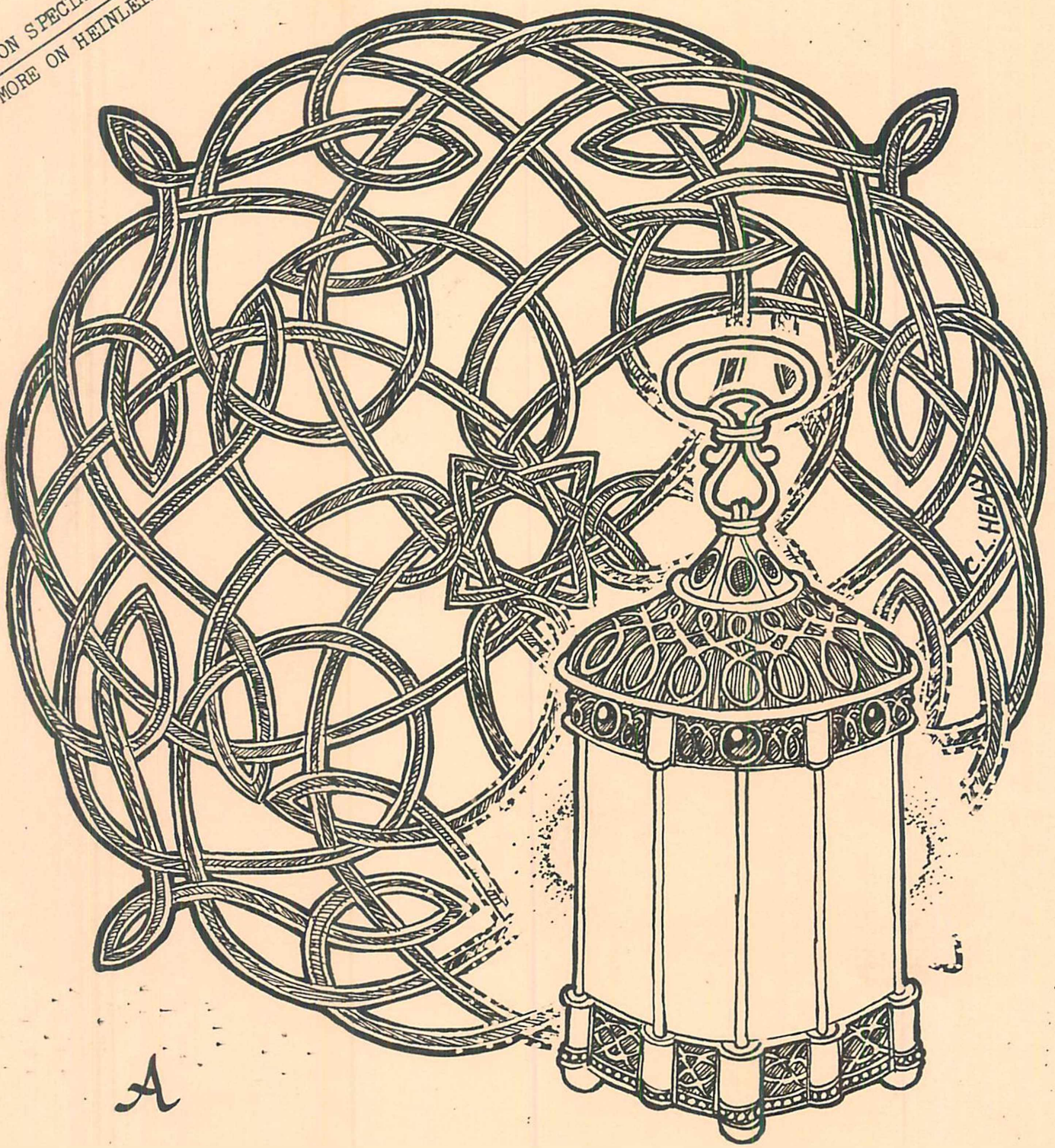
LOCS ON SPECIAL ISSUES
MORE ON HEINLEIN



A

Fritz Leiber Special

Lan's Lantern 38

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Dedication:

To Maia, as usual,
and
Fritz Leiber, a Grand Master in every sense of the word.

LAN'S LANTERN #38 is published and edited by George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304 USA. Phone: (313) 642-5670. LAN'S LANTERN is available for articles, art, letters of comment, even money (US$2 post paid) and the whim of the editor. The opinions expressed are those of the contributors, and may or may not be those of the editor. This is Lantern Publication #24, a division of LanShack Press Unlimited.

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From The Editor:

by Lan

Fritz and I

I have only met Fritz Leiber once. He and I shared the Guests of Honor spots at MINICON in 1989--the year of his Golden Anniversary--along with a few other notable authors and fans. Fritz was the Professional Guest of Honor, and I was the Fan Guest of Honor (and I doubled as the Toastmaster).

The reading of Fritz Leiber's fiction up to that point was minimal. I was (and am) too busy trying to keep up with the new books and magazines being published to go back to read the SF I missed when I was younger, or the Classics of our field. It is only when I put out a special issue that I work on reading that particular author. Thus it was with Fritz Leiber.

I began reading his books in preparation for this issue about then. Because of one thing or another, I got sidetracked and only read his work in spurts. By the time I sifted through the material I had read and narrowed down the scope of the article I wanted to work on, I had lost many of the details of the stories and novels I wanted to use (even though I had taken notes on every one of them). Therefore I needed to reread several stories, including the novels, which took even more time. I also sought out more books of Leiber's, so I could have as many of the short stories I needed for "Modern Demons and a Twisted Mind." I was not disappointed in my research, nor with the reading.

I found much to admire in the stories, and found various themes and styles peculiar to Fritz Leiber. This is something which a reader picks up subconsciously in reading any author, but which comes to the fore when reading volumes of that author. Fritz Leiber loves the Theatre, having grown up in that background, and the pacing of the stories, the scenes portrayed, and the characters, show that. His love of chess, psychology, sex and eroticism, other authors, and abnormal quirks of the human psyche is evident. Knowing something about the man leads the reader to see very easily that many of the main characters in his stories are patterned after himself: Franz Westin in Our Lady of Darkness, Carr Mackay in The Sinful Ones and You're All Alone, Norman Saylor in Conjure Wife, and naturally Fafhrd in the numerous "Fafhrd and Gray Mouser" stories.

But back to MINICON, 1989.

I introduced the man as having won several Hugos and Nebulas, the recipient of the Gandalf Award as a Grandmaster of Fantasy, and a holder of the Nebula Grandmaster award. The applause was thunderous. The man, bent with age and the results of too much alcohol in his youth, shuffled to the microphone and spoke. There was no shaking in that voice, no question as to the power which was still in the man. His resonant tones could have been heard throughout the massive room without the microphone. The appreciation of the listeners again was overwhelming when Fritz finished.

Later I was on a panel with him, and after the convention, Polly Peterson and Eric Heideman took Fritz, Margo Skinner (his companion) and myself out to a post-convention dinner. We had a pleasant time talking about all sorts of topics. I left the convention with a good impression of the man.

Now I can only apologize that this tribute issue of Lan's Lantern is so late. Fritz, you deserve better, but I hope that you appreciate those who appreciate you. Some of those thoughts are contained here, and other would say more if they could.

Here's to another 50 years, Fritz! |*|

* * * * ** * * * *

This issue contains many articles and tributes to Fritz Leiber, which I think is obvious. However, I've included locs about the previous special issues of Lan's Lantern, and other things which got left out of some of those special issues.

Future issues will include more travelogues from various people, stuff about fan activities, and the usual reviews and my own ramblings. I have no immediate plans for special issues.

An Appreciation of Fritz Leiber's Fiction

by Tom Sadler

Grandmaster. An honor bestowed on only certain authors within the science fiction world, those whom their peers feel are deserving of that appellation. The subject of this tribute is definitely one of the more familiar names in fandom--Fritz Leiber. What can one say about him? That he, too, is one of the Grand Old Masters of science fiction and fantasy? Such an honor seems only reasonable to me.

I discovered Fritz Leiber's works after I found those of Robert A. Heinlein, but found as much pleasure in them although for different reasons, as is to be expected.

I presume that most people know Fritz Leiber came from a theatrical background. His parents were actors, and for a long time his father, Fritz Leiber, Sr., headed a repertory company until moving to California where he obtained parts in movies. Fritz Jr. also acted in plays in his younger days.

When one stops to think about it, isn't that a great sort of foundation on which to build a career as a writer? I mean, consider the fact that repertory companies of that era produced plays that ranged from the great and eloquent works of Shakespeare (mostly) through other dramas, comedies and the so-called "mellerdramas". A repertory actor was called upon to play a very wide variety of roles during the course of his or her career and so were exposed to a multitude of different personalities. Then, too, the majority of actors like to do everything they can to get inside the characters they're playing in order to better understand that character and so do a better job of bringing the character to life. Actors use all sorts of methods to help them in their craft, but chief among them is simply to observe all sorts of people in everyday life.

In that way, a writer is very much like an actor except that the writer portrays many character at once rather than in a series. Still and all, the writer strives to make his or her characters as real and believable as humanly possible, Thus writers, too, study the people around them in order to fashion "real" characters in their fiction. And, just as an actor does, a writer strives to get inside the heads of his/her creations and tries to think and feel as that character does so that his/her motivations seem real and true.

Consciously or unconsciously, Fritz Leiber seems to have mastered the actor's practice because of his experience as one and applied it to his fiction. (The fact that he also studied psychology might also have something to do with his fiction crafting.) And over the years he has created some interesting people in his sto-

from <u>You're All Alone</u>

ries. We all know, of course, that his most familiar character, Fafhrd, is patterned on himself--something that many writers have done, at least in part. But it seems to me that the many, many other characters he has created are almost as fascinating.

Its interesting to note that many writers are adept in creating short stories, that they in fact excel at that form of fiction. Others, however, are much better at the novel and find short stories beyond their skill. Still others are equally adept at both forms of fiction. Fritz Lieber, I think, is one of those in the third category. Even more to his credit, though, is the fact that he is also equally adept at writing science fiction and fantasy and horror. (Not, mind you, the King/Barker/Campbell, et al. type.) Fritz Leiber is a writer justifiably highly regarded by his peers.

Many plays, of course, are considered literature because they deal with the human condition. Because of his early involvement with the theatre, I'm sure Fritz Leiber learned much about drama, tension, mood, setting, and humor, and thus was able to use that knowledge in his writing.

One of the noteworthy aspects of the tales of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser is that not only do the characters change because of what has ahppened to them along the way but they also grow older physically just as real people do. Most fictional characters, it seems, are frozen in time at one particular age for all eternity.

The thing about Fritz Leiber is that he is as adept with fantasy as he is with science fiction. His approach is different from either Robert A. Heinlein or Clifford Simak--but I don't want to get into that particular aspect here and now. Suffice it to say it's fascinating to see the various bits of business he uses to delineate and define his characters, to make each of them separate, distinct and real. Leiber uses not only physical descriptions but also employs particular mannerisms and the individual's reactions to his surroundings and events to further help show what that person is like. And he does it with skill and wit and a shrewd understanding of human nature and motivations.

Leiber's Hugo-winning novel, The Wanderer, starts out in a familiar sort of way as a typical "Earth in peril" tale when a large mysterious object is discovered in deep space and headed directly for Earth. It seems a certainty that the planet is on a collision course that inevitably will bring total destruction. The first portion of the book deals with the approach of the object and its effect on a group of people and, ultimately, Earth.

Here, Leiber introduces and clearly delineates each person and shows their individual reactions to the imminent event. On a larger scale he details the effect the object has on Earth, from great tidal waves caused by the other body's gravitational influence to the hysteria caused by the intruder as it draws ever nearer. But instead of destroying Earth of all life on it, Leiber changes course and it is discovered that the huge intruding body is not a comet or a runaway planet, but a planet turned into an interstellar craft. And of course the craft is the home to another race, as the main characters Leiber has created soon discover. Along the way he slips in one of his favorite subjects, namely sex.

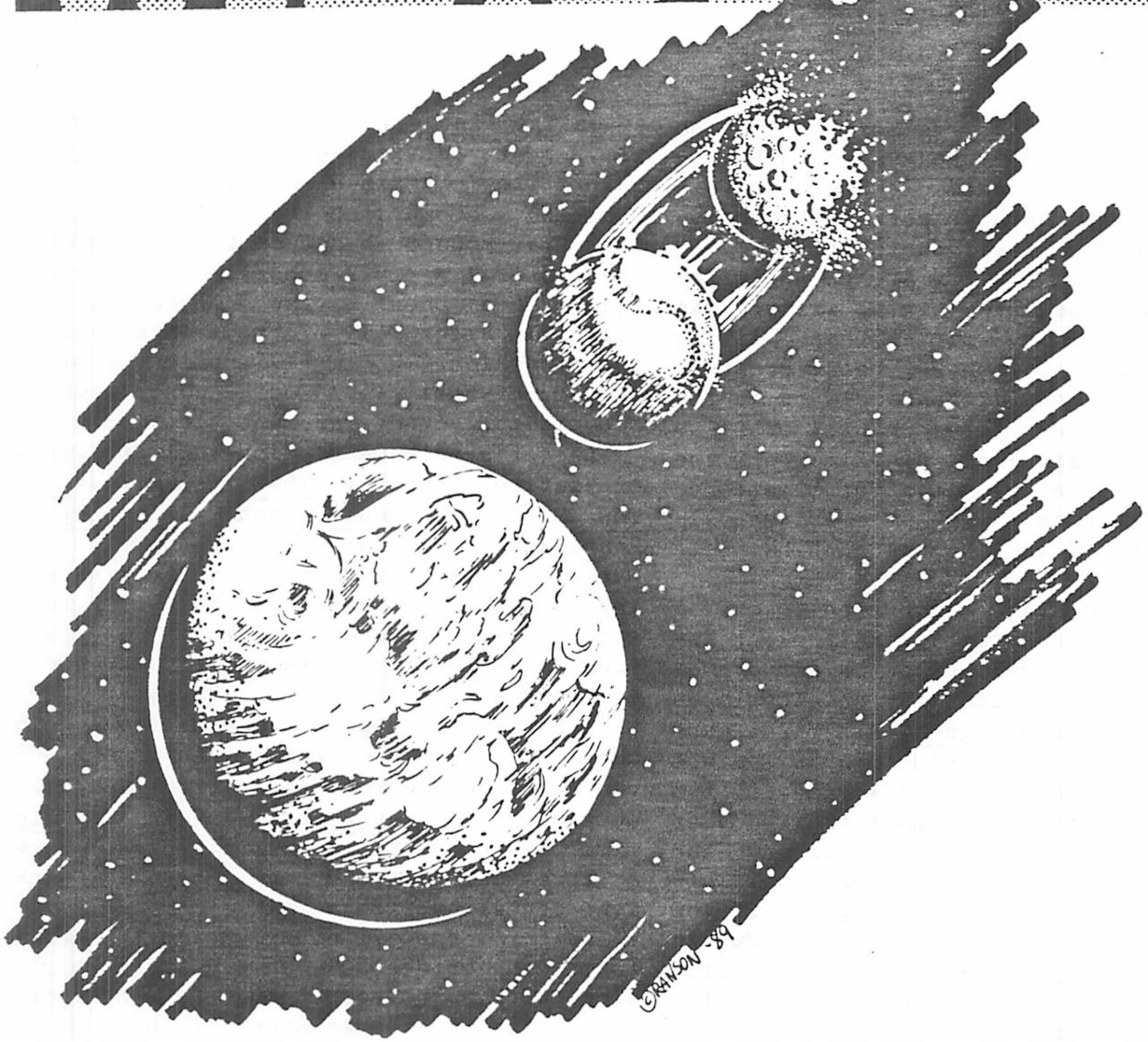
Take the novel Conjure Wife, which deals with witchcraft among the faculty wives of a university and from which a couple of less-than-inspired movies were made. Or the novel A Specter is Haunting Texas, a satiric look at a possible future with which we might be better off. And then there's the novel Gather, Darkness, which deals with another future in which magic strives against science for supremacy of the world.

Or take his short fiction, as, for example, a short story of Leiber's that has been frequently anthologized. "A Pail of Air" is a most curious little tale of a family in the future existing in a world so polluted that survivors live in little cells in the ruins of the cities' skyscrapers.

"Gonna Roll the Bones," a story of a gambler pitted against a most unusual opponent who is more than he seems and who teaches the gambler a lesson he'll long remember. Or, another good example, "Space-Time for Springers," the story of a most unusual sentient kitten with an IQ of 160.

And then there's "Rump-Titty-Tum-Tah-Tee," a curious tale of an obsession created by a long dead man and the effect it has on the world at large. Or "The Man Who Never Grew Young," a sad and somber tale of a man who watches time flow backward

THE WANDERER



but is curiously untouched by the course of events. And then there's "The Foxholes of Mars," which weems to me very anti-war in its attitude. "Wanted--An Enemy," deals with the concept of creating a common enemy to unite mankind and unexpected and undesirable consequences that might result.

When it comes to Leiber's tales of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, one can't help being drawn into a fascinating world of two very likeable rogues and scoundrels and their fantastic adventures. And I think Leiber has the most fun with those two skilled swordsmen. True, the tales are rypical of the sword and sorcery genre-how can they help not being so since the man is very nearly solely responsible for creating that fiction--but they are also filled with drama, pathos, and with Leiber's wit and cleverness. In their own ways, Leiber's tales of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser rise above the typical fantasies, and that's what maked his work so worthwhile and enjoyable.

