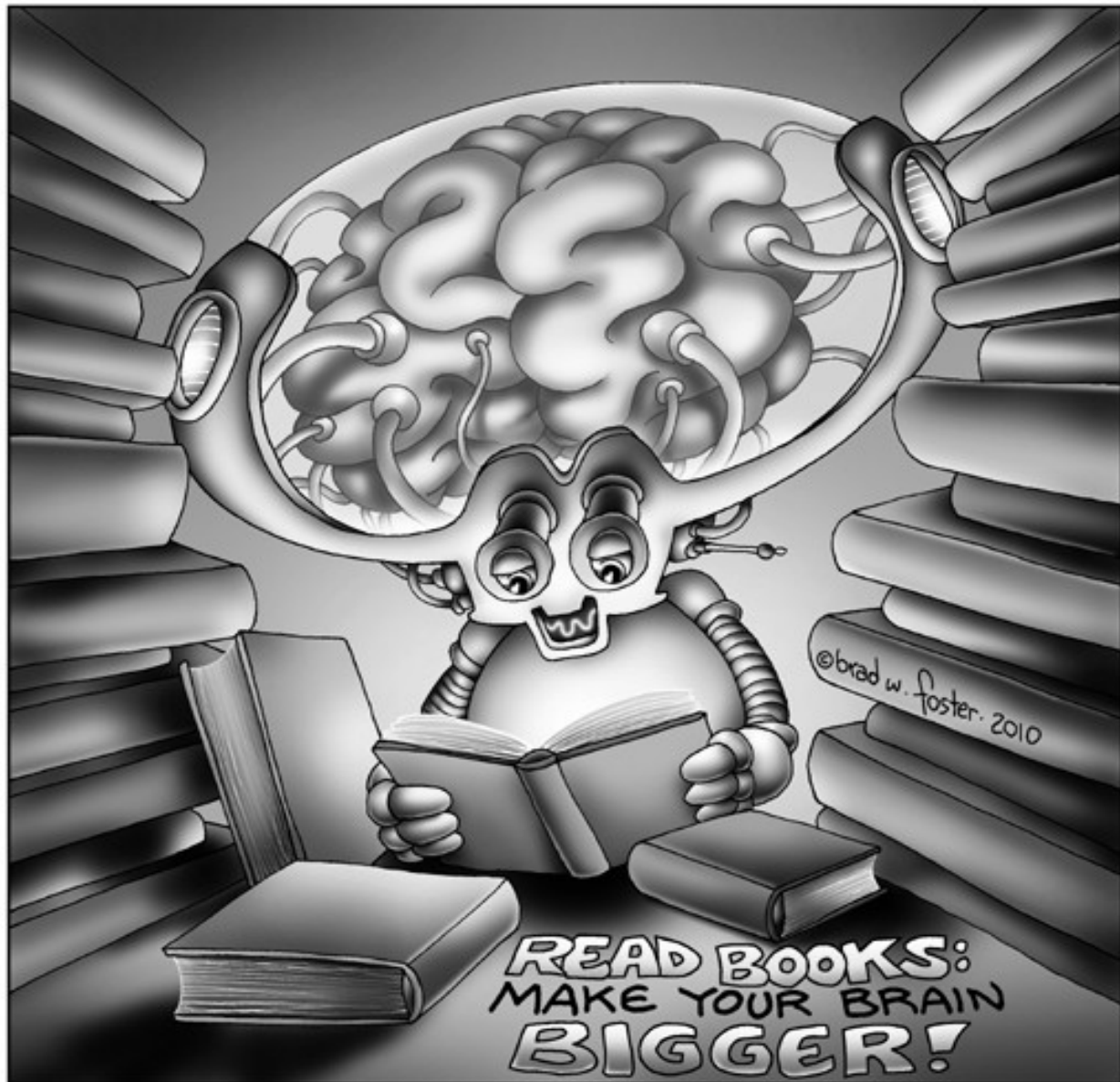


It Goes On The Shelf

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November 2011

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Published at The Sign of the Purple Mouth by Ned Brooks

4817 Dean Lane, Lilburn GA 30047-4720

nedbrooks@sprynet.com

Website - <http://home.sprynet.com/~nedbrooks/home.htm>

*'And departing, leave behind us
Toothprints in the hands of time.'*

Cover by Brad Foster, drawing by Steve Stiles, bacover by Dan Osterman

Tarock Rules by A Nony Mouse, www.tarock.net, 24pp+card

Strayed into a book stack here, only 2x4.5 inches, plus a heavy plastic card. Tarock is a complicated card game played with a 54-card Tarot deck, said to have been popular in Austria-Hungary before WWI. The daffynitions may have lost something in translation:

Skeench-a-tola - When the players wish to end the, [sic] the dealer calls Skeench-a-tola. The cards are dealt and a Round is played as usual. Whoever ends up with the Skeench (the Joker) will be the last dealer of the game. If the Skeench ends up in the Talon, the next Round is Skeench-a-tola.

The rest of it is even worse - I'll stick to Hearts. I have shelved it with the Tarot decks.

Silent Type II, edited by Cynthia Lowry & Brandon MacInnis, Quirky Works Books October 2010, 60pp, illustrations, photos, wraps

This was given me by Dale Speirs. In another place it is called "Issue #2" so it must be a magazine. All poetry and pictures, and I recognize one name from the typewriter collectors Yahoo-list. It is undeniably quirky.... It opens with a quote from Hal Fair - "Don't expect the typewriter to ever completely disappear." - and many of the pictures are of typewriters. The other art is of the "found art" sort, and the text is typescript, even though the printing is all process color on heavy coated stock. A visit to the publisher's website revealed that this copy is the "first state" - later copies had a poem removed!

