heaviest burden, that man is King"[40].

After these introductory examples of folktale material in science fiction, let me briefly recall the gist of my first Address before the Society in 1980[41]. On that occasion, taking my cue from an earlier Presidential Address by H.R. Ellis Davidson[42], I broached the much wider topic of folktales and literature. I defined folktales as traditional narratives, handed down in speech as well as usually also in writing, and classified them into myths (folk science), legends (folk history), and fairytales (folk literature), allowing for the fact that, in the words of Katharine Briggs, "all kinds of border cases arise"[43]. On this basis, I made the large proposal that "all worthwhile works of . . . literature have important points of contact with folktales. For folktales are a very fundamental part of human culture, and . . . a very important medium for the transmission of symbolism over long periods"[44]. I began to consider the use of folktale material in the theatre, a subject on which Katharine Briggs had thrown so much light[45]. This time I shall try to apply my proposal to science fiction.

For reasons that will appear, the use of folktale material is more obvious in sf than in many other forms of literature. Soviet scholars and writers seem to have been the first to emphasize a general relationship between folktales and science fiction. As Patrick Parrinder has discussed in several publications, Yevgeny Zamyatin was already in 1922 describing Wells as a creator of "urban fairytales"[46]. At about the same time, as Irwin Porges records in his monumental life of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Axionov, president of the Russian poets' "Soviet", was explaining the success of Burroughs's books in Russia in terms of the Russian people's fondness for fairytales[47]. More recently, in 1968, in discussing the relations between technology and literature, I traced a continuity between

what I called the *success story* and modern sf, through such figures as Galland, Defoe and Wells[48]. By the *success story* I meant a cluster of several hundred motifs in the chapter of the Motif-Index called *Tests*[49], the kind of folktale in which the hero or heroine solves some technical problem, alone or with specialist assistance, and wins a royal marriage and half the kingdom. Next, at a conference of the Folklore Society and the History Department of the University of Exeter, held in April 1971, H.W. Stubbs discussed the theme of the descent into the underworld, of which more later, and its influence on modern fiction, including some science fiction[50]. Finally, in October of the same year, at a symposium held at McGill University in Montreal, another Soviet scholar, Tatyana Chernysheva, produced an interesting discussion of folktales, Wells and recent sf[51], in which she gave special attention to the theme of transformation, again a very large theme, which occupies over a third of the chapter of the Motif-Index called *Magic*[52]. None of these studies, however, go into great detail, and other references to the link between folktales and science fiction are vague[53]. A vast and rewarding field of research lies wide open for the detailed study of types and motifs represented in the large literature of sf, their changing proportions and treatments. In this Address, I hope only to open a few pathways into this unknown world.

Why is the influence of folktales particularly obvious in science fiction? To make this clear, I must say something about sf, beginning with the term itself. Brian Stableford has recorded the use of the term *science fiction* in a book published by one William Wilson in 1851;[54] and in 1940, in conversation with Hal Thompson, Burroughs claimed he had coined the word *scientifiction*[55]. But the important coinages were certainly those of the writer – publisher Hugo Gernsback, who introduced *scientific fiction* in 1922, *scientifiction* in 1924, and *science fiction* in 1929[56]. By the end of the 1930s, the last term was well established. The abbreviation STF (for scientifiction) lasted much longer, and was only just beginning to be displaced by sf (for science fiction) in 1957, when Moskowitz wrote an essay on all these terms[57].

Science fiction has often been defined. For my purposes, I will take it to mean prose fiction in which science and/or technology plays an integral part in the setting and/or action. For a more evocative statement, it is impossible to improve on what Gernsback wrote in 1926: "by 'scientifiction' I mean the Jules Verne, H.G. Wells and Edgar Allan Poe type of story—a charming romance intermingled with scientific fact and prophetic vision"[58].

Since the pioneering work of Moskowitz, much has been written about the history of sf and its prescursors, and I shall not try to summarize it today. I must, however, say something about American pulp magazines, and what is called the Golden Age of science fiction. In the words of James Gunn, "in 1884, two new inventions—the linotype and the process for making paper from wood pulp—lowered the cost of printing . . . and made possible the pulp magazines"[59]. From 1896, the publishers began to produce all-fiction magazines, and from 1906 "category pulps", that is, magazines dealing each with a particular kind of story[60]. Science fiction stories appeared for a long time in general adventure magazines, the most famous and influential being those of Burroughs, who began his writing career with "Under the Moons of Mars", serialized in *All-Story* magazine in February to July 1912[61]. In 1926, Gernsback launched *Amazing Stories*, and this was the first of a series of specialist sf pulp magazines, whose tangled tales are conveniently set out in Michael Ashley's two-volume history[62].

By 1937, when John W. Campbell became editor of *Astounding Stories,* which under his auspices became *Astounding Science Fiction,* pulp sf had matured, and the following period is generally called the Golden Age of science fiction[63]. Isaac Asimov, who was himself discovered by Campbell in 1939[64], dates the Golden Age from 1938 to 1950, when other magazines and editors became important[65]. I would personally like to extend it a little longer, if only to include such a Golden Age classic as Asimov's own *The Currents of Space,* published in *Astounding* in 1952[66]. But essentially the Golden Age began in the heyday of the New Deal (which Frederik Pohl mentions in his autobiographical book about science fiction),[67] and ended, like so many good things in the 1950s, when the effects of overpopulation in the United States reached a climax, with that sustained onslaught on science, learning and the arts we label by the infamous name of Joseph McCarthy. This background is relevant, because the Golden Age is characterized, not only by the greatest concentration of good stories in the history of sf, but also by a glowing faith in science, technology, and mankind. Ideally, a Golden Age story concerned the combined solution of a personal, social, technical and scientific problem[68]. Robert Heinlein, who wrote some of the finest Golden Age stories, made a chart of the future, on which he plotted characters, events, and stories to be written; two of these stories, recounting the rise and dictatorship of a "television evangelist", he deliberately never wrote, because they would have been "down beat", though he did write a story about the dictator's fall[69]. In my discussion of technology and literature in 1968, I showed that the success story, in folktale and literature alike, is marked by social mobility, broad human sympathies, and the happy ending; and all three are characteristic of Golden Age science fiction, which at its best shows an awareness that nothing human, or even that nothing intelligent, is alien[70]. Happy endings are indeed generally characteristic of many fairytales as opposed to many legends, and we may expect specifically to find fairytale motifs abounding in the Golden Age.

Now American pulp sf had two remarkable characteristics, highly relevant for my theme today. The first can be strikingly illustrated by my own personal experience. In my childhood in the 1930s I read Poe, Verne, Wells, Burroughs, and Conan Doyle. At the age of nine, asked to write an essay on my favourite novel, I chose *The First Men in the Moon.* A little later, I encountered the most exciting book of my whole childhood, *The Gods of Mars,* and I can still recall, after the diabolical cliff-hanger at the end, my joy when I laid my hands on *The Warlord of Mars,* and knew I could find out what happened next. My response to Burroughs was far from unique; his cliff-hangers regularly drove readers mad[71], and, according to James Gunn, "almost every author of science fiction and many readers credit Burroughs with their introduction, at an early age, to 'the sense of wonder'"[72]. In addition to these writers, I was lent by a school-friend[73] all twenty issues of the British sf magazine *Scoops,* which lasted only from 1933 to 1934[74]. This was a precious loan: among other fine things, *Scoops* had reprinted Conan Doyle's *The Poison Belt.* In my early teens, I only remember reading one sf story, Eimar O'Duffy's superb satire *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street*[75]. In later life, I managed to forget the author's name, and a search of many years was only rewarded in 1979, when Brian Stableford kindly gave me the details, and George Locke, of Ferret Fantasy, found me a second-hand copy, which, for a bonus, had belonged to the king of archaeologists, for it is signed "V.G. Childe".

When I was first reading O'Duffy, I was quite ignorant of the Golden Age then

dawning across the Atlantic. And indeed I reached the age of twenty-five, in 1950, totally unaware of the *existence* of any science fiction magazines but the ill-fated British *Scoops,* and thus of the existence of most of the sf ever written by then. In 1950, I was given the opportunity to read through a veritable treasure hoard of sf magazines, including *Astounding* and Campbell's marvellous fantasy magazine, *Unknown Worlds*[76]. From then on I was an avid collector. I scoured the bookshops of Europe for the second-hand leavings of the American forces, and I can still recall the exhilaration of running down Sprague de Camp's *The Tritonian Ring* and De Camp and Fletcher Pratt's *The Incomplete Enchanter* in an antique shop in Tavistock. My local newsagent, Mr M. Richards, very kindly enlisted a brilliant rep, who actually obtained on request De Camp's *The Goblin Tower* and De Camp and Pratt's *The Castle of Iron.* His task must have been, in Milton's words, like "those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder"[77]. For, as I learned from Mr Richards, the science fiction and fantasy paperbacks came over, as a tiny intrusive element, in the mountains of Westerns and Micky Spillanes that crossed the Atlantic *as ballast,* to be sold over here *by the ton*[78]. So matters continued until April 1971, when I went to Birmingham to lecture at the Schools Science Conference, and met the late James Blish and his writer-illustrator wife Judith, who told me of Derek Stokes's London science fiction bookshop, Dark They Were And Golden-Eyed, then off the Strand, later in Berwick Street, now in St. Anne's Court. From then on, my troubles were largely over as far as books were concerned, and indeed while I was preparing this address Derek Stokes found me a rather recondite paper I was looking for.

The period when I knew of American sf, but found it so hard to get, does have a historical parallel. In his life of Nicias, Plutarch tells a beautiful story, which Browning used for his poem *Balaustion's Adventure*[79]. The Sicilian Greeks passionately liked the choruses of Euripides, but had great trouble getting hold of them. So, after the Athenian defeat at Syracuse, when many Athenian prisoners were enslaved, their masters freed them and sent them home in return for recitations of Euripides, and they went to thank the poet on their return. On another occasion, when an eastern Greek ship wanted to put into the harbour of Syracuse to escape pirates, she was admitted on condition her crew recited some of Euripides's choruses.

This is all very well, but after all we have printing-presses nowadays, and Britain was not at war with the United States, as Syracuse was with Athens. On the contrary, I met with some extraordinary kindnesses from Americans, for instance in my desperate quest for Isaac Asimov's books. Andre Schiffrin, of the New American Library, sent me five Asimov books as a present in 1958, and in the same year Isaac Asimov himself sent me his last spare copy of *Foundation and Empire,* a highly treasured possession of mine[80]. The whole episode is bizarre enough, but still more remarkable is the fact that I could reach the age of twenty-five in an English-speaking country without even knowing of the existence of a whole English literature, and that the most important of its epoch. The isolation of American sf from so many readers in another English-speaking country resulted from its isolation from book literature. According to James Gunn, it was "neither published in book form nor reviewed from 1926 until 1946"[81]. There is no parallel for this in the whole history of literature. Thanks to a second factor, this isolation caused science fiction to develop almost as a kind of folk literature. This second factor was the control of sf by its

folk—the fans.

Readers have always had some control over writers, and the multiple instalment serials of the nineteenth century gave them some chance to exercise this control in mid-story. Dickens yielded to pressure from Bulwer Lytton, who no doubt represented the readers, and made Estella relent towards Pip in *Great Expectations,* though he remained adamant when "inundated with imploring letters recommending poor little Nell to mercy"[82]. But the continuous feedback influence of the fans on sf was something quite new in the way of folk control of written fiction. Columns of letters from readers had been a feature of pulp magazines from early in their career, but the sf fan wrote, in Moskowitz's words, "out of all proportion to his numbers"[83]. A vast movement of fans developed; as James Gunn has observed, its "successes, failures and power struggles . . . would fill several books—and have"[84]. In the words of Philip Klass, "few workers in any art form ever had the experience of so much of their audience looking over their shoulders as they worked"[85].

Philip Klass, well-known himself as a science fiction writer by his pen-name William Tenn, wrote this in his introduction to a recent reprint of Fredric Brown's *What Mad Universe,* which, as he shows, is the most subtle comment ever made on the extraordinary relationship in sf between author or editor and fan. Brown's marvellous novel is based on the conception of an infinite number of parallel universes. This concept, as F.M. Cornford showed in 1934, was evolved in the 5th century B.C. by the founders of the atomic theory, Leucippus of Miletus and Democritus of Abdera[86]. Democritus added the idea that these universes might differ from each other, thus opening the way to the conception of an infinite number of different or *alternate* parallel universes. As Brian Stableford has discussed, this concept has naturally been a godsend to sf writers, especially with the addition of a way to travel between the universes[87]. For one thing, if there is an infinite number of alternate parallel universes, then any universe any individual can dream up must exist somewhere and might be reached. In this way Brown was able to develop a kind of psychological science fiction. He took off, perhaps consciously, from the Taoist story of Chuang Chou, who dreamed he was a butterfly and woke up wondering if the butterfly was really dreaming he was Chuang Chou[88]. This is also of course familiar as Alice's problem with the Red King in *Through the Looking-Glass.* Brown's hero, a science fiction editor called Keith Winton, has been having trouble with a fan called Joe Doppelberg, when he is precipitated by an electrical superdischarge into a parallel alternate universe. The subtlety of the story lies in the fact, in Klass's words, that "Keith Winton is not simply in the universe that Joe Doppelberg has dreamed up—he is in the universe that *he* thinks Joe Doppelberg *would* dream up"[89]. And there I must leave Brown's plot, except to mention that after many trials for his hero there is a beautifully logical happy ending.

As Brian Stableford has observed, the conception of alternate parallel universes is related to some forms of the otherworld in folktales[90]. Alan Bruford has quoted a subtle Scottish tale of a competition at lying held at a farm-house[91]. A clodhopping labourer cannot make up any stories at all, so the farmer, who has the Black Art, decides to give him a story to tell, and sends him to clean out a boat. The labourer is carried across to the other side of a river, where he has become a beautiful girl, marries and has two children; after this he sees the boat, gets in to look at it, and is carried back to the farm side, where he is a clodhopping labourer again, to his great distress. But when he tells his story, he is given the prize for the best lie: actually he has only been away for half an hour, and has

imagined the whole thing because, says the storyteller, "the farmer had put the Black Art on him". This story has almost as many angles as Brown's; well might Bruford call it "something resembling folk science-fiction".

To return to Brown's novel, Klass discusses whether it is strictly science fiction or fantasy, and concludes that "the late John W. Campbell's distinction between science fiction and fantasy—that the first should be logical and possible and good, and that the second need only be logical and good—blurs completely here"[92]. In fact sf is closely connected with fantasy, and both together make up *imaginative,* as opposed to *naturalistic,* fiction. Imaginative fiction is specially related to that broad category of complex folktales we call *wonder tales,* as naturalistic fiction is specially related to the rather narrower category of complex folktales we call *novelle.* In 1712, Addison wrote an essay on what Dryden had called "the Fairy Way of Writing"[93]. Nobody can succeed in this, he asserts, unless he has "a particular cast of fancy, and an imagination naturally fruitful . . . Besides this, he ought to be very well versed in legends and fables and antiquated romances, that he may . . . humour those notions which we have imbibed in our infancy". Addison undoubtedly had fantasy in mind, but his sketch, as I hope to show, applies very well to the sf writer. No wonder we often find the same authors writing science fiction and fantasy. Poul Anderson, for instance, has written some excellent fantasies. The outstanding example is Sprague de Camp, who is about equally prolific and successful in both sf and fantasy.

Campbell's dictum, that science fiction should be logical and possible and good, whereas fantasy need only be logical and good, is a fair working definition of the two extremes. There are, it is true, some arbitrary conventions. Since Olaf Stapledon published *Star Maker* in 1937, there have been copious stories involving, in Moskowitz's words, "galactic wars and the organization of galactic empires comprising thousands of planets"[94]. In 1950, Claire Russell observed that all such stories are, strictly speaking, pure fantasies, for a simple reason. To reach the stage of interstellar travel, an intelligent species must first pass the stage of interplanetary travel, which humanity has just reached. But at this stage the species will have, as we have at present, a technology that could, if misused, destroy civilization, the species, or even life on the planet. It follows that no species can reach the interstellar stage without first overcoming the problems of over-population and violence. Interstellar crime, tyranny and war are therefore impossible[95]. Arthur Clarke has hinted at the same thing in *Childhood's End* (1953) and "The Sentinel" (1951)[96]. Nevertheless, by convention, stories that conform to Campbell's rule *otherwise* are normally counted as sf, the interstellar setting simply providing a larger canvas for thought experiments about what would really be earthbound societies. As Isaac Asimov wrote in 1954 in his version of Bunthorne's confession in *Patience:*-[97]

> So success is not a mystery, just brush up on your history, and borrow day by day.
> Take an empire that was Roman and you'll find it is at home in all the starry Milky Way.
> With a drive that's hyperspatial, through the parsecs you will race, you'll find that plotting is a breeze,
> With a tiny bit of cribbin' from the works of Edward Gibbon and that Greek, Thucydides.

In any case, imaginative literature does not really fall neatly into two halves. There are all gradations between the pure science fiction of, say, Hal Clement and the pure fantasy of, say, Lord Dunsany. And in the middle there is a large area of what we call *science fantasy.* It is not only in *What Mad Universe* that the distinction blurs. Take the concept

of magic. In 1968, when discussing the folk success story, I wrote: "it is true that the technological marvels are achieved by magic, often with the help of spirits or talking animals, whom nobody but the hero ever meets. But if we are honest, all technology is magic to those not in the know. As far as I personally am concerned, it is simply magic to pack electronic components at 10,000 per cubic inch; yet I know that by 1967 experts were doing this by means of a rational technology"[98]. As Arthur Clarke has more succinctly put it, "a sufficiently advanced science is indistinguishable from magic"[99]. This is one very important reason why sf is so susceptible to the magic of the folk wonder tale.

Some people have found ways to use pure fantasy in psychological science fiction. A delightful example is Peter Phillips's short story "Dreams are Sacred" (1949)[100]. A writer of sf and fantasy, overworking after an illness, writes increasingly wild fantasy and eventually has a breakdown and goes into a permanent dream-state in which he lives out his stories as the hero. The psychiatrists have discovered how to hook up his brain with that of a volunteer, who is to enter his dreams and reduce them to reality until the illusion collapses and the dreamer is cured. A very down-to-earth sports reporter is elected, and succeeds in doing the job. Faced by an army of outworldish monsters conceived by the dreamer, for instance, he conjures up a telephone box and summons a police riot squad.

In 1884, when Ottmar Mergenthaler was perfecting the linotype that made pulp magazines possible, Samuel Clemens was in process of losing all his money on a disastrously impractical rival typesetting machine. But that year a friend introduced him to Malory's *Morte D'Arthur,* and in the course of the next five years, in his better known name of Mark Twain, he launched Boss Morgan into the Dark Ages as *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889)[101]. He thus started a genre of stories of backwards time travel in history, of which the best is *Lest Darkness Fall,* published in 1939 by Sprague de Camp[102]. "The general idea for *Lest Darkness Fall*", he wrote me in 1972, "I got from *A Connecticut Yankee* . . . , and the specific setting from Robert Graves's *Count Belisarius.* Also, having been a patent expert in my earlier career, and so having some acquaintance with the actual problems of technology, I thought somebody ought to write a story wherein the time traveller bravely tries to invent his way out of his predicament but finds that most of his ideas won't work without a lifetime of costly experiment"[103].

But the Arthurian setting of Mark Twain's story, with its rich interaction of chivalry and technology, is at least as much legend as history, and *A Connecticut Yankee* gave rise *also* to a genre of science fantasy in which modern or even future individuals are introduced into the worlds of the great cycles of legend or romance. The world of the Norse gods is particularly popular, being the implicit subject of A. Merritt's *Dwellers in the Mirage* (1932)[104], and the explicit subject of Edmond Hamilton's *A Yank at Valhalla* (1941)[105] and Lester del Rey's "When the World Tottered" (1950)[106]. The most ambitious of all these works is Emil Petaja's tetralogy based on the Finnish *Kalevala—Saga of Lost Earths* and *The Star Mill* (1966)[107] and *The Stolen Sun* and *Tramontane* (1967)[108]. Petaja has four heroes from the remote future, each an avatar of one of the four heroes of the *Kalevala,* and interweaves their sf adventures with the fate of the descendants of the people of the epic. He calls his work science fantasy[109]. The transitions between the future and legendary worlds are not always entirely convincing, and Petaja does rather give himself *carte blanche* when, for instance, he introduces the episode of the giant Vipunen with the words: "there was nothing supernatural about it, actually.

Nothing was 'supernatural'. It was simply a random discovery of a heretofore unguessed-at phenomenon"[110]. But Petaja's tetralogy as a whole is a *tour de force,* and it is of exceptional interest for my present purpose and deserves a separate study, both because of the importance of the *Kalevala* in the history of folklore study, and because Petaja himself is of Finnish descent, dedicates his work to his mother "who loved the Old Songs—who remembered", and specifically states he has *heard* "these song-stories since childhood" and knows "great passages by heart"; the tradition includes a mass of material in addition to the original epic collated by Elias Lönnrot in 1835 and 1849[111].

The neatest and most elegant formula for this kind of science fantasy was developed by Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt in the series of stories they wrote between 1940 and 1954 about the adventures of a young psychologist called Harold Shea[112]. They started, some years before Brown, from that rich notion of an infinite number of alternate parallel universes, but they invented the most intellectually satisfying way of travelling between them. The idea was that each of the worlds recorded in legend cycles has a system of natural laws which, though logically consistent, is quite different from those of our universe. By analysing, say, Homer, it should be possible to isolate the corresponding pattern of law, which can then be expressed in symbolic logic, and used to attune the mind and senses to such a totally different system that they carry the body into the corresponding universe. Shea is a decidedly incomplete enchanter who rarely gets where he wants to go, but he and sometimes his friends are enabled in this way to explore in succession the worlds of the Norse gods, of Spenser, of *Kubla Khan,* of Ariosto, of the *Kalevala,* and of the Irish heroes, with more or less successful attempts at applying the natural laws of each of these universes to make appropriate magic, in the course of adventures as colourful and entertaining as any in pure fantasy.

The use of whole legend cycles is, then, not uncommon in science fiction or at least in science fantasy. But both forms also make abundant use of individual tales, tale types and motifs. Sometimes the titles of folktales or folksongs are adopted for sf stories, but here, as in other literature, there need be no sustantial connection with the tale or song used. I can see only a rather incidental connection between Henry Kuttner's story "The Piper's Son" (1945) and the famous pig-rustler of the nursery song, or between Stuart Gordon's trilogy *One-Eye, Two-Eyes* and *Three-Eyes* (1973 – 5) and the Grimms' fairytale of that name, or even between Heinlein's delightful story "—And He Built a Crooked House—", specifically in the form of a tesseract, or four-dimensional hypercube, (1941) and the song that inspired its apt title[113].

When a tale, type or motif is used organically in the story, it may sometimes be used without modification. Thus in Edward Arnold's *Lieut Gulliver Jones: His Vacation* (1905)[114], the American hero on Mars is trying to recover a princess from a king who has captured her and the king sets him two apparently impossible tasks, both of which he fulfills, and still withholds the girl. These are the folktale motifs of Tasks Imposed and Reward for Accomplishment of Task Deceptively Withheld[115]. But this sort of unmodified use is naturally more characteristic of fantasy, and in fact this novel of Arnold's is not far from the fantasy end of the spectrum of imaginative literature.

Far more commonly, however, folktale material is treated in a manner which I shall call *scientification.* By that I mean the scientific treatment of folktale motifs, the imaginative attempt to see new implications, including scientific and technical ones, of folk images. When I read Tatyana Chernysheva, I found she had anticipated me here, and

some of her remarks express beautifully what I mean by my new term. "In modern science fiction, as in Wells", she writes, "the folktale is an indispensable constructive element for creating new science-fictional imagery. These old image-clusters and associations, well known from childhood days, have not lost their power: they direct the writer's imagination, so that he willy-nilly tries on the new scientific discovery for congruity with them—will it give a new effect?"[116] As I hope to show, this can be done consciously or unconsciously. It can be done in fantasy as well as in science fiction, indeed I believe the presence of some scientification is an excellent criterion for science fantasy, as opposed to the pure fantasy of George MacDonald or Lord Dunsany.

There are two forms of scientification. First, you can take the folktale motif as given, and consider what would be its *consequences* in realistic scientific and technical terms. The Grand Master of this sort of game is Sprague de Camp. In "Nothing in the Rules" (1939)[117] he works out *exactly* what would happen if you entered a mermaid for a ladies' swimming event. In one of his novels with Fletcher Pratt, *Land of Unreason* (1941)[118], in my view the best fantasy ever written, the hero has to fight two-headed eagles. The call of one of these monsters has a slight warble, which the hero ascribes to "the heterodyning effect of a slight difference in pitch between the two larynxes belong to a single eagle". In *The Goblin Tower* (1968)[119], De Camp's hero goes to bed with a princess who turns into a gigantic snake. This is our old folktale friend the Lamia, which Keats got from Philestratus *via* Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*[120]. Two Lamia folktales were collected in Florence by Charles Godfrey Leland and published as recently as 1896[121]. It is an extremely dangerous monster. But De Camp's hero, with typical resource, escapes it by taking up the carpet, for, as he rightly assumes, no snake, not even a Lamia, can move on a polished floor without any "roughness or solid objects to exert a horizontal force against".

There is, however, a further and very common development of scientification. In addition to working out the realistic consequences of the motif, the writer may scientify the motif itself, that is, try to explain it as a real possibility, if necessary by means of extrapolation from present to future science and technology. Aldous Huxley's masterpiece[122] takes off explicitly from the Greek legend of Tithonus, who had the misfortune to receive everlasting life without everlasting youth[123]. Huxley's epigraph and title are both taken from Tennyson's treatment of the legend—"the woods decay, the woods decay and fall . . . and *after many a summer* dies the swan". He first provides a scientific basis for his Earl's immortality, by means of intestinal flora and the famous "raw, triturated Viscera of freshly opened Carp". Then he predicts very exactly the consequences of everlasting life without everlasting youth, by an invalid but plausible extrapolation, from Bolk's conception of man as a foetalized ape, to what might happen if the foetal ape came to maturity[124].

From the immortal body we may turn to the severed-yet-living head, a folktale motif discussed by Beatrice White in a paper in *Folklore* in 1972[125]. In particular, there is the speaking head, kept in a living condition for some purpose, and none too pleased about it[126]. This motif appears unmodified in Mikhail Bulgakov's superb fantasy, *The Master and Margarita* (1966 – 7)[127]. In science fiction, more economically, the brain only is preserved, built into a computer or equipped with suitable effectors. Examples of this are H.P. Lovecraft's story "The Whisperer in Darkness" (1931)[128], D.A.C. Morrison's story "Another Antigone" (1955)[129], and Charles L. Harness's novel *The Ring of Ritornel*

(1968)[130]. A related theme is necromancy, the temporary raising of the dead to provide oracular information, as the witch of En-dor raised Samuel for King Saul[131]. For a marvellous scientification of this, we can go to the *Foundation* trilogy of Isaac Asimov (1942 – 50), with its Time Vault that periodically opens for the hologram of the long-dead Hari Seldon to make his oracular pronouncements, recorded before his death as predictions of his statistical science of psychohistory, and unfailingly accurate until the dramatic moment when his calculations are upset by the appearance of an individual with paranormal powers[132].

Next we may take a group of motifs concerned with bodily transformations. The witch's familiar, whom she feeds with her blood[133], is most ingeniously scientified in Fritz Leiber's *Gather, Darkness!* (1943)[134], as a product of culture from the witch's own tissue, after "chromosome-stripping" to reduce the creature to bare essentials, so that it depends on infusions of blood from its partner. The witches and their familiars in this novel are sympathetic characters. So, up to a point, is the werewolf in James Blish's story "There Shall Be No Darkness" (1950), victim of "an endocrine disturbance, associated with an allergy to garlic and a metabolic susceptibility to silver poisoning"[135]. In tales from Northern Europe, perhaps for climatic reasons, giants, trolls or dwarves sometimes turn to stone if caught in the open at sunrise[136]. In his novel *Three Hearts and Three Lions* (1953)[137], Poul Anderson mentions also a belief that a giant so transformed is dangerous to approach, and he interprets the whole process as a transformation from carbon to silicon under solar radiation, with production of a radioactive isotope.

Turning from the body to the mind, one of the best-known stories in Herodotus[138] is that of the dumb son of Croesus, who recovers his voice when he has to speak to save his father's life from a Persian soldier ignorant of the king's identity. This theme of what we now call hysterical dumbness is treated in a perfectly modern scientific manner in E.T.A. Hoffmann's story "Das Sanctus" (1817), about a girl who loses and recovers her singing voice. Though Hoffmann has a small entry in the *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction,* and though Colin Wilson has aptly mentioned him in connection with David Lindsay[139], I believe Hoffmann has been under-rated by historians of sf. Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844), for instance, has twice recently been anthologized as early science fiction[140], though it is demonstrably a poor pastiche of Hoffmann. The German master seems to me to be a great pioneer of that kind of psychological science fiction that has been so well done in our century by James Blish and Theodore Sturgeon. While on the subject of singing, I must mention the elegant episode in *The City and the Stars* (1955)[141], in which Arthur Clarke's hero escapes from a people of master-hypnotists, by means of the flying robot he has pre-programmed to seize and carry him off, despite any orders he may give to the contrary. When the resulting conflict of emotions in the hero subsides, we are shown quite clearly where this episode came from—"once more he was at peace, as ages ago an earlier wanderer had been when, lashed to the mast of his ship, he had heard the song of the Sirens die away across the wine-dark sea"[142].

I turn now to magic objects: two will suffice. Compressible objects such as ships or tents that fold up to pocket size, form an important cluster of motifs[143]. There is a beautiful technical version of this motif in Theodore Sturgeon's story "Memory" (1948)[144], in which the hero wins a space-shipping contract by finding out how to compress nested plastic pipes in such a way that they resume their original shape and size when heated on arrival. And for another magic object we may take the famous chicken-legged walking

house of the Baba Yaga, the terrible witch of Russian fairytale who makes her earliest appearance in the twelfth-century Kievan Chronicle[145]. Houses really could move in a sense in the days of timber frames, which could be bodily transported by means of horses and rollers. According to George Ewart Evans, the alms-houses at Stonham Aspal, for instance, "were originally built in the churchyard, but were removed bodily to a site further down the street"[146]. But plausible self-moving houses like the Baba Yaga's had to wait for science fiction. In Jane Webb's *The Mummy* (1827), houses of the twenty-second century "move from place to place on railway lines" (I.F. Clarke)[147]. A.E. Van Vogt has an apartment that turns out to be a spaceship, in a novel called, paradoxically, because of another building in it, *The House that Stood Still* (1950)[148]. It is appropriate that *The Mummy* was written by a woman, and that a woman owns the spaceship-apartment in the Van Vogt novel.

As a final example of scientification, I may take my own story, "The Three Brothers" (1954)[149]. I had in mind a literary model, Ruskin's little masterpiece *The King of the Golden River* (1851), which he called "a fairly good imitation of Grimm"[150]. I first encountered this as a school-book at about the age of eight. But I also made a deliberate attempt to provide a scientific interpretation of the fairytale motif of grateful and helpful animals[151]. The quest in my story was for an ampoule of an anti-ageing drug, and in the end the hero's father gets a share of it, but I was quite unconscious at the time that this is the water of life, aptly associated with three brothers and grateful animals[152]. For my hero's first helper, I chose a hive of honey-bees. As Karl von Frisch had been discovering, to quote my story, "on returning to the hive, these sociable creatures are wont to express their pleasure in a lively dance, the forms of which convey to less fortunate colleagues the direction and distance of the treasures they have found"; and as Von Frisch had proved, a human being can learn to interpret the dance[153]. Donald R. Griffin's observations on echolocation in bats were also becoming known[154], so my hero's second helper was a bat. By a free association to the location mechanisms of fishes, then being analysed by H.W. Lissmann[155], I made the third helper an electric fish, though one with a high-voltage output. By using simple principles of reward training, it was easy to have my innocent hero benefit unexpectedly from previous kindness to the animals, and I selected three problems to match the three solutions.

In this last instance, I know what was and what was not conscious, and I know I have been soaked in myth, legend and fairytale from books since early childhood. In order to get a little more light on the processes of transmission and creation, I asked some specific questions of four sf writers, who very kindly answered them. They are, in alphabetical order, three giants established during the Golden Age, Isaac Asimov, Arthur Clarke, and Sprague de Camp, and a younger author, Brian Stableford, scientist as well as writer in the best Golden Age tradition, and a leading contributor to the *Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction*[156]. To begin with, I have suggested that a science fiction writer, in Addison's words, "ought to be very well versed in legends and fables"[157]. An early enthusiasm for reading myth, legend and fairytale is recorded of Burroughs, John W. Campbell, C.L. Moore, Eric Frank Russell, and A.E. Van Vogt[158]. My informants tell the same story. De Camp and Stableford both mentioned the Grimms, but De Camp added: "I guess my first exposure to folktales was Lang's *The Red Fairy Book*", and "Lang is the one that sticks in my memory". "When I was a youngster", wrote Asimov, "I read and was impressed

by the Greek myths, the Norse myths, and, of course, all the collections of fairy tales I could find".