Even though his health hasn't been the best recently--and I hope it has improved and he can be around for a few years more --Fritz Leiber is still an imposing man. With a sly smile, a high forehead surmounted with a mane of white hair, a distinctive voice, a great wit, and a large fund of tales yet to tell, Fritz Leiber is indeed a distinctive and distinguished man. And I'm glad he chose to become a writer and share his stories with us.

Thank you very much, Fritz Leiber. [*]

Fritz Leiber

by Eric M. Heideman

Fritz Leiber, Jr., was born in Chicago on December 24, 1910, to two noted Shakespearean actors. Spending summers travelling with his parents' theatrical company, Leiber gained a feel for the gusto, cadence, and flexibility of spoken and written English that few living writers can match. Leiber has written that, living backstage, he saw "fantasy being created, the spells woven for the audience in the darkness out front, the mechanics of illusion and illusioning. A world where the need for make-believe is never questioned and the importance, perhaps even necessity, of fantasy in living and thinking is not denied."

He became a stage and screen actor, a lay preacher, and an aircraft plant inspector; taught college speech and drama; and worked as an editor for an encyclopedia and for Science Digest. His first published fiction appeared in 1939, since which time he has published 14 novels, two volumes of poetry, a substantial body of science fiction/fantasy criticism, and around 200 short stories. Jonquil, his British-born novelist/playwright wife of 33 years, died in 1969; their son Justin is a philosophy professor and science fiction writer. Fritz Leiber has been a full-time writer since 1956. He lives in San Francisco.

During the course of an exceptionally rich and varied life, Leiber has been a chess and fencing enthusiast, and a student of literature, astronomy, politics, pacifism, war, music, mythology, metaphysics, cats and especially people. When he began writing, his natural bent was toward fantasy, but fantasy of a special sort; for Leiber has maintained that "Fantasy must be fertilized--yes, watered and manured--from the real world." Few speculative writers have matched his skill at creating real people, in all of their quirkiness and vulnerability.

He coined the name "sword and sorcery" for Robert E. Howard's limited subgenre of adventure fantasy, and gave us its funniest, most convincing swordsmen/heroes, Fafhrd the Northern giant (based on Leiber himself), and his short, wily companion, the Gray Mouser (based on the characters' co-creator, Harry Fischer). For 50 years Leiber has been giving us their adventures, in splendidly plotted, often hilarious fashion, while filling in the background of their world of Nehwon, rich in odd sights, sounds, and entities.

Leiber's science fiction includes works of satire (notably The Green Millenium, The Silver Eggheads, and A Specter is Haunting Texas); a disaster novel, The Wanderer, stronger in ideas and characterization, and strangeness than most such efforts; stories about alternate universes (including Destiny Times Three), and about a "Change War" between two great forces, the Snakes and Spiders, each seeking to change the course of time to their own advantage. The war is chronicled in a collection, The Change War, and in The Big Time, a remarkable novel, structured like a three-act play and set in an entertainment center outside time.

Leiber's special contribution to horror forms the bridge between the eldritch visions of H.P. Lovecraft and the contemporary chills of Stephen King. In his search for the shape the unknown might take in contemporary environments, among people who act and talk as our friends do, he created the modern horror story. Leiber is not this century's most famous or influential horror writer, but he may well be the best. See Night's Black Agents, Shadows with Eyes, The Sinful Ones, Our Lady of Darkness, and especially Conjure Wife.

Breaking up Leiber's work into categories is unusually difficult, because he's always delighted in mixing forms (see Gather, Darkness!), breaking Thou Shalt Nots, and crossing boundaries. He is respectful of the scientific method and the rules of logic, but he also has a healthy appreciation for the uncanny and the un-

knowable. His stories are at once fantastic and real, frightening and whimsical, written with a balance and wholeness that is immensely satisfying. Several people have done specific types of imaginative writing better, but no one has equalled his range. Fritz Leiber is the most versatile fantasist of the twentieth century. His life work is one of America's important gifts to the world.

Happy Golden Anniversary to the Grand Master!

* * * * * * * *

THE BOOKS (and SELECTED OTHER STUFF) OF FRITZ LEIBER

Night's Black Agents (collection), 1947. Expanded edition, 1978.
Gather, Darkness! (novel, 1943 magazine publication), 1953.
Conjure Wife (novel; 1943 magazine publication), 1953.
The Green Millenium (novel), 1953.
The Sinful Ones (novel), 1953. Revised edition, 1980.
Destiny Times Three (novel; 1945 magazine publication), 1956. Reissued as a Dell Binary Star with Norman Spinrad's Riding the Torch, 1978.
Two Sought Adventure (Fafhrd/Mouser collection), 1957.
The Mind Spider and Other Stories (collection), 1961.
The Big Time (novel; 1958 magazine publication), 1961.
The Silver Eggheads (novel), 1961.
Shadows with Eyes (collection), 1962.
Ships to the Stars (collection), 1964.
A Pail of Air (collection), 1964.
The Wanderer (novel), 1964.
The Night of the Wolf (collection), 1966.
Tarzan and the Valley of Gold (novel), 1966.
The Secret Songs (collection), 1968.
Swords in the Mist (Fafhrd/Mouser collection; book III in their chronological adventures), 1968.
Swords against Wizardry (collection; Fafhrd/Mouser, book IV), 1968.
The Swords of Lankhmar (novel; Fafhrd/Mouser, book V), 1968.
"Fantasy Books" (regular column), in Fantastic Stories, March 1968-March 1979; continued irregularly in Locus, 1979-1982.
Night Monsters (collection), 1969. Reissued with different contents, 1974.
A Specter is Haunting Texas (novel), 1969.
The Demons of the Upper Air (poetry collection), 1969.
Swords and Deviltry (collection; Fafhrd/Mouser, book I), 1970.
Swords Against Death (collection; Fafhrd/Mouser, book II), 1970.
You're All Alone (collection), 1972.
The Book of Fritz Leiber (collection), 1974.
The Best of Fritz Leiber (collection), 1974.
The Second Book of Fritz Leiber (collection), 1975.
The Worlds of Fritz Leiber (collection), 1976.
Fritz Leiber Read "Gonna Roll the Bones" (album), 1977.
Swords and Ice Magic (collection; Fafhrd/Mouser, book VI), 1977. Includes the novel Rime Isle.
Our Lady of Darkness (novel), 1977.
Heroes and Horrors (collection), 1978.
The Change War (collection), 1978.
Bazaar of the Bizarre (collection; Leiber's favorite Fafhrd/Mouser stories), 1978.
Sonnets to Jonquil and All (poetry collection; with Jonquil Stephens), 1978.
Ship of Shadows (collection), 1979. The novella, "Ship of Shadows," (1969 magazine publication) is reissued in a Tor Double with Poul Anderson's No Truce for Kings, 1989.
Editor with Stuart Schiff, The World Fantasy Awards, Vol. 2 (fiction anthology), 1980.
"On Fantasy" (bimonthly column), in Fantasy Newsletter, 1980-1984.
"Horror Hits a High" (essay), in Fear Itself: The Horror Fiction of Stephen King (Tim Underwood and Chuck Miller, eds.), 1982.
"Moons and Stars and Stuff" (monthly column), in Locus, October 1982-present.
The Ghost Light (collection), 1984. Includes "Not Much Disorder and Not So Early Sex: An Autobiographical Essay."
The Knight and Knave of Swords (collection; Fafhrd/Mouser, book VII), December 1988. Includes the novel, The Mouser Goes Below.

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Fritz Leiber

A Bibliography

Compiled by Lan

This is a companion listing to go with the selected bibliography compiled by Eric Heideman. This probably does not cover every story that Leiber has written, but it comes pretty close. The books cited are all by Fritz Leiber, unless otherwise noted (the editor is named parenthetically). The listing comes from our card catalogue, and as such most often the shorter works will not contain the first publication. Most of the books cited should be available either in new printings, or in used bookstores. The earliest copyright I've been able to find follows each title. (In some cases, a list of dates was on the copyright page with no reference as to which date belonged to which story; I left blank parentheses after these titles.)

"Adept's Gambit" (1947) Swords in the Mist; Night's Black Agent
"After Such Knowldege" () The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Afterword" (1974) The Best of Fritz Leiber.
"Alice and the Allergy" (1945) The Leiber Chronicles
"America the Beautiful" (1970) The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles; The Year 2000 (Harrison); The Ruins of Earth (Disch)
"Amis et Ennemis" () Apres (Nuetzel)
"Automatic Pistol, The" (940) The Leiber Chronicles; Night's Black Agents; The Unexpected (Margulies)
"Bad Day for Sales, A" (1953) The Leiber Chronicles; Science Fiction of the 50s (Greenberg)
"Bait, The" (1973) Swords and Ice Magic; The Leiber Chronicles
"Bazaar of the Bizarre" (1963) Swords Against Death; The Leiber Chronicles; Magic for Sale (Davidson); Swords Against Tomorrow (Hoskins); The Spell of Seven (de Camp)
"Be of Good Cheer" (1964) Rulers of Men (Santesson)
"Beat Cluster, The" (1961) The Leiber Chronicles; A Pail of Air; The 7th Galaxy Reader (Pohl)
"Beauty and the Beasts" (1974) The Book of Fritz Leiber; Swords and Ice Magic
"Belson Express" (1975) The Second Book of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles; The Years Best Horror Stories, Series V (Page)
Best of Fritz Leiber, The -- Doubleday/SFBC: 1974 (Collection); Ballantine
"Big Holiday, The" The Best of Fritz Leiber
Big Time, The -- Ace: 1961
"Big Trek, The" (1957) Ships to the Stars; The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Best from F&SF, 7th series (Boucher)
"Bit of the Dark World, A" (1962) Shadows with Eyes; Night's Black Agents
"Black Glass" (1978) The Best SF of the Year #8 (Carr)
"Black Gondolier, The" (1964) Night Monsters
"Bleak Shore, The" () Swords Against Death
Book of Fritz Leiber, The -- Daw: 1974
"Bread Overhead" (1957) A Pail of Air
"Bullett with His Name" (1958) Worlds of When (Conklin)
"Button Molder, The" (1979) The Leiber Chronicles
"Casket Demon, The" (1963) Night Monsters
"Cat Hotel, The" (1983) F&SF, Oct 83
"Cat Three" (1973) F&SF, Oct 73
"Catch that Zeppelin!" (1975) The Leiber Chronicles; The 1976 Annual World's Best SF (Wollheim); Nebula Awards Stories 11 (LeGuin); F&SF Mar 75; The Hugo Winners (Asimov)
"Cat's Cradle" () The Book of Fritz Leiber
Changewar -- Ace: 1983
"Circle Curse, The" () Swords against Death
"Claws from the Night" () Swords against Death

"Cloud of Hate, The" (1963) Swords in the Mist
"Coming Attraction" (1950) The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles; A Pail of Air; The Vortex Blasters (Moskowitz); Galaxy (Pohl); The Science Fiction Hall of Fame (Silverberg)
Conjure Wife -- Ace: 1977 (1953)
"Crazy Annaoj" () The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Crazy Wolf" (aka "Sanity") (1944) The Night of the Wolf; The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles
"Creature from Cleveland Depths, The" (aka "The Lone Wolf") (1962) The Night of the Wolf; You're All Alone
"Curse of the Smalls and the Stars, The" (1983) Heroic Visions (Salmonson); The Leiber Chronicles; The Knight and Knave of Swords
"Cyclops" (1965) On Our Way to the Future (Carr)
"Damnation Morning" (1959) Changewar; The Mind Spider
"Dead Man, The" (1950) Shadows with Eyes
"Deadly Moon" (1960) Ships to the Stars; Thrilling SF Oct 73
"Death of Princes, The" (1976) The Leiber Chronicles; Best SF Of the Year #6 (Carr); Amazing Jun 76
"Debunking the I Machine" () The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Defense of Werewolves, A" (1948) The Second Book of Fritz Leiber
"Demons of the Upper Air" (1969) F&SF Jul 69
"Deskful of Girls, A" (1958) Changewar; Shadows with Eyes; The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Best from F&SF, 8th series (Boucher)
Destiny Times Three -- Dell 1978 (1945), part of Binary Star #1
"Diary in the Snow" (1947) Night's Black Agents
"Do You Know Dave Wenzel?" (1974) Fellowship of the Stars (Carr)
"Dr. Kometevsky's Day" (1952) Ships to the Stars
"Dreams of Albert Moreland, The" (1947) Night's Black Agents
"Enchanted Forest, The" (1950) The Best of Fritz Leiber; Ships to the Stars
"Endfray of the Ofray" (1969) The Leiber Chronicles
"Four Ghosts in Hamlet" (1965) You're All Alone; The Leiber Chronicles
"Foxholes of Mars, The" (1952) The Best of Fritz Leiber, A Pail of Air
"Frost Monstreme, The" (1976) Swords and Ice Magic; Flashing Swords #3 (Carter)
Gather Darkness! -- Ballentine: 1975 (1950)
Ghost Light, The -- Berkley: 1984
"Girl with the Hungry Eyes, The" (1949) The Leiber Chronicles; Night's Black Agents; Blood Is Not Enough (Datlow); Vampires (Ryan)
"Glove, The" (1975) The Leiber Chronicles; The Years Best Horror Stories, series IV (Page)
"Gold, Black, and Silver" (1971) Quark 2 (Delany & Hacker)
"Gonna Roll the Bones" (1967) The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles, Nebula Award Stories Three (Zelazny); The Hugo Winners, Vol. 1 & 2 (Asimov); The SF Hall of Fame, Vol 3 (Clarke); Dangerous Visions (Ellison)
"Good New Days, The" (1965) Galaxy Oct 65; The Best of Fritz Leiber
Green Millennium, The -- Ace: 1969 (1953)
"Haunted Future, The" (1959) A Day in the Life (Dozois); The Mind Spiders; The Leiber Chronicles
"Hill and the Hole, The" (1942) Night's Black Agents
"Hitch in Space, A" () The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Horrible Imaginings" (1982) The Leiber Chronicles
"Hound, The" (1942) The Leiber Chronicles; Night's Black Agents; Werewolf! (Pronzini)
"Howling Tower, The" () Swords against Death
"Ill Met in Lankhmar" (1970) Swords and Deviltry; The Leiber Chronicles; The Hugo Winners, vol 3 (Asimov)
"I'm Looking for Jeff" (1952) Night Monsters; The Best from FANTASTIC (White); Time Untamed (Anonymous)
"In the Witch's Tent" () Swords against Wizardry
"In the X-Ray" (1949) Weird Tales (Kaye); Fiends and Creatures (Kaye)
"Induction" () Swords and Deviltry
"Inheritance, The" (1942) Night's Black Agents
"Inner Circles, The" (1967) The Leiber Chroni- cles; New Worlds of Fantasy #3 (Carr)
"Jewels in the Forest, The" () Swords against Death
"Kindergarten" () The Book of Fritz Leiber
"King Lear" () The Book of Fritz Leiber

Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser

Knight and Knave of Swords, The -- Putnam/ Ace: 1990
"Knight to Move" (1965) Changewar; The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Last Letter, The" (1958) A Pail of Air
"Lean Times in Lankhmar" (1959) Sword in the Mist; Great SF #6 ()
Leiber Chronicles, The -- Dark Harvets: 1990
"Let Freedom Ring" (aka "The Wolf Pack") (1950) The Night of the Wolf
"Lion and the Lamb, The" (1950) The Second Book of Fritz Leiber
"Little Old Miss MacBeth" () The Best of Fritz Leiber
"Lone Wolf, The" (aka "The Creature from Cleveland Depths") (1962) The Night of the Wolf; You're All Alone
"Lords of Quarmall, The" () Swords against Wizardry
"Man Who Made Friends with Electricity, The" (1962) Shadows with Eyes; The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles
"Man Who Never Grew Young, The" (1949) The Best of Fritz Lieber; The Leiber Chronicles; Night's Black Agents; The Dark Side (Knight); Twilight Zone Mar 82
"Man Who Was Married to Space and Time, The" (1982) The Best of OMNI #3
"Mariana" (1960) The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles; SF: The Best of the Best (Merrill)
"Mechanical Bride, The" (1954) The Second Book of Fritz Leiber
"Mer She, The" (1978) Heroes and Horrors (Schiff); The Knight and Knave of Swords
"Midnight by the Morphy Watch" (1974) The Leiber Chronicles; The Best from IF, Vol III (Baen)
"Midnight in the Mirror World" (1964) Night Monsters
Mind Spider, The, and other stories -- Ace: 1961
"Mind Spider, The" (1959) The Mind Spider
"Moon is Green, The" (1952) The Leiber Chronicles
"Mouser Goes Below, The" (1987) Terry's Universe (Carr); Whispers (Schiff); The Knight and Knave of Swords
"Mr. Bauer and the Atoms" (1945) Strange Ports of Call (Derleth)
"Mysterious Doings in the Metropolitan Museum" (1974) Universe 5 (Carr)
"Nice Girl with Five Husbands" (1951) A Pail of Air
"Night He Cried, The" (1953) The Best of Fritz Leiber; The Leiber Chronicles; Off the Beaten Orbit (Merrill)
Night Monsters -- Ace: 1969
"Night of the Long Knives, The" (aka "The Wolf Pair") (1960) The Night of the Wolf
Night of the Wolf, The -- Ballantine: 1966
Night's Black Agents -- Berkley: 1978 (1948)
"No Great Magic" (1960) Changewar
"Number of the Beast, The" (1959) The Mind Spider
Our Lady of Darkness -- Berkley: 1978 (1977)
"Oldest Soldier, The" (1960) The Mind Spider; Changewar
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"Pipe Dream" (1958) A Pail of Air
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"Power of the Puppets, The" (1941) Shadows with Eyes
"Price of Pain-Ease, The" () Swords against Death
"Rime Isle" (1977) Swords and Ice Magic; Cosmos May & July 1977
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Second Book of Fritz Leiber, The -- DAW: 1975

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Sinful Ones, The -- Pocketbooks: 1980 (1950)
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"Afterword" The Best of Fritz Leiber.
"Anima Archetype in Science Fantasy, The." Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"Debunking the I Machine." The Book of Fritz Leiber; Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"Fafhrd and Me." The Second Book of Fritz Leiber; Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"Hottest and Coldest Molecules." The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Ingmar Bergman: Fantasy Novelist." The Second Book of Fritz Leiber
"John Carter: Sword of Theosophy." Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"King Lear." The Book of Fritz Leiber
"Literary Copernicus, A." Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"Masters of Mace and Magic." The Book of Fritz Leiber
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"Monsters and Monster Lovers." The Book of Fritz Leiber; Fafhrd and Me
"My Correspondence with Lovecraft." Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"My Life and Writings." Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
"Robert E. Howard's Style." Fafhrd and Me (Betancourt)
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Fafhrd and Me, edited by John Gregory Betancourt; Wildside Press, 1990, $9.95. A collection of essays by Fritz Leiber; introduction by Darrell Schweitzer.