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**Alabama is the only remaining state to ban the sale of sex toys, but nevertheless the Huntsville shop Pleasures recently expanded by moving to a former bank building in order to use three drive-thru windows to sell dildos. (Since state law prohibits the sale unless used for "bona fide medical, scientific, educational, legislative, judicial, or law enforcement purposes," customers must provide a brief written description of their medical or other "legitimate" condition in order to make the purchase.) [Huntsville Times, 11-9-10]**  
~~~~~

The Green Child by Herbert Read, Grey Walls Press 1945, 137pp, illus. in color by Felix Kelly, 12/6

I've had this for a long time, and recently had some correspondence about the Herbert Read foreword to the Varma book on "Gothics" mentioned lastish. I'm not sure if it's the same Herbert Read - the name

cannot be uncommon. The author of **The Green Child** is Sir Herbert Edward Read (1893–1968), said on Wikipedia to have been an "anarchist poet". It is a curious tale, based on the old legend of the "Green Children", two toddlers said to have appeared in an English village in 1830. Read is coy about this, giving the date but not the location - Woolpit, 7 miles east of Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk County. These children had greenish skin and no language. In the novel, one has died but the other, called Sally, has survived into her 30s to be the center of the story. The organization of the account is peculiar - "Oliver", who left Woolpit on the day the children appeared, returns 30 years later and rescues Sally from her brutal husband and he and Sally fall into the millpond - then we get a long account of Oliver's adventures in the imaginary Argentine Republic of Roncador - then Oliver (now Olivero, the name he used in Roncador) and Sally fall through the bottom of the millpond into the strange realm that the Green Children had come from.

The book is clearly written and easy to read - and describes two disparate utopias. One is created by Oliver in Roncador by overthrowing a petty dictator and organizing a democracy based on the principles of the French Revolution - the other is the land of the Green Children (where the light comes only from phosphorescent fungi, and there is nothing to eat but fungi), which is organized hierarchically with the aim of every citizen is becoming immortal stone.

Banvard's Folly by Paul Collins, Picador 2001, 286pp, period illustrations, sources, \$25

I mentioned this in IGOTS 24, but only that the late lamented Ken Lake had recommended it. I finally finished reading it in January after running across it in a general clean-up of scattered books. And indeed it is an excellent account of strange and forgotten things. Banvard painted enormous historical dioramas that drew paying crowds in the 1850s - there were no movies or TV or photographs. William Henry Ireland published plays as by Shakespeare that the Bard had never gotten around to writing. John Cleves Symmes insisted that the Earth is hollow. René Blondlot discovered N-rays - that only he could detect. Francois Sudre invented a musical language. Ephraim Bull discovered the Concord grape - and Welch's grape juice is still popular. George Psalmanazar invented his name (his birth name is still unknown) and promoted himself as a "Formosan" in early 18th century England where they didn't know he made it all up. Alfred Ely Beach built a pneumatic railway under the New York City Hall during the Tammany era - without anyone knowing he had done it until he threw a party to display it. Augustus J. Pleasonton promoted the health benefits of blue light to the extent that a few Victorian sun-porches with blue glass panes still survive. Thomas Dick preached an early version of the Anthropic Principal called "Natural Theology", which held that *all* the worlds must be inhabited because God would not waste creation for it to remain empty.

The Last Skeptic of Science by René, R. René 1998, 185pp, diagrams and cartoons

This large quarto paperback found in a thrift store is subtitled "The Book Mensa Tried to Stop". Apparently Mensa only tried to keep their name off his book. Just how the author became a member is a puzzle as he does not seem to be quite that bright. One of his chapters, "Gravity Does Not Suck", presents Newton's equation for the force of gravity between two masses with one of the mass values raised to the second power! In the calculation of the relative forces of the Earth and the Sun on the Moon he does not seem to actually square any mass value - but seems to be amazed to find that the pull of the Sun on the Moon is about 2.4 times as great as the pull of the Earth on the Moon. In fact Isaac Asimov

pointed out long ago that the Moon does not orbit the Earth as other moons in the solar system orbit their primaries - the Moon's orbit always curves toward the Sun, just as the Earth's does. The stability of the lunar orbit is a balance between gravity and centrifugal acceleration.

But is René putting us on? Another chapter on his opposition to Newtonian gravity proposes trying to detect it by floating brass balls in a pan of mercury in a cave lake (to isolate exterior forces) - these are referred to as *René's Brass Balls*....

While sorted accumulated papers I ran across this list of curious tomes, unattributed but probably sent to me by another collector:

The Vrill Staff, as by "XYZ" (*D. Stott, London 1891*) is a straightforward SF novel in which Vrill is used to create a death ray.

The Gorilla Origin of Man, as by *Mammoth Martinet* is a Symzonian inner world novel issued in paperback in the UK (*Farah, London 1871*)

No Rates and Taxes: a romance of five worlds by *Thomas Andrew Pinkerton* (*Arrowsmith, Bristol 1902*) is another paperback and is a utopian novel set in the future when the solar system has been colonised.

Francis and Frances: or an unexplainable phenomenon (*Arrowsmith, Bristol 1888*) is an unusual novel about twins who do not co-exist together, they either exist on alternate days or change sex every 24 hours. An enigmatic novel that has been attributed to Annie Thomas. This has now been reprinted by the British Library as a trade paperback.

The Oven (1903) is a great pot-boiler, literally. White cannibals, one a cross-dresser, and their Congolese cook kidnap young children and fatten them up in force-feeding cages.

Purple and White (1905) is a Ruritanian future war novel in which the King of a Balkan (?) state uses black magic to defend his kingdom.

The Thing that Cannot be Named is a rare late 1920s juvenile lost race novel.

And the supposedly most valuable title of the lot:

Dope-Darling, as by *Leda Burke* (*Laurie 1919*) is David Garnett's first book, only issued in paperback. It's a novel about cocaine addiction and was slammed by the critics at the time for being in bad taste.

I have only the reprint of **Francis and Frances**, and would certainly buy one if I found it in a thrift store! I have added in italics the name of the author and publisher, if the Net reveals such data.