What is striking is the special enthusiasm shown for the ancient Greek stories, which, as I showed in my first Address, are definitely folktales by my definition, having been handed down entirely by word of mouth for centuries[159]. Since the Greeks were great technologists, and the *Odyssey*, as I pointed out in 1968, is very much an epic of technology[160], it is perhaps no wonder Greek tales appeal especially to embryo sf writers. We might expect such an interest from the classical scholar De Camp, author of *The Ancient Engineers* and of the best historical novels ever written about the Greeks[161]. But the other three writers are quite clear about their preference. "The Greek myths were my favourites", wrote Asimov, "I read and re-read Homer endlessly". When I asked Clarke when he first met the story of Odysseus, he replied: "I've no idea —can't remember when I didn't know it!" His enthusiasm for the resourceful hero appears again and again, in the Sirens episode in *The City and the Stars,* at the end of *The Challenge of the Spaceship*[162], where he welcomes "the boy who will be the first Odysseus of the Age of Space . . . ", and of course in his great film, of which more later. In a letter to me in 1959[163], he even mistyped "Ulysses" when he meant another hero, though he noticed the slip before posting the letter. Finally, Stableford reported it was the Greek tales that most impressed him as a child, through the medium of Kingsley's *The Heroes,* and especially Roger Lancelyn Green's *Tales of the Greek Heroes.* Such books are very important transmitters of folktales. When Stableford was about six years old, he was given some parts of Arthur Mee's *Children's Encyclopaedia*—they were very damp, and he had to dry them out in the sun in the family back yard: here too it was the Greek tales that caught his interest most. By coincidence, both the primary schools he attended had sessions of storytelling when the children were told specifically Greek tales, and it was during these sessions that he acquired a fascination with Orpheus comparable to Clarke's with Odysseus.

Since science fiction writers are indeed "very well versed in legends and fables", they often consciously use folktale motifs. De Camp, himself a folklorist and author of the most comprehensive book on the Atlantis legend[164], uses folklore and anthropology freely, as well as observations made on his extensive travels. Thus he told me he got the royal succession rule in *The Goblin Tower* from Frazer, who is actually referred to by characters in *The Incomplete Enchanter* and *Land of Unreason,* on the subject of magic and changelings, respectively[165]. The Norse adventure in *The Incomplete Enchanter* was based closely on the Eddas. Clarke is obviously fascinated by the legends of his adopted home, Sri Lanka. He discusses the legends of the rock called Sigiriya as sources for his enthralling novel *The Fountains of Paradise*[166], in which he interweaves a legend and a science fiction story, and has told me it was the place itself that inspired him. In *The View from Serendip*[167], we can watch him at work, drawing on an incident in the *Ramayana,* a local legend, and a gravitational anomaly, which "might make an opening for a pretty good science-fiction movie . . . " Asimov is of course renowned as the man who, in his own words to me, "consciously rifled history" for sf plots. However, at least once he consciously used a fable. In his story "Saddle and Bridle", Hari Seldon's Foundation supplies the dangerous tyrants of neighbouring planets with a technologically based religion that appears to aggrandize them, but actually puts them at the Foundation's mercy. The Foundation leader explicitly tells the fable of the horse who allowed a man to harness him in order to chase and kill their mutual enemy, a wolf, but afterwards found

the man kept him harnessed[168]. When I asked him if the Aesop fable originally suggested the plot, Asimov replied: "Yes, the Aesop fable was in my mind from the beginning".

Stableford is well aware he is providing a scientific basis for magical motifs: as he puts it, characteristically, precisely, and with more than one meaning (for this is no longer the Golden Age), "science fiction takes place in a disenchanted universe". In his *Dies Irae* trilogy (1971)[169], he consciously used the whole Trojan cycle of legends, substituting for the gods two human beings with unusual but less than divine powers, and thus moving into a new plot in the final volume. In his fine novel *Man in a Cage* (1975)[170], the hero suffers from both murderous madness and demanding labours, and Stableford consciously called him Harker Lee as a play on the sounds of Heracles or Hercules; when writing this novel, he made use of Robert Graves's *The Greek Myths.* In *To Challenge Chaos* (1972)[171], he consciously and explicitly used the Flying Dutchman and his favourite hero Orpheus. He had Orpheus again in mind when he wrote *The Realms of Tartarus* (1976-7)[172], which is explicitly related to Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790)[173]. These imaginative works provide new examples of the hero's descent into the underworld, traced in earlier authors in the pioneering study by H.W. Stubbs I have already mentioned. Indeed, Stableford's systematic use of the Greek legends, like Petaja's of the *Kalevala,* deserves a separate investigation.

But the use of folktale motifs may equally be unconscious throughout. David Pringle[174] has observed the underworld descent motif in two other Stableford novels, *Halcyon Drift* (1972) and *Rhapsody in Black* (1973)[175]. Stableford has told me this was quite unconscious. Moreover there is a fairytale-type connected with, but distinct from, the explicit descent into hell discussed by Stubbs. It is called by Aarne *The Three Stolen Princesses,* by Thompson *The Bear's Son,* and by Paul Delarue, more aptly I think, *The Princesses Rescued from the Underworld*[176]. The hero descends into a world inside the earth, by means of a hole or pit, and he is eventually trapped there, for instance when an enemy drops the rope by which he was to have been pulled up, and has to find another escape route. The motifs of this tale-type can be traced in a number of science fiction works, for instance by Holberg (1741), Verne (1864), Burroughs (1914 and sequels), and O'Neill (1935)[177]. Twentieth-century advances in geology have relegated the world inside the earth from science fiction to fantasy. In *The Realms of Tartarus,* however, Brian Stableford imagined a vast concentric shell, built round the earth and raised high above it, on which a new civilization is evolved. Some people are left behind in the space between shell and earth surface, which becomes a new kind of underworld. As we have seen, Stableford was consciously thinking of hell, but he has assured me he did *not* have the fairytale in mind. Yet his hero is prevented from returning to the outer shell when an enemy draws up the cage of the hoist he had used to descend, and is "trapped in the world below"[178].

In 1966, Asimov published *Fantastic Voyage*[179], a novel based on a screenplay based on a story. The novel tells of a group of people miniaturized to travel round a man's bloodstream and operate on a brain clot. Granted the improbable miniaturization, the treatment is anatomically plausible throughout. It is clearly a scientific treatment of the *Kalevala* hero Vainamoinen's adventure inside the body of the giant Vipunen[180]. I asked Asimov if he, or to his knowledge any of the four other authors involved at various stages, ever thought of the *Kalevala* consciously, and he replied: "No". This is the more interesting when we recall Emil Petaja's conscious use of the same episode. For another

example, we can return to *The Fountains of Paradise.* The central sf idea is the space elevator, a lift-shaft extending from a mountain top to a satellite in synchronous orbit with the earth, and therefore always above the same spot. Though Clarke only introduced this after starting work on the novel, it is a natural development of his own thought, and indeed he nearly invented the space elevator idea in 1963, independently of, and only three years after, the actual inventor, the Russian Y.N. Artsutanov[181]. Long before that, in 1945, it was Clarke who invented the idea of synchronous satellites for communication; if he could have patented this idea, he would by now be almost as rich as Wells's Sleeper[182]. However, a shaft linking earth and heaven is an important theme in the mythology of many countries, the *axis mundi* discussed by John Irwin at the Centenary Conference of the Folklore Society in 1978[183]. As Irwin has shown, the *axis mundi* is connected with water, hence the fountains in the novel and its title. I asked Clarke if he had thought at all of a mythical pillar linking heaven and earth, or of the more homely image of Jack and the Beanstalk? He replied: "No; I was inspired purely by the daring technology".

Of course the use of folktale motifs need not be conscious *or* unconscious throughout. An intermediate case in point is the film *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Clarke's book *The Lost Worlds of 2001* (1972)[184], describing his work on the film with the director, Stanley Kubrick, is an invaluable document for study of the creative process. Now in *Report on Planet Three* (also 1972)[185], Clarke wrote: "we set out with the deliberate intention of creating a myth". The resulting myth reached millions, and has no doubt become a part of word-of-mouth folklore, so it is of interest to trace its continuity with earlier folktale. In the same passage, Clarke adds: "the Odyssean parallel was clear in our minds from the very beginning, long before the title of the film was chosen". In view of the complicated genesis of *2001,* even "the very beginning" may be ambiguous, and I have some first-hand relevant information. During the making of the film, Clarke rang me up from the London area to ask for information about deep-freezing of tissues, a subject on which, regrettably I was a complete blank. He told me he had realized, as they went along, they were recreating episodes of the *Odyssey,* such as the Cyclops adventure. Clarke has, unfortunately, no recollection of the call, and I omitted to note it at the time. It was in the autumn, and I am inclined to date it to October 1965, when Clarke was in the London area preparing for the shooting. His log of the film for 15 October mentions Kubrick's decision to kill off all the hero's shipmates, with the comment "after all, Odysseus was the sole survivor . . . ", and the entry for 17 October mentions the hibernacula[186]. The title had been decided in April 1965; a log entry for 6 August 1964 mentions an idea of Kubrick's of making the computer female and calling it "Athena", which suggests Greek myth and indeed Odysseus's patroness, but not the eventual identification of the computer with the Cyclops[187]. Whatever the exact sequence of events, however, there is no doubt the use of the tale of Odysseus was conscious at an early stage of the proceedings. It is therefore fascinating to learn that the hero's name *Bowman,* chosen on 17 August 1964[188], just after the "Athena" entry, was a totally *unconscious* reference to the skill for which Odysseus was famous. Here are conscious and unconscious creation at work together.

Folktale motifs can be enriched, recombined and reassembled by the creative writer. I happened to send Arthur Clarke a copy of the Centenary Volume of the Folklore Society, containing a paper on werewolves by Clair Russell and myself, in which we mentioned the story of Prince Llywelyn and his dog Gelert[189]. "The prince goes off on a raid, leaving his baby son in his tent, guarded by . . . Gelert. When he returns, he finds the tent collapsed,

and Gelert sitting behind it covered with blood. Jumping to the wrong conclusion, he kills the poor dog, only to hear the cry of a baby, and find his son safe and sound under the tent, with the carcase of a huge wolf, slain by the faithful Gelert in defence of the baby". He is overwhelmed by remorse. On reading this, Clarke was reminded that this particular tale had made a special impression on him. Acting on this hint, I traced the submotifs of the tale in two of his stories and one of his novels.

In "Dog Star" (1962)[190], the astronomer hero's Alsatian dog senses an earthquake coming and thus rouses him and saves his life. Later he goes to work in an observatory on the moon. The dog, left behind, pines to death. Though he could hardly have avoided leaving her, the hero has an intense feeling of guilt. One night on the moon, he hallucinates the dog barking, and wakes just in time to save himself and most of his colleagues from a moonquake.

Here we have a wolf-like dog saving human life, and a man causing the dog's death and feeling intense guilt. But these two motifs have, I believe, attracted another folktale into the story. The hero is the Man in the Moon[191]. This character is pilloried up there to expiate the guilt of some crime, ranging from murder to sabbath-breaking[192]. We know from Shakespeare he sometimes has a dog with him[193]; an old Devon woman actually pointed the dog out to Sabine Baring-Gould[194].

Now consider Clarke's story "Hate" (1961)[195], a moving parable of the futility of revenge in general, and in particular of hating a whole people for the crimes of some of its members. The chief character, a diver on the Great Barrier Reef, is from Eastern Europe, not an innocent refugee but a defector, a former eager tool of an oppressive regime, who turned against it when his brother was killed in a rising; now he hates all Russians. A Russian space capsule is found on the seabed; it contains a cosmonaut returned from orbiting the moon. The diver can talk to but not hear the trapped cosmonaut; after announcing what he is going to do, he deliberately sabotages the recovery till the cosmonaut's air supply is exhausted. When the cosmonaut's body is recovered, it turns out to be that of a girl midget, with a spool of tape in her hand on which she has recorded the diver's words. "He could not guess, in this moment beyond all feeling, that the Furies had yet to close in upon his soul — and that soon the whole world would be listening to an accusing voice from beyond the grave, branding him more irrevocably than any man since Cain".

Here we have a man, seeking to avenge the death of a near male relative, killing someone small, innocent and very brave, and soon to be overwhelmed by remorse. This time it is not a dog, but a woman from the moon, as in some Man-in-the-Moon tales. "In some places", writes Baring-Gould, "a woman is believed to accompany him . . . in other localities, she is replaced by a dog"[196]. I suggest this goes back to the huntress Diana or Artemis, who is represented with a hunting dog in the funerary art of the Roman Empire, and who is, of course, the goddess of the moon[197]. At first sight it seems odd to end with Cain, who killed a man and not a woman. But the good writer always gets it right. In the version of the tale known to Dante[198], and still circulating in Florence in the 1880s[199], the Man in the Moon is Cain.

The Gelert motifs recur on a grander scale in Clarke's fine novel *Childhood's End* (1953)[200]. Mankind falls under the benevolent rule of the Overlords, a people from a remote planet. They hesitate to show themselves, because they have leathery wings, horns and barbed tails, and have tried unsuccessfully to help mankind before, leaving only a

devilish memory[201]. Now, as Clair Russell and I discussed in our paper on werewolves, the devil has often been symbolized as a man-eating wolf[202]. In reality, the Overlords are helping man and protecting him from various dangers, and their representative finally shows himself when the time is ripe, with "a human child resting trustfully on either arm"[203]. At an early stage of the Overlords' rule, one man feels the Overlord he knows may have for him "the affection of a man for a . . . dog"; but it later appears this is a double-take, for the Overlords themselves are only guardians, sent by a higher power to protect the *childhood* of mankind, potentially a higher species than their own[204]. Here the guardian dog of the legend is seen at last for what he is, and Clarke has given a constructive resolution of the emotional problem set in the folktale.

I have now given many examples to show how particular folktales, types and motifs can be traced in science fiction. What if we take a favourite sf theme, and look at its folktale background? For this purpose, I will take the theme of the *robot*. I define a robot as a man-made, roughly human-shaped automaton that is functional, that is, one that does work. Automata occur in the folktales of many societies. The moving statues made by the legendary Athenian technologist Daedalus are mentioned by Plato and by Aristotle, who typically goes straight to the point, observing that if we had such automata human slaves would be redundant[205]. The most interesting automata are the golems of the Jews. The word *golem* occurs in the Psalms[206]: "thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect". It means something unformed, and golems were rather rough-and ready robots made of clay. The earliest one was made by the legendary hero Ben Sira, who had an unusual origin himself, being an early case of artificial insemination[207]. His father, the prophet Jeremiah, was forced by some homosexual hooligans to masturbate in the water of a public bath; Jeremiah's daughter bathed there soon afterwards, and the result was Ben Sira. His golem, and those made by a number of later legendary sages, were made for purely ritual purposes and dismantled immediately afterwards. This impractical use of awesome powers reminds me of the Yogi in Sprague de Camp's story "The Wisdom of the East" (1942)[208], the essence of whose vast powers was that "one shall be too indifferent to the material world to use them".

However, from the 15th to the 17th century a body of legends arose about wonder-working rabbis who made true robots, golems who actually worked for them. Such a golem was often activated by means of a name of God, the *Shem,* written on a label placed in his mouth; he was liable to become dangerous, and had then to be deactivated by removing it. This last legend was connected with Elijah, Rabbi of Chelm (died 1583)[209]. However, in the course of the 18th century, the golem legends were firmly attached, retrospectively of course, to Chief Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel of Prague (born about 1512, died 1609), a famous theologian and jurist, who in 1592 received the exceptional honour of an interview with the Emperor Rudolf II[210]. This now famous Golem of Prague first appeared in print in 1847. One of his legends told how the Rabbi usually inactivated him on the Sabbath, but one day he forgot, and the golem ran amok, breaking windows and threatening people. The Rabbi was hurriedly summoned from the Altneuschul synagogue, just after the Sabbath Psalm. He removed the Shem from the golem's mouth, and then returned to the synagogue, where he had the psalm repeated. Spoken tradition in Prague ascribed to this incident the actual custom at the Altneuschul synagogue of singing this psalm twice. The golem was believed to be preserved in the synagogue loft; a writer

called Kisch went to look in 1925, but found no golem[211].

In the later 19th century, with growing antisemitism, the Jews in Eastern Europe began to be accused of ritual murder; there was a case in Bohemia in 1889[212]. In 1909, Judah Rosenberg published a book of so-called legends about Rabbi Loew, purporting to be from an old manuscript but all in fact invented or taken from current traditions or from widely distributed folktales such as our old friend the Sorcerer's Apprentice[213]. Rosenberg's golem, which may well have *started* some folklore, was created for the sole purpose of helping to refute the ritual murder slander, which he quite unhistorically transferred from his own times to 16th-century Prague. The trouble with passing your fictions off as legends is that they can be seen as being in the folk domain: Rosenberg's book was copied and enlarged without acknowledgement in 1917 by Chaim Bloch[214]. The earlier legends of the golem of Prague inspired much literature, drama, opera and film, the most famous work being Gustav Meyrink's strange novel, *Der Golem* (1915)[215]. A Czech film about the golem, *The Emperor's Baker,* shown in London in the early 1950s, was the best film I ever saw, and taught me respect for proverbial folk wisdom — I had not till then believed you really can laugh till your ribs ache. Take the scene when the Emperor, unaware his wineglass has just been poisoned, asks Tycho Brahe to explain the difference between the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems, using all the wineglasses on the table as planets and satellites . . .

Now robots have been used in hundreds if not thousands of science fiction stories, but two authors will always be the supreme authorities on the subject. One of them was a Czech who lived and worked for much of his life in Prague, and the other was born to a Jewish family in a suburb of Smolensk[216]. They are, of course, Karel Capek and Isaac Asimov. Capek is well known as a writer of novels and *belles lettres,* with his science fiction novels including the magnificent *War with the Newts* (1936); but he will probably always be remembered first as the creator of the labour force of mass-produced robots in his play R.U.R. (1921)[217]. The name *robot* is said to have been suggested by his brother Josef. It is the Czech word for feudal labour service[218], an ironic survival into the age of automation. Capek's robots clearly show the destructive and dangerous aspects of the golem. According to Moskowitz, Capek admitted to "being thoroughly familiar with and influenced by" the golem legend, and a film about the golem was being shown widely in Czechoslovakia in 1920, when Capek wrote the play.

Asimov, whose family emigrated to New York when he was three, is also well known as a writer both of fiction and non-fiction (on anything from Byron to biochemistry), not least for his awesome prolificity. He invented the science fiction detective story, after Campbell said it was impossible[219], and the *Foundation* series occupies a unique position in science fiction. But Asimov will probably always be remembered first as a legislator, author of the three laws of robotics, which the embryo robotics industry takes as seriously as the space industry did Clarke's satellites[220]. Asimov is the man who tamed the golem. He first read about the golem as a teenager, in English — he only reads Yiddish with effort. He was not influenced in making his laws by the basically good nature of the golem in the Rosenberg-Bloch tradition. When I asked him: "did you consciously think of the golem when you began to write robot stories? or at any other stage?" he answered: "No". So once again we have conscious influence (on Capek) and surely unconscious influence (on Asimov).

Let me conclude this sketch with a question and an answer. How can traditional tales

have so much to do with an art form that James Gunn has defined as "the artistic response to the human experience of change"[221]? The answer is, of course, that folktales are infinitely adaptable. "Human thought", writes Chernysheva, "in each new stage of its development tries to conserve and save what was accumulated in the earlier cultural epochs, to find a way of inserting the old imagery into a new world view"[222]. "Each generation", writes James Branch Cabell, "finds for Andromeda a different monster and another rescuer"[223]. It is all summed up in a sign I saw outside a shop in Oxford on 25 November 1980, inviting everyone to VISIT SANTA CLAUS IN HIS SPACE-SHIP IN THE BASEMENT.

Notes

To save space and print in these extensive notes, I have throughout omitted the essentially redundant words *"op.cit."*. A work previously listed is referred to simply by the author's or editor's surname, supplemented where necessary by a word or two to distinguish it from other sources already listed by the same author, and sometimes (after a long interval) by a reference to the earlier note.

1 W.M.S. Russell, *The Barber of Aldebaran* (unpublished, written 1954-5), Chapter 11. According to their reports, this novel has given pleasure and amusement to literally generations of publishers' readers, though none of their employers has so far expected it to please or amuse anyone else.
2 Type 1527. This and other Type references are to A. Aarne and S. Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale* (Helsinki, 1961).
3 Type 545B.
4 P. Mathers (transl. from the French translation of J.C. Mardrus), *The Book of the Thousand Nights and One Night* (revised edn, London, 1947), I, pp. 291-316.
5 e.g. Lucian, *Philopseudes,* 34-6; cf. Motifs D1601, D1651, J2400. These and other Motif references are to S. Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Helsinki, 1932).
6 L. Sprague de Camp, e.g. *The Queen of Zamba* (Davis, New York, 1977 – 1949); *The Floating Continent* (Roberts and Vinter, London, 1966 – 1950-51); *The Tower of Zanid* (Macfadden – Bartell, New York, 1972 – 1958); *The Continent Makers* (New American Library, New York, 1971 – 1949-51). In referring to recent science fiction books, I have listed editions actually consulted at the moment of writing (in many cases I have copies of the work in more than one edition, collection etc.), giving publisher (without which they are often virtually untraceable) as well as place of publication, and where possible, at the end of the reference after a dash (unless given in the text), date of *first* publication. To save space, such works are not listed in the notes if only mentioned in passing.
7 Motifs J1865, J2196, J2514, N411.2; Types 1202, 1650 (scythe).
8 Motif N411.3.
9 Motifs N410-439; Whittington's cat: Motif N411.1; Type 1651.
10 Foolish groups and foolish individuals are not separated in the indexes; but plenty of examples can be found among Motifs J1700-2749 and Types 1200-1349, and 1865 (jokes about foreigners).
11 From a lecture on "Corn in Egypt" given at Hackney Town Hall, reported by Oliver Pritchett, *Evening Standard* (25 January 1978), pp.24-5.
12 G. Wissowa (ed.), *Pauly's Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft* (Stuttgart, 1894), I, s.v. Abdera (G. Hirschfeld).
13 W.A. Coupe (ed.) *A Sixteenth-Century German Reader* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 232-4.
14 K.M. Briggs, *A Dictionary of British Folk-Tales* (London, 1970), Part A Vol. 2, p.5.
15 The men of several foolish villages tried to keep the spring by building a fence round the cuckoo, which of course flew away over it (Briggs, Part A Vol. 2, pp. 25-6, Borrowdale; 51-2, Crewkerne; 349-50, Gotham). This may possibly go back to an ancient ritual for magically conserving spring fertility; see E.A. Armstrong, *The Folklore of Birds* (2nd edn, New York, 1970), pp. 208-9.
16 C. Davies, "Well, Why do we Laugh at the Irish?" *Western Mail* (15 March 1980), p.12; "Ethnic Jokes, Moral Values and Social Boundaries" *Sociology* (in press); "Ethnic Jokes and Social Forces", in L. Mintz (ed.), *Race, Sex and Ethnicity in American Humour* (in press).
17 Motifs J1865, J2514, Type 1202.
18 Runo 26; see W.F. Kirby (transl.), *Kalevala* (London, 1907), II, pp. 15-16.

19 Coupe, p.232; Briggs, Part A Vol. 2, pp.349-50.
20 "Unconscious Literary Use of Traditional Material" *Folklore,* 85 (1974), pp.268-75.
21 S. Moskowitz, *Explorers of the Infinite* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1963), p. 34.
22 J.R. Hammond, *An H.G. Wells Companion* (London, 1979), p.94.
23 H.G. Wells, *Experiment in Autobiography* (London, 1966), II, pp.582-4.
24 Hammond, pp.96,94.
25 *Ibid.*
26 Motif D1960.1.
27 (Sir) J.G. Frazer (transl. and comment.), *Pausanias's Description of Greece* (2nd edn, London, 1913), II, p.121.
28 Frazer, pp. 121, 123; cf. E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Boston, 1957), pp.141-2; for Theopompus, see H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature* (4th edn revised, London, 1964), p.310.
29 A. Bruford, "Some Aspects of the Otherworld", in: V. Newall (ed.), *Folklore Studies in the Twentieth Century* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1980), pp.147-52, quotation p.148.
30 I.F. Clarke, *The Pattern of Expectation, 1644 – 2001* (London, 1979), pp.2, 27, 37.
31 J. Gunn (ed.), *The Road to Science Fiction* (London, 1977 – 9), I, p.312.
32 *Ibid.;* Clarke, pp.161-4.
33 P. Parrinder, "*News from Nowhere, The Time Machine,* and the Break-up of Classical Realism" *Science-Fiction Studies,* 3 (1976), pp.265-74.
34 Gunn, I, p.314.
35 In Chapter 2, both versions.
36 Chapter 18, both versions.
37 H. Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War* (revised edn, Harmondsworth, 1965), pp.86-7, 122-4, 196, 273, 319 n.2.
38 *Beowulf,* 10; I do not read Anglo-Saxon, and used the translation by David Wright (London, 1970), p.43.
39. *Ibid.,* 35, p.86.
40. Closing chapter, both versions.
41 "Folktales and the Theatre" *Folklore,* 92 (1981), pp.
42 "Folklore and Literature" *Folklore,* 86 (1975), pp.73-93.
43 K.M. Briggs, *British Folk Tales and Legends: a Sampler* (London, 1977), p.4.
44 Russell, "Theatre", p.
45 K.M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck* (London, 1959), and *Pale Hecate's Team* (London, 1962), *passim.*
46 P. Parrinder, *Science Fiction* (London, 1980), p.53, and "Imagining the Future: Wells and Zamyatin" in D. Suvin and R.M. Philmus (ed.), *H.G. Wells and Modern Science Fiction* (London, 1977), pp.126-43, especially p.128.
47 I. Porges, *Edgar Rice Burroughs* (New York, 1976), I, p.596.
48 "To Seek a Fortune", *Listener,* 80 (1968), pp.365-7.
49 Chapter H.
50 "Underworld Themes in Modern Fiction", in H.R. Ellis Davidson (ed.), *The Journey to the Other World* (Cambridge and Ipswich, 1975), pp.130-49.
51 "The Folktale, Wells and Modern Science Fiction" (transl. D. Suvin), in: Suvin and Philmus, pp.35-47.
52 Chapter D.
53 e.g. M. Duffy, *The Erotic World of Faery* (St. Albans, 1974), Chapter 19; E.S. Rabkin (ed.), *Fantastic Worlds: Myths, Tales and Stories* (Oxford, 1979), pp.172-3.
54 B. Stableford, "William Wilson's Prospectus for Science Fiction: 1851", *Foundation,* 10 (1976), pp.6-12.
55 Porges, II, p.940.
56 Moskowitz, pp.316, 318, 321-2.
57 *Ibid.,* p.332.
58 Cited in Gunn, I, p.383.
59 Gunn, II, p.10.
60 Gunn, I, p.346, II, p.11.
61 Porges, I, Chapters 1 and 6, II, p.1244.
62 M. Ashley, *The History of the Science Fiction Magazine* (revised edn, London, 1977-8).
63 Gunn, II, pp.15-16, 472.
64 S. Moskowitz, *Seekers of Tomorrow* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1966), p.253.
65 I. Asimov (ed.) *Before the Golden Age* (London, 1975), I, p.11.
66 I. Asimov, *The Currents of Space* (New American Library, New York, 1953 – 1952). Cf. Moskowitz, *Seekers,* p.263.

67 F. Pohl, *The Way the Future Was* (New York, 1978), p.27.
68 See C. Russell and W.M.S. Russell, *Human Behaviour: a New Approach* (London, 1961), pp.425-6; Gunn, III, P.9; P. Nicholls (ed.) *The Encyclopaedia of Science Fiction* (London, 1979), s.v. Optimism (P. Nicholls)
69 R. Heinlein, *The Man who Sold the Moon* (Sidgwick and Jackson, London, 1953), p.7; *Revolt in 2100* (Shasta, Chicago, 1953), pp. 13-19.
70 "Fortune" (see n.48), *passim*. On the concern of science fiction with all humanity, see also Gunn, II, pp.3-8.
71 Porges, II, pp.1105-6.
72 Gunn, II, p.68
73 Now Dr K.A.A. Campbell, and I take this opportunity of recording my gratitude for the loan.
74 Ashley, I, p.234.
75 (Macmillan, London, 1928).
76 I owe this to the owner of the collection, Mr J.S. Hayes, and I take this opportunity of recording my thanks.
77 *Areopagitica* — e.g. M.W. Wallace (ed.), *Milton's Prose* (London, 1925), p.290.
78 All this is noted in a letter I wrote to Sprague de Camp on 10 November 1971.
79 Plutarch, *Nicias*, 29.
80 W.M.S. Russell to Andre Schiffrin, 26 August 1958 (he sent me the books through Dillon's University Bookshop, who also helped me in my quest); W.M.S. Russell to Isaac Asimov, 20 October 1958; Isaac Asimov to W.M.S. Russell, 10 November 1958.
81 Gunn, II, p.13, cf. p.364.
82 E. Johnson, *Charles Dickens: His Tragedy and Triumph* (revised abridged edn, Harmondsworth, 1979, pp.91-2, 179.
83 Gunn, II, pp.11, 13; Moskowitz, *Explorers*, p.318.
84 Gunn, II, p.236.
85 Unpaginated introduction to F. Brown, *What Mad Universe* (Bantam, New York, 1978 – 1949).
86 F.M. Cornford, "Innumerable Worlds in Presocratic Philosophy", *Classical Quarterly*, 28 (1934), pp.1-16; see also G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, 1963), Chapter 17, especially p.412.
87 See Nicholls (n.68), s.v. Alternate Worlds, Parallel Worlds (both B. Stableford).
88 F. Huxley, *The Way of the Sacred* (London, 1974), p.43.
89 Klass, introd. Brown (n.85).
90 See n.87
91 Bruford (n.29), pp.149-50.
92 Klass, introd. Brown.
93 *The Spectator*, No. 419
94 Moskowitz, *Explorers*, p.270.
95 C. Russell, personal communication (1950).
96 A.C. Clarke, *Across the Sea of Stars* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1959), pp.401 and 11.
97 I. Asimov, *Earth is Room Enough* (Panther, London, 1960), pp. 51-2.
98 Russell, "Fortune" (n.48), p.365.
99 Cited by Gunn, I, p.347.
100 E.F. Bleiler and T.E. Dikty (ed.), *Imagination Unlimited* (Berkley, New York, 1959), pp.101-123.
101 J. Kaplan, *Mr Clemens and Mark Twain* (Harmondsworth, 1970), p.407 and Chapter 14.
102 (Pyramid, New York, 1963).
103 L. Sprague de Camp to W.M.S. Russell, 30 September 1972.
104 (Paperback, New York, 1962).
105 (Ace, New York, 1973).
106 *Fantastic Adventures*, II (1950), pp.6-69.
107 (Daw, New York, 1979).
108 (Daw, New York, 1979).
109 Petaja, *Saga* and *Star Mill*, p.115.
110 Petaja, *Sun* and *Tramontane*, p.104.
111 Petaja, *Saga* and *Star Mill*, pp.1 and 6; J. Campbell, "Folkloristic Commentary", in *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* (London, 1975), pp.831-64, especially pp.852-5; G. de Santillana and H. von Dechend, *Hamlet's Mill* (Boston, 1977), pp.96, 117; cf. also n.18.
112 L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, *The Incomplete Enchanter* (Pyramid, New York, 1960 – 1940); *The Castle of Iron* (Pyramid, New York, 1962 – 1941); *The Enchanter Compleated* (Sphere, London, 1980 – 1953-4).