Touchstone, edited by James Tucker and Erin McKee; The Mysterious Stranger Press, 1978, $10.00. Tributes to Fritz Leiber and Ray Bradbury.

from
"A Deskful of Girls"?

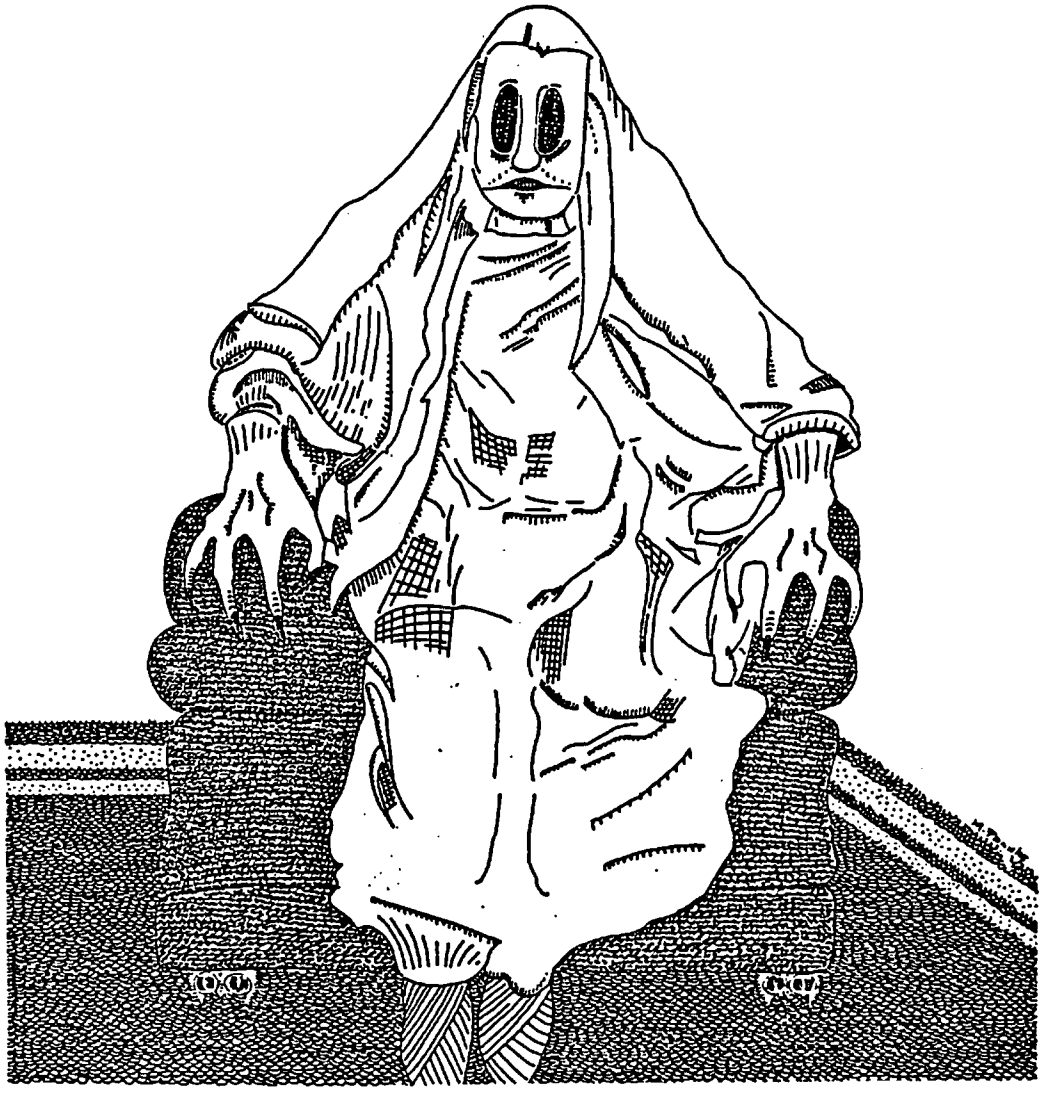
Fritzish Thoughts

by Richard Brandt

A man sits in his easy chair, zonked out on tranquilizers, placidly hallucinating in harmony with the images on this television set. His wife, feeling similarly spacey, is on the kitchen, where she happens across the kids' bottles of glue and glitter. Our hero has just confronted a confusing vision of friendly extraterrestrial visitors on the tube when his beloved walks in, naked to the waist, her face, breasts and shoulders sparkling in iridescent green. Hubby experiences an epiphany.

It's the epitome of Sixties New Wave SF --why, examined closely, it doesn't even have any overt scientifictional content. Psychological introspection and subjective reality-warping it has aplenty, and you might expect it to have been picked up by one of the young turks publishing New Worlds or Quark or Dangerous Visions or some such.

Instead, "The Secret Songs" was sold to one of the slicks in 1958. Michael Moorcock was 19 years old; Harlan Ellison had been selling hackwork for maybe two years.



from Our Lady of Darkness

Sadly, it languished unpublished until Fantasy and Science Fiction picked it up five or six years later, when the New Wave was barely a droplet in Judith Merrill's eye.

As usual, Fritz Leiber Jr. was a decade or so ahead of his time; and, as usual, hardly anyone realized it at the moment.

Consider:

> His masterful occult novel, Conjure Wife, was published as a glossy mass-market paperback with embossed cut-out covers, at the height of the post-Exorcist horror boom...three decades after its first publication in Unknown.
>
> His Hugo-winning The Wanderer anticipated the vogue for disaster novels by ten years--later, similar books like Niven and Pournelle's Lucifer's Hammer managed to find their way onto bestseller lists...
>
> He's been chronicling the adventures of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, surely two of the towering figures in heroic fantasy--well, one of them is a towering figure, anyway--since the inception of his career, fifty years ago now; but that was years too early to cash in on the popularity of sword-and-sorcery fiction following the appearance of Conan in paperbacks, and later in films.

Many a lesser writer might be content to let their reputation rest primarily on one series. Not Fritz Leiber, whose work also includes the science fictional "Change War" series, including another Hugo-winning novel, The Big Time, a significant addition to the canon of time-travel literature and a profound anti-war message as well. Leiber's true devotees have ferreted out other recurring themes--such as the repeated appearance of wickedly sentient felines.

More than all this, it's the sheer beauty of the man's prose that elicits my admiration. Anyone who can create a slyly onomatopoeic story like "Rump-Titty-Titty-Tum-Tah-TEE!" has an obvious love and feel for the sounds of the language. Passages like the justly celebrated closing of "Coming Attraction" beg to be read aloud, to let the phrases roll mellifluously off the tongue. (Not trippingly, mind you; these need time to be savored.)

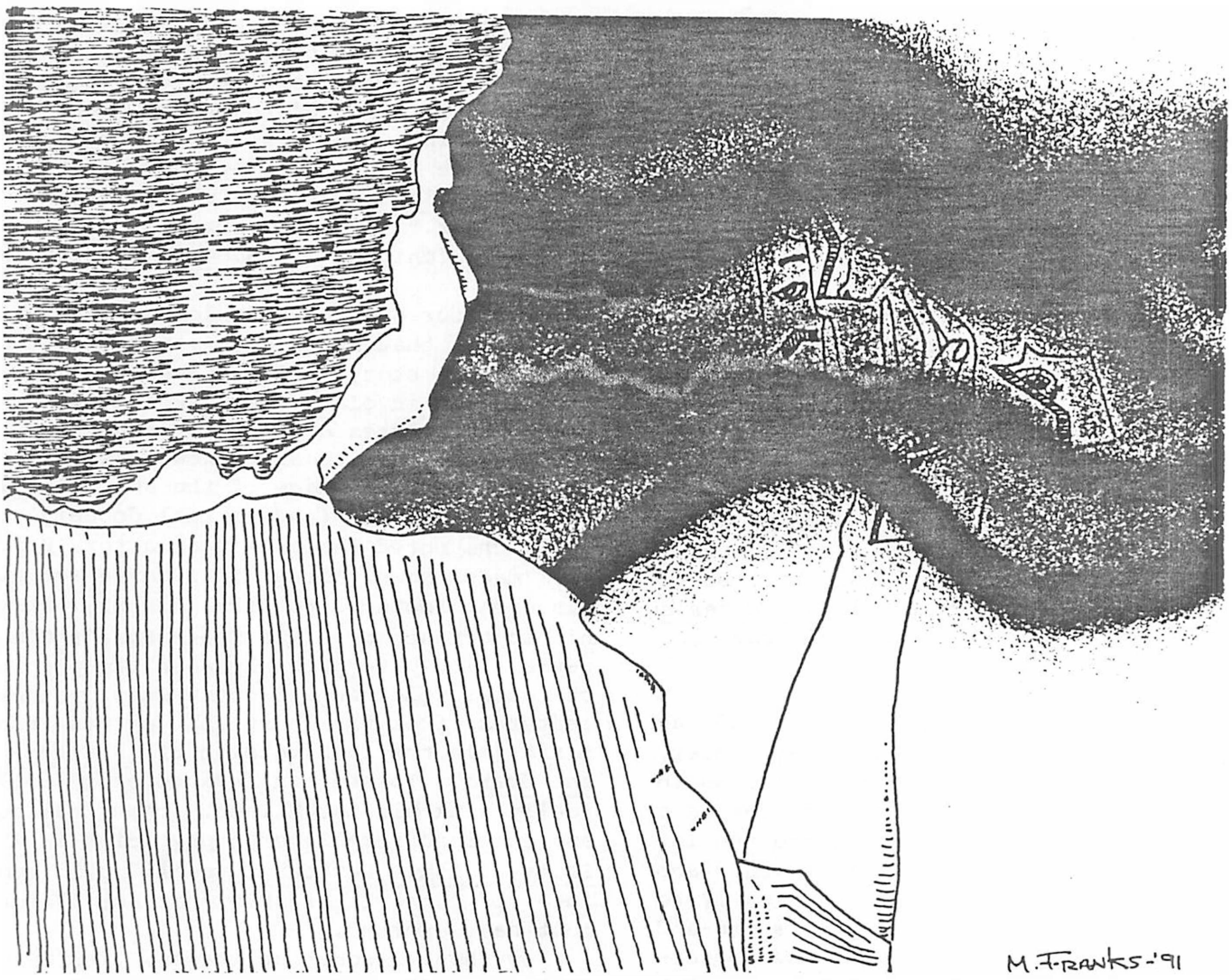
Just take the titles of Fritz Leiber stories, full of unforgettable sounds and images: "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes." "Space-Time for Springers." "Smoke Ghost." The Ghost Light. "A Deskful of Girls." "A Pail of Air." "Belsen Express." "The Ship Sails at Midnight." A Specter Is Haunting Texas.

And "Four Ghosts in Hamlet"--a delightful title that Fritz even manages to justify by the story's end. Like many of his stories, it involves the theater; and like many, it features a ghost--of a sort.

Ghosts, the theater--how easily they conjure up the image of the author's father and namesake (and virtual doppelganger!), the noted Shakespearean actor. Fritz Sr. made some forays into movie acting, his great footnote to film history being his appearance opposite Theda Bara's Cleopatra. You have probably seen him playing character roles in various Warner Brothers features from the Thirties, or (as Franz Liszt!) in the 1943 version of Phantom of the Opera. To see him in a role he could really sink his teeth into, check him out as an insufferably smug physician in The Story of Louis Pasteur; you'll get some idea of the incredible charisma the man must have exerted.

How those flickering images, replaying over and over, might hang over the head of the impressionable artist. And perhaps they do--Leiber's story "237 Talking Statues, Etc." has a young man whose famous father left a legacy of innumerable paintings and graven images--from which the utterances of his monstrous ego continue to issue forth. The story is an amusing one, and perhaps functioned as a bit of cathartic exorcism for the author....

An exorcism of a different sort appears in his novel Our Lady of Darkness (also published as The Pale Brown Thing). A San Franciscan of modest means, with notable similarities to our author, shares his meager lodgings with a "Scholar's Mistress"--the untidy pile of old books and pulp magazines that has taken over the unused half of his bed. At the novel's climax, he enters the room to behold a fearsome apparition: a creature composed of the crumbled flakes of decaying pulp paper, given body and motion by an animating spirit.



from Conjure Wife

Yes, it is the Scholar's Mistress come to terrifying life. Fortunately, at this juncture, our heroine appears on the scene. A dyed-in-the-wool rationalist, she dispatches the supernatural figure with a litany of names of Men of Reason ("Pythagorus, Newton and Einstein!").

So, the duality of Fritz Leiber--a name to be reckoned with in the field of science fiction, a man who worked for Science Digest, for Pete's sake--and also one of the finest exponents of dark fantasy and supernatural horror--more often than not creating one with the feel of the other (Gather, Darkness! or "Ship of Shadows," for example).

Perhaps his studies in the sciences of psychology and psychiatry allow him to cross the boundaries between rationality and the darker sides of human nature with such ease. Consider his depiction of our readiness to surrender control of our lives in "Creature from the Cleveland Depths," or the ease with which the narrator, shunted into an alternate reality, becomes a creature of his times in "Catch That Zeppelin!"

All the same, one is tempted to read more into that Scholar's Mistress than, probably, one ought. Is Leiber himself haunted by the specter of his own pulp origins, by the notion that they might have hindered a wider popular and critical acceptance of one of the finest voices in contemporary English literature?

Yet we understand the seductiveness of the Mistress. Within that alluring corpus of pulp literature, there are treasures to entice and tantalize.

There are treasures like Fritz Leiber.

Richard Brandt |*|

Fritz Leiber: A Chronology

by Robert Sabella

1910 Born December 4, in Chicago

1932 Graduates from University of Chicago with a degree in psychology

1938 Son Justin born on July 8

1939 first story, "Two Sought Adventure," (a Grey Mouser and Fafhrd story), appears in the August Unknown

1943 Conjure Wife appears in April Unknown

Gather, Darkness serialized in May-June-July Astounding

1951 Guest of Honor at the New Orleans World Science Fiction Convention (NOLACON I)

"Coming Attraction" appears in the November Galaxy

1958 The Big Time, serialized in the March-April Galaxy, wins the Hugo Award for Best Novel

1964 The Wanderer published, wins second Hugo Award for Best Novel

1967 "Gonna Roll the Bones" appears in Dangerous Visions, sweeps both Hugo and Nebula Awards for Best Novelette

1969 "Ship of Shadows" appears in the July Fantasy & Science Fiction, wins the Hugo Award as the Best Novella

1970 "Ill Met in Lankhmar" appears in the April Fantasy & Science Fiction, sweeps both Hugo and Nebula Awards as the Best Novella

1975 Receives Gandolf Award as Grand Master of Fantasy

"Catch That Zeppelin" appears in the March Fantasy & Science Fiction, sweeps both the Hugo and Nebula Awards as the Best Short Story

1977 Our Lady of Darkness serialized in the Jan-Feb issues of Fantasy & Science Fiction as "The Pale Brown Thing"

1981 Receives Nebula Grandmaster Award

Fritz Leiber has written lots of good things, but I remember him best for the fantasy series of Fahfrd and the Gray Mouser, which is exquisite. It is well known that he has never earned an amount of money even vaguely suitable for the excellence of his writing. It is for people like him that I regret that the Hugo Rocketship is not accompanied by a $50,000 award. (Admittedly this would strain the budgets of the Worldcon.)