Quote Year Book 1949, edited by the staff, Droke House 1949, 381pp

I see from a Google that *Quote* was a biweekly magazine of quotes and humor published by Maxwell Droke in Indianapolis - this is not explained in the book itself. In spite of the title, the period covered is 1948 - day by day. This takes some 171 pages, and there is an index. Then there are a few pages of obituaries - mostly people I never heard of. The next section is "The Year in Print", quotes arranged alphabetically by subject - all are attributed to a source, though not in detail, and some are translated from European magazines. Next we get "the year's best anecdotes", selected by Ralph C Smedley, the founder of Toastmasters International - even here the text uses what must be Droke's own system of abbreviations, and what must be "railway company" appears as "ry co". The "Book Briefs" section consists of actual excerpts, but why an excerpt from **Raintree County** is subtitled "No Boundaries in Time and Space" is unclear. The books are both fiction and non-fiction - **Road to Survival** by William Vogt is a warning about the impact of our civilization on the ecology. It is introduced by Bernard Baruch, who

quotes the population of Earth as "more than 2 billion" - current data is 2.5 billion in 1949, and just under 7 billion now. Vogt's last line here on the failure to establish sustainability: "*Like Gadarene swine, we shall rush down a war-torn slope to a barbarian existence in the blackened rubble.*" We've seen that plot often enough in SF! A similar dark prediction is quoted from a Philip Wylie letter to the *Saturday Review of Literature*.

There is also a "News of the New" - stereophonic sound (with a wire recorder!), an atomic watch, an Australian 45 mpg car, Tel-Autograph transmits handwriting by wire, a match that produces heat without light, a folding piano, projection TV....

Sponge #2 1993, ed divers, AK Press, 32pp

This was sent me by an anonymous mail-art fan in the NW - a lithoed saddle-stapled magazine of random weirdness, with an Extra Gift Inside (a plastic bag containing what appears to be Barbie's ponytail). I guess it's a sort of fanzine - it has a letter column. The page count is deceptive - the print is large, and there are a lot of b&w photos printed with a very coarse screen.

Structure of the Visual Book by Keith A. Smith, self-published 1998, 239pp, illustrated, wraps

The cover also carries the title "Book 95". But the copyright page indicates that what I have is the third printing of the third edition of a book that first appeared in 1984. A curious tome indeed to be so much in demand - it seems to be about his other books. There are many photos, and his idea seems to be that a book should look like anything but. They were apparently numbered, so this must be his 95th - which somehow is just a common trade paperback in structure (the way they used to be done, with sewn signatures).

The N-word of the Narcissus by Joseph Conrad, Wordbridge 2009, 157pp, wraps, \$9.99

At least most of it is by Conrad - the word *n*— has been replaced with "N-word" not just on the cover, but throughout the text. I never read any Conrad that I recall - I read the beginning of this, and it seemed to me that he went overboard on descriptive adjectives.

La invención de Morel by Adolfo Bioy Casares, Booket 2010, 159pp, wraps

I remember seeing mention of Casares in books by and about Jorge Luis Borges, and in fact have two Casares book in translation that I have not read. This book is said to be Casares' most famous story, and the inspiration for the film *Last Year at Marienbad*. Whether my Spanish will suffice to extract any sense from it remains to be seen!

The Fantasy Fan (#64/100) by Charles Hornig, Thingmaker 2010, 192/96/55pp, boxed

The Fantasy Fan was one of the most famous fanzines of the 1930s - long forgotten even by most fans of my aging generation - I'm 73 and got into fandom in the early 1960s. Charles Hornig started much younger than I did, and published these 18 issues of his fanzine from 1933 to 1935. They are collected here in facsimile from the originals. Many of the sf writers and editors later to become famous are represented here - Bob Tucker, Julius Schwartz, Forry Ackerman, Bob Bloch, Clark Ashton Smith, August Derleth, Virginia Kidd, Eando Binder, Emil Petaja, Robert E Howard, H. P. Lovecraft....

The guy that made these actually gives his name as Lance Thingmaker.... The book is about 6x9 and

over an inch thick, facsimile on mostly tan paper, with a few sheets of salmon and green mixed in. The pagination is by volume - there were 12 issues in Vol.1 and 6 issues in Vol.2. Then in the back he has also included a copy of HPL's "Supernatural Horror in Literature". But while the sections of that are in the ToC, there is no Contents of the 18 issues or an index - however, the magazine is indexed in the Miller/Contento Index of Science-Fiction, Fantasy, and Weird Magazines. Thingmaker explains how he got the zines, and why he created the book - but does not include any means of contacting him. However I see that there was no need - he gets 67 hits on Google and seems to be on several of the social networks. Or any mention of copyright - but since Hornig never claimed even common-law copyright, it must be all public domain. The collectors that had the original zines are Karen McDonald and Robert E. Lumpkin. I have done a page-by-page commentary on the contents.

Krax (no.47, 2010), ed. Andy Robson, 70pp, \$9

A digest-size saddle-stapled poetry fanzine. A supplement carries extensive reviews - oddly enough including one of my SFPazines but not IGOTS. There is also much excellent art by Alan Hunter.

Strong Measures, ed. by Dacey & Jauss, Harper & Row 1986, 492pp, indexes, \$18.95

This anthology of verse is subtitled "Contemporary American Poetry in Traditional Forms" and these "forms", about which I know very little except that they seem to avoid the formless mess of most 20th-century poetry, are explained in detail. I recognize the names of a few of the poets as fiction writers I have read - Fred Chappell, Tom Disch, John Updike. And I think X. J. Kennedy, Adrienne Rich, and Paul Zimmer used to be fans. For example, Fred Chappell has two entries - a poem about a young man's infatuation with the verse of Rimbaud in "Sicilian Quatrains"; and a poem about the burning of a church in "Anglo-Saxon prosody" (a bit like *Beowulf*).

The Word Exchange, ed. by Delanty & Matto, Norton 2011, 557pp, \$35.00

Another verse anthology, but on a much different scheme that is only revealed in the subtitle - "Anglo-Saxon Poems in Translation". Here they compiled quite a lot of such ancient verse that shows only hints of what we knew as English (special symbols are needed for the alphabet) and have gotten them translated into modern verse. Only X. J. Kennedy is a name I recognize. A review said that these poems were very dark - while there is a lot of blood and thunder, there also sections of "The Riddle Hoard" - the answer to each riddle is given in an index. The riddles are often meant to be humorous - one that appears to be obscene turns out to have a perfectly innocent answer, a gag still seen occasionally.