113 H. Kuttner, *Mutant* (Mayflower, London, 1962), pp.7-32; S. Gordon, *One-Eye* (Panther, St. Albans, 1976), *Two-Eyes* and *Three-Eyes* (Daw, New York, 1974, 1975); I. Asimov (ed.), *Where Do We Go From Here?* (Sphere, London, 1974), pp.93-113; W.S. Baring-Gould and C. Baring-Gould, *The Annotated Mother Goose* (Bramhall, New York, 1962), pp.104-5 (the piper's son) and p.148 (the crooked man). The Grimm tale is No. 130 in the edition mentioned in n.111.
114 (New English Library, London, 1976), pp.173-7.
115 H900 and K231.2, respectively.
116 Chernysheva (nn.46 and 51), p.41.
117 J.W. Campbell (ed.), *From Unknown Worlds* (Atlas, London, 1952), pp.34-45.
118 (Ballantine, New York, 1970), p.221
119 (Pyramid, New York, 1968), pp.153-6.
120 G.W. Bowersock (ed.), *Philostratus: Life of Apollonius* (transl. C.P. Jones, Harmondsworth, 1970), pp.21, 94-6.
121 *Legends of Florence, Second Series* (London, 1896), pp.248-59. The Lamia is sometimes half-woman, half-snake, and appears as such in the Motif-Index – B29.1. Human-snake transformation is entered as Motif D191.
122 *After Many a Summer* (London, 1950 – 1939).
123 (Sir) J.G. Frazer (ed. and transl.) *Apollodorus. The Library* (London, 1921), II, pp.42-4.
124 Huxley (n.122), pp.237, 311-13.
125 "A Persistent Paradox", *Folklore*, 83 (1972), pp.122-31. Motifs E783, D1610.5.
126 e.g. the Tale of Rayyān the Doctor, Mathers (n.4), I, pp.33-48.
127 (transl. M. Glenny, London, 1969). Written in 1938, the Russian original *Master i Margarita*, was first published in the Soviet Union in 1966-7 in an "expurgated" edition, and in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1969 in an unexpurgated edition. See E.N. Mahlow, *Bulgakov's The Master and Margarita* (New York, 1975), p.189.
128 *The Haunter of the Dark* (Panther, London, 1963), pp.115-176.
129 Various Authors, *A.D. 2500* (Heinemann, London, 1955), pp.96-106.
130 (Panther, St. Albans, 1968).
131 I Samuel, 28. I have discussed necromancy in the Roman Empire in a recent paper given at the Folklore Society's York Conference (1980), on "Greek and Roman Ghosts", in H.R. Ellis Davidson and W.M.S. Russell (ed.) *The Folklore of Ghosts* (in preparation).
132 *Foundation* (Panther, London, 1960), e.g. pp.63-5, 110-12; *Foundation and Empire* (Gnome, New York, 1952), pp.161-7; *Second Foundation* (Panther, London, 1964).
133 Motif G225.0.1.
134 (Berkley, New York, 1950), pp.122-3.
135 W.M.S. Russell and C. Russell, "The Social Biology of Werewolves", in J.R. Porter and W.M.S. Russell (ed.), *Animals in Folklore* (Brewer, Ipswich and Cambridge, 1978), pp.143-82, 260-69, quotation p.146; the story was published in *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, April 1950.
136 Motifs F451.3.2.1, F531.6.12.2, G304.2.5, all examples German, Scandinavian or Icelandic.
137 (Avon, New York, 1962), p.82.
138 I, 34 and 85.
139 J.B. Pick, C. Wilson and E.H. Visiak, *The Strange Genius of David Lindsay* (London, 1970), p.47. Hoffmann is also briefly mentioned by Sam Moskowitz, *Explorers*, pp.65, 210.
140 Gunn, I, pp.178-208, and H.B. Franklin, *Future Perfect* (revised edn, Oxford, 1978), pp.18-23, 65-92.
141 (Transworld, London, 1957), pp.180-82.
142 Cf. *Odyssey*, 12, lines 153-200.
143 D491, D631 and its sub-classes. See also S. Thompson, *The Folktale* (London, 1977), pp.350-51.
144 K.F. Crossen (ed.), *Adventures in Tomorrow* (Bodley Head, London, 1953), pp.89-112.
145 G. Vernadsky, *Kievan Russia* (London, 1973), pp.251, 286.
146 G.E. Evans, *The Pattern under the Plough* (London, 1971), p.33.
147 Clarke (n.30), p.55.
148 (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1953), p.132.
149 *A.D. 2500* (n.129), pp.118-30.
150 E.T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin* (London, 1911), I, p.219.
151 For the whole complex of motifs involved, see the Analysis of Types 550 and 551, Aarne and Thompson, pp.196-7.
152 *Ibid.*, and cf. G.H. Gerould, *The Grateful Dead* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967), pp.119-25.

153 See K. von Frisch, *The Dance Language and Orientation of Bees* (transl. L.E. Chadwick, London, 1967), *passim*. Cf. C. Russell and W.M.S. Russell, "Language and Animal Signals", in N. Minnis (ed.), *Linguistics at Large* (London, 1971), pp.159-94.
154. See D.R. Griffin, *Listening in the Dark* (New Haven, Conn., 1958), *passim*.
155 "Continuous Electrical Signals from the Tail of a Fish, *Gymnarchus niloticus* Civ.", *Nature*, 167 (1951), pp.201-2.
156 Letters: W.M.S.R. to Isaac Asimov, 20 November 1980; Isaac Asimov to W.M.S.R., 28 November 1980; W.M.S.R. to Arthur C. Clarke, 14 November 1980; Arthur C. Clarke to W.M.S.R., 27 November 1980; W.M.S.R. to L. Sprague de Camp, 18 March 1975, 7 August 1979; L. Sprague de Camp to W.M.S.R., 13 September 1975, 3 September 1979; personal communications from Brian M. Stableford, 24 January 1980, 16 February 1981. I take this opportunity to express my warm thanks to them all.
157 See n.93.
158 Porges, I, pp.39,214,559, II, p.1104 n.17; Moskowitz, *Seekers*, pp.30, 306, 136, 215; Gunn, II, p.439.
159 Russell, "Theatre" (n.41), p.
160 Russell, "Fortune" (n.48), p.365.
161 *The Ancient Engineers* (London, 1970), and e.g. *An Elephant for Aristotle* (Modern Literary Editions, New York, 1958), *The Bronze God of Rhodes* (Bantam, New York, 1963 – 1960), and *The Dragon of the Ishtar Gate* (Lancer, New York, 1968 – 1961).
162 (New York, 1961), p.185.
163 17 July.
164 *Lost Continents* (revised edn, New York, 1970).
165 *Tower* (n.119), Chapter 1; *Enchanter* (n.112), p.9; *Land* (n.118), p.9.
166 (Ballantine, New York, 1980), pp.299-300.
167 (Pan, London, 1979), pp.236-7.
168 *Foundation* (n.132), pp.108-9. In this book version, the story (pp.67-112) is called "The Mayors".
169 *The Days of Glory, In the Kingdom of the Beasts, Day of Wrath* (Quartet, London, 1974).
170 (John Day, New York, 1975).
171 (Daw, New York, 1972).
172 (Daw, New York, 1977).
173 This date is probable but not certain, see Sir G. Keynes (ed.), *William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (London, 1975), p.xii.
174 "Rats, Humans and Other Minor Vermin: an Assessment of Brian Stableford's Novels", *Foundation* 15 (1979), pp.19-28.
175 (J.M. Dent, London, 1974) and (Pan, London, 1976), respectively.
176 Type 301 (the motifs are analyzed); Thompson, *Folktale* (n.143), p.33; P. Delarue, *Le Conte Populaire Francais* (Paris, 1957), I, pp.108 ff. An important set of underworld motifs are listed as Motifs F80-109. The tale-type is obviously closely related to heroic descents to hell, and no doubt also to the literal descents practised at underground oracular shrines in some societies – e.g. A. Foss, *Epirus* (London, 1978, pp.189-92); R.F. Paget, *In the Footsteps of Orpheus* (London, 1967), *passim;* P. Levi (transl.) *Pausanias. Guide to Greece* (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp.393-6.
177 See M.H. Nicolson, *Voyages to the Moon* (New York, 1960), pp.136-43, 226-36; Gunn, I, pp.152-60 (with a translation of part of Holberg); J. Jules-Verne, *Jules Verne* (transl. R. Greaves, London, 1976), pp.66-8; R. Lupoff, *Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure* (revised edn, New York, 1968), Chapter 4, 6, 8; A. Storr (introd.), *Joseph O'Neill: Land under England* (London, 1978). Verne and O'Neill are both discussed by Stubbs (n.50), pp. 138, 143. Motifs from the tale-type I have found in one or more of these works include dragons, the hero trapped, and the odd behaviour of time in the underworld.
178 *Tartarus* (n.172), p.26.
179 (Transworld, London, 1966).
180 *Kalevala*, Runo 17; see Kirby (n.18), I, pp.177-92.
181 *Fountains* (n.166), pp.300-03.
182 Moskowitz, *Seekers*, p.380; A.C. Clarke, *Profiles of the Future* (London, 1962), pp.11, 179-80.
183 "The Axis Mundi and the Phallus; Some Unrecognized East-West Parallels", in Newall (n.29), pp.250-59, with references to Irwin's own earlier work.
184 (London, 1978).
185 (London, 1973), p.247.
186 *Lost Worlds* (n.184), p.38.
187 *Ibid.*, pp.32-3.

188 *Ibid.*, p.33.
189 Russell and Russell, "Werewolves" (n.135), pp.161-2.
190 A.C. Clarke, *Tales of Ten Worlds* (Pan, London, 1965), pp.147-52.
191 Motif A751.
192 Motif A751.1; S. Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* (2nd edn, London, 1888), pp.190-208; B. Thorpe, *Yule-Tide Stories* (London, 1904), p.465.
193 *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* V,1; *The Tempest,* II, 2.
194 Baring-Gould, p.197.
195 *Ten Worlds* (n.190), pp.44-60.
196 Baring-Gould, pp.193, 200.
197 F. Cumont, *Récherches sur le Symbolisme Funéraire des Romains* (Paris, 1942), pp.235 (Spain), 245 (Sidon).
198 *Inferno,* 20, 124-7; *Paradiso,* 2, 49-51.
199 C.G. Leland, *Legends of Florence. First Series* (2nd edn, London, 1896), pp.254-71.
200 *Sea of Stars* (n.96), pp.247-434.
201 *Ibid.*, pp.296-9, 303.
202 Russell and Russell, "Werewolves" (n.135), pp.159-60.
203 *Sea of Stars* pp.362, 401-2, 303.
204 *Ibid.*, pp.298-9, 403-5.
205 Plato, *Meno,* 97D, *Euthyphro,* 11C; Aristotle, *Politics,* 1253b.
206 139, v.16. See *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), s.v. Golem.
207 L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia, 1928), VI, pp.400-02.
208 *The Reluctant Shaman* (Pyramid, New York, 1970 – 1942), pp.113-31, quotation p.120.
209 For all this, see again Golem article (n.206); also L. Wiener, *The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1899), pp.35-6.
210 For Rabbi Loew and the legends about him, see F. Thieberger, *The Great Rabbi Loew of Prague* (London, 1955), *passim;* V. Newall, "The Sorcerer's Statue"; *Fate and Fortune,* No.13 (1975), pp.11-14.
211 C. Bloch, *The Golem* (transl. H. Scheidermann, New York, 1972), p.10.
212 A.L. Sachar, *A History of the Jews* (5th edn, New York, 1965), pp.322, 343.
213 Golem article; Thieberger, pp.80-81; Y. Velt (ed.), *Great Works of Jewish Fantasy* (London, 1978), pp.162-225, 351, Sorcerer's Apprentice tale on pp.173-4; A.S. Rappoport, *The Folklore of the Jews* (London, 1937), pp.195-203.
214 Velt, p.351; cp. Bloch (n.211). Bloch wrote in the trenches during the First World War, and may not have realised he was plagiarizing.
215 Golem article; Newall (n.210), p.14.
216 Capek: Moskowitz, *Explorers, pp.208-24, and W.E. Harkins, Karel Capek* (London, 1962), *passim;* Asimov: Moskowitz, *Seekers,* pp.249-65.
217 For an English translation, see e.g. The Brothers Capek, *R.U.R. and The Insect Play* (transl. P. Selver, Oxford, 1961).
218 J.V. Polisensky, *The Thirty Years' War* (transl. R. Evans, London, 1974), p.49.
219 Gunn, II, p.4.
220 Asimov's early robot stories are collected in *I, Robot* (New American Library, New York, 1956 – 1950) and *The Rest of the Robots* (Panther, London, 1968 – 1964). His first robot story was published in 1940.
221 Gunn, I, p.4.
222 Chernysheva (nn. 51, 46), p.41.
223 J.B. Cabell, *Straws and Prayerbooks* New York, 1924, p.105.

Phyllis Eisenstein is a native of Chicago and has been writing science fiction and fantasy professionally since the early 1970s. Her books, which include the excellent fantasies Born to Exile *(1978) and* Sorcerer's Son *(1979), have been very well received.*

Her alternate-world novel, Shadow of Earth, *was reviewed in* Foundation *19. Recent publications include the novel* In the Hands of Glory *(Pocket Books) and the story "Nightlife" (*F&SF, *February 1982). The following piece is her Guest-of-Honour speech from Icon, an sf convention held in Iowa, October 1981.*

The Profession of Science Fiction, 28: Science Fiction and Me

PHYLLIS EISENSTEIN

Some writers, I suppose, have thematic material in mind before they ever commit a word to paper. We all approached the study of fiction in school as if that were true, anyway; our teachers told us that fiction has plot, character, setting, and theme—the four requirements. I never thought of it that way, though. There are themes in my work, but they sort of sneaked up on me while I wasn't looking. I really started writing just for fun, and if the plays I wrote in the fourth grade, which were loosely based on the *Captain Video* television show, had any themes, I certainly didn't know about them.

I became interested in science fiction because my brother read it. He is eight and a half years older than I am, and by the time I learned to read he already had a substantial collection of paperbacks, second-hand book club editions, and pulp magazines. The first novel I read was his copy of Van Vogt's *Slan*. I was eight, and I identified strongly with its young hero, Jommy Cross, who was just about my age. I liked the book, though I don't think I really understood much of it, and I was eager to read more. I quickly worked my way through the magazines, and for some reason I never asked why so many of them had no covers. I suppose I thought they fell off by themselves. It wasn't until the Chicon in 1962 that I saw some *Planet Stories* and *Thrilling Wonder* covers and realized what my parents would have done if they had seen women in brass brassieres on my brother's reading material. They thought that science fiction was, if not wholesome, at least harmless, and my brother had obviously gone as far as he could to keep them in that frame of mind. Looking back, of course, I'm grateful to him for that. By the time I finished all of his magazines, I was well and truly hooked. And by the time I was old enough to buy my own magazines, their covers were sedate enough to show anybody's parents.

I started writing science fiction as soon as I could write, or actually as soon as I could *print*. Plays did not come first, but they were a good way to get my friends involved in my

fantasy life; and very quickly what was initially intended as an after-school game worked its way into the classroom. Almost every month, in the fourth grade, my friends and I presented a new *Captain Video* play before our class. I directed these as well as writing them and taking a role, and I think it was my experience with wilful child actors that caused me to abandon playwriting. I wanted complete control over the finished product, and that just wasn't possible as long as other people felt free to adlib with my dialog. I returned to playwriting briefly in high school, producing some *Twilight Zone*-style items for Spanish class, but outside of that I committed myself to narrative prose.

I thought of myself as a science fiction writer-in-training from the very beginning, and my schoolmates all seemed to accept this notion, though they thought it was rather weird that I didn't want to be a teacher or a nurse when I grew up, like the rest of the girls. In the issue of my grammar school newspaper that dealt with my class's graduation, every graduate's name had a clever rhyme attached to it, and the one beside mine was

> Out of the pages of Phyllis's books
> Come little green men and Martian crooks.

All through grammar and high school my classmates were fascinated by my writing. I wrote in study hall, at lunch, and even in class. At first I had a special section in the back of my school notebook for stories, and people sitting near me would try to peer over my shoulder to read as I wrote there. Later I kept a separate five-ring binder for fiction, and in study hall I would satisfy my neighbors' curiosity by passing pages to my right as I finished them. This would result in my stories moving snakewise up and down the rows of students, page by page, until the end of the period, when people from various parts of the room would return the material to me. One such story, I recall, was entitled "Lost—One Guided Missile," and it dealt with secret super-weapons, handsome young Marsmen, and death-defying plunges into craters on the Moon. Looking back, I am still amazed that teenagers who reacted with loathing to the very thought of reading short stories by Hemingway and Faulkner for English class eagerly consumed my naïve prose and television-inspired plots.

In spite of being bored unmercifully by the highly repetitious education offered by the Chicago public school system, I did manage to soak up enough information to get myself into the University of Chicago. After three years, though, I dropped out, once again bored and now impatient. I wanted to get to the real work of my life, the full-time work of writing science fiction, and college was just throwing obstacles in my way. I was studying very hard, though the grades I wanted seemed out of my reach, and I had no time left for writing sf. Nor could I see that producing dry analytical papers on Shakespeare, Dickens, or the history of Western Civilization, was helping me in any way to be a better writer. And I was lonely, because the Air Force had sent my fiancé to Germany, and I didn't much care for the idea of a five-thousand-mile separation from him. So I dropped out of college and married Alex and moved to Germany. And out of the two years we lived there came two salable stories. The first was "The Trouble with the Past," which Alex and I wrote together from an idea of his, and which appeared in *New Dimensions* 1. The other was the initial Alaric story, "Born to Exile," which I did by myself and which appeared in the August, 1971 *Fantasy and Science Fiction.*

If I thought a magic door would open because of those first sales, I was wrong. Numerous rejection slips followed them; some stories never did sell. And my first novel,

Shadow of Earth, took eight long years to find a publisher. Those were hard years, filled with frustration and self-doubt. But there never was a time when I was tempted to give up. Well, hardly ever. I concentrated on becoming as good a writer as I could possibly be, and I'm still working on that. And now, October, 1981, I have four published novels behind me, and twenty-one shorter works, five of them collaborations with Alex.

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. Looking back over the years, I think I can pretty much see all the forces that conspired to make me a science fiction writer. And I think that the books and stories I've produced must, inevitably, be my response to those forces. But if you had asked me, while I was writing them, what themes I was trying to deal with, I don't think I could have answered. I was writing stories about people in strange situations, and plot, motivation, and setting were in the forefront of my mind. That other stuff seems to have come from deeper inside, and now I am going to dig some of it out and lay it in front of you, and you'll see a few of the aspects of the human condition that are important to me.

Before I begin, though, I'd like to note that I don't draw a hard line between the fantasy I write and the science fiction, though of course publishers do, for commercial purposes. I approach both in the same way, with imagination tempered by logic. People, after all, are people, and demons and fairies are no more than non-human intelligences. And magic can be treated as science, more or less, if given enough thought.

I've always been a dreamer. I used to daydream on my way to school—it made the long walk seem shorter. Of course, my daydreams all had plot, and in fact some became so complicated and interesting that I turned them into stories. And I've done that with a couple of real dreams, too, notably with one that was so vivid and so recurrent that the only way I could get it out of my nights was to write it down. It became the opening of my new novel, *In the Hands of Glory.* And when I reread that scene, it still gives me chills.

Dreams, of course, are windows in the subconscious. That's why I've used them in half a dozen stories to reveal aspects of a character's personality —or prior experiences—that would not be easily demonstrated through conscious action. And they sometimes make good counterpoint to a waking life. But they also represent, for me, the desire for the unattainable. That notion seems to have first crystallized in my *F&SF* story, "In Answer to Your Call," in which a science fiction writer's dream comes alive but refuses to be constrained by his conscious desires. Here and in other stories I see our dreams as having life beyond us, out of our control, and however much we *want* to make them real, the very attempt may be doomed to failure. By pursuing the unattainable desire, by trying to transform the dream into reality, we risk grief, madness, and even death. I think this idea is expressed most forcefully in my first cover story for *F&SF,* "In the Western Tradition," where the heroine falls in love with a man dead for more than a century. Even in "Nightlife"—soon to appear in *F&SF,* and the most up-beat treatment of this theme that I think I could manage—even in "Nightlife" there is an atmosphere of inescapable melancholy. My attitude toward dreams is at least partly a result of reading Peter Phillips' "Dreams Are Sacred," a somewht humorous story about the conscious manipulation of dreams. I loved the story but rebelled against the humour; I take my dreams seriously. Maybe that's because some of them still jar me awake in the middle of the night.

Melancholy, I think, is a hallmark of quite a lot of my fiction. Alaric, whom I invented when I was fifteen, was the reservoir for all the unhappiness in my own life. With him, I investigated loss and loneliness. With him, I found that one way of coping with them was

to fill your life with new sights and sounds. More recently, in *Sorcerer's Son,* I examined two other means of coping. One was quiet resignation. That was Delivev's way; it isn't one I personally have the temperament for, but I thought I could comprehend it, or at least convey it adequately. The other was Cray's way, the attempt to recapture that which was lost. Like the attempt to achieve the unattainable desire, this, I think, is a sure route to misery.

People like Cray lead lives ruled by obsession. There is no other explanation for his intense desire to find his father and his father's house. But I can identify with that—after all, writing has always been something of an obsession for me, even though some people, especially my relatives, thought it was silly or even crazy. Obsessed people don't care what others think of them. Stories about obsession, like Bester's *The Stars My Destination,* appeal to me because of the very strength of the passion involved. Generally, my obsessed characters are driven by a need to assert their individuality and are willing to take almost any risk on that account. Cray's decision to be a knight instead of a sorcerer is his bid to be a person in his own right, not just his mother's son; in a world in which his choices are limited, he makes the choice which will test him to the utmost. Celia, in *Shadow of Earth,* needs to escape from a world she can no longer tolerate, one in which she is little better than a brood-mare. Even Rezhyk, the villain of *Sorcerer's Son,* is obsessed with pursuing his own goals unmolested by other sorcerers, and is frantic at the thought that someone may try to stand in his way. These people are all driven by a highly developed sense of self, and a need to be in control of their own lives. In a modest way I share that attitude, or else I would be working in some office nine to five, instead of sitting at my own typewriter at strange hours of the day and night.

Because Alaric has been with me since I was fifteen, and because, in a sense, I have watched him grow up along with me, I suppose it was inevitable that I should become concerned with the transformation of the innocent young person into the experienced adult. That should be obvious from *Born to Exile* and *Sorcerer's Son,* and perhaps a little less obvious from *Shadow of Earth.* Oddly enough, when I first invented Alaric, he was already an adult, already settled into an adult's life work. It was only as I grew older that I realized I had avoided the most interesting parts of his life, and I went back to reconstruct them. Or perhaps I realized that I was too young myself to talk about the adult Alaric and had to stumble through adolescence beside him.

The last theme I want to talk about is the first one I noticed in my work; or rather, Alex pointed it out to me, for I was much too close to my fiction to generalize about it at the time. It is the conflict between love and home. I had such a conflict in my own life; I wanted to be with Alex, but that meant leaving behind me everything familiar and going to live in a place where my established pattern of life was inappropriate, where I had no friends save him, where even the language my neighbors spoke would be incomprehensible to me. In fact, I didn't realize how strange the experience would be, and how alien the place, until I got there. But of course I knew it wasn't a permanent relocation; eventually, in the foreseeable future, the Air Force would let go of him and we would go home. So my choice was not an irrevocable one. But some people *are* presented with the necessity for making a permanent choice between love and home. From my own experience, I know that the pull of home is strong. When my plane from Germany moved into its holding pattern over John F. Kennedy Airport and I saw the Statue of Liberty below me—the first time in my life I had ever seen the Statue of Liberty except in pictures—I pressed my

forehead to the window and tears actually came to my eyes. I don't think I could convey to you the rush of emotion that I felt at that moment, how glad I was to come home. And it *was* home, even though I had never been to New York City before.

Love is very strong. Fiction has certainly harped on that for a long time. But in the face of cutting that link with the familiar, cutting it forever, is it really strong enough? When I wrote *Shadow of Earth,* I decided it was not. At the end of that book, the two lovers part, each turning to his own world, never—as far as they know—to meet again. I knew that, given the characters I had established, that was the proper ending. My then-agent wrote me a long letter disagreeing with my ending, and through all the verbiage I could see that what she was really asking for was a more traditional happy ending: the lovers united, for richer for poorer, riding into the sunset hand in hand. While charming in the abstract, such a scene would have ruined the entire book for me, and so the ending remained as I intended it. Because, although I didn't verbalize the love-versus-home conflict to myself, I knew that it was one of the things the book was about. And once I knew that it was a theme of the book, I also knew that I would have to look at it from some other angle eventually, which I did in the new novel, *In the Hands of Glory.*

I never thought of myself as filling my stories up with heavyweight material. I'm an entertainer, and it pleases me enormously that folks choose to pick up my books instead of turning on the television set. Yet when I write about people and try to make them as real as I possibly can, they inevitably struggle with the things that seem important to me. When I play the science fiction game, giving my characters as weird a problem in as weird a setting as I can manage, I have only my own emotions to fall back on; *they* can only feel to the extent that I can feel. To say that all my characters' attitudes are mine would be simplistic and erroneous. Yet they derive from me, from some part of me, or from some part of the external universe that has been filtered through me.

In all of this discussion of theme and its effect on character, there has been very little mention of the fantastic, the futuristic, the exotic—that is, of science fiction and fantasy *per se.* I have been talking about people, perhaps not always like you and me, but recognizable. One major reason for writing science fiction and fantasy, rather than traditional literary realism, is to confront one's characters with the unknown and unexpected. This kind of literature provides a special crucible for exploring the reactions of human beings in very special, and extreme, situations. People in such stories do not merely skirt the edge of some foreign experience, they go over the cliff, hanging on to normal existence by their fingernails, if at all. Abducted to Arabia by the white slavers, a damsel in distress could always hope for escape and a return home, or at least a refuge in the American Consulate. But in *Shadow of Earth,* for example, the world in which Celia is trapped has only a slender thread of connection with her own, not one so easily grasped as a consular hand in Marrakesh. Different adjustments, as well as a greater desperation, are required. Thrown into strangeness, Celia interacts with those around her in ways she never dreamed of; everything she knows, everything she has always done without conscious thought, is by and large inappropriate; she must learn a whole new set of responses. And this is a primary attraction of the literature: not just that it confronts the *reader* with the unknown, but that it can—or should—bring its characters through a more profound form of experience.

Gregory Feeley, who lives in Connecticut, contributed a study of James Blish to the last issue of Foundation *("Cages of Conscience from Seedling Stories"). Here he turns his attention to a more recent writer, Jack Dann.*

Dann is "the kind of inspired madman who comes along all too rarely" says George R.R. Martin. His last novel, Junction *(Dell Books, 1981, 250pp, $2.50), also carries jacket encomia from Gregory Benford, Philip K. Dick, Michael Moorcock and Roger Zelazny. Now Gregory Feeley examines it, and Dann's earlier work, in greater depth.*

Dann's Disjunctions

GREGORY FEELEY

Junction, Jack Dann's second novel, is an expansion and partial recasting of a novella that preceded *Starhiker,* Dann's first book, and was in fact among the author's first significant works. The two novels, one framing the other thus in their gestations, possess notable similarities in theme and structure, enough almost to be considered companion pieces. The interesting contrasts between the novels, and between them and the original "Junction" (now reprinted in the collection *Timetipping*), point up the salient concerns of Dann's work to date, which has been appearing since 1970 but has excited little comment, despite Dann's four Nebula nominations and his reputation as an excellent anthologist. Like Gardner Dozois, whose early unconventional short work commanded the respect of enough fellow writers to receive prize nominations but found little response from a wider readership, Dann has gained a reputation as a "difficult" and dark writer, often disparaged for his unsavory protagonists, deemed "pessimistic" (still a pejorative to fan sensibilities) and pretentious. The appearance in paperback of *Junction* (at 250 pages more accessibly paced than his earlier, dense works) and the widely-praised "Camps"—about whose popularity more below—may prefigure a general appreciation.

The story that *Starhiker* and "Junction" each superficially tells is a simple one, among the most familiar and variously embellished in science fiction. An unexceptionable young man, chafing at the constraints imposed by the backward and provincial community in which he lives, strikes out on a journey that takes him through a series of dimensions greater in mutability and transcendent immanence than his (and our) own, from which he ultimately returns, fundamentally changed, as a figure of eminence. The power of this tale, which has come into sf not from the tradition of adventure fiction but from children's and folk literature, derives from the journey operating as a metaphor both for the getting of wisdom and as the journey-through-life. The protagonist's experience in encountering the challenges of the new worlds corresponds to the reader's experience in encountering the challenge of the (presumably) imaginatively original text. Thus the work itself constitutes an undertaking to be worked through, implicitly promising reward to the diligent, with the protagonist's bland likeableness serving to facilitate reader identification with his point of view (although in *Junction* Dann has moved toward undermining this last convention).

Dann's recurrent theme, as even a cursory study of *Timetipping* would reveal, is not the debauching of the sf hero but the possibilities of human transcendence, the mutability of consciousness under extremes of experience such as science fiction scenarios can provide. His interest centers on the individual experience, rather than the communal—virtually all of Dann's protagonists to date have been solitary figures, whose voyagings arise from a conscious exercise of will, as the title of *Starhiker,* with its connotation of distant travel undertaken individually and outside normal channels, suggests. In "Timetipping", a seemingly whimsical piece that recalls Isaac Bashevis Singer at his more energetic, the world experiences a dissolution of temporal sequence that might unnerve less than God-fearing men:

> Since timetipping, everything moved differently. Nothing was for certain, anything could change (depending on your point of view), and almost anything could happen, especially to forgetful old men who found themselves in the wrong century rather than the wrong street.
>
> Take Moishe Hodel, who was too old and fat to be climbing ladders, yet he insisted on climbing to the roof of his suburban house so that he could sit on the top of a stone-tuff church in Goreme six hundred years in the past . . .

The phenomenon of timetipping—hopping through time as a natural ability, if not always under conscious control—does not require or receive much further explanation in the course of the story, which generates its dramatic energy from the juxtaposition of an orthodox but resourceful individual striving to remain upright in a society—world, continuum—whose fundamental laws have undergone radical transformation. The bending of form that constitutes the heart of Dann's work receives its purest expression here: Timetipping happens; one man, at least, learns to cope with it. Although the depictions of protean human consciousness in Dann's longer stories are more complexly rendered—e.g. "lateral thinking" in *Starhiker* or the cosmological communion of "merging the dreams" in *Junction*—"Timetipping" stands effectively as a crystallization of this central concern; the fact that it gave Dann's first collection its title probably reflects this.

The major event giving rise to the action of *Junction* closely resembles that of "Timetipping": an irruption that renders fluid the tyrannies of sequence. Sometime in the future, a vast unexplained catastrophe befalls Earth, an alteration of physical law that divorces cause from effect and renders the whole world, save for a tiny bubble containing the village of Junction, a region of physical indeterminacy regarded by the superstitious villagers as "Hell". Outside Junction mountains may grow in seconds, change color, dissolve into moisture: nothing however can enter the village, though townspeople may wander across the bordering tundraland into Hell and disappear.

The novel opens as Ned Wheeler, a discontented Junctioner given to the unhealthy practice of looking upon Hell, sees a creature come out and cross the tundra, in defiance of what natural law is known to remain, to enter Junction. Frightened out of a lifelong iconoclasm, Wheeler attempts conversion to the severe church of his father and most townspeople, which attributes their plight to divine scourge. Some, however, hold Wheeler responsible for the vision he reports, and he is unexpectedly elected President next morning, a position that seems to partake of the sacrificial lamb as much as of the civic figurehead. Wheeler is sent forth to confront the creature, who turns out to be a man from New York City of the distant, pre-catastrophe past, who has come to Junction seeking him. All of New York, it appears, has been dreaming about Ned Wheeler for days, and regions of the city have begun experiencing slippages in time—buildings

vanishing to be replaced by earlier structures. Deacon, a policeman, has been sent to fetch Ned Wheeler from Junction (his commission for this remains unclear) and brings Wheeler through Hell into late twentieth-century New York.

The novel thus far is largely an evocation of estranging and disjunctive conflations: the neo-medieval world of Junction, with its mercantile guilds, religious mania, fetishism (for glass, all of which broke in the catastrophe and is thought to reflect the soul) and hierarchical orthodoxies; founded upon the still-discernible wreckage of a Western industrialized city; with the surrounding Hell evident to the reader if not the characters as a fluxion of space-time principles as understood in the present day. Much of this evocation is very good, such as the night-time scene where panicked townspeople of a schismatic sect throw themselves into Hell in a millenialist frenzy, which achieves a hallucinatory quality that approaches the truly daemonic, something rarely seen amid the thrashings and saturnalia of most modern fantasy and "science fantasy". Other scenes have their *longeurs*, and this portion of the book, as a unit, might have functioned best had it run to less than its hundred pages (the corresponding section of the novella, which is not greatly different in the story it tells, occupies a quarter of this length; Dann may have misjudged the degree to which his material warranted expansion).

The remainder of the novel recounts Ned Wheeler's journey to a New York City undergoing progressive disruptions of time, thence to Goshen, New York (evidently the city eventually to become Junction) on an ill-starred trip in the company of various parapsychologists that never reaches its destination, as the material of their collective reality dissolves while their helicopter is still in the air. Wheeler finds himself in a desert in Goreme, Turkey (the same one containing the stone-tuff church mentioned in "Time-tipping", which is mentioned again briefly in the more recent story "Amnesia" and appears to have a particular fascination for Dann) where he discovers a kind of consciousness in all living and once-living things. He converses with a figure in a fresco on the wall of the ancient church, who identifies himself as a metaphor for the consciousness of an essentially sentient universe whose resonating awareness tends steadily to a maximum. Advising Wheeler that "You've just sunk inside reality. It's much thicker than the diluted stuff you're used to," he explains that

> we are all the bits of an ordering process of mind, if you like, that has created itself out of its own potential . . . Dreams add another layer of reality to the world, an ever-thickening atmosphere of consciousness. And every soul contributes an idea, a thought, or simply the density of its being (,)

and invites Wheeler to join in this expanding synthesis of souls. The protagonist unsurprisingly balks, and is warned that assimilation is irresistible. He flees.