David Palter
1987 |*|

Fritz Leiber: A Man of Variety

by John Thiel

I am always happy to hear Fritz Leiber being commended. When I was putting together my old fantasy fanzine, Phantasmagoria, I wrote to Fritz, whose fantasy story "Two Sought Adventure" I had just finished reading, and asked him for the details of his career. He answered with a chatty letter in which he pointed out that he was as big as Fafhrd and discussed his career as an actor, saying that he had appeared in a number of horror pictures, The Hunchback of Notre Dame with Charles Laughton being among them. I saw him in this later, and though he did a splendid portrayal of a minor character in it. He commended me on my initiative on working up a fantasy magazine and said he would be glad to help me with it.

He did not give me any chronology of his career as a fantasy--and sometimes science fiction--writer, but I found the proprietor of the Werewolf Bookshop amenable to finding authors in magazines for me, and when I asked about Leiber, the first pulp he dug out contained a gripping tale called "You're All Alone," wherein the world of the paranoid becomes realized and different aspects of a city are studied from the perspective of a character who is detached from it. Truth is found in paranoia as people demonstrably chase him around, but toward the end there is somewhat of an explnantion of it all; however, the people do belong to fantastic secret societies.

I also acquired a paperback called The Green Millennium. It certainly showed Leiber as an author with imagination. In fact, he goes from grim realism to some of the most utter fantasies that have been printed.

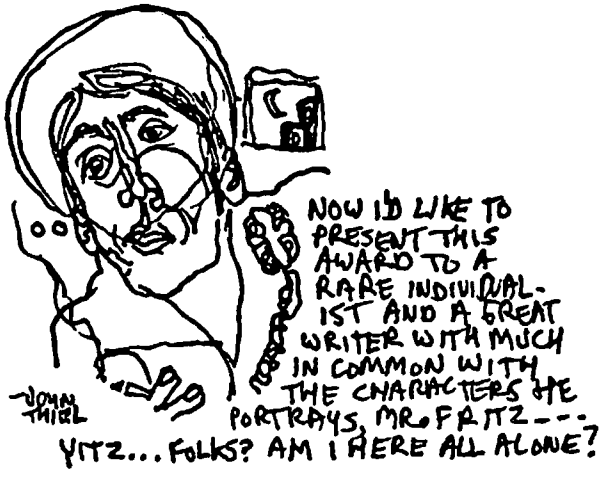
I was by this time wanting to follow Leiber as a writer, and was pleased to see him return to the fantasy field after a lapse, appearing regularly in Fantastic with more stories of Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser, as well as other fantasies. I wrote the editor that I thought it improved the field as well as Leiber's own fortunes. Fairman answered that the field had been in a slump, and there could be nothing better than earlier writers returning, as well as new ones appearing (whereupon I wrote back to Fairman that I'd like to see another story by him, reminding him of "The Terible Puppets"). Leiber also turned more to SF, and had story after story published in The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction. He was still too rare for any sort of award, although I did write "Two Sought Adventure" in on my Hugo ballot.

Leiber is now living in the Haight-Ashberry district of San Francisco, a place I lived for some years. I surmise he is surveying the new ideas out there, for he certainly ought to be living in a better place, particularly after his work in Hollywood, but I guess this imaginative and self-guided writer knows what he wants to do.

Likely he has been inspiration for others than myself, although one doesn't read a whole lot of articles about him. Awards he has gotten on occasion, but I still think his impact on the fantasy field hasn't been fully realized, and I am glad to see a special issue being done on him.

I guess he takes rest from writing from time to time, but I would be happy to see another resurgence. He always has something new for everyone--from the strangest worlds ever viewed.

John Thiel |*|



Modern Demons and a Twisted Mind: The Fantastic Fiction of Fritz Leiber

by Lan

"All I ever try to write is a good story with a good measure of strangeness to it. The supreme goddess of the universe is Mystery, and being well entertained is the highest joy."
Fritz Leiber, in "Afterword"
The Best of Fritz Leiber

As Leiber writes above, he wants to tell a good story and entertain his readers. To entertain his readers, however, Leiber has used his imgination to create some interesting scenarios, characters, and twists to what one could term horror themes. Many of the ideas and approaches to modern urban and dark fantasy and horror were pioneered by Fritz Leiber and others whose stories appeared in Weird Tales in the earlier half of this century.

The stories and backgrounds which Leiber has created, the emphasis on characterization, and the appeal to something mysterious and strange, has set his work above many others, and garnered for him the Gandalf Award as a Grandmaster of Fantasy (not to mention several Hugo and Nebula awards). Many of the ideas which Leiber created in his pursuit of "modern demons" have influenced other authors. Harlan Ellison admits to this ("Sources" in Touchstone, 1978, pp. 85-88), and claims that others have used his work as inspiration as well. Each new writer, of course, puts his/her own slant on the idea, but the link is indeed there.

In the following study, the themes of the modern demon and unusual approaches is pursued in the fiction of Fritz Leiber. These are pointed out in a thematic listing of selected stories. The plots of the stories, and sometimes the climaxes, will be revealed so the reader should be prepared for this, although it will be avoided if possible.

* * * * ** * * * *

Modern Demons

In all the stories that Leiber has written concerning a "Modern Demon"--that is, supernatural beings which are the results of the industrial age, not demons born of the fear of the unknown or superstition (although some of this plays a part)--there is some discussion of such demons among the main characters of the story. It is as though Leiber was discussing the form, shape, and reasons behind such demons in order to clarify them for himself, as well as the reader.

The earliest example of a "modern demon" appeared in "Smoke Ghost" (1941). Mr. Catesby Wran sees a strange, wraith-like figure which seems to be made up of the smoke and soot and ash of the factories of the city. No one else sees it, but the figure pursues Wran, demands acknowledgement and worship, even possesses his secretary to elicit his allegiance.

In this story Leiber, through Wran, questions to existence of modern horrors,

what shape a modern demon would take, how technology and science would or could produce the frightening hobgoblins of the imagination which superstition and fears produced in our ancestors.

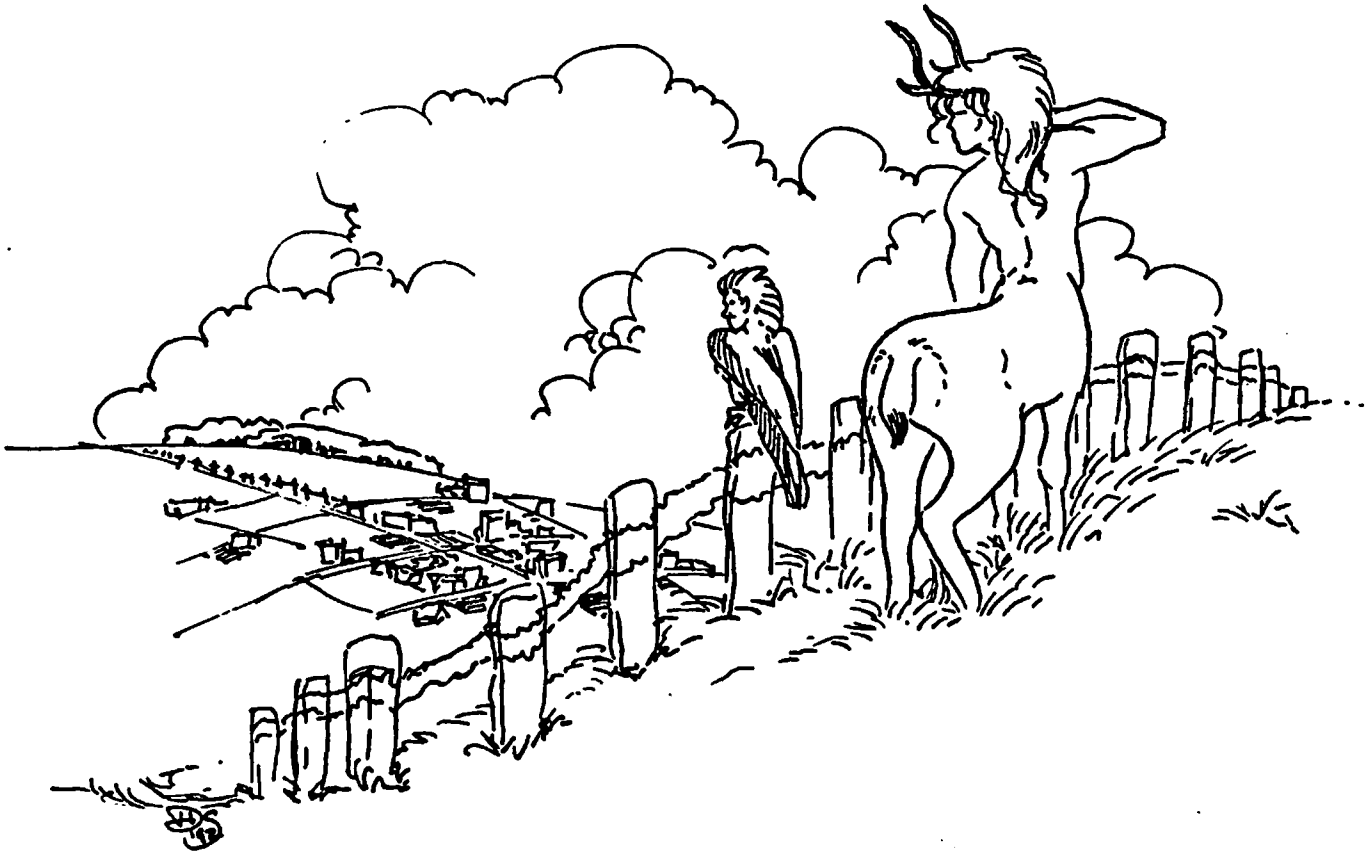
In 1942, Leiber published "The Hound", and again structures the story to include a conversation between the main character David Lashley and his friend Tom Goodsell about the nature of supernatural beings which would inhabit a modern city. Lashley is pursued by a modern demon which he interprets as a dog, but something more vicious, more deadly than any mastiff. The thing seethes like a mass of darkness and tries to destroy him, until he is rescued, only temporarily, from its choking grasp.

The same sort of dark mass appears in the 1962 story, "A Bit of the Dark World". Vicki Quinn and Glenn Seabury visit Franz Kinzman and his house on the rim of a canyon, and the mass arises from the canyon floor to wreack havoc with Rim House and kill Franz.

The demon is seen differently by each. When they approach Rim House, they stop to observe a pinnacle rock which juts from the canyon floor. The three see something different, something frightening, which seems to possess the rock. Franz muses that it might be the gate to Hell, and he is not far from wrong.

Electricity is the demon in Leiber's 1962 classic story, "The Man Who Made Friends with Electricity." Mr. Leverett leases Peak House for a year, and the main selling point for taking it is that the power lines run near it. He knows, likes and communes with electricity. The sales agent, Mr. Scott, is pleased, since the power lines have been the single reason he had NOT been able to rent the place. Leverett knows that electricity is intelligent and likes working for mankind, but is appalled that it is not loyal to any one country. He demands that electricity swear allegiance to the free world, America in particular, and have nothing to do with Russian electricity. To prevent him from revealing his knowledge, he is killed by a discharge of electricity, a combination of lightning and a powerline broken from the tower outside Peak House.

Another modern demon is seen in "The Black Gondolier" (1964). In Venice, California, where canals were dug in imitation of the Italian city, oil was discovered, and Daloway is convinced that the oil in the well outside his trailer home is spying on him, and will eventually kill him as he is the only person who knows that the oil is intelligent. He has a recurring dream that the oil, in the form of a Black Gondolier will capture him and carry him off.



from "A Bit of the Dark World"

Eventually, the narrator believes Daloway, especially after he disappears. The evidence suggests that the Black Gondolier has taken him, though the police merely think that the oil well sprang a leak and inundated Daloway's trailer. They still could not explain the oily footprints, different from Daloway's, leading to the canal.

The novel, Our Lady of Darkness (1977), is a tour de force on this particular topic. Not only is there a discussion of possible modern demons, but Leiber creates an author and his books which talk about it, something on the order of Lovecraft's Necronomicon. To add credence, he mixes in several of the masters of supernatural horror by name (like Lovecraft, Jack London, George Sterling, Ambrose Bierce, and even Dashiell Hammett) and referencing their works (including his own, at one point). He uses a Clark Ashton Smith diary as a central focus for part of the discussion of his fictional sourcebook, Megapolisomancy: A New Science of Cities by Thibaut de Castris. And along with the discussions of city demons born of steel and paper and concrete, there are discourses on magic and witchcraft, as well as the power of music.

Franz Westen is a recovering/cured alcoholic who is also a fantasy writer. In his building are his close friends: Saul Rosenzweig, a psychiatrist working in a mental hospital; Gunnar Nordgren who works at an office; Calpurnia, a female classical musician who plays flute and harpsichord. Franz's room is a cluttered office cum bedroom, typical of a bachelor/writer. On his double bed is a pile of books which were his companions during three years of drunkenness after his wife died, arranged in the shape of a female, his "Scholar's Mistress".

At one point through his binoculars, Franz sees a strange apparition on Corona Heights, a mound bare of buildings, something unusual for any area of San Francisco. In front of the 1000 foot TV tower he sees a brown-robed figure cavorting in a strange dance, who pooks directly at Franz and waves.

Disturbed by this, Franz tells Cal he is going to investigate, and she warns him to be careful. When he reaches Corona Heights, he looks back to his apartment, somewhat difficult to find among the sea of buildings, and sees the brown-robed figure in his apartment window, waving at him.

He consults with his friends, and they have some logical and illogical explanations but none really seem to fit. Franz wonders about the de Castris book, and his descriptions of "paramentals", modern city-dwelling and city-produced demons. He sees Jaime Donaldus Byers who was an expert on Clark Ashton Smith, whose supposed diary (which Franz mysteriously acquired at the same time he purchased the de Castris Megapolisomancy) talks about a visit with de Castris in San Francisco, and some strange things de Castris did. Byers confirms that the diary was written by Smith, and that he too was concerned about the paramentals.

Frightened by this revalation, Franz hurries to Cal's concert and sits with Saul and Gunnar. As the concert starts, he realizes he can solve the mystery, and tells his two friends to get Cal as soon as she finishes her last piece, a Bach Brandenberg Concerto, and get back to their apartment building. There he finds the paramental, Our Lady of Darkness, and many of the puzzle pieces fall into place. Franz is almost killed, but is rescued by Cal from the Lady.

It is a wonderfully constructed novel which pulls together a lot of different ideas as well as interests of the author.

from Our Lady of Darkness?

A second reading is more satisfying than one; it is amazing to realize that all the action takes place in only two days, although it seems a lot longer. The slow build-up to the full appearance of Our Lady of Darkness is carefully orchestrated, along with the revelations of the activities of de Castris, and how they fit in with the appearance of the Lady.

This novel brings to a climax Leiber's search for his modern demons. Other authors would take things from here, using some of the foundations that Leiber laid in his search for such chilling horrors.

* * * * ** * * * *

Conventional stories with twists

As if creating demons for the twentieth century weren't enough, in line with his idea of "writing a good story with a good measure of strangeness to it", Lieber has taken some standard plots and added his personal twists.

POSSESSION

One of Leiber's early stories which uses a familiar theme but in a modern form appears in "The Automatic Pistol". In this case, the ghost of a murdered gangster possesses his pistol, and seeks vengeance on the person who killed him. Leiber likens the relationship between Inky Kozacs and his pistol to that of a witch and his familiar.

The description of Anton Larsen's growing horror as he realizes that the pistol was out to get him is well done, though without the power and control over words that Leiber eventually would have. Since he was trained as an actor in the theatre, the images and descriptions used are very visual; his study of psychology helped in creating the dread and making it seem real though this too falls short of what was to come.

***

The influence of "Jack the Ripper" is seen in the 1942 story, "The Inheritance," which Leiber acknowledges in the story. Mr. Rhode inherits an apartment (for three and a half months) and all the possessions of his police Lieutenant Uncle David--a person he vaguely knew and had never met--and becomes possessed by his uncle.

Rhode examines the things left to him, and finds neswpaper articles of some of the cases his uncle had worked on. He gets involved in the accounts of a case about a serial killer called "The Phantom Slayer". When he falls asleep, Rhodes dreams of being the killer, and believes his overactive imagination, combined with his uneasiness at being in a new place, caused the strange dreams. But at one point when his dream-self is about to kill a little girl, he wakes to find himself in his uncle's uniform, and the girl standing before him. After seeing her to safety, he reports his dreams and findings to the police.

His uncle, Rhode then finds out, was The Phantom Slayer, who wore the uniform to lull his victim's suspicions. A doctor later told Rhode that it was his subconscious mind that realized who the murderer was, but his consciousness refused to accept it. The subconscious then forced him

to dress and enact the final planned murder so Rhode would confront his conclusions. A nice "scientific" explanation for the "possession"; he suspects otherwise.

***

Leiber turns the idea of "possession" inside out in "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes" (1949). The Girl has an affect on people and draws them to her. She was "discovered" by a photographer, and her pictures used in advertising. The Girl wants to possess things, people, experiences. She's a mental vampire who drains people of their memories and experiences and leaves them dead.

***

The girl Bobby in "I'm Looking for Jeff" (1952) seems to be able to control people, which to the outsider seems like the type of possession as in "Girl with Hungry Eyes". Only a few people can see Bobby, and she asks them to do help her find Jeff and do nasty things to him for her. The control is actually one from beyond the grave and the purpose is revenge The story is common, but the handling is quite unique.