Christian Morgenstern's Galgenlieder, translated by Max Knight, University of California 1966, 225pp.

I had never heard of the author (1871-1914), who wrote in German, or of this verse form. This was a thrift-store find, and the dust-jacket blurb says that the poems are delightful and grotesque. They seem merely bizarre to me (in translation), but the word *galgen* does mean "gallows". The introduction says that these poems are set in the fantasy world of "Gallows Hill", where the moonsheep and the nightwindhound and the fingoer roam. There is also a Nosobame, and a Flat (Nahe) - Manly Wade Wellman's "John stories" mention a monster called the Flat that lies in wait for the unwary traveler. For some reason a Karl F. Ross translates "Der Werwolf" as "The Banshee".

Time Line by Gavin L. O'Keefe, Ramble House 2010, 86pp.

This is all artwork by the author except for a brief foreword. The entries are dated, the oldest being a 1969 portrait of his mother - obviously done at about kindergarten age! The rest are really excellent bizarre fantasy art, some labeled with the title of the literature that inspired them. The dust jacket has a great color cover. I have the editions of the *Alice* books with his art, and I published a reprint of William Blake's *An Island in the Moon* with his art.

The Book of Time by H. G. Wells and Richard A. Lupoff, Surinam Turtle Press 2011, 158pp, illustrations by Gavin O'Keefe.

This book is uniform with Time Line even though the press names are different - I got both from Fender Tucker at Ramble House. The three H. G. Wells pieces reprinted are *The Time Machine*, *The Grey Man*, and *The Chronic Argonauts*. Richard Lupoff contributes *12:01 P.M.*, *12:02 P.M.*, and *Nebogipfel at the End of Time* - all stories concerned with that odd 4th dimension that we are all whizzing through, with excellent illustrations by O'Keefe.

The Match (No.109, Spring 2011) ed. by Fred Woodworth, 80pp.

The first issue of this Journal of Ethical Anarchism appeared in 1969. I have the last 23 issues, from the last 19 years - obviously it was more frequent before that. It is beautifully printed by the electro-mechanical systems of the previous century that Fred has preserved and maintained - he eschews anything cybernetical. Including the banking system - if you want a copy, you will have to send cash. And it is well worth getting, because Fred is an excellent writer. Not that I agree with him about everything - I don't believe "ethical anarchy" is a workable system for society. On the other hand, I quite agree with him about the vileness of the abuse of power by the police all over this country (See:

<http://www.injusticeeverywhere.com/>

and even worse in many other countries). This particular issue seemed a bit odd to me for an ethical anarchist - he describes how and why he printed flyers and protested in person against the appearance in the Tucson area of the traveling exhibition called "Bodies". This exhibition has been on the road for several years I think - I recall seeing it advertised in the Atlanta newspaper. It consists of human bodies prepared as permanent anatomical exhibits, showing the bone and muscle structure. I see nothing to object to in this - the same thing is seen as diagrams in anatomy textbooks, and now no doubt as animated cyber-images. The old battle over how surgeons would learn without cadavers is over, and if they want my body when I am done with it, they are welcome to it. The one reasonable objection he raises to the "Bodies" exhibition is that the bodies are Chinese - and the state of civil rights in China is such that there is no way to be sure that they were not obtained by murder. (Box 3012, Tucson AZ 85702)

Resonance (Vol.6, 2011), ed.anon, 32pp.

Apparently an annual, from the School of Physics at Georgia Tech, where I received a B.S. in Physics - over 50 years ago. The 32 pages are all heavy coated stock with color printing and concern research that is quite beyond my out-dated grasp of such things. But the center-fold is particularly skiffy, about a project that might have been more in the news if it were not for all the catastrophes. On December 18, 2010, the Ice Cube project was completed. This is a neutrino-detection device using the Earth itself as a

filter - it looks north from the geographical South Pole, where a cubic kilometer of the ice has been instrumented with optical sensors that can detect the muon released when a neutrino hits an atom. The object is to observe the neutrino emissions from distant violent events such as supernovas, black holes, and neutron stars. A panoramic view shows the site.

Company of Liars by Karen Maitland, Delacorte Press 2008, 466pp, map, \$24

A mystical tale set in the 14th century, as the Plague sweeps through England and a group of travelers flee north from an English Channel port. The author, who has a doctorate in psycholinguistics, is an excellent writer, and provides a short glossary of long-lost words. The one that I found surprising is *camelot* - the narrator, who is never named, is an itinerant dealer in fake religious relics, called "a camelot", and addressed by the others as "Camelot" as he refused to give his name. The **Oxford English Dictionary** does not find this usage of the word - "camelot" is an old word, but only defined there as a variant spelling of "camlet/chamlet", an expensive fabric.

As in Chaucer's **Canterbury Tales**, these travelers are chance acquaintances and pass the time telling stories. The stories are fantasy - but as the plot thickens, we find that what each of the company is willing to reveal about himself is indeed a lie.

Strenuous Animals by Edwin J. Webster, Frederick A. Stokes 1904, 157pp, illustrated by E. W. Kemble and Bob Addams

And not in very good condition - but few children's books from 100 years ago are. There is a lot of artwork by Kemble, a well-know illustrator of the time. Addams seems to have done the chapter headings. Only the cover art is in color.

What struck me as odd when I saw this in an antique/junque store was the title - animal story books were (and are) common enough, but what did Webster mean by "strenuous"? The subtitle is "Veracious Tales" - which of course they are not. Perhaps the title was taken from the first sentence - "Tom Wilson's imported grizzly created lamentable havoc among Pike County animals during his short yet strenuous career". The tall tale that follows (which includes another use of *strenuous*) does not seem to be aimed at children. It reads a bit like some of the Jumping-Frog style humor of Mark Twain. A local black bear tricks the grizzly into drinking nitroglycerin and the grizzly is blown to bits.

Only one dealer found on the Net offers a copy of this, and he wants quite a lot for it!