It is at this point that the story lines of the original novella and new novel diverge. In "Junction", Ned Wheeler is quickly overwhelmed, and the story concludes in a Junction to which Wheeler has returned in well-adjusted interpenetration, with the suffusion of "one thought filling the universe" overcoming, evidently, the disruption of causality wreaked upon the world. (This at least seems to be the outcome.) In the novel, Wheeler mounts a sustained resistance and flees across the landscape described as "the substratum of reality", where all evident features seem merely figurative. His flight occupies the last 20,000 words of the novel, ending on a note that is moving, deeply estranging, and ambiguous as to his ultimate success.

In its structure, *Junction* departs both from *Starhiker* and from the novella in that the

folk-tale convention of a gladdening return home (maintained through the tradition from the Brothers Grimm to the quest sagas of Tolkien and his pathetic successors and even unto *On Wings of Song,* where it is subverted) is abandoned in recognition of the truth that there *is* no return, ever, this side of children's literature. The conclusion to *Starhiker* is the one false note in that impressive work, the too-visible edge of the conventional framework upon which Dann devised his stylistic triumph. (Dann has stated that he conceived the novel expediently for Laser Books, a decidedly unambitious line of SF adventure novels edited by Roger Elwood, before burning through and surpassing the initial notion.) In "The Marks of Painted Teeth" (published in the same year as "Junction") Dann had already demonstrated the willingness to dramatize a voyage that does not return from strangeness; his later works have not—with one qualified exception—returned to the neat circularity of this archetypal journey.

Dann has stated in print that he considers "Junction", with its unexplained initial premise, a fantasy; whereas in *Junction* the phenomenon is rationalized through the effects of a black hole, making the novel true science fiction. Nevertheless, it is in the latter version that Ned Wheeler achieves a transfiguration that more nearly surpasses the rational. In both stories it is the local disruption of causality which gives immediate rise to the growing universe of souls, though Wheeler is told that the process was in any event inevitable. In *Junction,* however, Wheeler's prominence in the scheme is explained by his habitual dalliance near the edges of Hell, which has caused his presence to color the nature of the nascent "universe of souls" and mandated his co-option (as well as giving him the resources to resist) to a unique degree. Wheeler does not seem to hold so prominent a place in the shorter version—where, one assumes, his profound effect upon New York was more a local disturbance arising from his proximity to time-warping Hell than evidence of his centrality in a new order (such as the imbuement of Blish's protagonists in the discrete continua that survive the universal quietus in *The Triumph of Time*).

Joanna Russ and others have deplored the tendency of SF authors to bring their protagonists to the condition of the messianic, but Dann's utilization here of the concepts of the "evolving God" and *anima mundi* seems less a serious profferment by the author (to be taken away from the text like a fortune cookie slip) than an intellectually provocative artifice held up mainly for the light it can catch. Dann does not intend his elaboration of the aboriginal concept of "Dreamin'" to be taken seriously as George Zebrowski wishes the concept of Macrolife to be taken seriously, or as Gardner Dozois means for his vision of aliens opening Earth to interstellar commerce "as cynically . . . as Perry had opened Japan" in *Strangers* to stand as a trope for Dozois' quite serious convictions about overreaching Western civilization. Rather, Dann is an intensely figurative writer, working in a field whose potential for figuration, as great as that of the High Romantic tradition, is almost wholly neglected—those ventures beyond the sheer literal as science fiction has dared still largely restricted to such toe-dipping exercises as allegory, symbolism, echoing of myth, and overt irony (Dozois' metaphor, nailed down to the referent it should hoveringly suggest by his obtrusive gloss, almost loses its quality as metaphor, becoming instead a mere assertion of similarity).

As neither didactic intent nor more subtle climates of attitude can be inferred from Dann's fiction, the typical Dann story resists being read either as a statement, artistically rendered or otherwise, of personal belief (wherein the story's events culminate so as to illustrate the author's tenets, as in middle Heinlein, or the author's mouthpieces alone

possess any intelligence, as in late Heinlein and his recent ephebes) or as a wrought pattern informed by the authors, ethical sensibility (as in the works of LeGuin, Disch, or Crowley's *Engine Summer*). The rarity of science ficton that does not somehow address the social controversies of its time—consider how little SF of the 1970s wholly foregoes reflecting its author's opinions on feminism, imperial America, or the limits of growth—makes any work with such greater closure of form seem suspect, almost sinister; as though the author himself were uncaring if not amoral.

This is nowhere more evident than on the level of characterization. An SF novel whose protagonist does not embody the author's notion of a virtuous individual almost always contains clear auctorial indications of where and how the protagonist's character falls short. For a writer to create a major figure who is unattractive (or perhaps merely of human stature) without playing the squeamish game of assuring the reader that the author is aware of, and does not condone, these failings is to invite such complaints as that of *Analog* party-line reviewer criticizing the unsavoriness of poor Ned Wheeler, who is masturbative and screams when confronted by a monster.

It is this departure from the coziness of conventional characterization (and of didactic intent generally) that prompted Barry Malzberg in a recent issue of *F&SF* to distinguish emphatically between *Junction's* "power and naked self-exposure of the protagonist's persona" and that of the presumed "authorial persona" (knowing as Malzberg does the likelihood of such presumption) and which accounts, in large part, for the great popularity of "Camps", whose protagonist Stephen would not, any more than Ned Wheeler, be allowed on board at *Analog,* and whose neatly resolved plot would not alone suffice to gain the story an audience (any more than did *Starhiker*'s); but whose antagonistic force (most immediately, Nazis) gives the story a readily acceptable moral orientation that, combined with the affecting (and tidy) resonance of its inner and outer plots reaching crisis and resolution in tandem, makes for Dann's most accessible story. At 9000 words, "Camps" demonstrates again that Dann's mastery lies in the novelette, as with "The Dybbuk Dolls", "Fragmentary Blue", "Amnesia", and "Going Under", where material that could warrant a major section of a novel holds to its own containing form, compressed within the space-and-a-half of a short story.

If "Camps"' greater success (multiple award nominations; notice from Terry Carr; three appearances in anthologies besides *Timetipping* to date) seems beyond proportion with any artistic superiority over these works, it demonstrates readers' strong response to one fictive enactment, by no means less valid than more disaffecting strategies: the animation of characters and images that become charged with intense meaning on a level below conscious apprehension, taking on the significance of myth. When Stephen in "Camps" "believes he is dying, and . . . has resolved to die properly", his conviction echoes that of Esme in "Going Under" who has decided not "to die as mindlessly as (she) was born". Both this and the very different action Stephen does take, a healing of some rent in the past (a past both personal and—being what it was—of the burden and conscience of mankind) which corresponds to his own recovery, constitute a crucial step in spiritual actualization, the flexing of mind seen as a healthful, completing act, like Raymond Mantle attempting to "walk his way through his amnesia" in "Amnesia". The affinities here with starhiking and "thinking laterally" are apparent, but these recent works have sent roots further, coming to touch upon Jung's concept of the workings of the unconscious—and dreaming—mind as "a natural process which leads toward

wholeness, toward an inner integration, and the expression of an inherent meaningfulness"[1]. The association may seem unlikely, especially considering the tendency of those sf writers who have been influenced by Jung (from LeGuin on down) to idealize the darker strains of human nature—Dann's sensibility shares more with the saturnine Freudianism of Malzberg. No reader of Jung, however, can fail to note the similarities—one cannot impute direct influence—between *Junction's* cosmos-suffusing consciousness and Jung's *unus mundus,* "founded on the assumption that the multiplicity of the empirical world rests on an underlying unity", wherein "everything happening in time is experienced as if gathered up into a timeless objective oneness"[2]. Details in these recent stories, such as Poppa's boxed head floating just below the surface of the waves as his eyes open to look at Stephen in "Going Under", or the stronger suggestion of subsurface sentience in "Amnesia": "the sandy bottom, furrowed as if some underwater farmer had been at work", are affecting in a way that evades explication; and the endings of these stories—Amnesia most powerfully—create a resonance whose fitness and ability to disturb suggest that Dann is working with material a dimension greater in its connotative reach than the stuff of simple myth, whose "usual pattern" Joseph Campbell describes in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces:*

> A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won; the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow men[3].

Both "Going Under" and "Amnesia", evidently along with the early, uncollected "Whirl Cage" *(Orbit 10),* are parts of a forthcoming novel, *The Man Who Melted,* whose title suggests the freeing of forms that has become characteristic of Dann's work, but which indicates movement toward both the texture and implied historicity of a contemporary novel (note the mundane background details in "Amnesia") and the mythopoeia already mentioned.

The other stories in *Timetipping* date from 1971 to 1979, with the earlier, brief and generally less successful pieces placed disadvantageously to the fore. Various themes and devices recur, such as Goreme, the power of dreaming (evident as well in the recent "Fairy Tale" and presumably also in "The Carbon Dreamer", a novelette included in the contents page published in 1973 for the still-forthcoming *The Last Dangerous Visions*), the odd frequency of characters named Sandra, and the solitary, isolated protagonist. The longer, late stories are actually the more concentrated, as a comparison of the opening paragraphs of two stories which commence with similar settings and imagery, "I'm With You in Rockland" (1972) and "A Quiet Revolution for Death" (1978) shows.

"The Dybbuk Dolls", Dann's finest story to date, is a triumph for reasons virtually antithetical to those accounting for "Camps"' strength: its complex rendering of the invasion of a pious Jew's consciousness by an alien malevolence progresses from the masterful evocation of a future society where overcrowded communities live underground in ghetto-like enclaves, as mistrustful of each other as they are of the Jewish shopkeepers who live by selling Dybbuk Dolls and other dangerous extravagances, to a description of the invasion, presented from the victim's point of view, that is without rival in sf for its daemonic intensity, to a final triumph that encompasses defeat, as the narrative locus moves from the individual to his community and then soars into ironic melancholy. Its stylistic virtuosity, combined with the relative novelty of the material (although psi power is central to this and many other Dann stories, nothing so banal as

"mind reading" takes place in any of them) gives the story a tensile strength in its fusion of style and theme that, as fiction should, more resembles verse than the workaday content-bearing of most prose. That, plus the stiff-armed distancing of Dann's manner—Doesn't the man *care* about the awful thing happening to his protagonist? then why doesn't he say so?—probably account for the story's lack of appreciation (it remains unanthologized; the Nebula ballot containing it was compiled that year with no winnowing of nominees). At a time when the commercial fortunes of SF have exacerbated the field's traditional disregard of the importance of form (prizewinning stories become novels; novellas spawn successors to become trilogies with all the care accorded proportion of a freight train taking on additional cars), one is gratified by a story so purely of a piece, an entire and perfect chrysolite probably impossible to imitate, film, expand, or improve.

Lacking the response of any wide readership in his first published decade, Dann's work has received what prominence it has largely through the sustained advocacy of various editors, who have persistently placed the work before us in the face of initial coolness. Victoria Schochet, who brought out his first books while editor at Harper & Row and has been strongly endorsing Dann's stories in the recent *Berkley Showcase* series; Ted White, who serialized *Starhiker* and, after publishing "Junction" in *Fantastic* in 1973, took the unusual step of publishing separately the revised ending of the novel in those same pages four years later; even Roger Elwood (who, granted, always had less acceptable fiction than he had contracted to provide) and Robert Silverberg published and republished his work. The success of "Camps" and recent appearance in high-circulation markets such as *Playboy, Penthouse* and *Omni* may bring Dann's earlier work back into public view (of his six hardcover books to date, only one has appeared—and that briefly—in paperback). The difficult beauties of *Junction* and "The Dybbuk Dolls" remain, however; creating "huge cloudy symbols of a high romance" that stand prominently in SF's perhaps most vital (and least remarked) tradition.

Notes

1 Progoff, Ira. *Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973), p.xxi.
2 Jung, C.G., *Mysterium Conjunctionis,* par. 767, quoted in von Franz, Marie-Louise, *C.G. Jung, His Myth in Our Time* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), p.249; von Franz, p.252.
3 Campbell, Joseph, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1949), quoted (with the tag "usual pattern") in Campbell, *Myths to Live By* (New York: The Viking Press, 1972), pp.202-203.

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Spock, Avon and the Decline of Optimism

SUE JENKINS

Looking for the similarities between American TV's *Star Trek* and British TV's *Blake's Seven* may seem on the surface a short-lived and probably pointless occupation. On a superficial level, the two series differ so radically from one another, in almost every aspect, that the more rewarding game would appear to be one of spotting the differences. These are not only obvious, but are fundamental to any assessment of the relative merits and achievement of the series. Yet it can be argued — and will be in this article — that the underlying similarities of theme, structure, characterization and ideas are so striking as to bring out more strongly still the contrasts, particularly the enormous difference in the general mood or atmosphere of the two world-pictures.

The world of the future is very differently conceived in the two productions. Both envisage an interplanetary Federation; but where *Star Trek's* is voluntary, benevolent, egalitarian, and in principle pacific, *Blake's Seven* exist against a background of corrupt totalitarianism, militaristic, imperialistic and oppressive.

The starships *Enterprise* and *Liberator* reflect in their names and their missions these socio-political extremes. The large, happy *Enterprise* family is engaged in peaceful exploration; the small, desperate, ill-assorted group on the *Liberator,* and later *Scorpio,* is engaged in guerilla warfare against the oppressor.

The general attitudes to violence, death, love, trust, friendship — to the whole field of human relationships — is much harsher in *Blake's Seven* than in the earlier series. More people die, in more unpleasant ways, with far less in the way of grief or regret on the part of the witnesses or instigators of the deaths. The main characters, with whom the viewer is expected to identify and sympathize, are far more often portrayed killing or hurting people than was the case in *Star Trek.* Friendship and trust, ripening into affection, between Kirk, Spock and McCoy, was one of the foundation-stones of *Star Trek's* message, and its success. In the case of *Blake's Seven* it is hard to be sure from week to week how far any of the characters cares or does not care for any of the others.

Relationships shift and change constantly, cynicism is rife, exploitation alternates with self-sacrificing risks on behalf of others and, one suspects, with sexual liaison. Ambivalence and uncertainty are the only constants. Life on the *Enterprise* was cosy by comparison.

So where are the underlying similarities and repeated patterns? These occur in the area of characterization and relationships, and reveal the same system of oppositions and balances in both series. There are still enormous differences, but the fact of the similarities being there at all is the significant one.

In the first series of *Blake's Seven* the pattern of relationships that was established was strikingly like that previously used in *Star Trek*. Blake himself had many features in common with Kirk: idealism, strong emotions, impulsiveness, sincerity, commitment and loyalty. Avon displayed many of the qualities to be found in Spock: reserve, logic, alarmingly high intelligence, strict emotional control, scientific ability. He is also good with computers — "The only one he (ORAC) treats wth any respect is Avon", as Vila said in a later episode. Outside this central opposition of types, the parallels are less obvious; none of the *Blake's Seven* women, for example, has been at all like the adoringly subservient types they filled the *Enterprise* with. Yet Vila bears some comparison with McCoy in his role as caustic observer of the scene and commentator on the folly or inefficiency of the others.

This close parallel with the central triumvirate of *Star Trek* broke down with the second series of *Blake's Seven* and the disappearance of Blake. Yet the importance of that opposition of characters to the makers of the series was made plain by the substitution of Tarrant, a very similar physical and emotional type, for Blake. From that point on, Avon moved into the dominant role on the *Liberator* and his character has been broadened and deepened accordingly, with Vila's role foregrounded considerably in order to point up Avon's nature and actions through contrast.

We are therefore led to concentrate, in any search for the *essential* differences between the two series (rather than those superficial differences in style which stem from the gulf between Hollywood sentimentality and the British passion for the kitchen sink) upon the differences between Spock and Avon, who are in so many ways alike.

Spock, of course, is what Avon might have been had he grown up in the one sort of Federation rather than the other; just as Blake is what James Kirk would have been given the same background. It is the enormous gulf between their life -experiences that makes the two — equally brilliant, efficient, logical and, incidentally, physically courageous characters — so different. Where Spock avoids fighting, and especially killing, except as a last resort, Avon accepts the necessity for violence; he has always been treated violently by the system. Avon is covetous of wealth — indeed is a convicted criminal — where Spock neglects to draw his back pay. Avon is rude, arrogant and self-centred, Spock courteous, self-effacing, and caring toward others. Avon, despite a background in freedom fighting,is genuinely antagonistic towards Blake and cynical about his ideals; Spock's devotion to Kirk is unswerving, and antagonism can only be induced, if required for dramatic effect, by artificial means, (as in *Amok Time* and *This Side of Paradise)*. Spock smiles once in a blue moon, Avon quite frequently; but Avon's smile, although devastating, is somehow less reassuring than Spock's dependable expressionlessness.

So what went wrong between 1966 and 1979? What went wrong, that is to say, in the objective world, whose moods and attitudes science fiction is always so sensitive to? Why do we now look to the future in apparent pessimism instead of in the euphoric hope that produced, and was nourished by, the Spock phenomenon?

Spock is the child of the Sixties; Avon of the Seventies, whatever their Space-Time co-

ordinates in their sub-created futures. Gene Rodenberry first conceived his dream of a new, highly moral, didactic, even radical, science fiction series, as far back as 1960. It was 1966 before it got to the screen — the dream somewhat mutilated, too, by the forces of caution — but it is essentially the mood of the very early Sixties that *Star Trek* captures. "We shall overcome". The basis of the *Star Trek* vision is the assumption that we shall have overcome.

Unfortunately, events in the real world have slid rapidly in entirely the opposite direction to that envisaged by Rodenberry. The crisis of confidence this has produced in individuals and in institutions has resulted in an attitude to the world characterized by defensiveness, withdrawal, fear and mistrust. Hope, imagination, exploration have disappeared. Although on the surface the message of *Blake's Seven* would appear to be, that there will always be some hope; that someone will always be found to hold out against the forces of oppression; the close examination of its themes and characters does not bear this out. It's not nice out there. Even *Liberator* has now gone, to be replaced by *Scorpio*. Many of the team are dead or lost; and those who are left have achieved little more than the minor irritation or sting in the heel of the Federation that the new ship's name implies. The indestructiveness of the villainess Servelan symbolizes the potential for survival of the entire repulsive Federation system. Consciously or not, the creators of Blake are not only reflecting, but reinforcing the sense of lost hope. Ultimately, all they give us to identify with is a sense of alienation that we can easily find in the objective world. After the dream, the nightmare — carefully designed to win viewers; and successful, too. Why exactly do so many viewers like it?

John Schellenberger is a free-lance writer, based in London and Cambridge, and author of a recent article on university novels — "Life After Lucky Jim", Times Higher Education Supplement, *28th August 1981. He is particularly interested in the whole question of* genre *in literature: what? and why?*

In the following piece he brings to our attention an interesting novel of last year which has so far been overlooked by the sf press. It is Mind-Sprung *by Michael Lindsay (Nold Jonson, 1981, 141 pp, £4.50).*

Science Fiction and 'Mind-Sprung'

JOHN SCHELLENBERGER

It is becoming increasingly obvious that science fiction is losing its former status as the least reputable of literary genres. The Invader-from-Mars-with-big-tits comic-book

image looks like taking a long time dying, but the increasing commitment to teaching and researching science fiction shown by staff in university English departments, academic critical publications such as Patrick Parrinder's *Science Fiction* (1980) in Methuen's New Accents series and, perhaps most indicative if least satisfactory for readers who had much previous acquaintance with science fiction, the sycophantic reception of Doris Lessing's *Shikasta* (1979) by a critical establishment which had previously discounted science fiction, all demonstrate that the genre is becoming respectable.

One crucial aspect of this process is the break-down of the distinction — surely always an arbitrary one — between writings in the sf genre and what is sometimes conceived as the "mainstream" of literature. A writer who is vitally involved in this breakdown is J.G. Ballard whose most impressive novels — *Crash* (1973), *Concrete Island* (1974) and *High Rise* (1975) — are not within any standard definition sf yet may be seen as employing an sf approach to their subjects. Ballard himself claims that "the present, rather than the future, is now the period of greatest moral urgency for the writer"[1]. Sf of course is not simply an attempt to depict the science and technology of the possible future, it is an attempt to depict how people — implicitly or explicitly people like us *now* — might behave in a material or social environment significantly different from what we know. To a large extent the way in which sf projects into an imagined future many questions of man's relationship to his material circumstances and to technological change has the effect of high-lighting their contemporary relevance. Projection into the future side-steps various problems in constructing a realistic view of the present that might be accepted by one's readers. The depiction of an imagined future is however only one way of creating a visionary diagram of the present; one could also write about the present *as if* it was the future. For example Ballard's *Crash, Concrete Island* and *High Rise* all depict the present in terms of a nightmarish relationship between man and current technology: a relationship which is not generally recognized as already objectively existent but instead suggests a dystopian vision of the future. Ballard by no means invented this technique of writing about the present as if it were a sf dystopia; there is a strong element of this in Rex Warner's *The Aerodrome* (1941) and as Anthony Burgess has pointed out, George Orwell's *1984* is actually a satire on the actualities of 1948 rather than a dystopian prophecy[2]. The popular success of *1984* was largely due to the whole point about it being misunderstood, but both this misunderstanding of Orwell's novel and its enormous sales testify to the dramatic potential of conflating the present-day with the futuristic.

Orwell's future-present is one in which social and political relationships are different from those that are conventionally recognized in contemporary (or 1940s) Britain, whereas in Ballard's future-present the emphasis is more an altered relationships between man and technology. But there are surely other ways in which a futuristic framework of reference can be used in writing about the present. Michael Lindsay's *Mind-Sprung* (1981) combines elements of both Orwell's and Ballard's types of future-present, but also repeatedly uses sf references simply to emphasize the sheer *strangeness* of the present.

Arguably *Mind-Sprung* is as important a stage in the reintegration of science fiction with "main-stream" fiction as *1984* or *Crash,* but to claim this is not to deny that it is a very odd, eccentric and confusing book. On the back of its dust jacket[3] it is boldly announced in large lettering as "A New Kind of Book" and throughout it is never quite clear whether it is an autobiographical confession, a fictionalized memoir, a dope-smoker's manual, an essay or a novel. The dustjacket blurb claims it as "the best book

about drugs since *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*" but in many ways hashish—the ostensible subject of the book — seems to be used merely as a symbol, in the same way as whales are as much a symbol as the literal subject in *Moby Dick*. In a review of *Mind-Sprung* in the drug magazine *Home-Grown* it was described as "a rare, highly individual account of our times"[4]; equally well it might be read simply as a great existentialist novel.

In *Mind-Sprung* science fiction does not provide the only type of reference to contemporary cultural forms. Allusions to cinema for example are numerous. The petrol station where the protagonist Eddy Willis has a memorable encounter with two Finnish policemen looks "like a gasoline station anywhere in the back woods of a hundred Hollywood movies" (p.11[5]) and the port of Sundsvall in the Gulf of Bothnia resembles "a Swedish-Language version of a small town in a 1950s Hollywood movie" (p.77). The Swedish girl Eddy Willis moves in with "did not look like Britt Ekland, or Ingrid Bergman, or even like Randolph Scott" (p.82). These are neatly effective *visual* images. But sf references are even more frequent, and their purpose seems not to be visual evocation but the creation of a mood. The mood may possibly be one of hope and confidence in the book's final sentence: "He thought of himself as the prototype Twenty-First Century man" (p.141) but elsewhere it is one of strangeness and menace.

The narrative is divided between London and the Swedish arctic and significantly enough, apart from a couple of sinister allusions to the population being about to "rise up and throw off the shackles of an effete bureaucracy" (p.33-4) and to airliners over London filled with "English refugees fleeing desperately before it was too late" (p.126) most of the futuristic references relate to northern Sweden and are used to underline the strangeness and latent menace which Eddy Willis senses in Sweden: "the huge surrealistically modern iron-works shimmering in the heat haze like Martian invaders" (p.6); "it was not a Nazi Germany undefeated by World War, it was a separate parallel development, in another hemisphere or in another dimension" (p.80); "this materialistic civilization on the outer frontiers of the universe" (p.13); "like being on a colony on the moon . . . or like a colony on Mercury where half the year was daylight and heat and the other half darkness and unbelievable cold" (p.96); "As individuals they (the Swedes) seemed almost machine like . . . it could not be long befor they were rendered obsolete by robots" (p.104); "Much in Sweden seemed to prefigure the Twenty-First Century" (p.104); "like travellers from Outer space, space colonists returning to Terra from the other side of the galaxy" (p.123). Even his own children are referred to by the protagonists as "Aliens", unearthly "with their beautiful perfect elfin limbs and almost transparent skins" (p.109). Even one of the book's epigraphs is taken from science fiction —if *Frankenstein* can be described as science fiction—and emphasizes strangeness: "What may not be expected in a country of eternal light?" And the opening passage seems a deliberate attempt to depict humanity from the viewpoint of an extraterrestrial being:

> The surface of the earth was over-run with ugly little creatures who stood on their back legs . . . killed or captured all the other animals they encountered . . . lived in large groups in warrens . . . Their dominant characteristic was an obsession with mechanical tasks . . . They had a mania for organizing things in ever more complicated ways. (p.3)

Specific references to recognizable sf themes are backed by references that are actually to contemporary phenomena but which seem to have been deliberately selected for their futuristic quality: the possibility of decriminalizing theft and replacing the penal system

by State Compensation for robbery victims (p.7); the pistol guaranteed to function at sub-zero temperatures (p.5); the huge suspension bridge in the middle of nowhere (p.8); the office blocks "with row upon row of illuminated windows like lights flashing on control boards" (p.54); the Swedes whose behaviour "suggested not to so much regimentation, but a state of having been lobotomized" (p.59); the trackways gouged through the primeval forests "for overhead electric cables on elegant Π-shaped pylons" (p.61); the tail-first jet fighter that roars overhead (p.83); the miles of underground roads along which the miners are driven to work in buses (p.100); even the confusing references to the Soviet Union as the "Rossiskaya Federatsia" or Russian Federation.

In part the strangeness that these allusions underline is the technological and social strangeness of a country which Eddy Willis sees as "an incredibly remote provincial version of England, with the metropolitan features of England stripped away, and only partially replaced by necessary adaptations to an environment of climactic extremes and vast distances" (p.90) but it is the mere fact of strangeness, rather than the technological or social reasons for it, that seems central to *Mind-Sprung*. Though a relatively brief book, *Mind-Sprung* explores many themes such as for example the contrast between the disintegrating post-Imperial civilization of Britain, "impotent, bankrupt, strike-shattered but still senilely aggressive" (p.106) and more progressive Sweden, or the contrast between the sleaziness and congestion of London and Sweden's northernmost county, an "immense emptiness of spruce and birch forests, watered by great lakes and rivers, becoming, as one advances northwards, a rolling wasteland of moss and bare rocks" (p.98), but the essence of the book is the way it uses both hashish-smoking and emigration as symbols to explore the theme of the individual's search for self. The sense of paranoia and dread that one sometimes gets from smoking hashish is referred to frequently in the course of the narrative: the brilliantly evoked atmosphere of latent menace which Eddy Willis detects in Sweden is not solely a matter of "the way Sweden constantly, deliberately probed at him with its difference, the difference of foreign buildings, foreign traffic lights, foreign shops signs" (p.63) — it is at least in part drug-induced, and indeed it is only when Eddy is stoned that he comes to see Sweden as "at the same time incredibly beautiful and potentially extraordinarily hostile . . . a fairy-tale children's land, barricaded in by all the harshness of the armed state . . . " (p.80). It is as if the sense of strangeness that comes from hashish parallels as well as supplements the strangeness of being in an unfamiliar foreign country, and it is both types of strangeness that the sf references help evoke.

In a sense *Mind-Sprung* is as much about the future as any specifically sf novel. Underlying its main themes is a preoccupation with the collapse of western capitalism and an exploration of the different varieties of totalitarianism which may be expected to flourish in the aftermath. If science fiction is a depiction of the present in terms of the future, *Mind-Sprung* is in many ways a depiction of the future in terms of the present, and the constantly occurring sf allusions help convey a sense of the present actually spilling into the future. Indeed if the future hinted at in *Mind-Sprung* comes about, then technology and man's relationship with technology may cease to be the central preoccupation of western society, and insofar as sf is the characteristic genre of a society obsessed with the phenomenon of technological change, pure sf may be expected to go out of fashion, or survive only in the kind of assimilation of sf and other literary forms of which *Mind-Sprung* is an example.

Notes

1 W. Allen ed. *Contemporary Novelists* (1976 edition) p.89.
2 Cf.A. Burgess, *1985* (1978).
3 i.e. the dustjacket of the 1981 Nold Jonson hardback edition.
4 *Homegrown* vol. 1. no. 10 (Winter 1981) p.55.
5 References are to the 1981 Nold Jonson hardback edition.

Following hot on the heels of John Sladek's letter to the Radio Times *denouncing media bias, we are delighted to present him on that most agonizing and mind-bending subject, "The Profession of . . ."*

Of . . . what? An American jacket blurb recently described another excellent author of sf books as "a scrivener of Science Fiction." Alas, the dictionary defines a scrivener as "someone who draws up contracts" and "a person who writes things for illiterate people" . . . Is that all there is? as Peggy Lee sang. Can it be true, after all?

John Sladek's most recent novel is Roderick, or The Education of a Young Machine, *parts one and two (or, if you're an American trinitarian, parts one, two and three): a hilarious and brilliantly written mock-epic trip through cybernetic pedagogy, which tends to reveal that people are robots, and a robot is the best person around.* Roderick *is full of zany wit, verbal high jinks, pathos, mad adventure and deft satire, a joy of a novel.*

John Sladek was just recently Guest of Honour at the British 1982 Eastercon at Brighton.

The Profession of Science Fiction, 29: Kids! Read Books in Your Spare Time!

JOHN SLADEK

Mainly I write science fiction in self-defense. It's one way of getting to grips with a peculiar world, a world that I find Astounding, Amazing and altogether a Weird Tale. I wonder how people unfamiliar with sf manage to find their way around in our world of Watergate and Jonestown, Khomeini and Haig, robot factories and vodka-cola, Manson and Moonies and the MX missile system. I deal with this stuff as I can, and if the end product looks like satire, look at the raw material.

In 1969 I happened to mention "President Reagan" in a novel, probably because Ronald Reagan had become governor of California, and because, after Nixon, anything seemed possible. It's embarrassing to have one of your sillier predictions come true. I still can't get used to having a real President Reagan (played by Henry Fonda), much less his

Secretary of State, Alexander Haig (George C. Scott). In fact I never did get used to having a President Nixon (Warren Oates).

The fact that our current President starred in *Juke Girl* and *Bedtime for Bonzo* does seem to fit in with the present age of childishness, in which otherwise normal adults collect comics, go roller skating, wear track suits and go to see movies about Popeye and Superman. I suppose it's disingenuous of me to comment upon this as though I were somehow above it, when it must be obvious that science fiction is getting a free ride on this boom in infantile culture. I just hope the free ride doesn't end with no one reading anything.

But in some ways I am outside the American, or at least the Cal-American culture sphere. For one thing, I haven't lived in America since 1965; people have to explain to me in their letters what they mean by tranquillity tanks or jazz dancing. I am still shocked to hear that the children of nice middle-class people I know have become addicts, had multiple abortions, joined mind-destroying cults or been murder suspects, all while still in high school.

One gets over shock, of course, and fashionable jargon is as easily learned as forgotten. And the cultural distance between Britain and America isn't so great: a constant stream of media-packaged Americas (from *Dallas* to the Valley of the Shadow of Silicon) flows across to us. The real barrier seems to be between my Midwestern childhood and what I glimpse of America today.