***

"Diary in the Snow" (1947) contains possession of a different kind. Writer Thomas Alderman goes to stay with colleague John Wendle at his cabin Lone Top outside Terrestrial, Montana. Their only contact with the outside world is a radio which usually has lots of static. Tom gets inspired by one of the regular broadcasts and writes a realistic-sounding alien invasion story. Strange lights and sounds at night add to the unease in the cabin as his story takes shape, and the invasion becomes real.

The realization that what he had been writing was the actual invasion plan of an alien race while possessed by an alien presence is too much for Tom. His conscious mind snaps, he kills John, and in his own way manages to halt the invasion. His diary--the text of the story--is reviewed by a psychiatrist and put off as "the work of an insane mind".

WITCHES

"Schizo Jimmie" (1959) is a rather curious tale about a male witch. The narrator calls Jamie Bingham Walsh "Schizo Jimmie" because he is convinced that Jimmie carries a disease, an infection called insanity. Because of Jimmie, the narrator's sister was driven insane. He investigated Jimmie's past and found many of his former friends locked up in insane asylums. To prevent further infection, the narrator kills Jimmie, forcing him to jump over a cliff.

***

The ultimate tale about a witch is Leiber's Conjure Wife (1953). The premise that he works from is that all women are witches. The wives of the faculty of Hampden College all practice witchcraft to further their husband's careers. Tansey Saylor is no exception. She casts spells and performs rituals to help and protect her husband Norman. When he finds out, however, he tells her to discontinue, and lets himself wide open for attacks. He nearly loses not only his job and position, but also his wife. The tale is told in a very gripping manner and has one rivetted to the seat until the last page.

GHOSTS

Ghosts are the topic in "A Deskful of Girls" (1958). Emil Slyker has figured out a way to separate the ectoplasm of a person and retain it as a "ghost" while leaving the person alive. Carr Mackay investigates Emil for a friend, Jeff Crain, who is worried about Evelyn Cordew. Slyker has some sort of blackmail on Evelyn, and Crain wants Mackay to find out what it is, and buy it from him permanently. The material of the blackmail is five separate ghost versions of Evelyn, and the climax of this story is a little different han one might expect.

***

Another ghost story is his "Four Ghosts in Hamlet" (1965) in which a traveling Shakespearean company put on Hamlet and four different "people" play the ghost of Hamlet's father during one performance. The episode is touching because the aging, drunken actor who played the ghost had just been re-united with his children and family, and he dies on the night of the performance. There is the mystical aspect to this tale in that the three female members of the troup take to using a Ouija board, setting up part of the climax.

Although the idea of ghosts filling in parts of plays, playing important roles, rescuing people in distress, etc., just after the "hero" has died is a somewhat

common plotline. What sets this story apart is that Leiber draws on his experiences as a Shakespearean actor to fill in details of what goes on behind the scenes in stage-productions of this type.

OTHER IDEAS

In "The Power of the Puppets" (1941), the idea of puppets gaining self-mobility and holding their master in fear is common. But these are hand-puppets, "Punch and Judy" style, and Jock Lathrop's wife Delia is convinced that something else is operating them. She is sure they are possessed rats, and hires their friend George Clayton to investigate.

Jock's workshop has been closed to his wife and all visitors. His former trainer is convinced he is using witchcraft, particularly after Jock's hands were damaged in an accident. Still the puppets moved like no other, handling props as if they were alive. When George was able to examine the puppetheads, he saw that they were more like masks. Yet he can find nothing really amiss, just suspicions.

Finally, Delia takes matters into her own hands and shots one of the puppets on stage. Jock falls dead, but killed from a stab wound--a needle through the eye into the brain. When the puppets are pulled off, the unexpected is seen: the thumb and two fingers of each hand are revealed to have been changed. The index finger has eyes and a mouth; the thumb and middle finger are miniature arms and hands.

***

Max Redford is a scientist who lets reporter and friend Fred Alexander in on his latest experiment in "The Dead Man" (1950). Max has discovered the abilities of John Fearing who is able to control his body to the extent of faking the symptoms of diseases, even death. He has no conscious control, but his subconscious has the power, and Max hypnotizes him to program the subconscious to do his bidding.

In a demonstration experiment, Max signals John to fake death, and is unable to bring him out of it. Although Max tries to save John, the prize "guinea pig" dies. Fred knows that John and Max's wife Velda were having an affair, and suspected that Max knew as well, but was convinced Max did not deliberately kill John.

Six months later Max reveals as much, but then realizes that he had not given

"I've ripped-off the concept of 'The Girl with the Hungry Eyes' and rewritten it half a dozen times."
Harlan Ellison, in "Sources"
Touchstone

from "The Girl with the Hungry Eyes"

the correct counter-signal to bring John out of his self-induced death. Velda overhears, and rushes to the grave, and wakes John up. He kills Max, at the gravesite, and drives Velda completely insane.

***

Most writers at some point try to write a "deal with the devil" story. "Gonna Roll the Bones" (1967) is Leiber's attempt, but it is a "gamble with the devil" yarn, mystical and supernatural as well as bound to the SF world.

Joe is a gambler with a good throwing hand. He lives as a miner on an outback world with his wife, her mother, and an aging cat. He works his way into a high-stakes game and eventually comes head to head with the Big Gambler, the Devil himself. His luck deserts him but his wife's knack at charming saves him.

***

Another of the set of stories that most authors attempt to write is the solipsistic one--that one's self is the only reality. Leiber's venture into this venue is handled deftly in "Mariana" (1960). Cast in a science fictional setting, Mariana discovers a control panel in her house and one at a time turns switches off, which alter the world around her intil the last switch left is labelled "Mariana".

***

The world of mirrors, or a world within mirrors, has fascinated several authors, particularly Lewis Carroll. "Midnight in the Mirror World" (1964) is Leiber's venture into that type of story. A pianist, astronomer and chess master catches a glimpse of himself at midnight between two parallel mirrors. In the eighth reflection he sees himself cringing in horror as the image is attacked from behind by someone or some thing. As the story progresses, he gradually learns what is happening, and who the person is who will attack him.

***

"The world is a machine," says Jane Gregg in the short novel You're All Alone and in its longer incarnation, The Sinful Ones. Every person in the world follows a specific pattern and "life" is worked out in advanced--the ultimate predestination. This sort of turns solipsism on its side, and the idea that something else is controlling you is reversed. The only true people are those who are wakened to the fact that they don't need to follow the pattern already set up which opens them up to true freedom and deadly dangers.

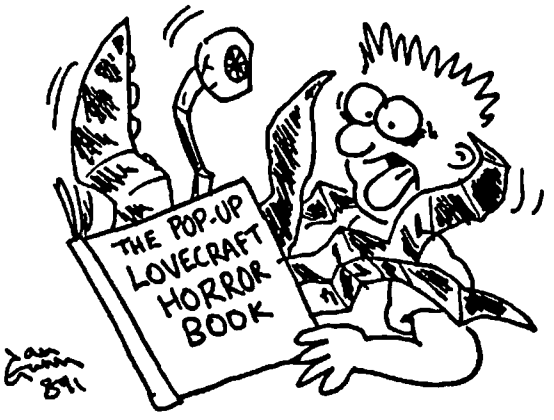
Jane awakens Carr Mackay, sending him into a frightening existence where one can do strange and even horrible things to the unawakened and not get caught. Both Jane and Carr are pursued by a group of their kind who like the control and freedom they have, and see the duo as enemies. The ultimate fate, climax and denouement of each version is different, though the pleasant endings coincide.

In the longer novel, The Sinful Ones, Leiber supplies more details and background for the story, adds several subplots so the endings are different, and emphasizes eroticism in several passages. As a result the story seems more full and vibrant. Still, the shorter work, You're All Alone is tightly knit, and the reader is pulled along more urgently by the action inherent in the plot.

* * * * ** * * * *

In these few works of Fritz Leiber, various common ideas of fantasy and horror are shown to have a little touch which Leiber uses to make them his own. A major contribution to this aspect of the field is his search for demons in the modern world, which he handles admirably. This is only a taste of what Leiber has done, a rather dry excursion through only one aspect of his works. There are other areas which need to be explored. What one needs to do is read the literature to appreciate fully his accomplishments.

You are encouraged to do so.



Thoughts on Fritz Leiber

by Tom Sadler

I have had the good fortune of meeting Fritz Leiber--twice. The first time was at the 13th World Fantasy Convention in Nashville, Tennessee, and later at the 1990 World Fantasy Convention in Chicago; I got his autograph to go along with those of other notable SF and Fantasy writers whose work I greatly enjoyed.

But, much more interesting to me, I got to listen to him speak on several panels. Fritz Leiber is a very imposing gentleman, despite the advancement of years. He also is a very sharp man indeed and full of interesting stories. One of the panels in which he participated dealt with "Sex in Science Fiction." There were a lot of interesting points made by all the panelists, but Fritz Leiber's comments seemed to sum if all up very neatly. It was his opinion that there wasn't nearly enough sex in SF and that it was a subject with which he was very fascinated and which he hoped to study for a long time to come.

And that leads me to the point where I can pass on an anecdote related by Justin Leiber, Frtiz's son and a fin author in his own right. It was very obvious that, even at his current age, Fritz Leiber still maintains a strong interest in sex and love, and the following brief account pretty much points this out.

According to Justin, he went to visit Fritz one day at his apartment While there, Justin related, he noticed a map spread out on the elder Leiber's dinner table. He said he looked at the map and saw several red circles on it surrounding another red circle. Naturally, Justin thought that rather curious and wondered just what those cirlces Wre for.

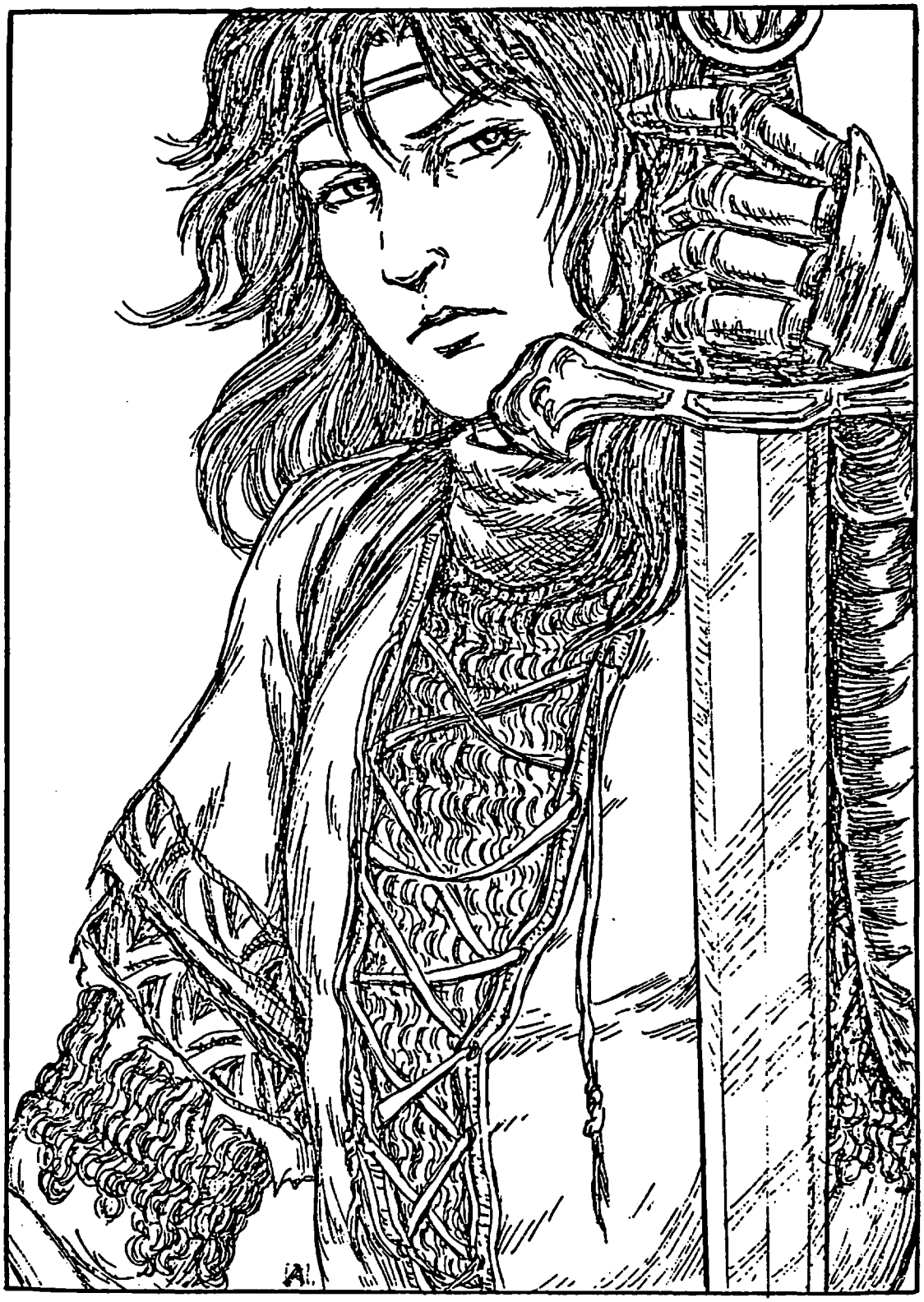
Justin managed to elicit the information he sought--and was somewhat surprised to discover that the majority of the circles pinpointed all the local "houses of ill-repute", and the inner circle was the location of Fritz Leiber's apartment, which was centrally situated within a reasonable distance of the "businesses". That, to me, is a very revealing aspect of the man and one that makes him very fascinating as well.

During the course of the convention I also found it interesting to watch Fritz Leiber wandering around the convention with Justin, apparently as interested as everyone else at what was going on. Yet he must have been to so many cons over the years that it seemed as if they all would have blended into one homogeneous whole. Still, if he wasn't a participant on a panel, he was often there in the audience listening to what was being said and occasionally making an interesting and cogent point or two.

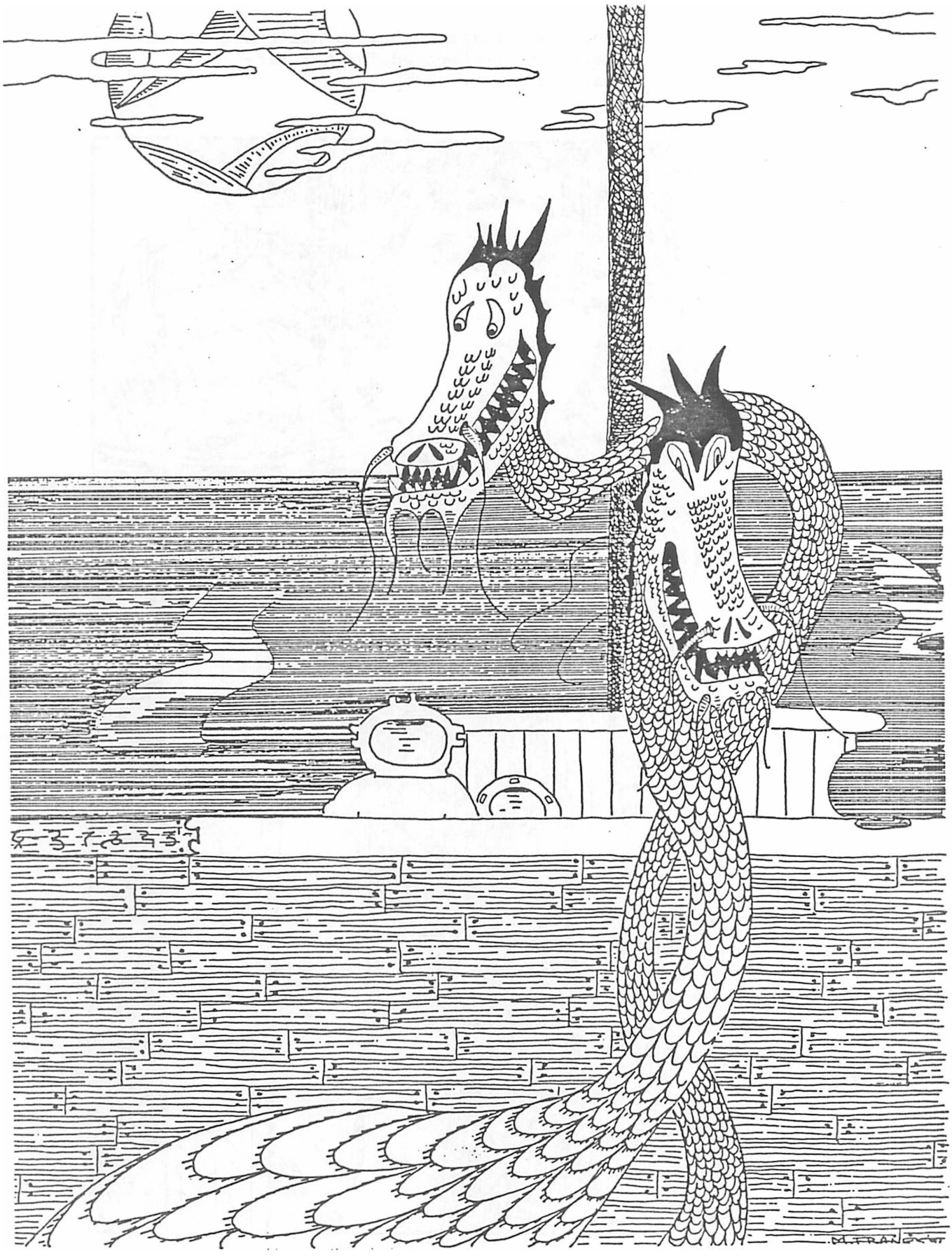
At the Chicago World Fantasy Con there was an interview session with Fritz Leiber which dealt with a wide variety of subjects, among them the creation of Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser. Unhappily, I didn't have the wits to bring my microcassette recorder with me or jot down notes. And relying on my memory is a chancy thing at best. Still, it was an interesting and all too brief hour.