My Miscellanies by Wilkie Collins, Peter Fenelon Collier (no date)

This is Volume Twenty of a collected Works, published in New York. The date seems to be murky. One dealer offers a copy he says is 1879, but it may be as late as 1900. Wilkie Collins died in 1888 and this is said to be his only non-fiction book. I never got very far with his Victorian novels (the most famous is **The Moonstone**) but these short pieces originally written for magazines of the times are more readable.

There is a detailed attempt to discover "The Unknown Public" that buys and reads what he calls "penny-novel-journals", 1-penny weekly magazines that included stories and Q&A columns, with an estimated readership of 3 million. Alas, it would have been more interesting if he had provided details such as titles and authors.

Another entry describes his experience with "My Black Mirror". He explains that Dr. Dee had a magic mirror, a "black speculum" made of "cannel-coal" in which Dee could see anything he wished, in space

The last entry is about his experience in hiring a temporary housekeeper who he calls "Mrs. Bullwinkle" - he was nearly driven into bankruptcy by her prodigious appetite, and gives long unlikely lists of what she could put away in a single day, even though she was not overweight.

This issue concentrates on radio talks that Mervyn Peake gave on the BBC in 1947, explaining how an artist sees the world, and how he approached book illustration. These are fascinating because while most artists are not very verbal, and few writers can draw any better than the rest of us, Peake had rare talent in both fields.

An excellent collection of 15 eldritch tales in the Lovecraft tradition, especially the title story and "Leng". I was startled to learn from the second story about psychic investigator Wilmott Watkyns that she is a lady! The book can be ordered from Ken at 2311 Swainwood Dr., Glenview IL 60025-2741. The price includes postage for US addresses - and you should aver that you are 18 or older; and say whether you want the copy inscribed.

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Next I suppose the fashion police will come around to be sure that your interior was decorated legally....



(*Fossilized for that extra crunchy taste!)

The Monkey's Wedding and Other Stories by Joan Aiken (1924-2004), Small Beer Press 2011, 203pp, dust-jacket art by Shelley Jackson, \$24.00

A posthumous collection, alas! Seven of the nineteen stories have not appeared previously. I enjoyed them very much. Her writing reminds me of a Mozart symphony - always perfectly paced and never a false note.

Titus Awakes by Maeve Gilmore (1918-1983), Overlook Press 2011, 265pp, \$25.95

The author was Mervyn Peake's widow, and this novel in his **Titus Groan** / **Gormenghast** / **Titus Alone** series is based on a fragment he had written before he died in 1968. Presumably this is the same text as the British edition published at the same time by Random House UK - I see it doesn't have the typos that Overlook is notorious for.

The fact that this was not published until long after Maeve Gilmore's death might indicate that she did not think much of it - or maybe she just considered it too personal. It's hard for me to say much about it in comparison to the earlier Titus books - it's been so long that that I am not really the same person who read those. But it seems to me that the writing is not as lyrical, and, although she was also an artist, she does not have the same visual imagination that Mervyn Peake was able to bring to his books. There is no attempt at his bizarre naming of characters. To

get 265 pages, the text had to be in a fairly large font with wide line-spacing - less than 65,000 words.

I have been a Mervyn Peake fan since I discovered **Titus Groan** in a used-book store over 50 years ago and was glad to see this published. It closes with Titus caring for an unnamed dementia patient who is clearly Mervyn Peake.

Mr. Pye, based on the book by Mervyn Peake, Landseer Productions 1986, 3-DVD set.

Mr. Pye (Heinemann 1953) is a fantasy set on the Isle of Sark where Mervyn Peake and his family lived for a time and is illustrated by the author. It was filmed as what we now call a mini-series for the BBC, with Derek Jacobi perfectly cast as the title character. I got the DVD set by e-mail from Mervyn Peake's son Sebastian, who assured me that it would play on the DVD players this side of the Pond. It will not play on my Sony BDP-S360, which is no more than a year old - and the software does not even say why. But the DVD software in this Windows XP PC does play it just fine. An excellent adaptation.

The Cartoons of Flannery O'Connor, Georgia College 2010, 108pp, wraps.

I have enjoyed her novels and stories, but had no idea that Flannery O'Connor was a cartoonist in college. I think I learned of this book from the local newspaper, and after some fol-de-rol with the college website I was able to order a copy. Try:

<http://www.gscu.edu/flannerycartoons>

As with most academic presses, the price does not appear on the book, and I have forgotten what I paid. There is an obvious influence of James Thurber on the line art, while the scratch-board illos are in a different style.

Three great books found as mint 1st editions on the same day at the Last Chance Thrift Store -

Drunken Goldfish by William Hartston, Sterling 1988, 154pp, profusely illustrated, \$17.95

This is subtitled "& Other Irrelevant Scientific Research". The research papers quoted are quite real (as far as I can tell), but the artwork is chosen for visual appeal and comedic value. Hartston seems to be the Dave Barry of research paper review. I see from the dust-jacket flap that he is a Chess Master, and has published books on chess and **The Ultimate Irrelevant Encyclopedia**. This last it seems would have to be very large, but I suppose "irrelevant" must always be a value judgment!

Homer & Langley by E. L. Doctorow, Random House 2009, 208pp, \$26.00

A novel based on the life and death of the Collyer brothers, the iconic example of compulsive accumulators. As a child I read a *Readers Digest* condensation of an earlier novel about them (**My Brother's Keeper** by Marcia Davenport - where she changes the surname to "Holt") and was

greatly impressed with the account. I tend to accumulate stuff myself, but have tried to always retain clear passage and access through the collections.

The Loom of God by Clifford A. Pickover, Plenum Trade 1996, 292pp, profusely illustrated, notes, index, bibliography, \$29.95

An odd publisher name! The title is from the statement *mathematics is the loom upon which God weaves the fabric of the universe*. Included is a discussion of Kurt Gödel's (Pickover spells it "Goedel" - perhaps the Plenum Trade typesetter had no umlaut) proof of the existence of God - and a picture of Tom Poston's visual proof of the existence of God, called "Mating Dance of the Horned Spheres". There are also 14 pages of computer programs for the Basic computer language. This book is also a sort of time-travel story - each chapter is introduced by an installment of the adventures of the Chief Historian of an intergalactic museum and his trusty alien sidekick Plex.