After a rough start, my childhood was spent with doting grandparents in a sleepy little town (pop. 4000) in the middle of Iowa. We were poor but not destitute, and it was one of those safe, secure, pleasant childhoods celebrated by Ray Bradbury, complete with hand-packed ice cream, rusty screen doors, waking in the morning to the sound of the milkman's horse . . . I don't know why, unlike Bradbury, I've never felt especially lyrical about my home town. It could be because, much of the time, my home town was boring. That may have been one reason why I read a lot. Like most children who read, I read everything that came before my eye. I worked my way right through the local library's children's section, from Uncle Wiggly (adventures of an elderly rabbit) to the Hardy Boys mysteries, then moved to the adult section where I read things like a Jules Verne novel and the stories of Poe and O. Henry. At home I had cheap editions of a lot of "children's classics" like Robin Hood, Three Musketeers, *Huckleberry Finn,* Kipling's *Just So Stories.* Kipling's book and the Oz books really possessed me, not just through their prose but through their illustrations. Kipling did his own drawings, with so many details you could sit peering at or daydreaming over for mindless hours—he must have known everything about child psychology. Later I found a similar delightful jumble of detail in the comic *Smokey Stover,* which I read in Big Little Books. I was not allowed comics at home, so kept up with them at other kids' houses and at the drugstores. In various fits of reading I got hooked on, e.g., dog books or war adventure. And there was *Piang, a Moro Chieftan,* which impressed me so deeply that I can still recall some of the details and even the names of a couple of its characters. And there was a big anthology of "classics" bowdlerized for children by Charles and Mary Lamb, things like *The Iliad, Midsummer Night's Dream, Pilgrim's Progress* and *Robinson Crusoe* (now of course everyone recognizes that these were not genuine classics in the sense that the works of Hugo Gernsback and H.P. Lovecraft are classics). My grandfather brought home his own junk

reading, which I also read: a stack of paperbacks every week, usually Westerns or sports stories (I remember Malamud's *The Natural* turning up; it seemed weird and sexy for a baseball story), also hardboiled detective items. He also brought home the *Saturday Evening Post,* which I always read from cover to cover: slushy love stories, C.S. Forester yarns, Ray Bradbury (I recall reading "The Veldt"), articles, cartoons, even ads for Arrow shorts (with limericks). My grandmother favored *The Sacred Heart Messenger* and *Catholic Digest,* so I read these too; and when I was supposed to be doing the supper dishes, I was often down on all fours reading the newspapers put down to protect the linoleum.

At the age of thirteen I went to live with my mother and step-father in the big city, St Paul. The library there had sf anthologies, and I remember reading a few Lewis Padgett stories. But my baptism into science fiction must have left my heel unimmersed, because it didn't quite take. At the same time I discovered Steinbeck, and the world of grown-up books.

I went to the University of Minnesota to become a mechanical engineer. This field began to seem, after a couple of years, like another stifling small town. The work itself was fascinating, but wasn't there more to the world? My fellow students seemed to believe there wasn't. Finally I got a job in the Physics Department, working for a real engineer. He was bored and unhappy, but making so much money that he couldn't quit.

After three years, I switched from mechanical engineering to English literature, having decided that I really wanted to spend my life writing. I wasn't yet sure what I wanted to write, only that it would be a lot more fun to be F. Scott Fitzgerald or Jack Kerouac than to design flanges for vacuum pumps.

I had been fiddling around with writing since before high school, turning out little pointless story-ettes, then poetry and attempts at humorous essays in the Thurber or Leacock veins (I thought). Majoring in English did open up my horizons; I realized for the first time that there were people like Fielding and Hawthorne and Ring Lardner—and for that matter, Chaucer and Shakespeare. I concentrated as much as possible on modern literature, and of course took English composition classes too. They were encouraging, and I came out of them no longer wanting to be Kerouac. Now I wanted to be Samuel Beckett. A long, tedious and I'm sure most un-Beckettian novel commenced; I dragged it around with me for years, until I went to Europe and lost it, without regret.

About this time (the early Sixties) there was so much good writing and dazzling writing popping up everywhere; books which were as great a pleasure to read as the first chosen book one reads in childhood: Vladimir Nabokov, William Gaddis, Joseph Heller, John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Harry Mathews, Donald Barthelme. Most of them veered towards science fiction, as did the newly-translated works of Jorge Luis Borges. Science fiction began to seem to me less juvenile, especially since my friend Tom Disch was now writing it. I began to hear about and read worthwhile sf by Philip K. Dick, Alfred Bester, Kurt Vonnegut, Walter M. Miller. When I began to write sf myself, Tom helped me a lot with criticism and market advice, and even lent me his agent. Tom and I collaborated on a few things, most of them juvenile and silly but fun to write. My first solo story to be published was "The Happy Breed", which is about people being juvenile and silly. A warning?

I see this article is turning into something like a senile browse through a family album.

All I've really said about science fiction is that I'm not very familiar with the genre. If I had been, there are a few other ways I might have tackled this:

1 *Tips from a professional.* Type on one side of the paper at a time. Read the fine print in contracts. Meet publishers with a warm smile and a firm handshake (Ask yourself, "What is there I can find to like about this person?"). Enclose return postage. And remember, science fiction may not be much, but by God it's a white-collar job.

2 *Anecdotes of genre awareness.* The time I met e.e. ("doc") cummings. How it feels to own a complete set of *Stupendous* (1937-1949) containing the first published story of A.E. van Georgerussell. How I laughed when the FBI kicked in my door and some of my teeth, accusing me of stealing the military secret that $E = mc^2$. Acronyms I have used: FTL, ESP, UFO, BEM, GBH.

3 *Literary insights (interior dialogue):* What is science fiction, anyway? Why do you ask? No but seriously, what is sf? It's just what you think it is. That's cribbed from Jasper Johns. Yes, but isn't sf itself cribbed from Andy Warhol? Images of the electric chair—you could be right—but it's an answer itself implicit in the question, which is itself free-standing only if we set aside the question of Albanian political sf and confront the larger socio-economic problems, taking up the science fiction of William Jennings Bryan in the process. Well I say, cut the cackle and just tell a good yarn, start right at the beginning, have some more in the middle, and finish up at the end, what's so doggoned complicated about that? I won't answer that, since we haven't even begun to take up the distancing effect of space travel, the alienation of aliens, Orwell's aunt, this. This? This dialogue, it grinds on like the pointless gears of a Forster machine, only connecting, only connecting. Toothless you mean, surely? What about Ideas in sf, pretty controversial thought in itself, eh? Oh I don't know, Forster's "When the Machine Stops" has plenty of Ideas, reminds me of my own unwritten story, "MutAnts", by the way is this me talking or you? Why do you ask?

Foundation Forum

Rarely have the parallels between sf and religion been pointed out as wittily as in the following piece by Thomas M. Disch (whose excellent new collection, The Man Who Had No Idea, *has just been published by Gollancz at £7.95).*

This is a transcription of a talk which was delivered by Mr Disch at Yorcon II, the 32nd British Easter SF Convention, held in Leeds in April 1981. Thanks to Graham and Linda James for their assistance with the tape, and to Tom Disch for allowing us to use his Guest-of-Honour speech in the somewhat edited form you see below.

Science Fiction as a Church

THOMAS M. DISCH

I exhort you to meditate with me on the subject of science fiction considered as a religious experience and as a church. This is Easter Sunday; we are gathered here to celebrate our peculiar rites; and so I'm going to begin the service now.

The first time I tried to deliver this talk was in Minneapolis, in the spring of 1973, when I went to a very small science fiction convention (it must have been around Easter time). Two or three people were delivering their message, their testimony, before I spoke. As they were talking, it dawned on me that this was a religious meeting, something I'd never understood about conventions till then. It didn't closely resemble the Catholicism I was brought up in (I'd grown up in the period of the Latin Mass), but there were great similarities between the convention in Minneapolis and certain Pentecostal services that I had seen in Guatemala.

Now that I have the hook in, I'll digress to tell you about my experiences in Guatemala. I was travelling through with Tony Clark, a professional con-man who sold solid gold watches from his van, and the van got stuck in the mud. The only way to get where I was going was to take a plane that for political reasons stopped at the border of British Honduras and would go no further. There was no public transportation from the border to the only city, Belize. So I started hitch-hiking, and there's not much traffic far inland in British Honduras. When finally a landrover came along and picked me up the driver was very friendly, and I was very friendly too. It turned out that he was there as a Pentecostal gospel missionary to the people of British Honduras, and he realized that Divine Providence had placed me there on the highway for him to pick up. I could not very well gainsay that. He took me to his home, and to his services. They were very nice services. They sang and they danced and they were exhorted to consider their own specialness: the fact that, of the few people of the human race who were going to be saved in times to come, this enclave right here in central British Honduras were among the privileged who wouldn't go to hell and would instead go to heaven.

That is the parallel that I observed in Minneapolis. Blessed was the text they preached; blessed are those who read sf for they shall inherit the future. There were also hints of secret powers that some few people possessed, and that these secret mental powers of

various sorts were observably related to one's reading of science fiction. Such powers are not uncommonly associated with religious experience. There is also the promise made to Noah. Like Noah, many sf writers and their fans feel they have the inside track on the approaching catastrophe, whatever it may be, and they're counting on being among the happy few who survive it. Need I cite chapter and verse?

Then there is the matter of healing—and here I will indulge in another digression. The very first science fiction "do" on a large scale that I went to was the Milford Writers' Conference in 1964. I hadn't known anybody in Milford before-hand and no one there, literally, had ever heard of me, because I was invited there as Dobbin Thorpe. Dobbin had published one story in *Amazing*. Damon Knight had liked the story, and so Dobbin was invited and wrote back saying he'd be happy to come. I was billeted with Walt and Leigh Richmond who owned the Red Fox Inn about ten miles outside of Milford in the far country. After the first day at The Anchorage, where the Knights were, I arrived at the Red Fox and met Walt and Leigh Richmond. I entered on a scene that was to me unfamiliar. Walt Richmond was examining a young sf writer who had also been invited there. He had a malady that was focused in his knee, but it related to a childhood trauma that Walt was investigating. It turned out that this fellow had had all sorts of unresolved problems with his father, and they were all concentrated in engrams in his knee. I didn't know the theory behind all of this very well, but I was impressed with the fact that *they* both understood what they were doing and that they expected me to do it too. I was shy and I didn't let Walt get at my engrams.

But I have to tell the story because the Richmonds were among the people who possessed psychic powers of a strange sort. They were collaborators on several books, and Leigh explained the method of their collaboration at one of the writing sessions. Often when you collaborate other people want to know how you actually do it. Walt and Leigh had found a very unusual and effective technique. He would think of what they were going to write and he would project it to her psychically. She would sit down at the typewriter and write the story that he had projected to her. They never had to exchange a word!

This was as near as I got to the inner arcana of the temple of True Believing in science fiction. The Richmonds understood all sorts of things about Atlantis. They'd written books about it, books that were visions of things that had actually happened. They were a little miffed when people regarded the books as fiction, because they knew it wasn't. But on the other hand they had to make a living, and so they published it as fiction.

Now that doesn't at all exhaust the parallels between science fiction and religion. That's about as far as I got in Minneapolis, and it wasn't well received. But since, over the years, I have thought about all the ways in which the religious nature of sf fandom and its many conventions is a good thing—especially if one doesn't have other religions going for one. If you think about some of the purposes that religions serve for people, and try to think of how science fiction may serve those purposes for us, there is rather a large number.

The obvious side of it is the social life. Surely when Methodists get together and decide that they're going to bake cakes and sell them to each other and then sit down and eat them, they're not *really* thinking about salvation at that moment. They're enjoying coffee and cake with their friends. And it is good to have occasions to get together and have coffee and cake, even if you're Presbyterian, or Unitarian—or science-fiction fans.

Then there's the question of pilgrimages. On the way up here to Leeds I realized that it was April and (you'll forgive my Middle English, I hope) "then longen folk to go on pilgrimages". I realized that I was this moment on a pilgrimage. We were in that queue (I expect there were others of you there with us, it got in the newspapers), ten miles of endless traffic jam on the M1 that just went on and on. Pilgrims, all of us. And as in Chaucer one of the purposes of making a pilgrimage isn't to get there, it's to trade stories along the way.

Then there's the aspect of what theologians call Agape, or communion—or, as it was practised by the Romans, drunken orgies. This is an important aspect of religion. People who have read about the history of religion will find that there's scarcely one recorded that does not make allowance for this at periodic intervals during the year when the pressure mounts up and people need a little break. And so we have holidays.

There's also the nationalistic aspect of religion. Nowadays it's considered quite unhip to even remember that we belong to nations, but like it or not, nationality is one of the chief ways people have of sorting themselves into groups. In the course of the different times I've been to conventions in England—the first one was at Bristol, and then it was at Buxton—I have seen an awful lot of England that I would not otherwise have seen. I kept thinking "Well, that's me being a tourist". But if you're English you can't really think of yourself as a tourist in that way. Religions and the pilgrimage system provide one of the ways in which you get to know your nation, as it were through direct experience. You visit other cities and you see what they're like and you live there a while. With people converging from all over the same nation, you mix together and you hear other people's funny accents and you ask them to repeat themselves till you can understand what they're saying. After a while you actually have a sense of the larger social group. As a social unifying force, one of the functions of religion has always been to make you aware of the larger groups you belong to.

Those are what I think of as the really good things about "the convention system" in science fiction, in its religious aspect—things nobody can take exception to. If you don't have another religion accomplishing those purposes, then this is terrific. But it leaves out one thing, obviously. The central idea of religion is supposed to be about the human experience of our relationship to something else: God, the infinite, or however your own religion will put it. The question is, can the parallel continue to be extended? If there are all these other resemblances to religion, then won't science fiction reflect this central aspect of religion as well?

(There are very many science-fiction stories *about* religion, and I will just recommend you to that worthy book, *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia,* where Brian Stableford has written an absolutely definitive article on the subject. It's a long subject; there is a lot of it. But that's not quite what I am getting at here.)

What I have in mind is this. Every sf fan will tell you that the basic element that has to be there in sf is Sense of Wonder—or "sensawonda", as I've seen it printed recently. Sense of Wonder can easily be related to religion if I can give it a different name, Sublimity. There is a book I started lately called *Turner and the Sublime.* Sublimity is instantly recognizable in Turner's paintings, or John Martin's (if you've seen that magnificent painting of the Apocalypse in the Tate Gallery, with the lightning bolt striking the cliff side and the giant rock falling). Martin did deluges and catastrophes on a

large scale, and there are a lot of Turner landscapes and seascapes, with storms at sea and vast swirling distances. Boundlessness is part of it, but also just *size,* the sense of looking into huge distances and losing yourself in awe. It's like stargazing in a way, but stargazing that involves a bit of thought. If you have no imagination, a black sky with little dots in it that blink could be construed as a kind of light-show, a dome with lights shining through the punctured tin. When you begin to speculate about what the sky really is, how far away the stars are and how big each of them is, when you start getting lost in those ideas, that's when Sense of Wonder starts happening.

I guess the archetypal science fiction books are the ones that appeal directly to that feeling, and help you form a vision of the vastness of space. There is Stapledon, and another that immediately comes to mind (that compares directly to a John Martin picture) is Clarke's *Rendezvous with Rama* where you have an artefact that is mysterious, explored at great length, totally awesome in its dimensions, and which disappears without having been explained—it is just contemplated. *Ringworld* is another obvious example of the satisfaction that contemplating a very large-scale phenomenon can give. On a smaller scale, I did a story about an elevator that just goes down forever, non-stop.

You can take it back all the way to the beginning of the Gothic novel—not science fiction but one of our kissing-cousins. *The Castle of Otranto* is an absolutely silly book that I don't think anybody nowadays could read without giggling, but at *one* point it just knocks everybody out. The only thing that happens in it that's interesting or yields Sense of Wonder is that a giant helmet appears out of nowhere and lands in the middle of the city square, killing the intended bridegroom of the heroine. This happens on page two. Nobody can explain it; it's a very large helmet. Later on other pieces of an entire suit of armour appear, similarly gigantic. There has to be something in the notion of *bigness* that is innately inspiring, that stirs the sense of awe and makes us all kneel down and pray.

All of this ties in with what Freud wrote about as "oceanic experience"—which is just religion without a theory, the feeling that you get on a starry night. But that's not all there is to the Sublime, because there is no system to that yet: one is just relating to the universe. Religions always look out at the universe and they discover gods. And gods invariably have a very human shape. It is in forming the idea of the human shape that gods should have that we get into the business of writing stories.

The scale of time is another aspect of Sublimity—the fact that you can look back in history the way you can look out in space; or you can look forward in history across vast dimensions, like Stapledon's huge projections through eras and eras of futurity. Wells was the first writer to begin a universal human history going back to the period of cave men or even to the geological formation of the earth. It's the new sense of history we have, of the dimensions of time, that needs to be celebrated somehow, to be understood and grasped and thought about. So that's another aspect of Sublimity, historical Sublimity.

But there's still one more, and it's where the word really got into its stride. Before landscapes were considered Sublime (according to Reynolds) Michelangelo was credited with being the *great* Sublime painter. That also relates to what he was supposed to have that Raphael and other people didn't have: *terribilitá*, which is a wonderful Italian word. "Terribility" does not work in English the same way that "terribilitá" works in Italian. It means that you look at a Michelangelo and you relate to the image that you're seeing as you might relate to the Sense of Wonder you get out of the sky: a human image so powerful and so profoundly meaningful that you look at it and you sense something

beyond the human in that human image, something God-like. And of course that's what Michelangelo was busy painting: pictures of gods. Now, to paint a picture of a god well isn't actually to tell fibs. You don't even have to be a Christian to understand that the human image can be boundlessly significant for human beings, that it can condense everything that is meaningful and wonderful and soul-shattering in an image—or a tale.

The human Sublime can be found in literature as well as in painting. The artists Reynolds compared Michelangelo with weren't other painters: they were Homer and Milton. Nowadays, novelists rarely write about gods as such; they seldom even write about heroes in the decorative sense of people wearing something appropriate for a fancy-dress ball. Aside from military heroes and cowboys, who each have their own uniform, heroes in modern novels tend to be ordinary folk.

There are also aspects of ritual observation connected with the evocation of extra-ordinary heroes in fancy dress plots. Wagner's *Parsifal* has more than a little in common with a High Mass in Latin. Or there's the Society for Creative Anachronism, which organizes real jousts for those who crave rituals at a higher energy level. I have my own suggestion for a ritual observation that could be returned to and renovated for modern-day use: building pyramids. I feel that they've been neglected for a long time. I was once in a cathedral in Italy, and it looked so easy to do. It was a really early cathedral and not very well built. There wasn't much that distinguished it as a work of architecture, and I couldn't help thinking, "Hey, I could do *that*!" Then I thought maybe I couldn't but I could surely do *something*. It must have been nice to live then and have one of those things going up in the town—and to help out. However, if you don't have a religion you probably wouldn't want to build a cathedral, because then you'd be locked into a whole system that you didn't agree with. But if you built *pyramids,* you would have the satisfaction of building something without having to be a true believer. So I wrote an article proposing that they build pyramids in Minnesota, and it was published and very well received. I called for volunteers and got a whole lot of mail from people who wanted to build pyramids in Minnesota and were volunteering to be a sort of slave corps for the purpose. Unfortunately none of the people who wrote in were offering to fund it, and that's where it bogged down. I funked out really, because I should have got busy organizing a fund-raising drive. Then there would be pyramids in Minnesota today, and I wouldn't just be presenting a day-dream.

I don't mean to suggest that the parallel I'm observing between science fiction and religion is always a good thing. There are aspects of religion that many people have had trouble with historically. For instance, there was the Inquisition, a time when if you had notions that could be considered heretical, it could be most unfortunate. Religion is often organized to make trouble for people who have the wrong ideas. This is true in science fiction as well. There are orthodox influences in the field that I have felt in my own experience, and others have felt as well. Like most heretics, I tend to think of Orthodoxy as being opposed to the free exercise of the imagination. The Orthodox themselves, of course, are defending The Truth.

I do think that when we're talking about art as against religion (if we're not considering religion a branch of art) that the artistic imperative to make things new, to create an image that isn't just an echo of yesterday's success, is necessarily opposed to the *other* dictate, namely to do it again the same way. As a writer, what one often feels from editors, and sometimes from readers, is that one should do it again: it feels so good, do it like you did it

the last time. This often is done; people do write what seems to me substantially the same book all over again. The process is called Orthodoxy, and the result can be a paperback novel or an ikon.

Most orthodox paperback novels are based on a book called *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by Joseph Campbell. Campbell shows how all myths can be boiled down into one all-purpose myth for all seasons. Moses is the same story as Theseus and that's the same as every other famous story. So, since there really is only one story to tell, writers need only tell that one story. And what is that story? It's the questing adventure! Scratch any one of them, such as *Lord Silverberg's Castle,* and under its coat of new paint is a chassis straight out of *The Hero of a Thousand Pages.* Silverberg, of course, doesn't have the only copy of Campbell's book. My own "The Brave Little Toaster" is a questing tale with the same ur-plot. There's nothing necessarily wrong with questing tales—indeed everybody probably will write one some time or other, maybe without knowing it, because it's a pretty basic pattern—but it is not the *only* pattern for telling a story. Try and tell that to a painter of orthodox ikons, though, and you'll only get a blank look.

There's another aspect of always telling one story, and that's not a question of the plot but of the moral of the story. It has sometimes been suggested that I am a nihilist, and I feel that's tantamount to saying a heretic. Nihilists believe in nothing, and that means that there is therefore something to believe in, i.e., an orthodox position. What my nihilism seemed to boil down to among those who pointed it out was that I had written a book called *The Genocides* in which the earth is destroyed by alien invaders. I didn't mean to suggest in the book that the earth *should* be destroyed by alien invaders, or that it *will* in all likelihood be destroyed, or even that we *deserve* such a fate. I meant to write what you might call an epic tragedy, and while that may be a rather highfalutin' ambition for a slim book the notion that one could write a tragedy was the error of my way, as I have been made to understand since. Not that I am recanting, mind you, but when the Grand Inquisitor had me down in the cellar he pointed out that problems don't exist in science fiction unless they're going to be solved, and that men can look towards a future of immortality and that it's quite possible that we will none of us ever die.

Though I remained unpersuaded, I don't object to the Grand Inquisitor, or others of his faith, publishing books expressing the orthodox, cheery view of mankind's destined immortality and the consequent irrelevance of tragic experience, but I think we heretics should be allowed to hand out our pamphlets and publish our novels too.

What all this boils down to is a plea for pluralism—and that seems to be a very English plea. Historically, England was the first country in which several religions learned to live side by side successfully. Indeed, they would even meet sometimes at ecumenical congresses, or, if not there, they would all live in the same village and sneer at each other's churches in a neighborly, peaceful, pluralistic spirit, the spirit of a good con.

So that seems to be my happy ending. Except—it occurred to me to wonder if I might on the basis of these ideas qualify as a religious thinker myself. And if so, whether I could solicit you to become members of my own congregation. The tax benefits to me would be simply amazing.

Letters

Dear Foundation October 1981

Just a short note in re John Clute's remarks on Mark Clifton in issue 22.

Starblaze Editions, our sf and fantasy imprint, will be reprinting Mr Clifton's Hugo-winning novel, written in collaboration with Frank Riley, *They'd Rather Be Right,* in December 1981.

In the process, we managed to unearth Mr Riley; a hard man to find, it turned out, not because of the obscurity in which he lived, but because of the notoriety in which he lived. Mr Riley, whom even Mr Clifton's agent could not locate for almost two decades, lived only a few miles away and was the travel columnist for the *Los Angeles Times,* and the author of a highly successful line of mystery novels. However, he had never mentioned his connection with sf to anyone, and it never occurred to anyone that the two Rileys could be the same.

Presumably, if anyone could shed light on Mark Clifton's work habits and philosophy, it is Frank Riley.

I spoke with him on the phone recently and he indicated a willingness to write a piece about Clifton, if any sf journal proved interested.

To my knowledge our edition will be the first unabridged English language edition (the Galaxy magabook, or whatever, cut a great deal out).

Hank Stine *The Donning Company, Norfolk, Virginia*

Dear David December 1981

You mention in *Foundation* 23 a forthcoming article to contain an "sf viewpoint from China".

Recently, through the offices of the magazine *China Reconstructs,* I have made contact with a young man who lives in Peking. I have already received from him four letters, an anthology of Chinese sf and a Chinese popular science magazine that contains sf. He has written:

"I can scarcely compare the similarities and differences between the Chinese and Western sf. Ours are still in the stage of infancy and can hardly be called literary works. Besides, they contain scientific viewpoints that are already outdated . . . nothing has yet emerged which can be matched with *The Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury, nor will this ever happen, because books like such will never be published here. Today in China, sf comes within the sphere of popular science, and those responsible for the popular science publications insist that the authors of science fiction should produce works with plots not too distant from realities. This naturally restricts to a large extent the imaginative power of sf writers. In China, sf is also classified into soft and hard science fictions. But few soft sf can be said to be hits or have produced an impact worth mentioning . . . In spite of all

this, there has been no such cheap, sexy, sanguinous, religious or racist stuff in Chinese sf. Most of the plots are positive and healthy, a characteristic which exists in most novels of the Soviet Union. On the other hand, large quantity of stereotyped fictions centering on flying saucers as well as spy stories fabricated around the theme of an improbable invention makes one's head spin."

Andrew Tidmarsh *Orton Goldhay, Peterborough*

Dear David February 1982

Thanks for *Foundation* 24

I thought the J.G. Ballard piece was excellent. A genuine scoop. I agree with Jimmy that Ted Carnell had a great deal to do with encouraging what became known as the British "new wave"—I've always said the same thing and have tried to put this into perspective in *The New Worlds Reader* which Fontana are supposed to be publishing. Re "The Terminal Beach", I remember that Barry Bayley and I were very enthusiastic about the story one day when we went to see Ted Carnell and I believe that our enthusiasm helped tip the balance towards his accepting it. At the same time Jimmy had enthused to Ted about a story of mine, "The Deep Fix", which in turn tipped the balance for that! Ted remained the most open-minded of all the editors of the "old school", particularly when he was editing all three magazines (*New Worlds, Science Fantasy* and *Science Fiction Adventures*). Without him, I think several of us would have given up writing for the magazines altogether. He was the kindest and least egocentric editor I've ever known. He would also pay attention to the enthusiasms of his writers (as described above). He remained, in many ways, a model when I took over *New Worlds,* even though I know he didn't care for a lot of the material I ran. I hope you can encourage Ballard to do some more stuff for *Foundation* along the lines of the current piece.

Michael Moorcock *Ingleton*

Dear Sir February 1982

I would like to advise your readers that my book *A History of Soviet Science Fantasy Since 1917* is now available from University Microfilms International, 30-2 Mortimer Street, London, W1. Buyers will receive an excellent xerox copy of the original through this firm's "Books on Demand" scheme.

The book is a companion to my earlier *Annotated Bibliography of Russian and Soviet Science Fantasy to 1966,* similarly available from U.M.I., and attempts an exhaustive study of the field together with an analysis of related critical activity.

Both books are also available on microfiche at the British Library, and in bound form in the library of the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1.

Alan Myers *Hitchin*

"The Last Rebel" (*Foundation* 23) is a fascinating interview, even if I've never gotten past page 3 of *The Pastel City* (and never tried to read anything else by M. John Harrison). I wonder if I find it fascinating because while I disagree with so many of his remarks, Mr Harrison still seems like a respectable writer. Some do worry me a great deal, however. For instance, Harrison admits that he does not have a balanced attitude towards sf. "I would even now refuse to admit that anything good comes out of the science fiction field," he says, "because I believe that it is good for the sf field to be told that and told it regularly. That way we might actually stimulate some sort of growth, self-examination and sense of responsibility." Perhaps; but I would prefer the truth, and this is not any more the truth than the attitude that sf is the only fiction worth reading and if readers are willing to part with their beer money to buy it, it is a success. How seriously can we take his remarks about sf if he says this?

Later, Harrison says that sf readers "don't like to be made to feel miserable"; one would hope so. I would think that anyone who enjoyed being made to feel miserable was psychologically unsound! And misery (or being made to feel miserable) is quite different from showing genuine suffering in a novel, hardship or pain. Much sf has dealt with this: half of Joanna Russ' *And We Who Are About To . . .* is about a woman dying on an alien planet. (In the first half, she kills the other survivors.) "Misery" implies a self-induced suffering in fact, an emotional response to pain, rather than the pain or suffering itself. Philip K. Dick's novels are studded with miserable characters.

Of Le Guin's fiction, he says "It's too tainted with ideology to tell if it has real compassion, too generalized." I wonder at that: Chris Fowler gives the example of Dickens, whose novels were about "an individual in a blacking factory", and yet Le Guin's fiction is nearly always about individuals. "You may hold your ideological views for the most humane of reasons, but the very fact that you hold them in an ideological framework dehumanizes them. This is important: it's the framework through which you view the world that matters." And yet what Harrison is saying is that we abandon any (organized) framework through which to view the world, because it's dehumanizing; let's rely on our emotions and whims of the moment. I think Le Guin's compassion in her fiction is quite evident—and her desire to affect change in the world is not bad. It may be even one of the "givens" of good science fiction: of novels written by conscientious, and indeed, compassionate authors. There is life outside of literature. This is an idea I wish Harrison could have expanded on.

"I would say . . . that all generic fantasy stuff obscures what a writer wants to say rather than helps it." Nonsense; in many cases it enhances the meaning.

The effect depends upon the writer's intentions and skill. No skillful writer is "subjugated to fantasy"; or shackled by readers. Harrison seems to be using the term "mainstream" (or "real" writers) to indicate quality, rather than content (as it has been most commonly used). Why doesn't he just call Borges and Ballard good writers and be done with it, rather than call them (even more confusingly) "real" writers? Despite his protests to the contrary, it does seem he is advocating a "socialist-realist" position for fiction. "Every piece of observation in that story is real, and most of it happened to me. . . . There is nothing in that story that is faked at all." I can understand the importance of personal observation for the writer, but it is not the only way to acquire knowledge for use

in fiction. The conclusion I come to is that Harrison doesn't want to write sf (because its trappings automatically make it "fake") but does so only to make a living (but he's not "in prison" like the other writers of generic fantasy). Well, this is unfortunate, but many decent writers do not live off their fiction.

I am sorry for the lateness for this letter—since beginning it, the latest issue of *Foundation* has arrived! I hope you or Mr Harrison still find my comments useful. (Some of his ideas are controversial enough to write articles about!) I haven't read all of the new Foundation yet, but the article you put together from an interview with J.G. Ballard is the finest piece about the man I have read. The quotes you used were quite appropriate. I found it especially amazing to discover that Ballard was a widower and raised children all those years while writing—I just can't believe it, it seems so at opposites, I suppose, from the image he projected in his fiction. It is unusual that I never read this about him before.

Cy Chauvin *Detroit*

Reviews

Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers
edited by Curtis C. Smith *(Macmillan, 1981, xviii + 642pp, £35)*

reviewed by John Clute

Before 1978 the shelf was pretty bare. Though Donald Tuck had published the first volume of his *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy through 1968* in 1974, and R. Reginald had assembled a couple of Model T sketches of his 1979 magnum opus, it was certainly the case that beyond these volumes, and the magazine checklists of Bradford M. Day, and Neil Barron's first edition of *Anatomy of Wonder,* and some scattered work on individual writers, most of it incomplete or incoherent or both, the science fiction researcher/student/collecter/reader had almost no critical apparatus available to him for sorting through or evaluating the field as a whole.

It all changed in 1978-79, with the publication of Tuck's second volume, completing his alphabetical survey of authors; of Reginald's *Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature, a Checklist, 1700-1974; with Contemporary Science Fiction Authors II,* which attempts to list and briefly identify *every* genre book published in English within the designated period, excluding plays and poetry; of William Contento's *Index to Science Fiction Anthologies and Collections;* of Lloyd Currey's *Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors: A Bibliography of First Printings of Their Fiction and Selected Nonfiction,* which provides moderately full and methodologically sober bibliographic descriptions of selected oeuvres; and of *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction,* general editor Peter Nicholls, associate editor myself (interest declared), which beyond citing titles and their dates lacks bibliographical content, but which presents the cognate data on titles (prior magazine appearances, revisions and so forth) in greater detail than any of the above.

None of the writers or compilers involved in this quintet of works, it should be noted, had any but the most fleeting access to research done by any of the others during the months and years of labour that preceded their various but closely-linked publication dates, which meant that a great deal of double-jobbing went on willy-nilly, and that a great number of errors were made that could (and would) have been eliminated, given cross-checking access. Least affected by this absence of resource the other books might have provided, because of its specialized focus, was probably the superb Contento; most damaged, because of its attempted comprehensiveness, the *Encyclopedia.* All the same, though errors of commission and omission did inevitably creep into most of the five volumes, it is nevertheless the case that an enormous amount of genuinely firm bibliographical and critical data came onto the market in 1978-79. *Things became known,* and once known should not be forgotten: proper titles, right dates, provenances; ghost titles were removed by the dozen, wiped away like shit.

None of these books were perfect. They had to be built upon. What they offered had to be *used.* We come to late 1981, and to Curtis C. Smith's *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers,* and I for one feel a sense of complex emotional and intellectual betrayal on contemplating the book, a sense which has by no means diminished after a couple of

months trying to use it. For the kind of Virgo bibliographer's mentality I'd admit to being blessed or lumbered with, *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers,* because it is a methodological shambles, engenders a kind of mild pervasive panic. It can easily be explained. Bibliographers tend to think of themselves as cleansers of the stables of nescience, dour, modest, dogged, mundane, but *bringing light.* But what has happened here? After dozens of us spent years with our primitive shovels shoveling dumb shit out of the stalls, Curtis C. Smith comes along and shovels altogether too much of it right back in again.