Now, after having met the man, I can appreciate his fiction even more. Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser are among the most memorable fictional characters ever created and ones who will, I think, be remembered a long time.

So, too, will Fritz Leiber, a man who richly deserves to be honored for his fifty-plus years as a writer.[*]



The Gray Mouser



The Rest of the Special Issue

by Lan

As soon as I had finished putting the Heinlein issue together and ran off 800 copies, I found the tribute written by Alex Bouchard. Then a couple of other essays found their way into my mailbox, and a parody about an A.E. Van Vogt story surfaced. What was I to do? I could have easily sent them back, or stuck them in a letter column in the general issue I was preparing, or *bright lantern lights up over my head* put them together with all the locs on the special issues that I have in one of the upcoming specials.

Brilliant idea, I thought to myself, and proceeded to hang on to all those articles and locs. Now, after several months (which have stretched into a couple of years), I can finally put all this material out before the reading public.

Of course, the best laid plans of mice and fan editors don't oft agree, especially when financial matters are added into the equation, so this issue continued to be delayed. My attempt to get just one more article about Fritz Leiber failed, and thus I finally told myself to get on with finishing the issue.

Then, on April 6, 1992, word came that Asimov had died. Someone called and asked if I was going to put out another special issue on him--a tribute to this outstanding man and writer. I had no plans to do so, nor did I want to wait another several months to a year before putting this issue out. Instead, I wrote a short essay myself, and have reprinted an article by fan Julie Washington which appeared in the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Both, I think, fit well into this section, and say much about Isaac Asimov.

So I am introducing the second and final section of this issue of Lan's Lantern and will let you get on with finishing it. Enjoy!|*|

Asimov's is a death in the family

By JULIE E. WASHINGTON
PLAIN DEALER YOUTH EDITOR

Monday word about Isaac Asimov's death spread among my science fiction friends via telephone and message machine. Some called me at work to be sure I had heard the news and to offer consolation. When I got home, there were recordings on my message machine. Dan from Columbus called twice, the second time to say plaintively, "Please come home soon!"

It's weird to feel sorrow over the death of someone you didn't actually know. Yet in the science fiction community — which prides itself on staying clubby and intimate despite its large numbers — even the lowliest fans felt as if we did know Asimov.

"It felt as though I had a childhood friend, and I hadn't stayed in touch with him, but then he died suddenly," one fan said.

We've not only lost one of the top writers in science ficition, but also our best spokesman. Even people who didn't know anything about science fiction — or claimed they never read it — had heard of Isaac Asimov. There will probably never be another science fiction writer who achieves such wide popularity inside and outside the genre.

I met him briefly at the 1989 World Science Fiction Convention in Boston. I hoped he would be there; his well-known dislike for airplanes meant he attended conventions only near his New York home.

I spotted him in a hallway, the bushy sideburns unmistakable. He was patiently signing books for a young man who had an entire box of books — all presumably by Asimov — at his feet. I had the impression the young man had stopped Asimov on his way to a panel discussion because Asimov kept repeating to a companion, "We'll get there, dear, we'll get there."

Isaac Asimov signed his name beneath his portrait, taken by Patti Perret and published in "The Faces of Science Fiction."

My heart pounded. I dug through my book bag for my copy of "The Faces of Science Fiction," a portrait book of science fiction authors. I've collected the autographs of several writers in it, but it makes everyone crazy because it has no page numbers or index.

With shaking hands, I thrust the book at Asimov. "Do you know where you are in this?" I asked. He didn't, but slowly thumbed through the pages until he found the photograph and signed his name. The photo shows him wearing a slightly rumpled tuxedo, smiling and fit, standing on a balcony with a fog-obscured city skyline behind him.

"I haven't a modest bone in my body — at least when it comes to science fiction," reads his quote on the opposite page. "I'm proud of what I've produced, but not of me. My stories, and those of several hundred other writers, are the face of science fiction."

Later at the same convention, I crammed into an overflowing ballroom to hear Asimov speak. He talked about how, growing up during the Depression, he watched his parents work from waking to sleeping. He applied the same work ethic to his writing, which is how he explained his tremendous output of nearly 500 books.

When I began exploring science fiction, reading Asimov was practically required. But I found the Foundation trilogy daunting, so I started with his first robot books: "I, Robot" (written in 1950) and "The Rest of the Robots." I loved Dr. Susan Calvin, the intelligent, spinsterly scientist who liked robots more than she liked people. (But I was glad to find that modern science fiction offered more realistic female characters.)

I took "I, Robot" off my bookshelf recently. I was invited to be a guest reader at an area elementary school and thought "Robbie," the story of a little girl's devotion to her robot, would be perfect. I didn't have time to finish the story, but one boy raised his hand and told the class how the story ended. I could have hugged him.

For the next generation of science fiction readers, the path will be dimmer without Asimov. But his tremendous vision will endure to light our way to the future.

Isaac Asimov

Recollections of the Good Doctor

by Lan

I met Isaac for the first time while I was a graduate student at Ohio State University. He was on tour to promote his first SF novel in many years, and I heard that he was going to speak to students in the OSU library on that warm afternoon in 1972. I managed to arrange my schedule to allow me to go to both the afternoon lecture and the evening one.

His speaking engagement was successful, as was to be expected, and I sent him a copy of the review which appeared in the school newspaper. He sent me a thank-you postcard back.

The next time I met him was at the World Science Fiction Convention in Boston in 1980. One of the Detroit fans had moved out to the East coast, and was working with NESFA to put on the convention, specifically the Hugo Ceremonies. She asked if Maia and I would like to help out. Like throw me into the briar patch.

Our job was simple--wait behind the curtain until Robert Silverberg introduced the presenter of the award, then step out, grab the appropriate Hugo, remove the tape hiding the winner's name, give the Hugo to the presenter who would give it to the winner.

When Isaac was called up to present one of the awards, he walked to the stairs, kissed both female ushers who were to assist people up the stairs. He then walked over to give Silverberg a kiss, then walked toward one of our crew--a New York fan named Valerie. She decided to play coy and backed into one of the uprights holding up the curtain, thus knocking it over. Maia and I, Chris and Pat Beck, and a very harried Bob Hillis frantically grabbed the falling fabric and poles, and righted everything.

A bit later, at the climax of the ceremony, Isaac came up to accept the Hugo for Best Novel on behalf of his long-time friend Arthur C. Clarke for The Fountains of Paradise.

About two weeks before Maia and I left for the Worldcon, the October Issue of The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction appeared in my mailbox, with a cover story by Ian Watson called "The World Science Fiction Convention of 2080". On the cover was a fan in a buckskin jacket, wearing a coonskin cap, and holding a Hugo. Since I had worn my coonskin hat to the ceremonies, and Isaac was standing at the foot of the stage talking to a fan, Maia and I asked if we could borrow the Hugo for a picture. He agreed, provided he could kiss Maia, to which she readily agreed. Under his watchful eye, Mark Evans took a picture of me holding the Hugo, similar to the pose in Barclay Shaw's cover painting for F&SF. We returned the Hugo with many thanks, but never did get the picture. It was lost with the many other ones taken for NESFA that weekend.

We met occasionally at Worldcons, but only in passing. Two months before he died I got a postcard from Janet Asimov, his wife, who wanted to convey both Isaac's and her appreciation for the 50th anniversary tribute I had put together (LL #34). She apologized for taking so long to send their thanks, but the circumstances around Isaac's health prevented much correspondence. But they both enjoyed the issue.

Then came the news in April, and many people began to reminisce. At CONTRAPTION in May, I was on a special panel talking about Asimov and the stories we knew about him. Buck Coulson and Howard Devore had many to tell, as was fitting since they had known him longer than I had.

We the fans have lost more than one of our beloved writers. The world has lost a person whom they trusted to explain science to them in reasonable terms. We will all miss him terribly. There was no one else like Isaac Asimov.|*|

Robert A. Heinlein: An Appreciation

by Alexander J. L. Bouchard

What can I say about Robert Anson Heinlein that hasn't already been said, and been said more eloquently, by others already?

Nothing, it turns out.

So, then, why am I bothering to write this article about him?

'Cause I feel I must.

So, then, onward . . .

Robert Anson Heinlein. Born in 1907 in Butler, Missouri. Graduate of the United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland. Professional naval officer. Prospector. Stonemason. Electronics engineer. Journalist. Political campaign worker. Former tuberculosis patient. World traveler. Fencer. Expert with many weapons. Married to the inimitable Ginny, whom he admits is smarter than himself.

If he were only these things, he would have been of interest only to those who used to watch George Pierrot here in Detroit every afternoon. (He used to host a boring travel film show every afternoon for an hour; even George himself couldn't stay awake through many of them.) But Robert A. Heinlein was not, and is not merely those things.

He brought us Valentine Michael Smith, the "Man From Mars"; Lazarus Long, the Senior of the Howard Families; Jubal Harshaw, sybarite, skeptic, and author extraordinaire; Zebediah John Carter, U.S.A.S. F.R., with his erratic "war surplus" second-sight; "Fader" Randall, from his short story "Coventry"; Podkayne of Mars; Delos David Harriman, "The Man Who Sold The Moon"; Professor Bernardo de la Paz, gentleman revolutionary; Manuel Garcia O'-Kelly-Davis, revolutionary, but no gentleman; "Noisy" Rhysling, with his perpetual sun-itch, and his bawdy ballads, and his final jetman's heroism; "Kettle Belly" Baldwin, alias "Mr. Two Canes", the chief of "Gulf" and "Friday"; the list goes on.

His settings spring to mind; Canalopolis, "down inside" the mechanisms of a roadcity, the power room of a Hawk-class freighter, the Kenya Beanstalk, the cabin of a semiballistic, Bottom Level of Luna City, the noisy atrium of a Roman-style house on a planet known as "Tertius" . . . again, the list goes on.

Robert Heinlein has written and sold science fiction for more years than many of us have been alive. He has almost always been entertaining, always been thought-provoking, and has managed to turn out phrases worth remembering in stories that were cracking good entertainment.

Think back to 1939, if you can; have you realized how many of our top SF writers today started then? Asimov, Heinlein, Sturgeon, Leiber, Van Vogt . . . quite a list. How many of them have had a seminal influence on the way you think, the way you act, the way you read? For me, the list narrows to two: Asimov and Heinlein.

The second science fiction novel I ever read, after I became aware of the field, was Have Space Suit, Will Travel by Heinlein. He did something no one else had done to me up to that time; he hooked me with his first line.

"You see, I had this space suit."

I soon read everything my high school library had by him, and was haunting the public libraries to find more. (I discovered other authors during those forays, too, but that's not for here.) Since this was about the time I discovered Star Trek reruns as well, I was in hog heaven. I couldn't get enough.

My ardor for Heinlein's newer work may have cooled, but I still pick up Time Enough For Love, or Stranger In A Strange Land, or The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress for enjoyment when I can't afford (or don't want to make the effort to find) a new book.

Characters he created, situations he wrote about, bits of himself cunningly disguised inside the words, cling to me in bad times, and good too. If it's true that you are what you experience, then, in large measure, I owe what I am to Robert Heinlein, for creating worlds far beyond any I knew as a fat, bespectacled, sheltered young boy in Catholic schools, and

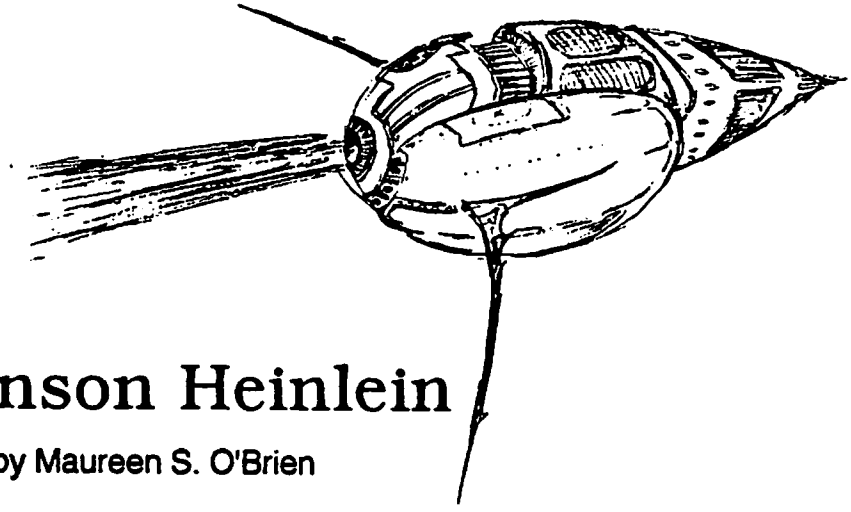
involving me in them.

My entry into the worlds of science fiction is largely his doing; for which, I am eternally grateful.

- - LATE ADDENDUM - -

Shortly after I wrote the above words, on the 8th of May, 1988, Robert Heinlein died at the age of 80. As I understand, he was to be cremated, and his ashes scattered at sea with full military honors. Appropriate; he considered himself a sailor first, last, and always. I mourn his passing, and offer what condolences I can to his widow, Ginny.

Ave atque vale, R. A. H.; you will be missed. And I won't say that hoary old cliche, "We shall not see his like again"; I hope we DO see his like again, and damned soon! We need all of them we can get! |*|



To Robert Anson Heinlein

Music and Lyrics by Maureen S. O'Brien

Oh, Lord, with gaze eternal even now you see
A young Navy Lieutenant with lungs full of TB.
Selfishly we pray that he will not be healed--
For Robert Anson Heinlein wrote the future real!

Chorus: To Robert Anson Heinlein, wherever you are!
If you stand before the throne of God or in some sep'rate star.
Robert Anson Heinlein, we'll raise a vein for you;
You wrote the future real and you helped it all come true.

You never could have children with your beloved wife
But it would be untrue to say you lived a barren life.
The kids who chanced to read your books and learned to dream of suns
Are scientists and engineers--your daughters and your sons!

Chorus:

With every story that you wrote, a mind was opened wide
To possibilities undreamed--in space or just inside.
With common sense, uncommon skill, and vision clear as great,
You changed in form and then in fact the future of these States!

Chorus:

Star Soldiers Are for Star Wars

Commentary by Joseph T. Major
on Robert A. Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*

Robert Heinlein's Starship Troopers has generated much heat, but little light, ever since its publication. Alexei Panshin got into very hot water when he read Heinlein's letters to "Sarge" Arthur Smith, in the hope that he could comment on a book better if he knew what the relationship between the dedicator and dedicatee had been. Randall Garrett blew the mind of a hippy by getting him to read it; the hippy had read Stranger in a Strange Land and wanted to read another book by that gentle loving soul R.A.H. This was not the sort of mind-blowing experience that hippies really wanted, and I think it was just plain mean of Randy to expose the guy to a different point of view.

The reader should note that all otherwise unqualified references are to Starship Troopers; thus a reference to "Chapter 11" without any other identification means Chapter 11 of Starship Troopers (and not the federal bankruptcy code). Since pagination varies among editions, and the arguments presented tend to consider the contents of entire units of discussion instead of isolated quotations, this seemed to be the best means of handling the problem of reference.

These random notes are meant to cast some minuscule illumination on various parts of Heinlein's tale, and thereby give the reader a better understanding of the work. (I am assuming that the reader knows something about the book: that may be too much, given how fandom has diversified and spread.) If they encourage others to comment, well that's just fine, too.

I. THE OLD CORPS

Where did Heinlein get the structure of the Mobile Infantry? Well, one day I found yet another history of the U.S. Marines, and while whipping along its pages I came across the organization of the Fleet Marine Force, which was something like this:

1st Marines (1st Battle Squadron)
  1st Battalion (1st Battle Division)
    A & B Company (U.S.S. IDAHO)
    C & D Company (U.S.S. MISSISSIPPI)
  2nd Battalion (2nd Battle Division)
    E & F Company (U.S.S. TENNESSEE)
    G & H Company (U.S.S. CALIFORNIA)
2nd Marines (2nd Battle Squadron)
  1st Battalion (3rd Battle Division)
    A & B Company (U.S.S. WEST VIRGINIA)
    C & D Company (U.S.S. COLORADO)
  2nd Battalion (4th Battle Division)
    E & F Company (U.S.S. PENNSYLVANIA)
    G & H Company (U.S.S. ARIZONA)

And so on. Now this seemed familiar, and then I realized how familiar it was. In Chapter 13 of Starship Troopers, Rico discusses the organization of the Mobile Infantry. Which turns out to be like the above organization; not precisely like it, but generally so. The Mobile Infantry is organized into divisions, which are composed of regiments, which are composed of battalions, which are composed of companies, which are composed of platoons, which are composed of sections, which are composed of soldiers--just like the U.S. Marines.