The Word on the Street by John McWhorter, Plenum Trade 1998, 294pp, Notes, Index, \$27.95
Plenum Trade again (this and the book above came from the same thrift store) - and the Net finds the same title (by the same author - the title is a cliché used by several authors) by two other publishers with different ISBN numbers.... The dust jacket on this book has two different ISBN numbers! The subtitle is "fact and fable about american english" and it seems to be a very well written account of the evolution of our favorite language.

Found in the Last Chance Thrift Store in "fine" condition, six ponderous novels by Willbur Smith from St.Martin's, all 1st editions. I had read his time-travel fantasy **The Sunbird** (St.Martin's 1973, \$7.95) long ago and enjoyed it, and was struck by the spectacular embossed dust jackets on these much later books. Smith has been busy - the latest of these lists 28 novels. I was interested to see the variation in production practice and price with the same author from the same press:

River God - 1994 - \$24.95 - bound in signatures with a headband, frontispiece map

The Seventh Scroll - 1995 - \$24.95 - bound in signatures with a headband

Birds of Prey - 1997 - \$25.95 - glued-stack binding, end-paper map

Monsoon - 1999 - \$26.95 - bound in signatures with a headband, end-paper map

Warlock - 2001 - \$27.95 - bound in signatures without a headband, end-paper map

Blue Horizon - 2003 - \$27.95 - bound in signatures with a headband

Rising Road by Sharon Davies, Oxford University Press 2010, 311pp

I happened on this in a antique/junque store and was struck by the odd title. It's a "uncorrected advance reading copy" and lacks the illustrations of the hardcover edition advertised on the back. A gruesome tale that my parents probably heard a lot about - in 1921 a Methodist minister in

Birmingham Alabama named Edwin Stephenson shot and killed a Catholic priest named James Coyle, in broad daylight in front of witnesses. At trial for murder he claimed it was a justified killing because the priest had "stolen" his 18-year-old daughter - in that the priest had married the daughter to a Puerto Rican. Stephenson's defense lawyer at the trial was Hugo Black - still at that time not yet a member of the KKK and long before his appointment to the US Supreme Court. Stephenson was acquitted and released!

Nightseed by H. A. Manhood, Viking 1928, 366pp

A completely forgotten writer, though he was quite popular once. The oddity of his stories lies in the unlikeliness of the plots and the purple prose. The last story in the book, "Fear", is the only one with anything actually supernatural, some sort of persistent unseen murderous monsters.

The Ozoids by Neal Wilgus, Juxtapedia Press 1986, 37pp, wraps, \$5.95

A collection of sets of limericks, one set per page, giving the characters and outline of the plot of each of 37 of the books set in the Land of Oz. Or is it the Land of Odds? The even-numbered pages are left blank, so that in all just 14 books are covered.

An Evening Among Headhunters by Lawrence Millman, Lumen 1998, 227 pp.

The DeKalb County public library system had this trade pb rebound in very sturdy boards, with the card covers pasted on - then covered the author's face on the back with their big green sticker. And then, of course, discarded it, even though it is in perfectly readable condition. A collection of excellent short accounts by a man who went to a lot of trouble to visit the most out-of-the-way places on Earth, from the tropics to the arctic.

The Essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Modern Library 1944, 557pp, ills. John Steuart Curry

The Curry illustrations are in both b&w and color - and his middle name above is not a typo. Rather vague impressionist stuff - but the double-page color illo at p.344 in the essay on "Politics" includes a 4-engine bomber over a burning city, something I suspect Emerson could not have imagined. Or the skyscrapers in the essay on "Friendship". The rather mysterious "Nominalist and Realist" gets a mysterious b&w illo - a naked lady and a large pig under a tree by a stream. No clue as to which is the Realist. The essay on "Love" gets a picture of what looks like an attempt to burn the Venus de Milo! The essay on "Spiritual Laws" seems to mix Adam and Eve with a giant Moses.

The Collected Stories of Carol Emshwiller Vol.1 - Nonstop Press 2011, 574pp, \$29.95

Luis Ortiz, who edited it, kindly sent me this. The dust-jacket art is an excellent portrait of his wife by the late Ed Emshwiller. There are some 88 stories if I counted right - and that's just Vol.1. These are short, sharp, funny fables, some from a variety of magazines, some appearing here for

the first time, some from her 1974 collection **Joy in Our Cause** (Harper & Row) with the beautiful artwork in the text retained here.

It Comes In the Mail from:

Peter Allen at Robert Temple Booksellers, who says they have moved to:
58 Ridge Road, London N21 3EA, England

And says that **Chikkin Hazard** (mentioned lastish) is specifically a spoof on **Foul Play**, a crime novel by Charles Reade and Dion Boucicault (3 vols., 1868); and that Burnand did a series of such spoofs.

Janet Alvarez, who sends a holiday card made from an excellent painting of a Hobbit in the Shire by Nan Gagnon. And a letter remarking on Charles Beaumont's story "Black Country", which she says is written in jazz rhythm - I might not have noticed! She read it in a Playboy anthology, but I see it's also in his collection **The Hunger** (Putnam/Bantam 1958/1959).

Doug Anderson, who had not heard of the big Mahlon Blaine book.

Dee Beetem, who sends a Catmas card.

Ruth Berman, who notes that her **Autumn World** mentioned lastish has been reprinted - see:
<http://ftlpublications.com>

and passes on more about the mad parody **Chikkin Hazard** - the author (under his real name, F. C. Burnand) wrote the libretto for Gilbert & Sullivan's operetta *Box and Cox*. Ruth has now had a novel published - **Bradamant's Quest** - a fantasy set in the time of Charlemagne.

Sheryl Birkhead, who says she is trying to organize her accumulated fanzines - it took me years, now I inventory each one the same day it appears and file it by title.

Dainis Bisenieks, who knew about the authors being parodied by the bizarre novel **Chikkin Hazard**. And explains how the new \$100 bill was counterfeited so as to pass the "iodine pen" test - what that detects in the starch found in almost all paper except banknote paper.

Rick Brooks, who sent a long e-mail of comment.

Lee Carson, who sends left-handed hand-rot from Tipperary. His cottage there is called "Slieve-No-Muc", which he says translates as "Mountain of the Druid's Pigs". Lee was in the public defender office in Chicago for many years, and says Obama is a "bargain basement Mason" -