But one must be fair. *Twentieth-Century Science-Fiction Writers* was an enormous enterprise, and for some individuals and libraries it will remain an indispensable reference source for a while. In its 642 huge pages, it includes extensive three-part entries on about 600 science fiction writers—a preliminary Who's Who style biographical notice; a short-form bibliography that is claimed to list "all books, including non-science fiction works" of the author in question; and a short critical essay on the author by one of Smith's 146 signed contributors. Some authors have also included comments of their own.

It is an enormous enterprise indeed, and Smith, who is Associate Professor of Humanities at the University of Houston, enlisted the aid of 20 advisors to help structure the work. Some of these advisors, like Darko Suvin, contributed (certainly in his case) some highly professional entries as well as recommendations as to who should or should not be included. Others, like Brian Stableford, also served (he certainly did) to ensure with wholesome advice that there would be entries on writers like J.D. Beresford and E.V. Odle, both of whom might otherwise have been muscled out by Australians like Frank Bryning, M. Barnard Eldershaw and Pip Maddern whose inclusion (while welcome: *hi!* strangers) might owe something to the number of Australian advisors on the Smith team. Generally speaking, however, at this level the book is well-planned, though John Gloag should certainly have been included in preference (say) to Pamela Zoline; and Gerald Kersh in preference to Arthur Keppel-Jones; and R.L. Fanthorpe in preference to Jean Mark Gawron; and Joseph O'Neill in preference to John Cowper Powys. But that's a game with no ending.

The biographical sections of each entry are generally about as accurate or revealing as one could expect—that is, pretty sound when the data are already in the public domain, and pretty scatty when Smith and whatever team of assistants helped him on this part of the job have to depend on writers to tell the truth about themselves, even when they happen to remember it, which is not often. All in all, though, a valuable compilation, up to this point.

But we must now spend a certain amount of time on the bibliographical sections of Professor Smith's enterprise. We will enter the heart of darkness of his book. As it is hard to know where to start, let us start with what Professor Smith claims to have accomplished. "The bibliographies," he says,

> list all books, including non-science fiction works. Original British and United States editions of all books have been listed; other editions are listed only if they are first editions. As a rule all uncollected science-fiction short stories published since the entrant's last collection have been listed; complete short story listings occur for writers whose reputations rest primarily on their short stories.

Though the bibliographies are in fact far more complexly (and confusingly) arranged than this explanatory note implies, and though Professor Smith says nothing here about some of his weirder practices, let us, for starters, stick with his simple, heady claims about

what he is offering the researcher/student, and see how they cash out.

For anyone even superficially knowledgeable about science-fiction bibliography, it's an easy enough task to check on Professor Smith's first, extremely impressive claim, that of having compiled 600 bibliographies that list *all books,* without exception, of the 600 writers included. It is very widely known that Robert Silverberg wrote a large number of pseudonymous novels in the 1950s and 60s, many of them under the name of Don Elliott. Interestingly, Currey's Silverberg bibliography, which is otherwise very thorough, mentions these pseudonymous works but does not list them; in a preliminary note, Currey states that, as a consequence, his "checklist of Silverberg's fiction is not complete". That is, when Currey could not fulfill his criteria for completeness, he said so. With Curtis C. Smith, a different kind of decorum operates. In *his* book, Silverberg's hundreds of pseudonymous novels are neither listed nor mentioned; they might as well not exist.

(We do not refer here to Silverberg's science-fiction pseudonyms. Smith lists Calvin M. Knox, and he also lists Ivar Jorgenson, though he spells it Ivar Jorgensen, causing him to confuse *Starhaven,* which Silverberg wrote as Jorgenson, with two Jorgensen titles by Paul W. Fairman, one of which, *The Deadly Sky,* is a retitling of an earlier Jorgensen/Fairman novel, *Ten from Infinity,* as Professor Smith could have worked out by referring to his own entry on Fairman, though *there,* sure enough, *The Deadly Sky* is misdated. We put this excursus in brackets; with many of the citations to follow, a similar snakes-and-ladders into the shambles can be assumed to lurk in wait, just below the surface.)

So. With Robert Silverberg, no work has been done to adjust his bibliography to the claims Professor Smith makes as to its completeness; and evidence of the failure to do that work has been concealed. A quick check of other writers known to have operated under pseudonyms—Zach Hughes, say, or Barry Malzberg—shows the same absence of research, acknowledged in the case of Hughes, muffled in the case of Malzberg; on the other hand—to demonstrate a lack of consistency that adds to the sense of shambles—a check with the Ron Goulart entry will show lists of non-science-fiction books he has written as Con Steffanson and Josephine Kains, though it manages to omit the science-fiction novels he has written as Joseph Silva . . .

But this is a game with no ending. Generally speaking, Professor Smith's claim to have listed all books comes reasonably close to the facts of the case when bibliographies already exist for him to draw upon (with due acknowledgements), or where (for instance) pseudonyms have been well-known for years. Every single book Evan Hunter has written under his various names seems to have been listed, including the dozens of Ed McBain police procedurals, but surely this comprehensiveness only underlines the ad hoc nature of the project in general. And because non-science-fiction writers who are famous will have bibliographies Professor Smith can draw upon, they will tend to be more thoroughly covered in this reference book devoted to science-fiction writers than the genre authors most of us are precisely most interested in finding out about in precisely this kind of book. Thus Evan Hunter complete. Thus Bertrand Russell, whose science-fiction comprises three titles and whose non-science-fiction takes four thick columns to list.

However, though Professor Smith misleads us about completeness in general, he is perfectly straightforward about declaring the uselessness of his listings of "all uncollected science-fiction short stories published since the entrant's last collection." Time and again I've had colleagues exclaim at the value of an uncollected stories listing, and then blink as they reread Professor Smith's note and realize what he's actually providing. Only short

stories *published since an author's last collection* are listed in the book, which may seem reasonable enough, but watch out. It means that the careers and work of classic pulp authors like Eando Binder or Raymond Z. Gallun—both of whom only published short story collections late in their careers—will be egregiously misrepresented. In Gallun's case, as an example, only short stories published after *The Best of Raymond Z. Gallun* (1978) are listed. And what bloody use is that? And what about Kris Neville, whose death in September 1980 goes unrecorded, though many 1981 books are listed (but more of that in a moment)? As Donald L. Lawlor's essay (part three of the entry) positively emphasizes, Neville produced most of his short stories in the 1950s and 60s, and it is mainly for his short stories that he will be remembered as approaching the first rank. But as his *only* collection, *Mission: Manstop,* was published as late as 1971, after he had become relatively inactive, almost nothing of his significant work is represented in the bibliography. The only conceivable reason for arranging things this way—beyond the demonstrably certifiable notion that any author who has published any of his stories in a collection has therefore published *all* of them worth remembering—is to avoid work. Once again, it is precisely the material one wants and expects to see in a book of this sort that is precisely the material that this book omits.

Professor Smith's final claim, as quoted from his Note, is simply and thoroughly false. If the case of Kris Neville were not sufficient demonstration that his book does *not* include "complete short story listings for writers whose reputations rest primarily on their short stories," then a brief check with the Harlan Ellison entry should be proof enough. One "uncollected" story is listed, period. The fact that it also appears in one of the Harlan Ellison collections that are also listed is presumably a simple error. Errors happen. The point remains.

So far we've been talking about omissions, failures to adhere to claims made. Perhaps it's time to touch on a few *positive* faults in Professor Smith's methodology, which we'll deal with under three headings only, because you can't go on forever.

One): *Projected titles.* These are titles which did not exist when Professor Smith compiled his bibliographies, but which he has included on the assumption that they *would* exist by the time his book was published, in exactly the form they were described to him as being about to take. It is an assumption which on the face of it, and after examination, both seems and is fatuous. Fatuous and opportunistic. And in any case, what kind of professional academic could possibly list a non-existent title (ie a potential ghost title) in the same bibliography as an already published book *without distinguishing between the two?* Smith does. There could be no faster way to shovel shit back into the stables.

A few examples might help show what happens when this sort of crapulence gums up the works. I'll take two authors, Harlan Ellison and Gordon R. Dickson. With Ellison, we can give Professor Smith the credit of not listing *Last Dangerous Visions,* and the demerit of listing *Blood's a Rover* as being published by Ace Books in 1980. (Publication of *Blood's a Rover* was first deferred until 1981, and then the book was withdrawn altogether.) Three other titles are listed which do not in fact exist: *Demon with a Glass Hand* (1967), *Kill Machine* (1967) and *Perhaps Impossible* (1967). Leslie Swigart's Ellison bibliography lists the first of these as a projected title, but does not mention the others at all; one wonders why Professor Smith acknowledges her work if he did not use it?

The case of Gordon R. Dickson is far messier even than that, and shows far more clearly the kind of clean-up job Professor Smith is willing to pass on to the rest of us, and

far more clearly the various categories of disaster the use of projected titles can lead to. Although he lists *On the Run* (1979), which is an unrevised retitling of *Mankind on the Run* (1956), Professor Smith fails to list *Arcturus Landing* (1978), which is a *revised* retitling of *Alien from Arcturus* (1956). He misses the 1978 revision of *Mission to Universe.* He misses *Pro* (1978) and *The Spirit of Dorsai* (1979) entirely. He ascribes *Nebula Winners Twelve* to the wrong year (1979 instead of 1978) and to the wrong publisher, and does the same with *Masters of Everon* (1980 instead of 1979) and wrong publisher. He calls *Lost Dorsai* a novel (it is a collection). And he supplies us, in *The Star Sailors,* for which he provides both a publisher (St Martin's Press) and a date (1980), one fully-fledged ghost title. With this many wrong projections, how can any researcher know what's *right* in the Dickson listing? The answer is: no way. The answer is: no ascription from 1978 onwards in this appalling mess has any value at all, until it is thoroughly checked.

(For the user of the book, a few further examples, out of a very long list. Algis Budrys' *The Life Machine* (1979) is a ghost, as is Jack L. Chalker's *The Identity Matrix* (1979), as is Felix Gotschalk's *The Last Americans* (1980) and R.A. Lafferty's *Where Have You Been, Sandaliotis?* (1979). Mack Reynolds' *Language Five* is actually Mack Reynolds' *Lagrange Five.* Barry Malzberg's *The Man Who Loved the Midnight Lady* (1980) is a collection, not a novel, and includes most if not all the "uncollected" short stories listed immediately below it on page 358; the same applies to James Tiptree Jr's *Star Songs of an Old Primate* (1978) on page 535. But this is a game with no ending.)

Two): *Categories.* In a superficial sense, it may have seemed a good idea to have tried to divide the output of the 600 writers treated into two main categories—Science-Fiction Publications, and Other Publications—and from these rubrics to have subjoined even more precise distinctions. Such a task, however, could have avoided procrustean lunacies only by extremely methodical execution, and by maintaining consistency from one list to the next. Needless to say, neither of these conditions were met. When Professor Smith is reducing complex bibliographies of established writers like Rudyard Kipling (for instance), he entraps himself in a positively preCopernican bedlam of distinction without sense, omission and commission without a clue. Under Science-Fiction Publications, Professor Smith lists two volumes of short stories, and leaves out Kipling's only science-fiction book, the admittedly slim *With the Night Mail* (1909), which does exist all the same, and which is considerably thicker than many of the pamphlets listed under Other Publications, subdivision Other. Of Kipling's four novels, one *(The Light That Failed)* is listed under Other Publications, subdivision Novel, one *(The Naulahka)* is listed under Other Publications, subdivision Stories, and two *("Captains Courageous"* and *Kim)* are listed under the aforementioned Other. For the reader who does not know Kipling, the gummy confusion this lunacy creates is nearly total. For the student of Kipling, the breakdown is worse than useless. For the professional bibliographer, it is a fine object lesson in how not to compress secondary information. For anyone looking for *With the Night Mail,* there is no hope at all, because it is simply not listed anywhere.

When (on the other hand) Professor Smith has no prior complexity of ascription to make nonsense of, then he tends to the other extreme. Most of Michael Moorcock's books (for instance) are fantasy, and, under the criteria Professor Smith operates elsewhere, would be separated as such from his science-fiction, of which he has written relatively little. Weirdly enough, though, Professor Smith lists every single book by

Moorcock (but one) as science fiction; that one title, a projected title by the way, which he misspells, is *The Great Rock'n'Roll Swindle* (1980 in tabloid form only). So what happens? Kipling is subdivided until he resembles the Chessboard of Salvador Dali; and genre-switcher Moorcock is treated with considerably less assortative sophistication than Ted Tubb.

(Most of L. Sprague de Camp's fantasies are duly separated from his science fiction, while his Conan pastiches are listed as science fiction in a reference book which excludes Robert E. Howard, presumably on the sufficient grounds that he did not write science fiction. But this is a game with no ending.)

Three): *Ascriptions.* We must be brief. (It is dumb to confuse throughout Nelson Doubleday, an issuer of bookclub editions, with Doubleday & Company; game without ending.) We shall confine ourselves to the way in which Professor Smith lists those short stories he has not managed to exclude from consideration on grounds we have already described as being less than admirable. Believe it or not (and maybe no professional will without actually inspecting the book), short stories are listed *either* according to their first publication *or* according to (what I would guess as being) their most widely available anthology publication, but with absolutely no distinction made between these two radically different kinds of ascription. Take (for example) Robert Abernathy, the first writer in the book. Here are two ascriptions:

"When the Rockets Come," in *Astounding* (New York), March 1945;

"Junior," in *SF: The Best of the Best,* edited by Judith Merril. New York, Delacorte Press, 1967.

There is *no* previous ascription of "Junior," which was of course first published over a decade earlier. There is *no* way to tell that the first ascription means the first publication of the story and the second means anything *but.* And it happens time and time again. The shit is in the stables all right.

I've spent no time going over the critical pieces making up the final part of each entry, and there is no room to be thorough. Briefly it can be said that they vary pretty widely, more or less from Darko Suvin to the ridiculous—Susan M. Shwartz's piece on Jacqueline Lichtenberg (whose "books are marked by an extraordinary density of thought. She creates extremely dangerous characters: the vampiric Simes, the venomous kren" et cetera) can perhaps be thought of as fairly representative of the latter extreme. It can also be said that the quaint variableness of quality these pieces exhibit not only reflects underediting but Professor Smith's visibly apparent dependence upon publish-or-perish American academics, some of whom are not exactly high-powered, but almost all of whom will write cheap. (Honorable exceptions include Gary K. Wolfe, whose several essays are uniformly cogent.) In any case, good or bad, the critical essays are matters of opinionation. You agree with them or otherwise. They do not fill the stables.

It's not that previous books didn't make mistakes, some as hilarious as some of those here, though not (I think) as methodologically culpable. It's that by now we had every reason to expect *better.* True enough, Professor Smith and his many colleagues had a great deal of work to do, and some of it shows to advantage; but they also had access to an enormous amount of secondary reference material, and their use of the tools they had at hand must be registered as being deeply unsatisfactory. And it's too late now. The damage has been done. For years now—every time some innocent party quotes some new ghost title out of this heart of darkness, or trashes Robert Abernathy for being behind the

times—the rest of us will be coming home late, dreck between our toes, the stable still crammed. For this is a game with no ending.

Twentieth-Century American Science Fiction Writers
edited by David Cowart and Thomas L. Wymer *(Gale Research, 1981, xxvi + 652 pp, $124)*

reviewed by Colin Greenland

Twentieth-Century American Science Fiction Writers is volume eight of Gale's *Dictionary of Literary Biography,* though packaged, for some reason, in two volumes. It contains entries of varying length on ninety authors who began writing between 1900 and 1970, with a basic bibliography of the work of each, plus appendices on various aspects of sf in general. The volumes are handsomely and sturdily produced, clearly laid out and illustrated with some very choice portrait photographs as well as a more random selection of magazine covers and the odd book-jacket and manuscript page. All these things are important for a reference work. Having said that, we must ask: who will be consulting this book and for what? To identify its function and judge it we can turn that question into a formal one—what is "literary biography" and how good are these essays as examples of it?—which is not pedantic but pragmatic for the researcher wondering where to look next and the potential purchaser wondering about that $124 price tag.

To start with, this volume of the *DLB* is not a dictionary in any sense I know. The only common factor between these two volumes and a dictionary is that the entries in each are arranged in alphabetical order. So, don't come here looking for definitive indexes of names or titles. As for "literary biography"—well, when compiling entries myself for a future volume of the *DLB,* I took this to mean that each essay should follow the career of the writer, specifying dates of composition and publication, defining periods and phases, and generally supplying as much personal information about the life as might be appropriate to an appreciation of the works. My editor asked for even more: character anecdotes, and portions of the author's financial and sexual histories that are probably "public domain" for American scholars but likely to make a repressed Britisher suspicious of prying. I was surprised, therefore, to see that the average contributor to *Twentieth-Century American SF Writers* offers quite a lot of literary but very little biography indeed. What I was expecting is here in snatches, as when William C. Barnwell integrates Algis Budrys's lost Prussian background with the major themes of exile and ambiguous identity in his fiction; or, most succinctly, in John Hollow's picture of Edgar Rice Burroughs as a self-unmade-man who "began to dream in prose, on the back of letterhead stationery from his failed projects." But the general pattern seems to be a paragraph or so of biographical information, such as might be gleaned from jacket copy and publicity releases, followed by a detailed account of the writings (thematic analysis at best, plot recitations at worst), and, for a living author, a limp last paragraph (these are always lousy things to have to write) saying, "promises to do as well if not better in the future." When Bill Blackbeard announces, "Gernsback has yet to be evenly assessed in a full-length biography or in a detailed study of his publishing work," we can quickly translate that as, "Will somebody please write some source material for me?" Moskowitz is Blackbeard's principal source (though he manages to misspell his name throughout), but apparently even Moskowitz does not say why Gernsback went bankrupt in February

1929, or how he then managed to launch three new magazines in that same year. I don't know the answer either; but if I wanted to find out, I might hope something called the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* would tell me. Barnwell may be good on the importance of nationality in Budrys, but he has no idea why Budrys published nothing in the ten years between *The Amsirs and the Iron Thorn* and *Michaelmas:* again, information I would expect a literary biographer to provide. Virginia Bemis cites approvingly Le Guin's contention (from her introduction to *Star Songs of an Old Primate*) "that the writer's personality is much less crucial to understanding the work than we habitually assume. Tiptree requires us to examine her stories rather than her biography." Fair enough, I suppose, especially since Tiptree is one of sf's more private figures—but what is that assertion doing in a *Dictionary of Literary Biography?* I begin to suspect that some transatlantic semantic shift has intervened; that the words "dictionary" and "biography" cease to have their customary meanings when used in conjunction with the word "literary". Certainly Coleridge wouldn't recognize them.

So I am arguing about the title, not the book itself. The inadequacies of the book as it is are much more minor and local. Erich S. Rupprecht's bibliography of Thomas Disch is full and up to date (with *Neighbouring Lives,* 1981) but his essay stops abruptly, inexplicably, and inexcusably, nine years short (at *334*). James Scott Hicks's essay on fandom is badly written and desperately in need of editing, but it does provide some perfect gems after the manner of the Master Wollheim. ("None less than Isaac Asimov, Robert Bloch, and Ray Bradbury began their careers as fans." "Presumably it is no longer considered an unfeminine trait to appreciate science and technology.") And then there are the conspicuous absences: Greg Benford, Ben Bova, Ron Goulart, John Sladek . . . Wilson Tucker I concede might be optional, but where is L. Ron Hubbard?

E. & O.E., *Twentieth-Century American Science Fiction Writers* is a solid and careful guide to the works of its subjects. It's a companion, really, not a dictionary. The inclusion of the appendices (on the "New Wave", SF Art, Films, Fanzines, a "World Chronology of Important Science-Fiction Works", the inevitable list of Hugo and Nebula winners, etc.) strongly indicates some uncertainty of identity, so it's surprising Gale didn't go all the way and claim it to be an encyclopaedia. Several books have pretended to that title with less justification.

Alien Encounters: Anatomy of Science Fiction
by Mark Rose *(Harvard University Press, 1981, 216pp, $12.95 US, £9.10 UK)*

reviewed by Gary K. Wolfe

Mark Rose's book is one of a small but growing number of studies which attempt to treat science fiction in the context of the history of ideas. Ideas rather than texts are his central concern, and the result is a work which, though short, is one of the most provocative and intelligent contributions to the study in some time. Readers accustomed to the kind of encyclopedic detail that has come to characterize so much of what passes for critical theory in the genre may be disappointed to find that they cannot simply turn to the index and look up a pocket evaluation of their favorite author; they are apt, too, to want to interrupt Rose's thematic discussions with exclamations of "But Simak did a story on that, too!" But one of the pleasures of Rose's book is that so much of what he says does

suggest additional texts, that the paradigms he presents have wide applicability beyond the illustrative examples. Surely this is one of the tests of a well-thought-through critical theory.

Rose's book is divided into six chapters. The first two, titled "Genre" and "Paradigm," constitute about a quarter of the book and attempt to locate the genre and identify its characteristic structural patterns. Science fiction, for Rose, emerged as an outgrowth of romance, a means of exteriorizing the romantic landscape in a non-metaphorical way suitable to an industrialized culture. But the last couple of decades have seen a "radical reinterpretation of the genre" among authors who see these landscapes metaphorically and begin anew the process of interiorization. Characterizing science fiction as "a form of the fantastic that denies it is fantastic," Rose aptly suggests that simple genre definitions may be becoming inadequate to deal with the extended shape of science fiction.

The paradigm Rose presents as central to science fiction's ideational structure is more problematic. Essentially, he sees the genre in terms of a confrontation between the human and nonhuman in a manner similar to the romantic opposition between man and nature. So far so good. Cutting across this, however, is a second kind of opposition which Rose characterizes as science *vs.* nature. This quadratic paradigm works well to describe a large number of texts, but it also raises questions. Do science and nature constitute a true opposition? Rose characterizes science as "a form of knowledge", but in fact it is a method, specifically a method for explaining nature. Is a method to be thought of as opposing that to which it is applied? Later in the same chapter, Rose more accurately places science in opposition to alternative systems of thought, such as politics and religion. And how is nature different from "nonhuman"? Here Rose sometimes seems to confuse "nonhuman" with "inhuman", as when he sees the nonhuman and science allied against man and nature in dystopian fiction. Rose's paradigm is a powerful and persuasive one in many ways, but it forces him into some odd judgments: society itself becomes the machine in the dystopia, and the image of the monster creates a particular problem unless it is thought of as a transformation of the human.

Any study focusing on major themes of science fiction is going to encounter this sort of problem. The genre criticizes itself, and scholars seeking to categorize its disparate elements can barely keep up with authors seeking to escape any such paradigms the scholars may invent. Are aliens more appropriately discussed in the context of space (as Rose does) or in the context of other "monsters"? Any science fiction reader could cite a number of stories illustrating either position. At times, in the four thematic chapters that make up the rest of the book, Rose seems to want to have it both ways. The result, as he himself acknowledges, is that by the time he gets around to discussing "Monster" in his final chapter, he has little left to say. "Monster" is the shortest chapter in the book, and the only one without a central text to discuss, although the image of monsters pervades the book in other contexts.

Of these final four chapters, two concern scientific or mythic concepts—"Space" and "Time"—and two concern the perceived results of science—"Machine" and "Monster". With the exception of the final chapter, each of these begins with a brief description of the historical background of the concept, followed by three or four discussions of major texts interspersed with comments showing how other texts reflect and modify the central theme. References to the mainstream of generic science fiction are

generally confined to these latter comments; there is little extended discussion of such authors as Heinlein or Asimov, and some readers may be disappointed to find that of the eleven texts Rose does select for detailed comment, more than half date from 1930 or earlier. Of the five modern works Rose discusses in depth, two are by Lem (*Solaris* and "The Mask"), one each is by Dick and Ballard *(The Man in the High Castle* and *The Drowned World)*, and one is a film *(2001)*. Some of these are among the most intelligent critiques of individual science fiction works I have read, and for this reason alone one wishes Rose had included more such discussions.

On the other hand, Rose is to be congratulated for resisting the impulse to be encyclopedic. While it would be tempting to list works that he has "missed" and that support his theses as well or better than works which he cites, this would be to misunderstand his purpose. *Alien Encounters* is a work which seeks not merely to identify the endless themes and variations which characterize generic science fiction, but rather to locate the deeper structures which provide a bond of commonality between works as diverse in origin and intent as Williamson's "With Folded Hands" and Lem's "The Mask." Rose sees science fiction as more than a popular genre characterized by internecine combat and self-referential narcissism, but as the continuation of an ongoing historical attempt to define the limits of what is human and what is available to humans. If there is much that he has left unsaid, or if there are rough edges to some of his formulations, this only suggests that he has provided much to build on. *Alien Encounters* holds out the promise of what a mature science fiction criticism can be.

Oath of Fealty
by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle (*Timescape, 1981, 238 pp, $13.95*)

reviewed by Douglas Barbour

In *Oath of Fealty,* their fourth collaboration, Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle have created a crisp, efficienct thriller with political overtones which guarantees them a controversial response. Set only a few years from now in Los Angeles, or rather in the four square mile Arcology of Todos Santos, built in the ruins of a burnt out slum and now providing a secure life for its quarter of a million inhabitants, the novel questions the social fallout from the ideology of liberal thinking in America.

A large cast of characters, most of them the leaders of Todos Santos, people this novel, which offers us a full tour of the wonders of this huge enclosed city and a battle to preserve its independence, as a singular political unit, from the ruinous policies of Los Angeles (and by extension, all big cities with their failing social programs). Todos Santos warns non-citizens to stay out on pain of death, and when some young people, who have been given information by an ecological underground group dedicated to the arcology's destruction, break in as a prank, they are killed. As a result, Todos Santos is forced to commit itself to even greater isolationism, and to protecting its own people even if that means breaking federal laws.

It's in the narrative of the decision-making leading to the jailbreak of the Todos Santos executive who ordered the death of the young people he thought were saboteurs that the ideological argument of *Oath of Fealty* is pursued. For Todos Santos is an ultra-modern feudal society, as an outsider, an intelligent newsman, points out.

"Feudal societies are always complex: everyone in such a society enjoys rights, but few have the same rights. There is not even a pretence of equality—of rights, nor of duties and responsibilities.

"There is, however, loyalty, and it runs both ways. The Todos Santos resident is expected and required to be loyal, but in return, Todos Santos gives protection . . .

"Loyalty and protection," Lunan said. "The ties of the Oath of Fealty run in both directions. The trend in the United States has been to cut all ties, so that individuals are alone. The citizen against the bureaucracy, against 'them,' only nobody is really in control and you can't say who 'they' are. In Todos Santos, 'they' is Art Bonner, and if you don't like what he's doing you have a chance to tell him so."

The novel does not deny that some kinds of personal freedom are lost in Todos Santos: the Security Force has spy-eyes everywhere and each citizen must wear an ID badge at all times within the complex, etc. But it argues, often persuasively, that many people will give up some freedom for the security, both financial and personal, that such a modern, technologically sustained, feudal society can offer. Given the signs that many people in the U.S. have lost faith in freedom and would like a bit more security (even Ronald Reagan falsely represents such hopes, nostalgic and incoherent though they are in his rhetoric) the novel may find a ready audience for its arguments. After all, a new TV series, *McLain's Law,* set in that same Los Angeles, proposes that civil liberties have created "a jungle out there" full of inhuman animals who must be stopped, with violence if need be. The images say we aren't getting the protection we deserve; *Oath of Fealty* argues that such protection is to be found in another way of life.

As I said earlier, Niven and Pournelle tell their story with efficient detail and narrative pizazz. Their characterizations have definitely improved since the days of *The Mote in God's Eye,* especially their women, thought they still fall within the rigid boundaries of double genre expectations: those of science fiction and bestsellerdom. Nevertheless, even on its own terms as a Heinleinesque social speculation (the book is dedicated to Heinlein), it runs into some problems because there is a strong subtext of science fiction fandom references which contaminates and trivializes the ideological argument of the main narrative.

At first, this fannish subtext appears limited to such minor irritants as the emphasis given to "Dream Masters, the gallery of fantasy art" in Todos Santos or one citizen's exclamation of "Great Ghu, no!" But other signs are more deeply imbedded in the narrative. Todos Santos' ID badges are straight from sf conventions: "Like most resident badges these were personalized. The parents' had color drawings with their names in stylized calligraphy; the children's had cartoons." One major character boasts of her past in fandom. Look deeper still: the feudal structure working in a contemporary closed society comes straight out of that sub-fandom, the Society for Creative Anachronism. And of course the Arcology's designer is really trying out earthbound prototypes for the generation starship he hopes to build one day. Ah the dreams of true believers! Now, it comes clear, the deeper argument of the novel is that people who could live in a feudal set-up like the Todos Santos Arcology would be the proper citizens for a centuries-long convention to the stars.

There would be much to admire and much to think about and argue with in *Oath of Fealty,* if the novel's ideological provocation were not dissipated by its unstated commitment to the old "fans are Slans" dream augmented by the possibility of unlimited funding (from an equally visionary OPEC source via Zurich banks—who's kidding whom here?), which translates into unlimited power to buy the dream. Seen in this

perspective, the ideological argument of the narrative begins to look pretty silly though I suspect Niven and Pournelle want it to be given the serious consideration it may even deserve. But it's impossible to take the puerile wish-fulfillment dreams of fandom seriously; and *Oath of Fealty* proves to be just another sub-Heinlein story with philosophical pretensions.

Radix
by A.A. Attanasio (*Morrow, 1981, 467 pp, $15.95; paperback $8.95*)

reviewed by Roz Kaveney

Mel Brooks once said that there are ideas which have to be tried over and over again until they're abandoned. There is little or nothing new in the plot and ideas of *Radix* and the heavyhanded preciosity of its style is not as original—even in its details—as the author would, I suspect, like to believe. There is talent here, perhaps, and there is certainly intelligence. No author who was not intelligent could ever have produced a book as remorselessly dull, as persistently dumb and as simply long as this one.

Stop me, as they say, if you've heard this one . . . In a postcatastrophe slum Sumner grows up poor but specially privileged as a result of his certificate of genetic purity; this also involves him with the voors—part mutant, part hyperspatial entity, by one of whom he has a son. For murdering other adolescent gang-members he is sent to a series of training centres and prison camps where he sheds his puppy fat and becomes a Superb Physical Specimen. We gradually learn the nature of the catastrophe which has overtaken his world; it has been knocked for a loop by energies and entities en route, via the center of the Galaxy, from and to other universes. Sumner, now a Ranger and mutant-killer and possessed by his voor son, is revealed as the dreaded doppelganger of the Delph, a formerly human tutelary deity of Earth; the Delph has created a giant crystal brain called Rubeus, who in turn is plotting to run Earth when it moves out of the energy beam and the plug is pulled on the Delph and his other major rivals. After the usual adversities and initiations, Sumner destroys Rubeus, hands over rule of the planet to a worthy minor character and goes off to meditate.

Bits of this—often the less original bits—are more or less well done. Sumner's crimes as the unknown dangerous Juvenile outlaw Sugar-rat are unpleasant in their violent details, but the descriptions of mass murder manage to convey something about the totalitarian urban squalour through which the hero moves as well as teasing our more unhealthy voyeuristic instincts. But the mayhem grows less interesting as Sumner acquires physical and psychical prowess. Scenes in which the young fat spotty malcontent tricks rivals into acid vats and onto electric fences have—in the ingenuity which their construction needs, in the hard work of making the details logical and plausible—a straining energy which communicates itself into the rhythms of the prose and through a sort of feedback makes more credible the mental efforts of the hero. Once he is trained up to a peak of perfection such that he can shrug off sprung steel manacles and dispose of massive opponents in a flurry of adverbs, the narrative loses this sense of difficulty, this sense that the hero and writer alike are having a hard time and having to pull muscles to win through. Without that sense, one gradually becomes aware that this stuff is not a bundle of fun to read.

Attansio has been very considerate to his audience in some ways—this I suppose counts as a plea in mitigation—and has provided a chronology and glossary so that us dumb bunnies can comprehend the awesomeness of his gimcrack metaphysical and cosmological rationale. Take the Voors for example; the Voor in the street is "a being from Unchala who has evolved into the Line and who spontaneously and creatively usurps the physical forms of species of whatever life-worlds the Line reaches". Nice to know they're spontaneous when they're usurping your physical form—wouldn't want to be possessed by rigorous anal compulsive hyperspatial entities, would we? . . . And the Line—what, pray, is that? What else but "a hypertube; the timelike geodesics which connect the space-free internal domain of a naked Kerrsingularity . . ." And *that* is in the glossary! In the text of the novel we regularly find ourselves enmeshed in purple passages which try and fail to tell us not only what all these energies and entities are but what they are like. The truth is that for all the misplaced ingenuity which he has put into the gobbledegook Attanasio has in an important sense failed to imagine these admittedly more or less unimaginable things. The violence is conventional and distasteful but it has vigorous sensory life—the mystical superscience is built up by stringing together cosmological buzzwords. But isn't that what space opera has always done? Well, yes; but the physical universe of E.E. Smith is of a complexity such that a child could model it in matchsticks, that of Charles Harness would take a little more time and plasticine and a few mirrors. Attanasio, poor sap, has made an effort, in the beginning perhaps a conscientious effort, to build a space-opera universe that takes on board modern physics—not in the Niven/Varley mode of "There are things called black holes and they weigh a lot"—but in all its complexity and intellectual thorniness. But somehow a sense of that kind of universe is not going to be best evoked in the seedy company of this sort of tatty storyline; A.A. Attanasio should have known better.