The difference is that today, the composite units of a U.S. Marine unit tend to operate together. Given the organization outlined above, obviously things were different in the twenties and thirties. Thus, when Heinlein was a serving officer, Marine Infantry units with the fleet larger than companies did not exist, except on paper. So when he wrote Starship Troopers, he modeled his infantry on the infantry he knew, creating a Mobile Infantry where units larger than companies do not exist, except on paper.

Then too, considering the most notorious role of those Marine units at the time, Harry Harrison may have had a point after all. That is, in Bill, the Galactic Hero, the primary use of Harrison's Imperial Space Troopers is in defending, expan-

ding, and exploiting the Galactic Empire's markets; Bill and friends drop onto planets in order to get them to buy buy buy. (The ultimate in hard sells.) Now considering the perception of the Marine interventions in the Caribbean as being in defense of U.S. business interests.... Well, I said Harrison had a point, of sorts. (There will be more on this later.)

II. THE WRITER AT SEA

But in general: can it be said that Heinlein (USNA '27) has a navalist bias? Why am I answering my own question? It has been noted that such a predilection exists: one has only to think of the proverb on work quoted in Chapter XII:

> Six days shalt thou work
> and do all thou art able,
> The seventh the same
> and pound on the cable.

This is supposedly a soldier talking, and yet he gives a naval version of this proverb as his first alternative. But it seems to be a general principle. Thus, when at the officers' candidate school they discuss a problem of command control they use a naval example, namely the battle of **U.S.S. CHESAPEAKE vs. H.M.S. SHANNON**--where "Don't Give Up the Ship!" just immediately preceeded **CHESAPEAKE**'s striking. Apparently the **SHANNON** was really ready. (As it so happened, the captain of the **SHANNON** knew he was outgunned, so he used a force multiplier; he ordered his Marines to take especial care to pick off the **CHESAPEAKE**'s officers, which is how a midshipman could become acting commander all unknowing. By the way, the middy in question was finally exonerated, sometime about the time that *Starship Troopers* was generating. I owe all this information to Tim Lane, by way of credit.) And so on, and so on, at a rate which might well appall any gyrene concerned about being swallowed alive by the gobs.

One expects a writer to draw on his own background, but one also expects a writer to use judgement, objective observation, and depth to rise above that background. Anyway, a navy man created the universe, so it would seem to be likely that it would be a navy man's universe. Understanding the author sometimes does help in understanding the author's work.

III. THE UGLY DUCKLING

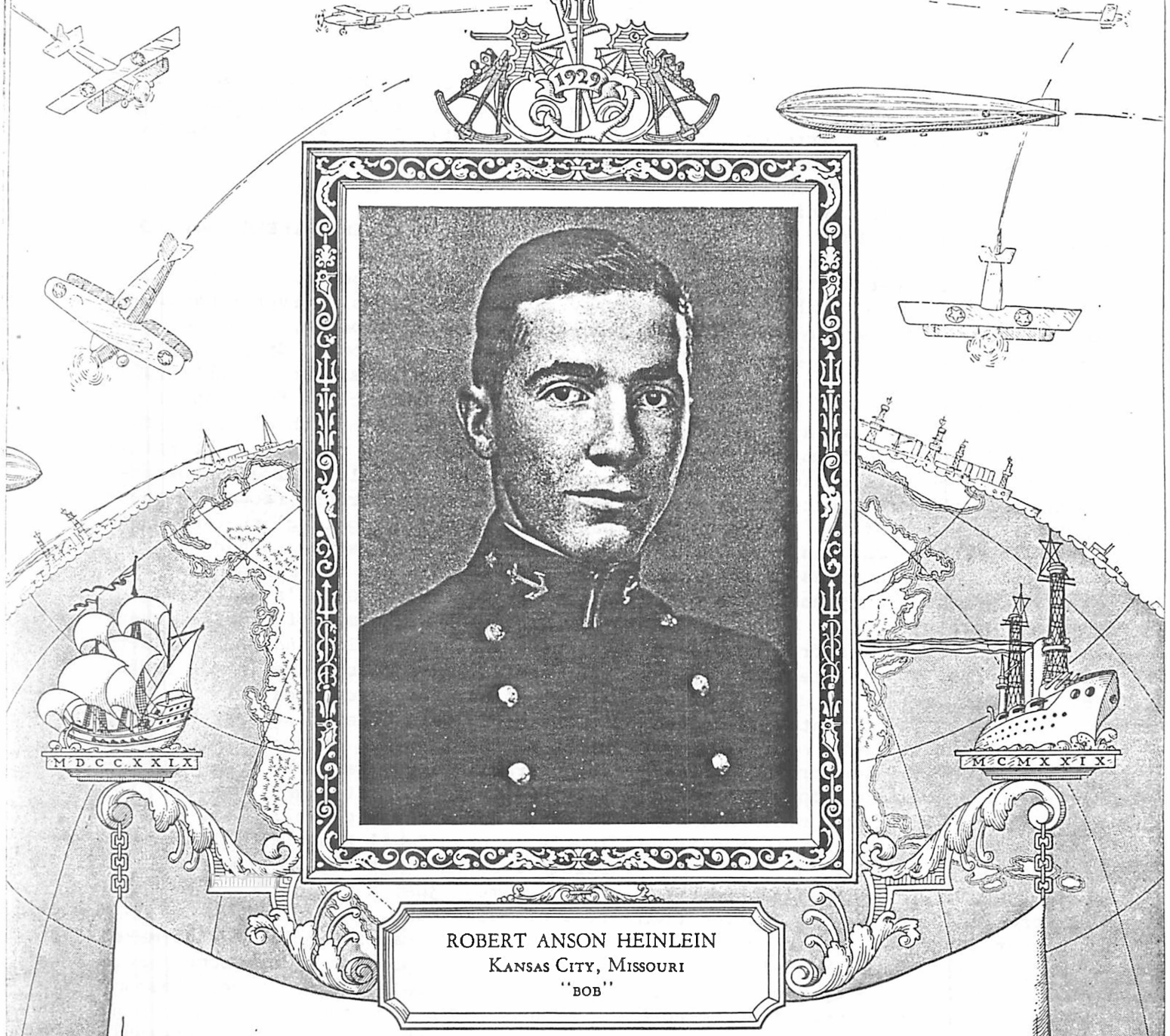
Also in the aforementioned Chapter 13, Heinlein (speaking in Juan Rico's voice) launches into a discussion of the failings of twentieth-century armies. These unhappy forces, he says, had too many noncombatants. Thus, when the designer of the Mobile Infantry set up this force, he set up one which was totally shed of this dragging tail. Every star soldier in the Mobile Infantry fights.

But what do these extra mouths really do? Instead of forcing you to read Martin van Creveld's *Supplying War*, I will merely try to reiterate some of his points. An army, being made up of people, needs all the things which people need: food, shelter, clothing, medical care, and so on. In addition, it has certain military requirements; the specialized needs of war must be filled and so the army must also have weapons of all sorts and their peculiar needs must be filled. Also, the provision of some ordinary items takes on a special urgency, as war uses them in profusion.

The answer to all this is to be found in logistics, the Ugly Duckling of war and the bane of military fantasists, the God of the Copybook Heading which says that (to take a random example) an army supplied by dirigibles which must make a 500-mile trip between supply depot and army to bring supplies is dead. (One of the many things S. M. Stirling ignored in that wish-fulfillment dream called *Marching Through Georgia*).

The vast majority of those "useless mouths" decried by Lieutenants Rico and Heinlein are engaged in the essential task of keeping the combatant units combatant. The Mobile Infantry has them too; it must have them or it will be ground down and eventually destroyed. Where are they?

The Mobile Infantry hides its logistic units so that it can pretend that it has none. There are two broad categories of ways in which it does so. It is organized and used as a raiding force. Contemporary examples of such include the American Delta Force, the British Special Air Service Regiment, and the Soviet Spetsnaz units. A raiding force is not engaged in sustained combat, it does not need any more consumables (whether food or ammunition, fuel or batteries) than its men can carry on their backs. (Or if it does, it's in trouble.) The purpose of a raiding force is not to hold ground, but to disrupt and disperse,



ROBERT ANSON HEINLEIN

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

"BOB"

THE stellar rise of our Bob has been exemplified by his promotion from the "boy general" to 2 P.O. But this indicates little of his true self. Starring for the course of four years is by no means a trifle, and his prowess as a fencer is established for he was the recipient of the 1927 epee medal. He does have uncanny ability to do those things which to others seem impossible.

Oftentimes Bob has stumbled into the room, cheeks aglow, eyes flashing, and in a quavering voice would say, "Well, boys, I've reformed. I'm in love again." Then just as night follows day or ebb follows flood he would resume his previous ways. "Repentance oft I swore—but was I sober when I swore?"

Memories of the cruise give to us our fondest dreams, but Bob disagrees. Too many teas and receptions aboard to suit him. Instead, he would rather stay below and study engineering. Moonlight canoe rides and cruises in an admiral's barge, chaperoned by a coxswain, are not included in his aversion to life afloat.

We hope Bob will stay in the Navy, for if he goes in the construction corps, as he threatens, some of us will probably crash in the planes he will design. "I consider any plane which I design a success if it rises high enough to crash."

*Black N** Class Fencing; 1929 4 Expert Rifleman Fencing 3, 2; NA*
Gymkhana 4, 3 Lucky Bag 2 Star 4, 3 2 P.O.

to confuse and confound.

Thus many of the usual demands of logistics have been rendered irrelevant. The serious question then arises: what does the high command do for defense, never mind the sort of conflict which cannot be resolved by a lightning-fast raid? Apparently not much, given the reference in Chapter 10 to the destruction of Buenos Aires. (The digression on the inadequacy of defense which accompanies this, while sound as far as it goes, is itself inadequate.)

The Mobile Infantry hides the logistics units it does have under a a variety of guises. The troops perform most of the routine maintenance; the derided Naval ratings who crew the transports which carry the bold M.I. do much of the remaining repairs, not to mention those supply, medical, and transport functions usually performed by constituent army units; and the rest is done by civilians.

All these have problems from the logistic point of view. The Mobile Infantry has a high casualty rate, as do most of the actual front-line combatants of conventional armies. There is no magical power which will protect the trained repair technicians of an M.I. platoon from wounding or death. This efficiency in not having separate "useless mouths" in repair units can be dearly bought.

The dispersion of other duties also creates problems, as may be derived from Rico's plight described so harrowingly also in Chapter 13, where he tries to fulfill all the duties done by those "useless mouths" of the staff as well as command a platoon, carry out maintenance, and study for his commission. He is stretched remarkably thin and has to pass over some duties; from this example it can be presumed that some of the efficiency gained in the M.I. by not having a staff of "useless mouths" is not efficient overall.

The use of civilians can best be described as a bookkeeping trick. The logistic functions are acknowledged, but at the same time ignored. Also, given the low moral standing of civilians (they didn't prove their moral worth by joining the Federal Service, now, did they?), is their use all that positive to morale?

The real use of the Mobile Infantry is as a weapon of the fleet, the same as torpedoes and artillery shell. This is the historic use of Marines. Yet the structure of the book is such that this consideration is not even conceived of, and cannot be considered. (See Heinlein's Space Cadet for an analysis of this problem from another perspective.)

IV. THE JUNKERS WEREN'T THERE, BOYCHIK

The Starship Troopers are well led. They say so themselves. "[Every] candidate must be a trained trooper, blooded under fire, a veteran of combat drops. No other army in history has stuck to this rule, although some came close." (Chapter 12) Well, the Israeli army, then eleven years old and successful in two wars, certainly came close. All Israeli officer candidates have the very background (assuming there has been enough fighting) that Rico and his fellow O.C.S. students had, a full term of service in the ranks. And ever since Frederick the Great's frightful father Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia, every officer in the Prussian and then the German armies had some service in the ranks, albeit as an officer candidate.

One could well understand that Heinlein might not be informed of such. After all, the Israeli army was very young and not very well known; it might change at any moment. And who would really want to seriously study "evil Prussian militarism"? Being less than totally informed is not a total crime, just a misconception, and a flaw of background.

But it is what is implicit that makes the selection process troublesome. Note that parenthetical comment above, "assuming there has been enough fighting". Panshin commented that reading about Starship Troopers sitting on their butts polishing their weapons for the umpteenth time for lack of anything else to do was not the stuff of which adventure fiction was made. But here we have acknowledgement that Heinlein expects war to be perpetual. This is hardly a secret, given other comments. It is, however, proof that war is a structural component of the system. Which would seem to accord with the position that war is a component of the philosophy of that society; ideas have consequences.

V. BUGS OF THE LENS AND OTHER OBSTRUCTIONS

John Campbell was once so rude as to point out that the Bugs would be helpless

against "Doc" Smith's Lensmen. Now of course Heinlein is entitled to his own universe and his own means therein, and no one can really complain unless willing to rewrite it.

But Campbell has a point: It is possible to look at the problems presented in Starship Troopers and consider other ways to resolve them than the ones Heinlein presents. Even if they are not in the universe of the book (and Heinlein does seem to have considered "psi" powers, one has only to look at the Special Talent in Chapter 13) it is still a point to consider. If they could have had such talents and did not, there has to be a valid reason for this. Failure to do so might well indicate the presence of a blind spot, a failure of perception.

This raises the question: Are there other blind spots? Well, let's consider what may be one.

VI. DALEY TROOPERS

As a going-away present to the American People (or that part of them represented by the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars), Ronald Reagan proposed that the U.S. Veterans Administration be raised to the status of a cabinet department. With due consideration to the veteran vote, Congress hastened to acquiesce.

What would the Department of Veterans Affairs be like if it provided services to the entire voting population? Think about it; the society described in Starship Troopers is one in which the entire electorate can receive entitlements, in restitution for their devoted service to society.

What does the D.V.A. do now? There are Veterans Hospitals and other rehabilitative services, of course, but primarily there are various forms of pensions. There are the educational benefits, much reduced from the halcyon days of 1965 and Oscar Gordon (c.f. Glory Road), there are widows and orphans benefits (I got $55 a month and made it go a ways), and then there are retirement benefits.

The right to vote is not the only retirement benefit explicitly mentioned; there are certain employment preferences --in Chapter 9 it is implied that policemen are veterans and in Chapter 11 it is explicitly stated that there is a category of "reserved jobs" which includes police. The reservation is for veterans, presumably. (How this is reconciled with Heinlein's digression in Expanded Umiverse on the nature of veterans is left as an exercise for the reader.) By way of comment, most states today grant a point preference bonus to veterans in tests for employment. This has caused problems for women, minorities, and other such members of political pressure groups struggling for favors.

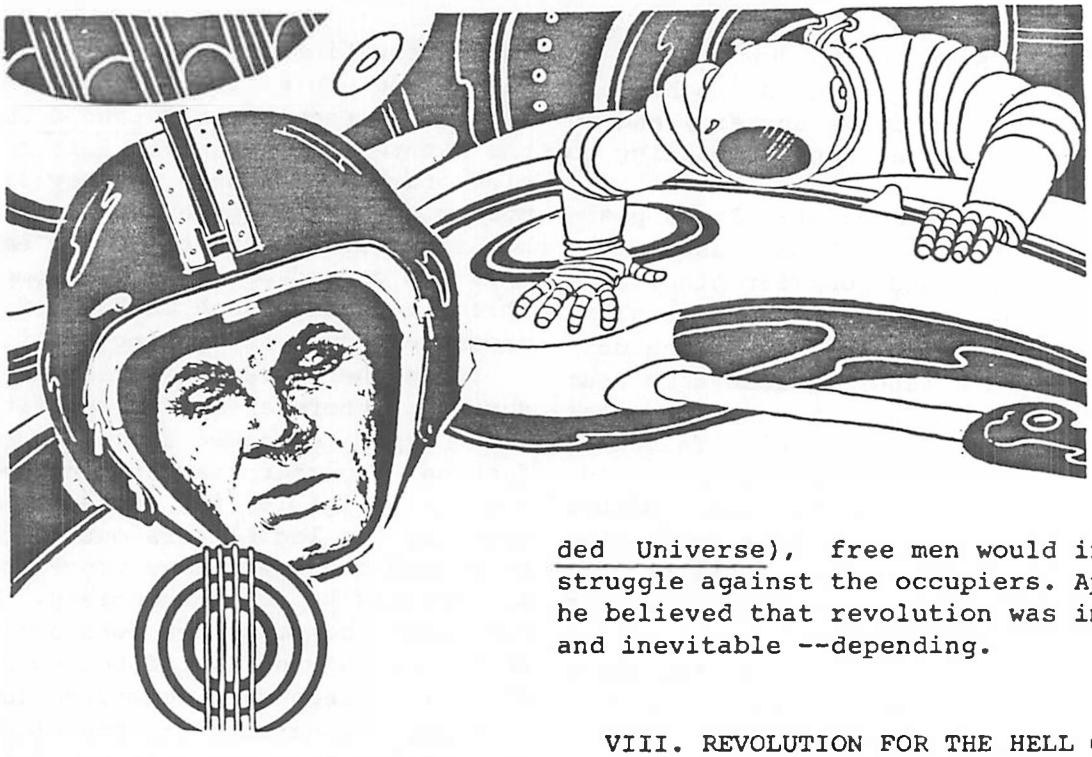
It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that there are other benefits of similar type, extended and expanded in like fashion. Remember that the entire electorate is eligible for veterans benefits, voted by the legislators out of a desire to reward those who have proved their moral fitness by serving society. That they can then campaign for re-election on the basis of having voted to reward, etc., etc., is a secondary consideration.