whatever that may mean!

Melissa Conway at UCR Riverside, who sends an elegant card with a photo of an 1834 printing press. They sent me a scan of the first issue of the early fanzine *Destiny* - I have all the rest from the Dietz collection.

Kevin Cook, who says that Robert E. Howard has a Library of America volume - I haven't seen that one. I can't find it on their website - he seems to appear only with "The Black Stone" in an anthology there.

Margaret Cubberly, who sends a card with a Christmas Letter inclosed. She was bitten by a cat; and is indexing the Newport News Shipyard Bulletin for the Mariner's Museum. She's gotten from 1927 to 1950. Later she sent a clipping on the closure and demolition of the 16-Ft Transonic Tunnel at NASA/Langley. I worked two weeks of graveyard shift there once.

Gary Deindorfer - if only in that his copy was returned as "not deliverable", and the stamps uncanceled.

Roger Dobson, another Arthur Machen fan from across the Pond.

Ken Faig, another Mahlon Blaine fan.

Al Fitzpatrick, who sends a Christmas card and a lot of e-mails.

John and Diane Fox, who send a cockatoo Christmas card from the Antipodes.

Alexis Gilliland, who sends a Christmas letter with a very silly cartoon.

Mary Gray, of the old HaRoSFA gang, who sends a Christmas card.

Brad Wayne Foster, who sent another great cover for this issue. And admits to having the dread middle name - but didn't know the problem with it. A google on [Wayne "middle name"] gets a lot of hits and some lists of the convicted killers with that middle name, but I can't find a complete list (the longest I found doesn't even include John Wayne Gacy) or any statistical analysis of the odd apparent correspondence between that middle name (few people after all are responsible for their middle name) and murderous behavior. My middle initial is W - but for Warnell, not Wayne.

Jim Goldfrank, who sends a CD of his own singing!

Richard Harland, who tries to explain "steampunk" and says there have been feelers from Hollywood over a film of his novel **Worldshaker**!

Linton Herbert, who says he gave up printing his remarkable zine *Wild Surmise* because of the expense and switched to a web log. Not quite the same - but even nostalgia is not what it used to be. Linton says I should read the anthropologist Robin Fox. He thinks we might be related through the Allens, but I find no Allens in the genealogy my mother did. Linton has a video up at YouTube called "The Dance of the Chromosomes", with dancing girls!

Don Herron, who says that he ran into Slanapa founder Frank Denton at a Big Read in Helena Montana.

Binker Hughes, who sends a Christmas card - I see that this has one of the nondenominated "Forever" stamps showing the foliage of the Eastern Red Cedar - I read recently that from now on the 1st-class stamp for the first ounce will all be "Forever" stamps in various designs.

Steve & Suzanne Hughes, who send a Christmas card from the boonies of Ellijay Georgia.

Jerry Kaufman, who mentions a Bryan Barrett selling issues of *Fanscient* - one of the few fanzines I might buy, except that I have a complete set. Jerry and Harry Morris are the only loccers so far who knew who Richard Hell is.

Herman King, one of the few left who remembers the Tidewater Virginia fans of the 1960s.

Colin Langeveld, who says he enjoyed my zine, and points me to the electronic version of his *Doppelganger Broadsheet*.

Eric Lindsay, who has no usable postal address but goes to Sydney to spend too much on books. He says CDs and DVDs are about to become obsolete. I can play 78s, 45s, LPs, wire recordings, reel-to-reel, audio cassettes, Beta, VHS, CD, and DVD - what next....

Sean McLachlan, who sends a picture postcard from Harar, Ethiopia, with two 1-birr banknotes. If you plan to visit Harar Jegol, the ancient fortified city, see his website:

<http://www.gadling.com/tag/cityofsaints>

Sean says there are hyenas in the alleys and that he is learning Harari and Amharic to supplement his Arabic. Alas, when I answered his letter, mine wandered around for a month or

two and then came back as having "insufficient address". Later I heard from him from him by e-mail from Cantabria Spain, and he says his Civil War horror novel is being published.

Eric Mayer, who sent a long comment and said I should donate my collection to be preserved as the Brooks Collection of Dreadful Curiosities. But I see very few of them as rising to the level of "dreadful"!

Harry Morris, who liked my description of **Voidoid** by Richard Hell so well that he bought the book - this may become more likely to be possible as I get older and run out of shelf space!

Dale Nelson, who has been writing for the Tolkien fanzines I don't get any more, and has been switched to the cyber-version.

Dan Osterman, who sent the IGOTS 32 envelope back (the stamps not canceled either time!) with a sketch he drew on the subway of a sketch artist on the subway.

Darroll & Rosemary Pardoe - Rosemary says that Devendra Varma's **The Gothic Flame** is probably mostly lifted from other authors - something I would hardly have noticed!

Lloyd Penney, who sent me the Klingon "Jews for Jesus" tract mentioned lastish.

Richard Polt, editor of the Harry Stephen Keeler newsletter, who notes that the great artist Mahlon Blaine did dust jacket art for Keeler's **Find the Clock** - a book I don't have. It's not in the bibliography the Roland Trenary did for the Legman book, but does get a full page image in b&w in the recent book by Brian Hunt.

Andy Robson, who sends his zine Krax (see above) and a letter.

Tom Sadler, the Reluctant Famulus, who sends a Christmas card.

Leland Sapiro, but only in that his copy was returned by the USPS with the notation "moved, not forwardable". A google finds sites with the address I have that say he was 86, so he might have shuffled off to that permanent worldcon beyond the hills we know. A P K Dick website reprints pages from his Riverside Quarterly where a "Yogi Borel" reviews a Dick book.

Darrell Schweitzer, who doesn't like my politics. But in fact I never understood politics and comment on current events only from the standpoint of logic and morality. He recommends the recent film *Agora* (about the destruction of the Library of Alexandria and the murder of Hypatia)

- I have it and it's pretty good. Darrell also mentions a much older film than the recent *Dean Spanley* based on something by Lord Dunsany - the 1944 *It Happened Tomorrow*, based on his play *The Jest of Hahalaba*. I have that on DVD too and enjoyed it, but I suspect that only the basic gimmick survives from the play, which I have not read.

David Shea, who sends a Christmas card and two C. J. Cherryh books, **The Pride of Chanur** and **Gate of Ivrel**. These are from the 1980s - and I still think of Cherryh as a new writer.... I see these are "DAW Book Collectors" number 464 and 188 respectively and went through multiple printings. David also says that Harriett Kolchak, den mother of Philadelphia fandom in the 60s, could speak Mandarin Chinese.