Not that this is Jack Chalker, or to be more accurate Stuart Gordon—the writing is awful, but it is not slick or mindless—sentences have been thought about for hours, days perhaps whole months . . . The early blood-lettings have a certain crude vigour, but then intelligence takes over in a blizzard of mots justes. All too often Attanasio avoids a cliché in favour of some dunderheaded coinage of his own: I thought I was tired of heroes' blood pounding in their ears, but it is far worse to have it "quopping". All too often Attanasio tries to reinforce sense impressions with that sort of half-baked neologism. And then there are the section titles—"Destiny as Density" and "Trance Port". Intelligence is on display in this novel—accompanied by too much cleverness and not enough thought.

In the last analysis, Attanasio has set himself an impossible task. At a level above the prose comic book it is difficult in the extreme to portray the efforts of a single strong man as affecting the destiny of the universe: when the universe in question is one that audience and author cannot grasp intellectually or sensuously then it beomes impossible. To render space opera respectable is always something of a gallant bid; with weapons as blunt, strategies as ill-conceived as these, it becomes a forlorn, foolhardy hope.

Aventine
by Lee Killough (*Del Rey, 1982, 171 pp, $1.95*)

reviewed by Colin Greenland and David Pringle

This is a collection of seven short stories set in a futuristic artists' colony called Aventine. Most of the stories first appeared in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* between 1974 and 1981. In reading them, we were reminded strongly of another imaginary resort and another author, and finally we decided the best way to comment on this book was via parody. Thus:

The Thousand Dreams of Karen Lee

Again last evening, as the crimson sun burnished the sculptured clouds over Vermilion Sands, I saw the shade of the forgotten writer slip from his moody old mansion on Aventine Avenue, summon the spectral Pontiac convertible with its satyrical chauffeur, and ride away across the burning sand-sea, without a sound. Watching him once again make his doomed flight into obscurity, I wondered who read his perverse, cryptic imaginings now, and what had become of Karen Lee, the disciple who had tried to take his place . . .

I was more than surprised when Tony Traven told me that Atelier 5, the Aventine, had been let for the season. It was already late in the day for Vermilion Sands. The stars were shutting up their villas and moving out, one by one, in their forlorn search for somewhere less fashionable. A new arrival was a prodigy; a new tenant for Atelier 5 little short of sensational. The former occupier had been a recluse, a writer of science fiction who had sunk glumly further and further into his shell as he witnessed his most bizarre speculations daily becoming fact. Rumour had it that he had been among the first settlers at the terminal beach-colony, and, true to form, he was among the first to leave it. We had seen little enough of him during his residence: there was talk of some major disfigurement, an appalling series of car crashes. Atelier 5, the Aventine was a sombre replica of the man's brooding personality.

"But you'd have to be crazy to take on one of those old psychotropic places", I protested.

"Nevertheless, that's what she's done," Tony said. "Perhaps she sees herself as a latter-day Juliet, sacrificing herself in Capulet's tomb." He began to glue a wing onto his Airfix B52.

I resolved to pay a visit to our mysterious new neighbour. The garden gnomes were in full voice that afternoon as I left my chromium shack and strolled towards the Aventine. All around me they muttered and grumbled, like sinister dwarves plotting rape.

Atelier 5 had seen better days. Silver spiders crawled in and out of the bioplastic, spinning their luminescent webs into hanging curtains like the dendrites of a tired brain. Would I find Snow White in this witch's palace?

At first sight my fears were allayed by her ingenuous charm. "My name is Karen Lee Killough," she said. "I'm a doggy radiographer, and—a writer. Won't you come in?"

It is always fascinating to watch a psychotropic house adjusting to a new personality.

The science-fiction writer's former home seemed tetchy and puzzled, filling the air with uncertainty. The hall had begun to fold over her like some dark and sulphurous sundew. Unperturbed, she stood cradling a Yorkshire terrier to her checkered bosom, a Hollywood vestal come to cleanse Hellmouth with her Pepsodent smile.

"Do you realize who used to live here?" I asked cautiously.

"Of course," Lee said warmly. "He was a genius. How could one forget 'The Cloud-Sculptors of Coral D'?"

Ten minutes later I took my leave. Outside, the sky hung expectantly, as though a cyclone were about to sweep up the Aventine and carry away this Dorothy in her gingham dress to some all-too-terrifying Land of Oz. This enigmatic young woman was clearly obsessed with the now-departed author and his decadent fantasies. Surely she didn't see herself as his avatar, the new dream-mistress of the sand-seas?

But as I stood on my balcony at dusk the first insane stories came drifting across the desert to me, the scattered reams of white paper fluttering over the sand like stranded albino butterflies. Finally, filled with foreboding, I straddled the rail, jumped down onto the terrace, and picked one up: "Tropic of Eden". I let it fall, and snatched another. Somewhere a sonic gnome belched, its turquoise breath sifting through the air to hang over my head like a spectral question mark. "Broken Stairways, Walls of Time." I read on rapidly. There was something heartbreakingly familiar about these phrases, this precious landscape with its rich, compulsive inhabitants, perpetual tourists sunning themselves in the glare of their own neuroses.

Forgetting myself, I ran along the Avenue and beat on the door of Atelier 5. In the twilight the darkened windows of the house seemed to resemble the sunglasses that had shielded the novelist's face. Was it possible that he had returned—in some characteristically oblique manner—to haunt the Aventine?

"Lee! It's me!" I called. "You've got to get out of the house!"

There was no reply, just the keening of a sand-scorpion flying high overhead, the rustling of spiders on the walls, and a gnomic undertone from the small hunched figures that filled the garden. I called again; then, galvanized by panic, threw myself at the door, my entire musculature unlocking like the shackles of a chastity belt.

The door burst inwards and there she stood, an electric storm playing about her calm features. No longer earthed, the obsessive psychotropic circuits in wall and ceiling were discharging into her overlit brain. All too clearly she had drunk of a milk of paradise which would soon blow every fuse in her skull.

"You can't help me now," Lee cried. "I am the great writer, the Overloaded Woman! Vermilion Sands is mine! Mine and Toto's!" The dog writhed in her embrace.

I made one last attempt, hardly knowing what strange vector of my desires she had become. "You're not in Kansas any more!" I yelled above the rising wind. "Get away from here, before it's too late! Find a suburb of your own!"

The invisible cyclone struck, and threw me spinning across the garden. The wind raged, the house roared, the gnomes screamed; and then, with a clap of thunder, it was over. A vast calm settled over the Aventine. I climbed out of the drained swimming-pool and dragged myself back to the porch. Karen Lee was gone, her personality unravelled on the psychic wind. She had been fragmented into a thousand postures, the gestures framed in motel mirrors, the apotheosis of Xerox, the signatures on a hundred royalty cheques. I

picked up her empty gingham dress. Dog hairs and fragments of skin fell from it like a melancholy snow.

It was then, in the silent aftermath, that I first saw the phantom of the science-fiction writer in his transparent Pontiac, the maleficent Wizard himself, a sorcerer recalled by his faithful house to punish a rash apprentice. He wore an ironic smile, and slowly patted a pile of books which lay on the ghostly leatherette beside him.

As I walked away into the darkness, the ruined pages rustled about my feet like mutated leaves. For once the garden gnomes were silent and no strange beasts honked in the night. The wind whined faintly down the Avenue like the voice of a deserted muse vainly wooing an electric typewriter.

Mission
by Patrick Tilley (*Michael Joseph, 1981, 398 pp, £4.95*)

reviewed by Neil Ferguson

If the writing of novels can be said to have any rules, these can only be the sum total of the prejudices and expectations of the people who read them. We may have our own peculiar tastes but when we read fiction we contribute, willynilly, to a consensus about what fiction *is*. Science fiction, say, can tell many tales that would be impossible in "straight" fiction; it is able to do so, and thereby contribute to Literature with a big L, because of an evolution in its readership's awareness of what the rules of the genre are. It is against them that our judgements are formed. Without going into what these invisible "rules" in my view are, I must confess that my own judgement was almost swayed by the large expensive packaging in which Patrick Tilley's novel is presented, and by the critical comments on the backcover acclaiming his earlier novel, *Fade Out* ("A novel as taut as a bow-string . . .", *Evening News*). It all certainly looks like a novel. It has pages. The kind of unlikely events that take place in sf literature abound; so why did I get the feeling this somehow wasn't a science fiction novel? Or indeed any kind of novel? With its chapters and characters and plot, *Mission* possesses all the characteristics people understand that a novel should have. So why does it not square with my own notions about what a novel *is*?

The narrative of *Mission* concerns a couple of weeks in the life of Leo Resnick, New York Jewish lawyer, would-be play-boy, and his feminist-chic girl-friend, Dr Miriam Maxwell, the circumstances of which would be of no interest to anyone were it not for the arrival in it of a character who is the real hero of his story—if not History—and whose mission is referred to in the title. Jesus Christ, slipping in and out of different time worlds, first century Jerusalem and present day Manhattan, gives Leo a lot to think about, including some additional details relating to his own life and crucifixion that were omitted from the version in the Gospels. He explains that the Bible events refer to one stage in the age-long battle between the forces of Good and Evil, the Empire and Brax, a nasty piece of work who unfortunately does not make a personal appearance in the story. All recorded history is an expression of this struggle. (Readers who suspect that economic considerations were contributing factors will have to suspend a certain amount of disbelief). So there is much that is familiar from history, myth and religious practice drawn into this single vast universal plot.

". . . My mission was to rescue *our* people. The twelve Ain-folk who were inside you."

"Inside us?" (Leo) said. I don't know why but the news came as quite a shock. "Are you trying to tell me that the human race has been occupied by your people?"

"Yes" he said. "That's where they've been hiding ever since Earth and the rest of the galaxy fell into enemy hands. Remember what I said about Michael and Gabriel resembling agents of the OSS. The situation here is analogous to your own recent past. The Second World War. The universe is like occupied Europe. The Ain-folk are the underground resistance movement that we are helping to stay alive until the day of liberation. And it's the rebels, your new overlords, who are the Nazis, stamping their *Sturm und Drang* philosophy over the cosmos."

There are pages of this. Pages and pages. The presence of Our Lord in Manhattan gives rise to some nice gags but does little to advance the plot. In fact, just the reverse. Leo, a shallow, not particularly likeable guy, finds himself drawn into lengthy meditations on diverse arcane mysteries. Among many others these include astrology, Scripture, the Quabbala, Sufiism, Atlantis, Glastonbury, King Arthur, Danikenesque technology. Little is left out of the hippy pantheon of alternative explanation for Why We Are Here. The overall effect is that the plot is imprisoned in a rambling erudite exposition as painfully as the Ain-folk are within the flesh of humankind.

If we exclude the seven-tenths of this book which are given over to exposition of implausible/plausible ideas about the universe, the reader is left with the vapid life-habits of Leo Resnick and his girl-friend, most of which consists of going to the movies, arguing and lying to each other. Which is OK; it seems highly likely that Our Lord would choose someone as culpable as Resnick to carry out His work. Unfortunately Leo's peccadilloes and style only figures as the picture-frame to the *real* story which is happening somewhere else, Jerusalem among other places, and before this novel began, as related by Christ with Leo playing the dummy. Thus the reader is tantalized by a second-hand version of the main plot. In this sense *Mission* isn't a novel: it's *about* one.

The erudition that went into this book must surely be the reason it was written, taking up as it does more space than the lives of the characters, as if the writer were more interested in scripture, myth and magic than Leo and Miriam. The presence of Christ in the story might have led a reader to expect His concerns to be in evidence: the wound in mankind He came to heal, human beings suffering the moral penalty for consciousness, questions of love and doubt, Chance versus causality. These matters are often referred to, but only off-stage. For this novel is *about* many things that should, instead, constitute its own being. Time, for example is discussed in the language of seriality whereas the narrative itself plods through linear time: most chapters begin with Leo starting the day and end with him concluding it, something which is not redeemed by the neat time-shift in the final half-dozen pages.

Much space is taken up explaining and justifying the Messiah's presence in New York as if it were something the writer found hard to believe himself. There are no loose threads. The plot is like the seamless shirt belonging to Him which so surprises the dry-cleaners on 49th Street. There are none of the narrative synapses, breaks in logic, that a practiced reader of novels enjoys being puzzled by. Sometimes we like our intelligence to spark, to find ourselves cornered by moral quandaries, be made to laugh and cry. The idea behind *Mission* is a good one. Philip Dick might have written it in twenty pages. Borges in five. Patrick Tilley takes 396 pages to do it. Yet there is a poignancy in the book, albeit unintentional. The author, an Englishman, has beamed himself aboard a New York wiseacre to serve as his first-person narrator, someone for whom he obviously does not cherish much affection. Leo Resnik speaks like the New World Thesaurus of American

Colloquialisms and embodies those British stereotypical assumptions about Americans: flippancy, low morals, fast-talking and a penchant for ironic understatement preceded by "Let's face it . . . " The jokey hip language all the characters use makes it difficult to tell one from the other, though it is presumably intended to locate them in real-life New York; the writing is so self-conscious, however, that the opposite effect is achieved. For any reader who can tell it from the real thing, it appears stylized and, like all baroque, draws attention to its existence as an artifact. Like American pictures of Englishmen walking around in tweeds saying "Pip Pip old man!", it out-Herods Herod. Whereas the *surface* of the writing is like a flashy American customized hot-rod, the actual *shape* of the narrative is as stolidly English as a Morris Minor Estate.

The Insider
by Christopher Evans *(Faber, 1981, 215 pp, £6.95)*

reviewed by Ian Watson

I recently read two American sf-vampire novels, both published by Pocket Books within months of each other: Suzy McKee Charnas's *The Vampire Tapestry*—and Whitley Strieber's *The Hunger,* which reads like the former excellent book gone right over the top. (I can believe in Charnas's vampire, but Streiber's specimens—despite a vast amount of biomedical hoo-ha, *per contra* Charnas's subtle use of psychiatry—lose most of their credibility when they suck so much blood, *élan vital* and bovril out of their victims that only a papery husk is left, which you can toss up into the nearest tree.)

But what has all this got to do with the good Christopher Evans, and his Insider? Actually, quite a lot.

In a rather Priestly breakdown-*cum*-confusion of identity, narrated in rather Priestly cadences, Evans's Insider is initially a misanthropic, deliberately under-achieving hack writer, Blair, who is in reality an alien entity that crash-landed in London during World War II and to save itself from extinction transferred into the body of a newly orphaned Blitz boy. Years later, in a near-future Britain of microchips, bread queues and impending Right Wing take-over, Blair's body succumbs on a park bench and he transfers again, to Marsh, a management consultant with many social and family commitments: behavioural aspects which Blair has spent his previous life avoiding, and with which he cannot come to terms.

As Blair, forced to adopt human guise, he could remember nothing about his previous alien identity but the bare fact of it. Now, as Marsh, aspects of the social being whom he has dispossessed begin to rise up through the mental grating down which he thought he had successfully flushed the Marsh persona, retaining merely memories and skills; and it becomes highly ambiguous whether he was ever really Blair at all (let alone an alien). Perhaps he is simply Marsh suffering from a nervous breakdown?

So what has this got to do with vampires?

Well, Evans goes out of his way to mention vampires. On page 128 quite gratuitously, so it seems—when Marsh meets someone's lady-friend, Arabella—she is compared to "a fugitive from some exotic vampire movie". Marsh senses that her name probably is not her real name, but is only the label for a nominal, artificial identity. And we feel that we are on the point of discovering that Arabella is another such bemused alien as Marsh

himself, haunting a stolen human identity. But we hear no more of her, nor does any such revelation emerge; which is a typical Evans narrative disjunction (as per his earlier *Capella's Golden Eyes*); and is actually quite in keeping with vampirism, since the lot of the vampire is to remain lonely, to shun his own kind, to remain perfectly concealed within the human race on which he preys.

(Time to zap the vulgar Strieber once again. Whereas Charnas's vampire *in extremis* gets involved, subtly and ambiguously, with a psychiatrist, Strieber's vamp of a specimen deliberately checks into a research lab for a full biopsy in gross defiance of her proper exile, silence and cunning. But then, the lady vampire in question has already rattled around medieval Europe in coaches packed with vampires, depopulating whole communities.)

Then, on page 211, Marsh decides that he is indeed "some kind of mental vampire—a parasite who could only sustain himself by destroying others."

The exile, silence and cunning; the parasitical possession of others to sustain his own life; the haunting by the spirits of victims whose *élan vital* he has appropriated; the longevity; the sense of alienation amidst the human race who are dominant (and viciously dangerous) *cattle,* but who at the same time provide the only source of emotional being-in-the-world for the alienated one—this is all vampire territory. But here it is developed without any of the razzle-dazzle of American renditions of this theme (or fraternal themes, as in Robert Stallman's *Book of the Beast* trilogy)—which themes, of strength in isolation, and disguise, and the absorbing of rebellious identities, can either be exciting, vivid and "unputable-down," or else can go over the top in a vicious power-orgy of personal imperialism, depending on the craft and morality of the author.

Indeed, of razzle and dazzle there is practically nothing in *The Insider.* The mood of the book is an ethically muscular, measured sadness—and Marsh in the end yields voluntarily to the human condition, and mortality. *The Insider* reads rather as though the J-P S. of *La Nausée* had taken a dose of valium instead of mescaline, and set out to rewrite *Dracula*—without ever mentioning the real subject of his discourse. Erasing it so much, indeed, that this might seem like a wilfully perverse interpretation of the book. Yet this theme is certainly in the air these days, and I do find in the book a reflection of the theme. I can only hope that the studiously reticent, "sad" treatment will not cause the book to be submerged, when publishers elsewhere clearly prefer sensation poured on sensation when writers treat such themes. So, then, it is a brave book, a book of integrity—and it is about integrity, too: integrity of the personality, and also personal human integrity.

This is also a second novel; and second novels are a terrible hurdle for authors. In this respect there are notable similarities—given their wildly different styles and themes—between Christoper Evans's progress so far, and Chris Boyce's: with the outer spatial *Catchworld* succeeded by the same authorial signature applied to a near-future dystopian Britain. As though the initial projection outwards is followed, in both cases, by a kind of "introspection" allied to near-future domestic politics. And I suppose that one can also cite Christopher Priest, with *Fugue For A Darkening Island* following on the "headier" invention of *Indoctrinaire.*

All praise to *The Insider,* in the political respect, as a quiet denunciation of the grubbier trends in contemporary British society, extrapolated a little way ahead—with the Powellite charisma of a Right Wing leader offset against the realities of his Britain-First policies in practice down at the mean base of his Unity Party: the smearing of shit on the

living room walls of a "Wog lover". Though perhaps this is a projection from a year or so back, before the real "unity" party—the Tory Party of the Labour Party—got on the move, waving its Access cards in fits of rampant twee. And again, perhaps not: beyond this present evanescent, cosmetic trend, if the world slump continues, and if Britain does remove itself from Northern Ireland in a manner perceived as a "débâcle", and various other ifs, perhaps the Bulldog-mongers will indeed come into their own, as per Evans's future.

One problem here is that the Insider opts out on principle, and though pressure of events and the osmosis of the former Marsh's liberal political attitudes (as betokened by his marriage to a woman of Asian origin) finally force an act of commitment, this comes rather too late and is too clumsily spontaneous, so that it fails wretchedly in objective terms, even if it brings inner peace. In mimetic terms this might be all too accurate: a dialogue of self with self, hating extremist on the one hand, on the other hand wanting to keep out of trouble; end result: it's suddenly too late in the day. So, all praise to Evans's art for concerning itself with politics, honestly and ethically, but perhaps art should be more diverse, more *inventive* than politics, more visionary, and—dare one say—more utopian, as it would be, for example, were this a John Brunner novel on the same theme. Here we have a banal, grimy future; but the Insider—admittedly *because of* the logic of his situation—remains part of the problem, rather than becoming part of the solution; and this is reflected in the almost placid sense of inevitability of the near-future delineated here, where opposition is hinted at (terrorist attacks at Heathrow, etc) but remains completely in the background, never encountered. The sub-text might be radical, but the text itself is normative. (Admittedly for a reason. But by comparison Christopher Priest's *A Dream of Wessex* and *The Affirmation* move from the similar grubby banal into and out of utopian domains which exist in a dialectic counterpoint with the baseline reality.)

With an introspective, domestically political second novel, then, it might seem that Christopher Evans is describing a familiar writerly trajectory with *The Insider*—though no doubt such comparisons are invidious, and a critic making them should be wary of the author paying any heed to them whatever, lest the act of observation by the critic *does* materially change the future of what he observed, as with a particle in high energy physics. So I shall refrain from making any hobbling prognoses; and having (as with *Capella's Golden Eyes)* had my vulgarly salivating expectations subtly undermined, here by a chiaroscuro of contagious sadness, I shall await Christopher Evans's next novel with the keenest interest and respect.

The book *is* contagiously sad, particularly in its final "victory" of defeat (like Matthieu up in the bell-tower facing the Nazis in *Chemins de la Liberté*)—and this, I suppose, is indeed a strength.

The Entropy Tango: A Comic Romance
by Michael Moorcock (*NEL, 1981, 153 pp, £5.95*)

reviewed by John Sladek

Dressed for anything in a maroon cardigan missing three buttons, an old Timex digital and black crease-resistant trousers, Yuri Viewer hoped he might make some impression on the assembled company in the airship's lounge.

"But in a Jerry Cornelius novel," said Una Persson or another, "the company never stays assembled for long."

"And vice versa." It didn't seem so clever on paper, and wasn't there some remark he wanted to make about paper itself but already a Bofors was already rattling or booming or whatever it does in the distance.

ENTROPY CRISIS LOOMS, WARNS EXPERT

Airships to Mars? Jerry dressed in white furs and driving a team of dogs? Anything is possible if we accept a new view of history from Jerry Cornelius, that anything is possible. Life may turn out to be a dance, a Russian Revolution, a masque or what the hell, a game of Consequences. But wait, on this line, Cornelius never even wrote any novels!

Picture Post, 1 April 1952

Una met Major Nye on an airship over Transcarpathia. He said, "It is a little like Consequences, isn't it?"

She said, "What are you wearing, we forgot to mention it."

The consequence was that one day a diligent graduate will develop a thesis on time and place in the novels of Una Persson, not to mention clothes and weapons. A Browning M1917—A1 began to rattle or boom or something.

TOO BLEEDIN' MUCH ENTROPY, ASSURES EXPERT

I only wish I could keep all of you straight, let's see there's Una and Jerry and Catherine Cornelius and Mrs Cornelius—bleedin' 'eck it's pissin' darn aparstrophes—and Colonel Pyat and Major Nye and Mrs Nye and Makhno & Prinz Lobkowitz & Bishop Beesley & Maxime & Martine & Mitzi & Miss Brunner & Professor Hira & hundreds of others. I'm just surprised the damn airship hasn't crashed, that's all, cast like that would sink Swift's bloody Laputa, no offence . . . a yarn with a beginning, a middle and an end, that's all.

Letter, Cornelius Digest, 1 April, 1952

"Besides, one of the military figures depicted in the end papers is out of uniform: puttees incorrectly wrapped," said the Colonel.

Somewhere a nightingale began to sing, cut short by the dry cough of an M16 or something. Una flung him into the taxi and ordered the driver to take them to 'arrods.

"What I want to know," said Colonel Airship, "is how anyone ever gets time to fire an epigram around here, what with nipping out all the time to take part in this revolution or that, helping the anarcho-nationalist banditti of the Canadian Ukraine hold off the Syndico-Trotskyist Cossacks of East Grinstead, what? And you no more than glimpse the white of their eyes and then it's off we go to help the Boobies of Fernando Po capitulate to an alliance between the greenshirts of Wadi Halfa and the Norman Tebbit Bicycle Brigade—it really is enough to make a battle cry."

Una rapped on the glass. "Driver, I've changed my mind. To the Finland Station."

As the taxi turned down Ladbroke Grove, she glimpsed Alexander Herzen in conversation with Jack Daniels.

"But how have a review without referring to the actual book?"

"Then let me quote from it:"

"You don't understand," said Una.
"Does one have to? I can't believe much in understanding. I do believe, though, in sympathy and comfort. In enthusiasm. What is understanding? It's translation. And you always lose something when you translate. Don't you?"
"But you have a rough idea of what I'm going through."
"Sort of," said Catherine. She laughed. "No."

A Better Mantrap
by Bob Shaw (*Gollancz, 1982, 192 pp, £6.95*)

reviewed by Dave Langford

This is Bob Shaw's eighteenth book and his third collection of short stories. He is the most reliable of British sf authors, and before reading the nine stories here one could safely predict that the writing would be good and unflashy, that characters would be well crafted (especially in Shaw's favourite arena of man/woman tensions), and that a general sense of good value for money would prevail. A further prediction might be that while no pits of awfulness will ever open underfoot, neither will there be peaks of staggering brilliance: the ups and downs of the collection will never take it far from its initial, respectably high, level.

Shaw's own ideal working method, to quote the man himself from *Foundation 10,* "is to devise a plot which is like a machine which will hold the idea-diamond in a claw under a spotlight and turn it this way and that (. . .) select all the good facets and make sure they are given due prominence". It's a novelist's approach, and the Shaw titles that spring to mind are novels: *The Palace of Eternity, A Wreath of Stars, Orbitsville, Vertigo,* and *Other Days, Other Eyes.* The main exception is the short "Light of Other Days", with its rapid sleight-of-hand switch from the lovely to the harrowing facets of "slow glass"; and even this gem of an idea shines better in the context of the fix-up *Other Days, Other Eyes,* where Shaw has space to think it through from beginning to logical end. By contrast, the short stories of *A Better Mantrap* tend to revolve about ideas which are slight, or familiar, or both.

"Crossing the Line" and "Dream Fighter" are in essence not sf, being neat dressings-up of familiar themes in sf trappings. A man's coming job posting puts intolerable strain on his marriage—and what difference does it make that the job is umpteen lightyears away while his son's dog (threatened with abandonment thanks to the equivalent of quarantine regulations) is a robot one? A clapped-out boxer confounds the big boys by failing to lose an arranged fight, and is done over so he'll never fight again—the sf *frisson* is added by making him a psionic fighter who throws mental punches. Both stories are done as well as this sort of "translation" into sf can be, but neither is quite satisfying.

More successful are "Amphitheatre" and "The Kingdom of O'Ryan", which both threaten to be mere "translations" but twist successfully into genuine sf. "Amphitheatre"is a serious look at the morality of the cameraman who stands aloof, passively recording atrocities—these being provided by some interestingly nasty alien fauna. The gradual fading of sympathy for the voyeur/scientist "hero" is nicely engineered, to the point where one cheers as he finally gets dragged into the mess he's observing. "The Kingdom of O'Ryan" is a tall tale in the best manner of Shaw the

humorist, building up from an elaborately familiar con operation to a tongue-in-cheek homily on the dangers of conning people too successfully: the suckers' faith ends up moving mountains, not to mention planets.

Another piece with a familiar feel is "In the Hereafter Hilton", a squib about a way to make the death penalty more palatable both to the victim and to society. (Compare, for example, Robert Rohrer's "Keep Them Happy" in mid-60s *F&SF*.) Moral issues are deftly avoided to produce a slick little sting in the tail. Also familiar-seeming is "The Cottage of Eternity", an extremely ingenious tall tale about which I have mixed feelings. As a story it's enormous fun, with its loony crossbreeding of particle physics with the ghost tradition—"The very low mass of a ghost leads to a very large shift in any radiation which strikes its surface and is scattered by it"—yes, of course, a spectral version of the Compton effect! The trouble is that, barring one or two small Shavian additions, the whole sequence of lunatic ideas is lifted bodily from a noted spoof-science article. D.A. Wright's "A Theory of Ghosts" appeared in *The Worm-Runner's Digest* in 1971 and has been reprinted many times, notably in *A Random Walk in Science* ed. R.L Weber, 1973; Bob Shaw plainly wrote the story with Wright's article perched by his typewriter. ("The low mass leads to a very large shift in wavelength $\Delta\lambda$ of radiation incident on a ghost's surface and scattered by it (Compton 1923).") Since the wholesale pillaging of published science is among the oldest of sf traditions, one shouldn't grumble too much about this... but it would be nice to see Wright acknowledged in future editions.

The three remaining stories are the best. "Small World" looks at less obvious facets of a well-worn idea, that of life in a space colony where there is less room than ever for anyone to be an island. The sheer connectedness of lives and actions is sketched with clever economy, as a little web of cause and effect links a ten-year-old on a dare, a severely depressed "space widow", the colony boss and ultimately the whole small world—though the characters mentioned never meet. The flaw is that the web is *too* conveniently symmetrical: it betrays the hand of an omnipotent Author . . .

Better still are "Conversion" and "Frost Animals", which open and close the collection. The first is an impeccably science-fictional horror story set in an "icewell", a futuristic offshore oil rig using a matter-transmitter variant to import deep-space cold and freeze the sea right down to its bed. Through the transmitter comes a dubiously benign alien presence, pursued by a fearsomely nasty one which freezes and shatters people to "organic rubble"; there's an animated corpse, a threat to the world, a race against time, lashings of tension, convincing description and macabre atmosphere, and a satisfying ending, all in less than 23 pages.

"Frost Animals" is the longest and best piece here. As in "Conversion", there is a glow of assured inventiveness. The spacefaring hero's dislocation at returning after thirteen subjective months to an Earth eighteen years older is compounded by the discovery that he's the prime suspect in a murder committed the night before his departure. The frost animals themselves—alien pets like ice patterns shifting and reforming on a window—are a fine invention in their own right, *and* integral to the plot. And the solution to the problems of whodunnit and what happened to the body has an ingenuity which would have been applauded by locked-room master John Dickson Carr himself.

A further Shavian trademark which appears throughout the collection is particularly evident in "Frost Animals": the sharp little insights which pin down aspects of character

in a way that makes one nod at the rightness of it. Here, people's reactions to the relativistic time dislocation have an original and convincing flavour, with travellers drawing a curious comfort from the maturity of the pseudo-years they haven't actually experienced—while Earthbound folk are afflicted with an uneasy and unfocussed resentment whose aim wavers between travellers' pseudo-maturity and their actual youthfulness.

A Better Mantrap is a good and entertaining collection but, on balance, rather a lightweight one. To see Bob Shaw at full stretch one should turn to the more ambitious of his novels.

Exotic Pleasures
by Peter Carey (*Picador, 1981, 192 pp, £1.95*)

reviewed by Colin Greenland

With the science fiction industry now firmly constipated in its "3-R" recession strategy—retrench, reissue, repeat—there are strange scattering movements all over the field. Major authors with any commitment to originality and change are taking their chances in the open. What do Michael Moorcock and Christopher Priest have in common except their determination that the letters sf are nothing but an unsightly birthmark, an ill-advised tattoo that must be removed immediately? Other majors are hanging on, Robert Silverberg and Brian Aldiss pulling all their books into a pile and climbing on top, realising that if you're going to do science fiction you'd better do it *colossal.* In the midfield Ian Watson and Bob Shaw are jumping up and down trying to attract the attention of publishers who scurry by with faces averted, pretending they don't owe them a thing. The lowly, the unspectacular and the hundred-and-one promising new talents are being given nothing to eat but promises, and are rapidly developing new talents for pornography, horror, tv novelizations, lists, lists of lists, books about Adam and the Ants, anything they can get a price for. Meanwhile, right at the bottom, six feet under, the cadaverous forms of the famous dead are stirring, summoned once more to trouble the earth, enticed by feverish incantations of sequels and unholy talismans with many noughts on the end.

Two principal effects of all this are already clear. The Golden Age Revival is upon us. The threefold dream of the Golden Aging Fan will come true: what could be better than a brand new Hugo C. Asinein book, except all the wonderful old Hugo C. Asinein books reissued with punchy new covers, and no space on the bookstall for anyone under the age of fifty-five at all? The second effect is most noticeable among those of us still too young to appreciate the sheer maturity of Hugo C. Asinein. We have to get our stuff elsewhere, outside the incredible shrinking field: not just by following Priest and Moorcock, Ursula Le Guin and John Crowley on their separate ways, but by keeping an eye open for people who are writing what we want to read but are never *marketed* as sf, and probably wouldn't be able to sell to *Hugo C. Asinein's SF Magazine* if they tried. The recent acknowledgment of Angela Carter and Russell Hoban by British sf readers is a very healthy sign, I think. Nobody had to argue to redefine their work as sf; everybody just recognized that it satisfies our tastes. We need to watch for new writers too. This is where Peter Carey comes in.

In fact, he's been coming in for a while now. He was *the* literary buzz one week in November 1981; his collection *Exotic Pleasures* first appeared here as *The Fat Man in History* from Faber in 1980; in any case it is a compilation from Carey's two collections published in Australia in 1979 and 1974, so it makes no sense to call him "new" either. Simply, the word has taken time to arrive. Now that it has, I recommend you receive it.

Having once again castigated the ancient for obstructing the modern, I have to say that some of Carey's stories have a remarkably old-fashioned flavour. "American Dreams" tells of the small meek stranger who secretly builds a perfect miniature of the village. The model becomes famous, attracts tourists, and eventually usurps the reality of the original, whose inhabitants have to live in the shadow of their tiny plaster replicas. "A Windmill in the West" describes the plight of the American soldier posted in the Australian desert. The desert is empty as far as the eye can see except for the ten foot electrified fence and the gap in it which he has been ordered to guard. It occurs to the soldier that nobody has told him what is inside the fence; or indeed which side is inside and which outside. "Exotic Pleasures" is set in a future when the great space adventure has been done and there are still three million unemployed. There is nothing much worth rummaging through "the untidy backyards of space" for, except "a few dozen strange new weeds of no particular distinction, and a poor small lizardish creature raised for its hallucinogenic skin". These stories are pensive, mildly ironic, and written in a minor key—*Galaxy* material from the fifties, it has been suggested. This is quaint until you realise that it imposes on Carey a time scheme derived from our reading, not from his writing. What would be deliberate archaism for a writer trained and distributed by the sf industry can still be novelty for an outsider; and Carey uses it so. For example, the model village in "American Dreams" does not actually come to life, as it would have done in Simak's version of the story, but simply stands as a mute, unassailable object lesson in transience, failure, and the vanity of human wishes. More specifically, Carey arranges the sf elements to make allegorical reflections, indicated in the title and in his description elsewhere of contemporary Australian cities as "outposts of the American Empire".

Handling the products without working in the factory, Carey escapes the logic of the conveyor belt. In his hands sf is fresh, flexible. He is free to follow conventions or not, as he chooses. Nor does he have to invert them, turning stereotypes and clichés back on themselves satirically, as a writer like Harrison does (both Harrisons, in fact). Carey encompasses the unexpected not by twisting tails, but by allowing the emphasis to fall elsewhere, perhaps coming to a subtly different conclusion.

"Do You Love Me?" is the story of a country plagued by outbreaks of unreality. The only antidote is the fixating power of human concern, either in the forms of love and affection, or in the obsessive inventories of the Cartographers who record annually the entire contents of the nation. But it seems that neither is equal to the disaster. In "The Chance" alien hucksters sell Earth a technique of tranferring minds between bodies. The human race flocks to the Genetic Lottery. You can never tell who you'll come out as; but inside you're still irreparably, inescapably you. "Peeling" introduces the abortionist's nurse who collects dolls, pulls their hair and eyes out and paints them white: a horror story. As it were. Carey is as eclectic and oblique as the real implications of his subjects require. At the same time, there is nothing tentative about "War Crimes", the strongest story here. Two denim capitalists, one shabby, the other a dandy, walk into an ailing frozen food company and take it over. They enact their fantasy of success with the perfect

ruthlessness of three-year-olds. Capitalism is one more "self-development" system, like *est* or Exegesis. Inside the factory they build themselves a nest of oriental rugs and ancient leather armchairs, stocked with the finest wines, hashish and hi-fi. Outside the factory nomadic tribes of the unemployed gather around bonfires. "War Crimes" is a cold, fascinating inspection of the new barbarism. In the dramatisation at the Institute of Contemporary Arts the set represented the factory, with a wall of mirrors in place of the chainlink fence. Looking out, the besieged tyrants could see themselves. Whose nightmare is this, anyway? Looking into Carey's succinct, uncompromising fiction, we can see our favourite reading matter newly shaped and polished to reflect our own faces. No comfort there.

Carey's first novel *Bliss (Faber, 1981, 296 pp, £6.50)* is also excellent; it is not sf (though it is fabulation), but it is about other favourite fictions: advertising, for example, and the paranoid myths of the counter-culture. None of the above, Carey maintains, will save us from our catastrophe.

The Many-Coloured Land
by Julian May (*Houghton-Mifflin, 1981, 411 pp, $12.95; Pan Books, 1982, £1.75*)

reviewed by Nick Pratt

Imagine a perfectly conventional novel about a twentieth-century woman being likened to three tenuously linked and variously flawed works—"A book to challenge *Mrs Dalloway, Women in Love* and *Rebecca*" for instance.

Ridiculous? Perhaps so; but translate that pattern into terms of the specialist shelves and it becomes all too familiar: ". . . will eventually rival *The Lord of the Rings, The Foundation Trilogy* and *The Lensman Series.*" Ah yes, blazed across covers, promotion posters and magazine advertisements, that passes as praise for the first lengthy volume of Julian May's Saga of the Exiles. It even manages to mean something: expect Entertainment with a capital E, it signals. Which is what we do.

May begins well enough, with a series of short, snappy natural-habitat chapters which introduce the eight protagonists (an ambitious number) and give a general impression of the twenty-second-century. Humanity has joined several other species in the loose confederation of the Galactic Milieu; metapsychic skills are blossoming and rejuvenation treatments are widely available; it is a time of peace and plenty (just look at all the "objects of art" dotted around). Nevertheless, there are human malcontents who dream of simpler times, days of adventure or solitude. They are a soothingly familiar bunch; we've met them before, from the jilted lover and the fierce little Athene-in-leather to the grounded space captain and the cracker-barrel-wise paleontologist. And they are all in luck: the Milieu encourages them to follow the example of thousands of earlier individualists and opt for Exile, a one-way trip into the Arcadia-on-Earth of the Pliocene era. May rapidly assembles her characters at the time portal and pops them through, their pockets stuffed with wonder-tech Decamole ready to expand into boats and bridges, houses and hot-air balloons, and their costumed heads stuffed with sleep-soaked survival courses. It should be easy.

Wrong—there is something nasty in the Pliocene. The Tanu and the Firvulag, two halves of a dimorphic alien species, have commandeered dear old Sol III as an arena for

their perpetual conflict. Both sides employ powerful metapsychic abilities and the Tanu have used these to bribe or enslave all human settlers. So much for dreams of freedom. Not to worry, inspired by the gutsy Felice (herself inspired by women's role in the Tanu breeding project—it's tuff being a gurl) our newly-arrived batch of misfits, psychopaths and ciphers decides to liberate the planet. Very soon we're swept off amidst powerful mental blasts, barenecks and golden torcers, weapons of deadly blood-metal, levitating Tanu knights, pantomime dwarves, and people who say "shit" a lot (realism).

By now the novel is in serious trouble. The synoptic style of the earlier chapters—imagination-wise, more equals better, babe—sneaks into the Pliocene; and techniques well-suited to background shading prove singularly inappropriate when applied to foreground narrative, where pacing and emphasis are all-important. This even invalidates the sensible division of the cast into smaller, more manageable groups—a senic boat-trip under Tanu domination and freedom amidst a rebel band blend together into a cloying catalogue of marvels. In the final third of the book May implicitly acknowledges the problem herself. She abandons one group (until the next volume) and concentrates upon the other as its members stagger through dense accumulations of adjectives and down sudden discursive side-tracks. The games manufacturers will lap it up: throw a 23 and you are Madame Guderian (as level-headed a character as any here)—

> "My latent abilities include the far-sensing function in moderation, a somewhat less powerful coercive ability, and an aspect of creativity that may spin certain illusions. I can coerce ordinary humans, and greys who are not under direct compulsion from a Tanu . . . I cannot coerce humans wearing gold or silver torcs—except with subliminal suggestions, which they may or may not follow. My farsense permits me to eavesdrop on the so-called declamatory or command mode of the mental speech . . ."

And so on.

The Many-Coloured Land has been praised as a work of vivid, sweeping imagination, and certainly sweeps don't come much broader than this. When May scrupulously acknowledges her sources she mentions the majority of European folk-lore, particularly the Celtic "via Jung and Joseph Campbell, among others." Nothing wrong with that, of course: the reworking of traditional material is a fine old literary custom (Once upon a time there lived a man named Faust . . .), and one especially beloved of sf writers. The two-headed trick with such exercises is to revitalize the old whilst allowing its unconscious resonance to strengthen and deepen the new. But the process is not an automatic one; and even with an Encyclopedia of Mythology as its dressing-up box, May's costume parade remains a costume parade.

To be fair, this book does not stand alone. It has no conclusion, nor does it peter out. It stops dead. The rebels have won a single victory in a continuing campaign and one character has flown off into the sunrise with a private grief: there is plenty to come yet. Nevertheless, 400-odd pages offer a comprehensive foretaste. Whether the saga concludes with the second volume (*The Golden Torc,* U.S. 1981) or continues with Covenant-like doggedness, it is reasonable to expect more of the same, right through to the grand finale. This will no doubt meet standard Awesome-and-Uplifting requirements: characters' external struggles will heal inner wounds and some miscegenation involving future emigrés, extra-galactic aliens or cute little ramapitheci will fill pre-history with offspring who toss multi-coloured torcs into the air whilst whistling our allegedly faerie "Londonderry Air" ("The Tanu Song", see appendix for music and lyrics).

All of which threatens to obscure the most interesting aspect of May's magnum opus.

Translation to a colourful and adventure-filled land may be a long-established cliché, but the voyagers to Elfland, Barsoom, Arcturus and the like are rarely people from our future. However, writers have been mortgaging off the final frontier for some years now, zeitgeist-persuaded to imagine the galaxy as an extended power-complex all the more stifling for its enormity. Some have wondered, with Delany, "what exactly is political power in a structure so vast . . ?" Many others, having conceded that free-range exploration is an improbable dream, have decided that rebellion will be the last refuge of individuality and excitement. (Look at *Star Wars* and *Blake's Seven*—other media have always offered telling, if sluggish, indications of sf's prevailing assumptions.) But these dissidents of the future must face dehumanizing circumstances and resolve to change them—onerous, that; and a little too credible for comfort. May has discovered an easier option: she takes it for granted that the future will be over-regulated and so the first thing her protagonists do is run away; and all their subsequent joys, sorrows and rebellious exploits take place at one remove, in a splendidly gaudy never-never land.

So now we have second-order escapism.

Syzygy
by Frederik Pohl (*Bantam, 1982, 248 pp, $3.50*)

reviewed by Ian Watson

A Bantam Book/January 1982. The Novel only Frederik Pohl could write. Time: eight seconds into the future. Place: Southern California. Prognosis: Disaster!

But alas I read it ten days after the Jupiter Effect failed to pop off; because, actually, er, there isn't any Jupiter Effect . . .

But presumably between publication day, 1st January 1982, and Jupiter Day a few weeks later, given the way the publishing biz seems to operate these days all American copies got shifted: supermarket-racked, through-flowed, and cover-stripped for return. As assorted characters in the book burbled to each other about some book called *The Jupiter Effect* in tones of, "But what if it's *true*?" I could only groan and apostrophize: "Fred Pohl, how could you?"

But of course Pohl isn't daft; and the Jupiter Effect as used in *Syzygy* is actually an enormous red herring, leading into something much more interesting and genuinely cosmic (all be it enormously coincidental): the detection of an extraterrestial signal boosted to us by gravitational lens focusing, proving that We Are Not Alone. Yet I fear that this is vitiated, rather than rendered gripping and topical, by its association with the late Jovian non-event.

Unfortunately, too, Pohl devotes a lot of energy and pages to characterizing his characters; and in this particular case it isn't a very good idea, as witness the rather embarrassing dialogue on love and marriage in the first chapter.

Finally, there's the title . . . Come on, Michael Coney: get you own back—call your next novel *Gateway*.

A Gift of Mirrorvax
by Malcolm MacCloud (*Atheneum, 1981, 192 pp, $9.95*)

Soul-Singer of Tyrnos
by Ardath Mayhar (*Atheneum, 1981, 195 pp, $9.95*)

Inherit the Earth
by Irma Walker (*Atheneum, 1981, 262 pp, $12.95*)

reviewed by Brian Stableford

There was a time when publishing for teenagers was something that happened on a fairly limited scale, and no one had any particularly clear ideas about what writing for teenagers ought to consist of, apart from the constriction that the stories had to involve teenage protagonists. Now, teenage publishing in the U.S.A. is a well-established sector of the market, with fairly well-established editorial guidelines, and several publishers—especially Atheneum—appear to have set up production lines which grind on with the monotonous regularity of production lines everywhere. If there were not such a production line, geared to grind on no matter what, two of these three books would surely never have been published at all, and all three of them suffer from editorial neglect to a degree which is virtually insulting.

A Gift of Mirrorvax is that relative rarity, a truly *awful* novel which has nothing whatsoever to recommend it. Like all novels to come off this particular conveyor belt it is a slightly feverish pubertal *bildungsroman,* which exploits the fact that it is set in a fantasy world by stripping the complexities of the real social and moral universe down to a handful of cardboard sets and platitudinous judgments. The plot makes no sense whatsoever, is appallingly badly organized and structured, and reaches a dreadfully unsubtle anticlimax which threatens the poor reader with a sequel. The world of Vax is dominated by three giant cartels which bid for the services of would-be employees. Those young people not sold at such an "auction" remain under state control as "capital", condemned to breed more "resources" for the system to draw upon. This is one of those worlds where everyone is colour-coded so as to be instantly recognizable. The hero, being auctioned for the second time, is bought for an inexplicably high price, and finds that he is to join the crew of a spaceship heading for "Mirrorvax"—a similar world which rotates around the sun in the same orbit as Vax. On the ship, and on the other world, he learns to be a nicer person and to question the absurd values of the stupid world from which he has come. The people of Mirrorvax, needless to say, are goody-goody God-fearing folk (God is a computer) who are not at all like the nasty materialists of Vax (who are themselves, though they do not know it, being manipulated by God the computer). The hero must choose between them, though the tangible results of his choice will not be revealed until volume two. I, for one, don't give a damn, and I cannot imagine any reader entertaining any measurable degree of enthusiasm about the prospect.

Soul-Singer of Tyrnos is awful in a rather different way. It set my teeth on edge, but I could imagine people reading it and liking it. It is set in a standardized magical Arcadia where everything would be really lovely if it were not for the presence of various nasty characters, ranging from sadistic human tyrants to other-worldly visitors with tarnished

alien souls. The heroine is trained in white magic and her brief is to tour the world singing at the nasties. There is nothing in the universe which cannot be reduced to helplessness by this magical singing, though sometimes (we are assured) it requires almost superhuman reserves of strength, courage and moral will to keep warbling away. The sadistic human tyrants are wrapped up in a few pages each; the alien personifications of evil take a little longer. The rogue soul-singer who (inevitably) provides the ultimate threat takes longer still. The whole saccharine saga is relayed in a kind of ham-handed purple prose, recounted in the first person by the incredibly modest heroine who has understandable difficulty in accepting that a person of such dubious intelligence and negligible literary flair should prove to be the most wonderful person in the world.

No adult person could read this mush without wanting to throw up, but as a naïve fantasy it has much to recommend it. It is authentically unsullied by the least hint of sophistication, and it is a great surprise to learn from the back flap that it is actually the work of a woman of mature years rather than the produce of a precocious ten-year-old. As twee wish-fulfilment fantasies go it is probably appealing enough to captivate at least some pre-pubescent children, but to my mind it represents a betrayal of editorial responsibility to expose impressionable youngsters to this kind of intellectually-degrading and morally-moronic pabulum.

Inherit the Earth, by contrast to the other books here under consideration, is the work of someone who actually knows something about the craft of writing. It is tightly-written, well-paced, and quite gripping. It is infinitely more readable than the other two works, having positive virtues of its own as well as declining to insult the intelligence and taste of the reader. It is a fairly standardized story of a young superperson isolated for study and possible exploitation by scientists and government agents, rather after the fashion of Wilson Tucker's *Wild Talent.* When she comes under threat, the young superperson escapes, apparently being saved by a violent and nasty protector which reappears on several other occasions to subject those who are mean to her to a horrible revenge.

The story is marred, in the end, by a triple-switch ending which represents a desperate attempt by the author to avoid the banality of all the endings which have previously been attached to this story. Irma Walker is clearly aware that she is following in the footsteps of other writers, and wants to inject some originality into a plot which is, unfortunately, played out. Her failure is a valiant effort which at least demonstrates that she knows what she is about, which is far more than could ever be said for Malcolm MacCloud or Ardath Mayhar. What Irma Walker does *not* know about, however, is biological science. Her understanding of genetics is primitive and she seems to think that *Homo sapiens* is the plural of "Homo Sapien". A little editorial attention could easily have cleared up this deficiency by repairing perhaps a dozen paragraphs strung throughout the story, but no one has bothered. It has been observed by numerous writers recently that publishing houses in America seem to select their junior editorial staff (i.e. the ones who actually do the work) for their illiteracy and total ignorance of all subjects with which their work might bring them into contact, and Atheneum seem determined to keep up this tradition.

These books demonstrate that the youth of America is being ill-served at every level by the publishers who are claiming to supply their specific needs. I don't know whether they care, or even if they notice, but if they don't it is something of a minor tragedy.

Spacebread
by Steve Senn (*Atheneum, 1981, 216 pp, $9.95*)

A Circle in the Sea
by Steve Senn (*Atheneum, 1981, 256 pp, $11.95*)

The Voyage Begun
by Nancy Bond (Atheneum, 1981, 319 pp, $12.95)

reviewed by Nick Pratt

The publishers of children's fiction rarely give star billing to the sf elements in their books (reciprocal) but Atheneum's growing list continues to demonstrate the diversity of children's science fiction. It's hardly surprising—there is plenty of scope for variety between the straightforward adventure tale for the younger audience and the truncated bildungsroman for the "young adult".

Steve Senn is a newcomer who handles himself best at the story-book end of the market: *Spacebread* avoids any complexities of motivation or plot, and tells of an attempt to avenge a murdered friend and of its rapid transition into a struggle against tyranny on "the distant planet Ralph". Goodies versus baddies, then; but by employing all the clear-cut no-nonsense ethics and inventive exuberance of a typical Marvel comic, Senn ensures that the colourful exploits of an improbably assorted cast—the eponymous she-cat space captain (shades of Jonathan Langley's *Doris and the Mice from Mars*), a sleepy dragon, an evil basilisk, blue-skinned humanoids, and even a sentient flying vegetable—will delight the majority of under-tens. Consequently, despite flirtations with several resprayed clichés and passing absurdities (a swift *three-legged* steed?), this fast-moving quest serves as a handy vehicle for some mildly didactic suggestions—essentially that maturity has nothing to do with the opinions of others and that no worthwhile goal is easily achieved. *Spacebread* is unlikely to become a much re-read favorite, but it is simple and effective.

A cavil: Senn clearly enjoyed writing the book, so much so that his flat and functional prose shows traces of carelessness. Given the average child's tendency to adopt mannerisms indescriminately, the occasional stray participle or outright Haigism—"If the magnetosphere of this planet is tampered with, it may extinct us"—is regrettable.

Fewer lapses of this kind mar *A Circle in the Sea,* an earnest novel in which a mysterious ring (possibly Atlantean) acts as the trigger for that old sf favourite, mind transference. With the ring on her finger Robin Shaw, gauche lonely adolescent of the Florida Keys, can slip free of her sleeping body to live as Breee, a young female dolphin. Of course, dolphins and whales prove to be highly intelligent, a breakaway "Circle" of mammals who forsook the land eons ago to return to the tranquility of the seas; and Robin learns of their society, their history, and of the toll taken by whaling and casual pollution. There is anger in the deep, and argument too, with an unprecedented Council assembling in mid-Atlantic. Does the surface world's brutality spring from thoughtlessness or malice? Should all sea-faring humans be subjected to revenge attacks? Is inter-species communication possible? Is Robin-Breee the link promised in legend or a crazed and dangerous distraction? Opinions differ, but on one point there is agreement: the time

has come for pilot, sperm, and killer whales, humpbacks, squareheads, and solitary blues to join together in a vast co-operative project to convince humanity of the intelligence and resolution of "The Returned".

Many readers will cheer as the undersea armada achieves its objective (far more dramatically than any of its members anticipated) and as Robin Shaw, dolphin tasks discharged, turns to face her own destiny. But Robin clocks in at the age of thirteen, so the book's target audience presumably includes young teenagers—a wary lot, less willing than their juniors to trade playful complicity in return for an illusion. And *A Circle in the Sea* sells them short; the balance goes awry and fantasy and reality fail to mesh. That human rapacity threatens several of the large cetaceans with extinction is a fair enough point. But whales are not imaginary beings shaped by a writer's specifications, and in his attempts to encapsulate their utterly alien dignity in a persuasively sympathetic narrative Senn inevitably diminishes that dignity, domesticates it: effluvia from Disneyland taint his seas and his whales become Uncle Mobys pursuing a dubious goal (after all, proof of intelligence is not, on current evidence, a certain defence against genocide). More seriously, the novel is self-enclosed despite its superficial "relevance". Robin's dry-land existence is composed of schematic family troubles and a few sore-thumb platitudes about youthful romance and the tolerance of true friends. As a frame for the message-laden marine episodes it serves, but its resonance in the everyday world is negligible.

Worried by the condition of the seas? Worried by the process of growing up? Get a magic ring and go adventuring; otherwise you're a non-starter. It invites refusal.

In contrast, *The Voyage Begun* compels attention. It is the near future. Birds, fish and animals are disappearing, the spoliation and exhaustion of the Earth have progressed beyond the point of no return. Energy, food and transport are still available at a price, but the world has a drab, played out quality. Bond offers no dramatic solutions to this situation, no last minute rescues for the western consumer-dream, so that as a picture of the coming century her stark mise-en-scene has a chilling plausibility.

Nevertheless, all of this remains background: things are running down, it is the way of the world; but life goes on. And for Paul (sixteen, studious and hopelessly impractical) and Mickey (a sharp and cunning girl of eleven) life is not a simple business. Not that a great deal happens—the peak of excitement comes when a government motor launch is illegally "borrowed"—but Bond carefully draws her readers into the minds of her protagonists, and so the most mundane events take on a satisfying weight. It's not a book of high adventure; instead its appeal lies in the intricate embodiment of a theme central to the preoccupation of its readership—the evident trials and more subtle rewards of achieving self-knowledge and independent agenthood. That's the "voyage" of the title and second-hand experience will not do, especially in Bond's harsh new world. At the end of their exploits (which may—just may—rekindle the will to live of a cantankerous old recluse) Paul and Mickey have gained appropriately different understandings of the meaning of responsibility, understandings which are—significantly—different again from those of their parents. Paul's older sister sums it up: "I want you to *start* thinking."

The Voyage Begun prompts its readers to do just that. Despite its rather ponderous solemnity (and perhaps that's inevitable—although Sendak, Hoban *et al* have proved that a touch of irony appeals to younger children, too much deflation still disconcerts their elders), the book convincingly exposes complacency as a refuge for cowards. Bond smoothes over some of reality's harder aspects (Mickey's brother is distinctly stereotyped

as a surly vandal driven by pure boredom) but she pulls no punches at the end: Paul follows his own conscience and is punished for doing so. The course of his life is changed. It is a cruel conclusion, but Bond implies with calm certainty that he has gained much more than he has lost.

With its solid moral concern and its dedication to characters who combine varieties of strength and weakness, *The Voyage Begun* is frequently reminiscent of Le Guin. In Bond's chosen field that's a considerable achievement.

Future Females: A Critical Anthology
edited by Marlene S. Barr *(Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981, 191 pp, $16.95 cloth; $8.95 paper)*

Woman Space: Future and Fantasy—Stories and Art by Women
by The New Victoria Collective *(New Victoria Publishers, 1981, 92 pp, $3.95*—available from 7 Bank Street, Lebanon, New Hampshire 03766, USA)

reviewed by Stefan Lewicki

Feminist science fiction is a relatively new phenomenon and criticism of it is obviously still finding its feet: this is reflected in *Future Females,* which is very much a mixture. There are several perceptive pieces on the interaction between feminism and science fiction, but already it's hard not be aware of the bandwagon effect of everyone wanting to leap in and make their contribution to the field. Feminist literature seems to me to demand a different approach—male reactions to it are problematic at the very least. Following feminist theory, it demands the personal engagement of the reader's feelings rather than "critical detachment".

I couldn't see the relevance of an article on *Paradise Lost* in this collection, or of attempting to associate it with a future-oriented literature like science fiction. Nor could I react to the "transactive criticism" of Norman Holland as other than abstruse, and pretentious in the extreme: a shapeless random chit-chat posing as criticism of Ursula Le Guin, whose work deserves better than this, as well as the patronizing references to her as "Ukelele Lady". The two digressions on various episodes of *Star Trek* seemed irrelevant, as well as too short to say anything meaningful. Lyman Tower Sargent's article on "The Role and Position of Women in the English Eutopia" is an academic piece analyzing many long-lost utopian novels for what they say about the position of women, an exercise in recovering the obscure past of literature, perhaps a necessary part of women reclaiming their lost cultural past. It's useful as a survey of the field, and confirms one's suspicions about women in utopias, but I wonder how many of the titles mentioned are accessible to most readers.

Though I've complained at some length about what I see as the defects of this collection of essays, I nevertheless feel that the several good pieces in the book more than make up for the dross. Feminists who criticise science fiction from an ideological standpoint almost invariably note how male-dominated a field it is (males wrote nine, and females seven of these essays!) and how stories and novels are male-centred and full of sexist attitudes, and generally dismissive of women. Eric Rabkin, in "Science Fiction Women Before Liberation" attempts an objective look at the validity of this claim and

comes to the conclusion that the genre is no longer as male-centred as it was, in the works of either women or men writers. Some may dismiss his article as male apologetics, but I feel this would be simplistic.

The dualities between men and women in our society, and the negative effect this has on individuals and humanity as a whole, is a common topic in feminist science fiction: a prime example is the work of Ursula Le Guin. Scott Sanders, in "Woman as Nature in Science Fiction", tackles this theme in an important analysis of the perpetuation of a deep culturally engrained link between woman and nature, and makes a case for the reassessment of both—is such a polarity permanent or inevitable? A feature of some recent sf by men and women is a strong sense of belonging to, or being a part of nature, and the need to accept this truth and integrate it into one's life, though this ecological appreciation is perhaps more strongly integrated in science fiction by women writers: their stories usually take for granted the need for an ecologically sound and balanced existence in the new worlds they imagine.

Essays by Carol Pearson and Joanna Russ both deal with women and utopias: feminist sf has produced a considerable number of utopian visions—*The Dispossessed,* and *Woman On The Edge Of Time* immediately spring to mind—and this reflects the strength of women's alienation from a male-constructed world. In "Coming Home" Carol Pearson sees women as the creators of a new consciousness and a new vision of humanity, while Joanna Russ traces the coherence of contemporary feminist utopian visions, in the themes they consider important, which seems to reflect the internal unity and wider acceptance of contemporary feminist ideology. Suzy McKee Charnas contributes a personal piece on the genesis of her trilogy, as yet incomplete, and she gives no secrets away about how the stories of *Walk To The End Of The World* and *Motherlines* are resolved. This latter remains unique, to my knowledge, as the only sf novel in which no men appear. Ann Hudson Jones' article examining Alexei Panshin's *Rite Of Passage* as an almost non-sexist novel is interesting, as is Susan Kress on the novels of Marge Piercy, including the important *Woman On The Edge Of Time.*

On balance a useful and much needed collection of essays, about a branch of sf which I feel is one of the most exciting and committed areas of contemporary literature. At this stage, critics need to be sensitive to its vitality and optimism, its potential for changing lives, and its alluring visions of the future. Critical appraisal must not be the kiss of death.

Woman Space: Future and Fantasy is a collection of stories and art by women, a curious and uneven mixture which doesn't really meet one's expectations: nothing really leaps out and demands the reader's attention. Many of the stories are more like sketches, or cameos, very ethereal and hard to grasp. Some of the better ones include vintage Joanna Russ, with a macabre murder story, "Little Tales From Nature", whose delight resides rather in the style than the plot; Lois Metzger's "Mara", a vignette about a mad woman who receives succour and support from mental contact with alien females, is reminiscent of the link across the centuries between Connie and Matapoissett in *Woman On The Edge Of Time;* "Suffering Machines", by Margaret Kingery is a curious tale of an anti-feminist women's movement attempting to destroy the feminist government of the U.S. in a post-holocaust world where all the men are dead. Eileen Kernaghan's "The Devil We Know" is probably the best story of the lot. To a matriarchal anti-technological society on another planet comes a man with a machine which will greatly improve their

agricultural production. We see the women torn between their suspicions of men, and the relationship that existed in the past between masculinity and technology, and how their own peaceful yet straitened existence can be improved. Simon the man from offworld attempts to persuade Ruth, a village healer, that he can help them . . . I shall say no more lest I spoil the twist in the tail of this story.

Books Received:

Robert A. Heinlein: America as Science Fiction by H. Bruce Franklin (Oxford University Press, 1980, 232pp, $4.95). A briskly readable Marxist analysis of Heinlein and his America. First of a series, "Science-Fiction Writers", under the General Editorship of Robert Scholes.

The Creation of Tomorrow: Fifty Years of Magazine Science Fiction by Paul A. Carter (Columbia University Press, 1980, 318pp, $9). Paperback edition of an enjoyable illustrated study, first published in 1977.

Anatomy of Wonder: A Critical Guide to Science Fiction (Second Edition) edited by Neil Barron (Bowker, 1981, 724pp, £14). Extensively revised and updated from its first edition of 1976, this is a very useful reference work—second only to the Nicholls/Clute *Encyclopedia of SF.*

Friendly Aliens: Thirteen Stories of the Fantastic Set in Canada by Foreign Authors edited by John Robert Colombo (Hounslow Press, 1981, 181pp, $8.95). An anthology of "Canadian" sf stories by Algernon Blackwood, Jack London, A. Merritt, M.P. Shiel, Edmond Hamilton and others.

British Science Fiction Writers, Volume 1: Bob Shaw edited by Paul Kincaid and Geoff Rippington (British SF Association, 1981, 38pp, no price given—£1?). Contains a brief introduction by Shaw; a substantial critical essay by Brian Stableford; and a full bibliography by Mike Ashley.

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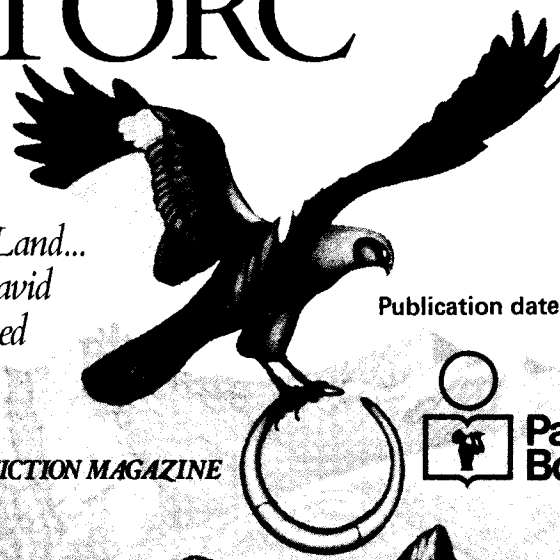

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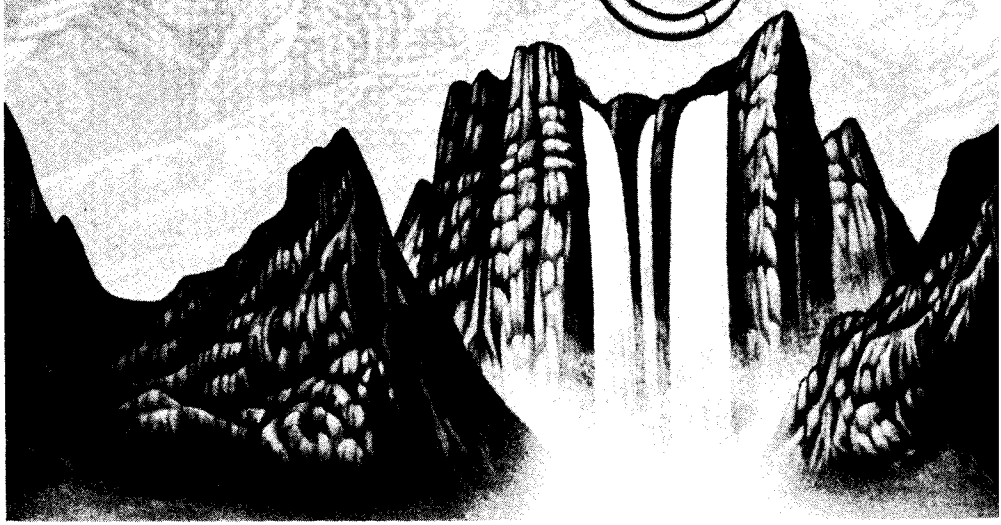

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