Brian Showers, my only correspondent in Ireland, who notes a CoA to 1 Alma Terrace, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

Jad Smith, a John Brunner fan that I have traded fanzines with.

Steve Sneyd, who reports that before the fleur-de-lis, the French royal symbol was...a toad.

Milt Stevens, who sends a long letter of comment, including that Steve and Vicki Ogden, mentioned lastish for their Poe fanzine, have done one on Frazetta - with a CDrom. They didn't send me a copy - perhaps they sense that I don't care for Frazetta's work.

Graham Stone in the Antipodes, who commented extensively and says he is not a fan of the *Alice* books. Graham also notes that **Foul Play**, the book parodied by the bizarre **Chikkin Hazard** mentioned lastish, had appeared eleven years previously - perhaps people read more slowly in the 19th century, or **Foul Play** was really popular and often reprinted.

Dave Szurek, who sends a Christmas card.

Juan Carlos Verrecchia, who sends Christmas greetings from Argentina. And later - it arrived on my birthday - an Adolfo Bioy Casares book, **La invención de Morel**.

Toni Weisskopf, who sends a penguin Xmas card.

Neal Wilgus, who denies having anything at all to do with the 1953 fanzine *Starlight* that Greg Pickersgill's MemoryHole fanzine index credits some Wilgus with - even though no Wilgus at all is actually mentioned in its pages. He kindly sent me his **The Ozoids, Limericks in Oz**, see above.

The **Harry Potter Award** to the British technology company ATSC Ltd for its invention of a “wand” that, according to the company, detects explosives, drugs, and human remains for up to six miles by air and three fifths of a mile by land. The ADE 651 sells for \$16,000 a unit. The only problem is that it doesn't work, which users might have figured out by reading the manual: the device has no batteries or internal parts. It is powered by “static electricity” generated by the holder walking in place. A wand-like antenna then points to the drugs, bodies, or explosives.

But the wand was widely used in Iraq. Ammar Tuma, a member of the Iraqi parliament's Security and Defense Committee, bitterly attacked the company for causing "grave and massive losses of the lives of innocent Iraqi civilians, by the hundreds and the thousands, from attacks we thought we were immune to because we have this device." The Iraqi Ministry of the Interior purchased 800 ADE 651s at a cost of \$85 million.

Runner-up for this award was the British firm, Global Technology Ltd, which sold \$10 million worth of very similar wands—the GT 200—to Mexico. The unit retails for \$20,000 apiece. In one demonstration the GT 200 detected drugs in a Volkswagen sedan. After thoroughly searching the car, authorities turned up a bottle of Tylenol (suggesting that one should switch to Advil). Human Rights Watch says it is “troubled” by the use of the wand, which is widely used in Thailand and Mexico. “If people are actually being arrested and charged solely on the basis of its readings, that would be outrageous,” the group said in a press release.

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Who is the Star-Spangled Torquemada?

19

Republicans in Congress have spent the past two-and-a-half years trying to block any useful piece of legislation and many horrendous ones as well. They've just done it with the background hum of war criminals on promotional book tours.

Dean of the University of California at Berkeley Law School Christopher Edley, Jr.

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**Troy Anthony Davis** [October 9, 1968 - September 21, 2011]

Slaughtered ("...cruel and unusual punishment to leave him strapped into a gurney with a needle in his arm for several hours while US Supreme Court Justices unanimously decided against hearing an appeal..." ) by the State of Georgia in some mad lust for racist revenge - another in a long string of legalized lynchings. The original trial proved nothing beyond a reasonable doubt except that a white policeman was shot dead and Troy Davis was a convenient suspect - the transcript of that trial was conveniently lost. No weapon was ever recovered, no motive was ever suggested.

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According to a recent report from Britain's Office of National Statistics, there are 297,000 households in the country in which no adult has ever held any kind of job. The number of individuals who thus may never have developed the "habit of work," and who instead have grown accustomed to the country's generous welfare payments, might total 700,000. (In an example cited by the Daily Mail, one such couple in their late 30s, and their children, "earn" the equivalent of almost \$1,100 per week in income support and disability payments.) [Daily Mail, 9-2-2011] - *I wonder what the parallel figures would be for the USA.... This odd situation is the inevitable result of the trend that started with the industrial revolution of the 19th century and was accelerated by the cyber-revolution of the 20th century - much of that part of the work-force that did manual labor is no longer needed. There is nothing for them to do. As this trend continues, who will be left with a job? Lawyers (with cyber-clerks) I suppose, and entertainers, and soldiers and policemen.*

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For the second year (2010) in a row, more US soldiers killed themselves (468) than died in combat (462). "If you... know the one thing that causes people to commit suicide, please let us know," General Peter Chiarelli told the Army Times, "because we don't know." Suicide is a tragic but predictable human reaction to being asked to kill - and watch your friends be killed - for a war based on lies. Perhaps being forced to bag the mangled flesh of fellow soldiers could be another reason why some are committing suicide. (Project Censored)

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And so closes another issue, in the third Obama year. I hope that all of you had a **Happy Halloween**, and will have

***A Merry Christmas
& A Happy New Year!***



The Bells

And the people—ah, the people—
 They that dwell up in the steeple,
 All alone,
 And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
 In that muffled monotone,
 Feel a glory in so rolling
 On the human heart a stone—
 They are neither man nor woman—
 They are neither brute nor human—
 They are Ghouls :
 And their king it is who tolls ;
 And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
 Rolls
 A paean from the bells !
 And his merry bosom swells
 With the paean of the bells !
 And he dances, and he yells ;
 Keeping time, time, time,
 In a sort of Runic rhyme,
 To the paean of the bells—
 Of the bells :

This fragment - just the middle of the fourth and final section of Edgar Allan Poe's tintinnabulous poem - was chosen as the first subject in a 1929 "Portfolio" of Edmund Dulac artwork based on Poe's verse. I wonder if the choice was political....