Also, by definition, the electorate is not bearing anything like the full cost of those benefits. The taxpayers are not represented, unless they happen also to be veterans. Thus those taxpayers who are not veterans face taxation without representation (gee, I like that phrase!) Then there is the observation that those without the vote tend to face erosion of their civil rights...but let's not discuss that problem.

VII. THE RAIN OF TERROR

> "My unit was 'Harman's Hammerers', C Company, 3rd Battalion, 17th Regiment M.I. We were on a drop into Ballykinler that day when someone fired a shot at us. I'm proud to say that we reacted like the good cap troopers we are; Ace and Ten-spot flamed the area where the shot came from, I covered the rear and took out a couple of hostiles, while the Sarge launched a nuke which vaporized the power plant.
>
> "On Saturday we got called up to Stormont Castle. I still can't understand why the people in Belfast and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland were so mad at us. After all,they got all the lights back on the next day, and there weren't that many people who died."

How capable is the Mobile Infantry of handling the "War of the Flea"? Can they deal with guerrillas and terrorists? To answer this question, one must consider



the nature of such war, and inspect the weapons available to fight it with. The M.I. is oriented towards mass destruction, towards rapid strikes and short actions. The wars of guerrillas and terrorists are low-intensity wars, of pinpointed destruction, slow buildup and long duration. (For the perplexed, Ballykinler is a suburb of Belfast where British troops are usually stationed to keep Democracy from achieving its goals, by the Protestant majority ruling the Catholic minority out of bounds.)

The example given above is a point to consider: a potential Provo might well join the M.I., but only to gain the skills and techniques needed to understand them. The skills he mainly uses can be learned other places--sniping, bomb-building, propaganda, and kneecapping.

What response can be made? Massive destruction will serve only to increase the attractiveness of the terrorists, and the M.I. has no other obvious option. Given these considerations, this leads one to the conclusion that the M.I. apparently can't handle guerrillas and guerrilla war very well.

Heinlein could not plead ignorance of all this; in his essay "How To Be a Survivor" (reprinted in Expanded Universe) he discusses the potentialities of guerrilla warfare. This was when he believed that a nuclear war with the Soviets, followed by a Soviet occupation of ruined America, was inevitable. However, as detailed in the story "Free Men" (also reprinted in Expanded Universe), free men would inevitably struggle against the occupiers. Apparently he believed that revolution was impossible and inevitable --depending.

VIII. REVOLUTION FOR THE HELL OF IT

Chapter 12 of Starship Troopers deals with Rico's education as an officer candidate. As part of his second course in History and Moral Philosophy he touches on the possibility of revolution against the government. The course material dismisses the possibility. After all, (it says) a rebellion has to be led by the aggressive in society, and those aggressive ones are all that governs it.

So it is that the wolves have been transmogrified into sheepdogs. Panshin dismisses this as the argument of the sheepshearer, which dismissal has its points. But consider the prior cause; are all the wolves made into sheepdogs to begin with? If you assume that, you assume that all potentially aggressive people will enter Federal Service, pass out of training through service into the electorate, desire urgently to retain their privileges, and become totally indoctrinated into the ethos of Federal Service. These are pretty big assumptions, and perhaps not quite as certain as some would have it.

Will all potentially aggressive people enter Federal service? This is the hardest question to definitely prove one way or the other. Yet the truth of this assumption is taken as a given; all potentially aggressive people enter Federal Service, we are told. Of course, the definition of potential aggressiveness seems to be "willingness to enter Federal Service", which begs the question.

Will all potentially aggressive people pass out of training into Federal Service? Here we are on somewhat firmer and less axiomatic ground. As is grandiosely displayed in Chapters 3-9, Mobile Infantry training is tough. It is supposed to be; the M.I. is an elite special warfare force. Indeed, one can wash out for many reasons unrelated to one's moral fitness to serve society...leaving potential revolutionaries trained in some of the necessary skills to fight, and even perhaps a grudge against the System which mistreated them. For a further discussion of the "washout" problem, see Heinlein's Space Cadet.)

Will all voters desire to retain their privileges? Ask Mikhail Gorbachev. Or Kim Philby, for that matter. Some people think that having privileges for the short-term may be deleterious to the survival of the nation in the long term. Disaffected veterans, for whatever reason (whether a lost political campaign or shining idealism) could easily turn to rebellion.

Will all veterans have become totally indoctrinated into the ethos of Federal Service? Time and again, "totally loyal" military units have mutinied or rebelled. When social problems have magnified and multiplied, those proving their moral fitness to serve society have been reminded that their relatives and associates who are not in the military are in trouble, trouble inflicted on them by those in power. The people in Federal Service are not protected from the influence of those who might want to oppose the system.

There are several sources of potential resisters, and it is only by the carefully drawn definition of "aggressive" that they have all been removed from the category of potential opponents of the system. Absent such consderations, there may be presumed to be a number of such sources. It would seem therefore likely that any potential revolutionist could indeed find those willing to fight and die to overturn the system, if he were to look in the right places.

IX. THE KISS OF THE WHIP

WARNING: Those easily sickened are advised to skip over this section, as it contains graphic and vivid descriptions of some of the effects of flogging. There, now that I've attracted your interest . . .

It was well known that the Chevalier Leopold was a brave man. There was even objective proof of this assertion; while serving in the army of his native Austria during the Austro-Prussian War, he was decorated for bravery. To confirm this assertion, note that at a later time, a scoundrel made an attempt to blackmail him; Leo reacted to this knavery by challenging him to a duel, whereupon the knavish scoundrel backed down.

Then Leo did what he had intended to do in the first place--be deliciously humiliated and whipped by his latest girlfriend, the scoundrel's friend. Chevalier Leopold von Sacher-Masoch is an unusual case, obviously. Yet for him, as well as for some other people, the reaction to flogging is not what Heinlein would have it be.

The 58th (Rutland) Foot of the British Army (later the 2nd Battalion the Northamptonshire Regiment, now incorporated into the 2nd Battalion, the Royal Anglian Regiment) was known as "The Steelbacks". This nickname came from the mettle with which its men bore up under the lash. (That this implies a certain proclivity for flogging is perhaps only natural.) Let me repeat this: the troopers of the 58th Foot were proud to have been whipped (however they might not have enjoyed the whipping at the time) and scorned those few unfortunates who could not take a good flogging.

Byron Farwell, the ubiquitous historian of the Victorian army, describes one man's quest for redemption through the lash in his book, Mr Kipling's Army, one of those ubiquitous histories. Private Richard Hovenden, while serving in the 58th Foot during the Peninsular Campaign, was sentenced to 100 lashes for creating a disturbance in a wine shop. (He and some buddies had been celebrating victory a little too enthusiastically.) He fainted after the twentieth stroke, and was let off of the remainder. This mercy gained him ostracism--Steelbacks take all their lashes! So he went to a great deal of trouble to get flogged again (by saying "Meaning no offense, sir, I wish to tell you that you are a fool" to his colonel), to thereby absolve his shameful disgrace and failure of nerve.

At the other end of the scale (going to a completely-owned subsidiary of the former force--not all that far), the British-Indian Army also used flogging as a punishment. Followed by discharge--it seems that the opinion of those who made opinion

in the Indian army was that any sepoy who had been humiliated by flogging simply could not ever again function properly as a soldier.

Obviously, the mere five lashes Rico gets would not enable him even to look at a Steelback of the 58th--or remain in the Indian Army. There is no guarantee that the salutary discipline praised by Heinlein would producethe results he assigns to it; indeed, I've given you counter-examples which gainsay both his assertion and each other.

The results of an action depend on the cultural context in which it occurs. But a culture can contain many subcultures, each which its own weighting of events and values. The culture of discipline in Starship Troopers is by definition one in which corporal punishment produces moral reform and other salutary results--the dream of a public school headmaster. Alas, dreams don't always come true.

Ask Sacher-Masoch: his wives and other girlfriends always eventually got tired of deliciously humiliating him, and left him, up the creek without a paddle. What!? You are calling a man who has proven his superior virtue by exhibiting his moral fitness to serve society through service in the military, a decorated veteran no less, a pervert?! Well, if you take Heinlein's view on the matter (see the discussion in Chapter 12 on civic virtue for more on this), you really can't look down on Sacher-Masoch. What this says about Heinlein, Sacher-Masoch, or the rest of us is considerable. That's a test in itelf.

X. PASSING THE VET TEST

What is a veteran? Most of those who have assailed Starship Troopers have said that it means "veteran of the armed forces". Heinlein disagreed with this assessment; in one of his many comments in Expanded Universe he said, "In Starship Troopers it is stated flatly and more than once that nineteen out of twenty veterans are not military veterans. Instead, 95% of voters are what we call today 'former members of federal civil service.'"

Now there is the man who ought to know speaking. Or perhaps he only knew what he really truly meant to say, or what he thought he might say sometime, or what he thought he had said. This raises the question: Is it stated flatly and more than once in Starship Troopers that most veterans are veteran civil service people?

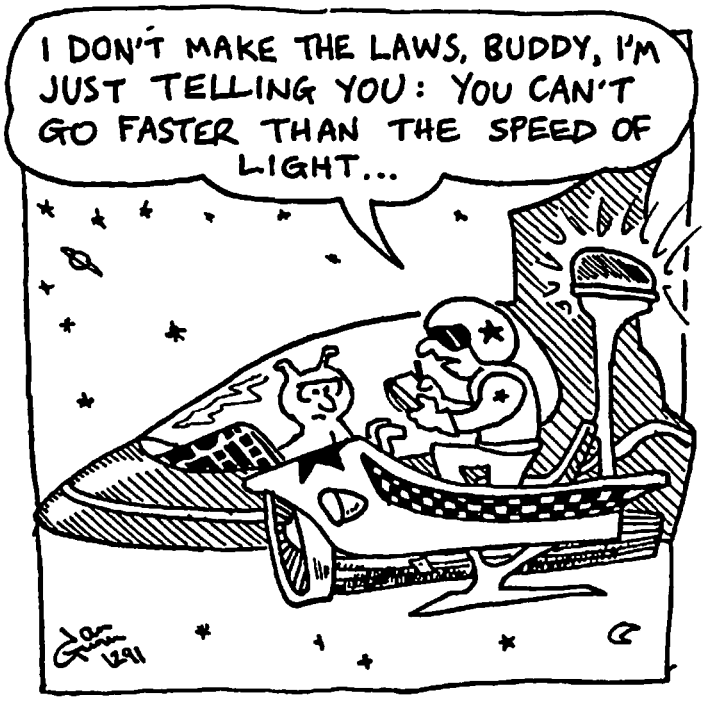
The two comments in Chapters 9 and 11 referenced above in Item III are the closest thing to an exposition on non-military jobs. Remember? The ones which said that policemen were veterans? Perhaps more conclusively, in Chapter 2 when Rico is first joining up, the list of potential careers he draws up consists entirely of military forms of service. Considering his state of mind at the time, if Rico had had a non-military choice, he would likely have given that choice a high preference (or at least higher than field-testing new equipment on Ganymede).

So Heinlein may have had such an consideration in mind, but if he did he apparently said little or nothing to actually indicate it. If you don't say what you mean, then you've failed to communicate.

XI. THE ART OF STRATEGY

> "Thus, what is of supreme importance in war is to attack the enemy's Strategy; next best is to disrupt his alliances; the next best is to attack his army. The worst policy is to attack cities."
>
> --Sun Tzu,
> The Art of War, III.4-7

The reaction to Starship Troopers has been varied, to put it politely. Considering the source, it is interesting to note



that the different types of responses can be described fall very nicely by Sun Tzu's rankings of strategy.

What is meant by this? Starting with his example of the worst policy, Sun Tzu points out the problems of attacking cities; the attacker is deliberately taking on the defender's strongest point. Many have done this to Heinlein, usually taking the attitude that Starship Troopers is "fascist". These people generally have no idea whatsoever what Mussolini advocated, much less how little the ideology and policies of the Italian corporate state resemble the ideology and policies of the state presented in Starship Troopers. Thus these arguments take on Heinlein at his strongest--and fail.

Attacking an army, while destroying the foe's immediate ability to resist by destroying the means of resistance, is not necessarily a guarantee of success. There may well be other sources of resistance. So it is with counterarguments such as Harry Harrison's Bill, the Galactic Hero. Harrison takes on the outermost appearances of Starship Troopers; not at all badly, given his great ability for wit and satire. As Harrison takes the epic of galactic imperialism to the cleaners, he leaves no turn of plot unstoned. But still Bill, the Galactic Hero spreads its point of aim, and only peppers the outermost appearances. The conceptual basis of Starship Troopers remains untouched; Bill may be merely the victim of a good idea poorly handled, or an aberration of a basically positive state.

Attacking alliances (or "negotiations", depending on your translation) severs the links between the foe's will to resist and his means of resistance. This is more likely to gain success, provided that the severed links lack the ability to get along on their own. So it is with counterarguments such as Gordon Dickson's Naked to the Stars. In a brilliant recasting, or imitation (depending on your point of view; for example, Dickson's polity gives veterans an extra vote, above the universal suffrage) Dickson proposes for those inevitable conflicts along the path to being the leanest, meanest, roughest, toughest, race in the galaxy a different sort of strategy--sort of an interstellar Peace Corps. This takes on the links of Heinlein's thesis, but does not necessarily leave the separated parts incapable of conquering; the Starship Troopers can

still be called in to back up the peace corpsmen, needed or not.

Attacking a strategy strikes at the intellectual level. A strategy is a means of organizing the events of the world in a coherently directed manner to achieve a specific, desired, end. Thus, strategy has a philosophical basis. To attack the philosophy of Starship Troopers is to attack its strategy. This philosophy, as Heinlein maintained time and again, is that mankind is a wild animal. "'[We] aren't wild animals, we humans.' 'But Captain, we are.' 'No. Some of us are.'" With that brief but complete conversation, Poul Anderson (in his story "The Master Key") has summed up the antithesis of Heinlein's philosophy, Heinlein's thesis--and the synthesis, a synthesis which is all too true. Not all humans are wild animals, free untamable men. Nicholas van Rijn is right: Too many humans are slaves. And so by pointing out an apparent correctness and an actual inadequacy of Heinlein's basic philosophy, Anderson has undermined the theme of the book. And so, on those terms, it falls. "Such is the execution of an Artful Strategy." (The Art of War, VII.33)

XII. L'ENVOI

In a letter to Heinlein's long-suffering agent Lurton Blassingame, their intermediary, Astounding editor John W. Campbell told him that Starship Troopers could provoke a reaction formation in the reader; it was so single-minded in promoting its ideas that it would induce the reader to rebel against them because of the means of presentation (The John W. Campbell Letters, p. 362; March 4, 1959). Perhaps it was comments like this which led to Heinlein's future attitude (cf. the bidding for To Sail Beyond the Sunset) towards editing in general.

Anyway, I hope this gets a reaction. |*|

Heinlein's Influence

by Helen E. Mercier-Davis

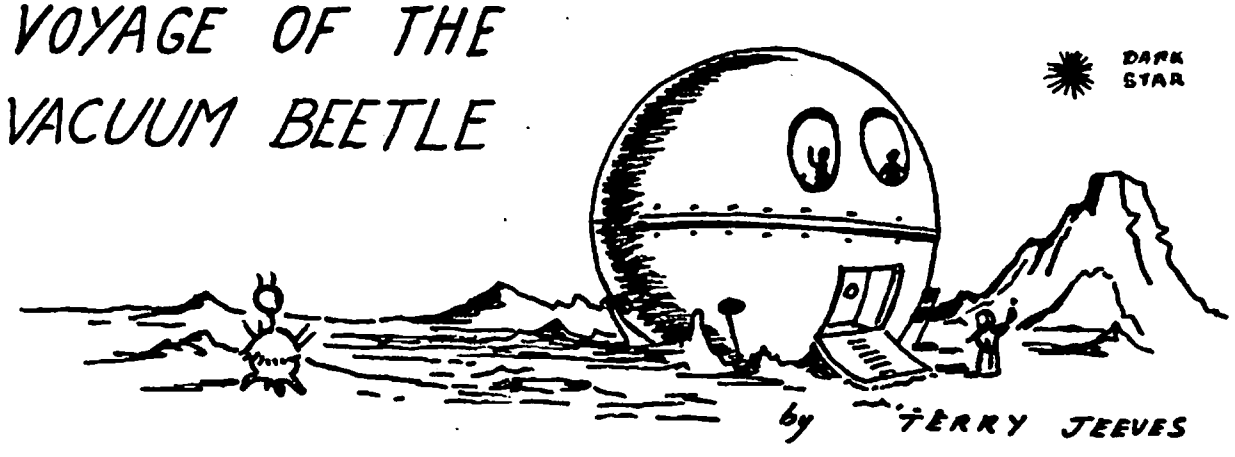
I was an early reader of Science Fiction, ingesting and enjoying the stories before I knew about such things as style and message. My mother kept short story anthologies around the house; Heinlein was often to be found there. My sister brought home his novels from Junior High School, six or seven at a time, so that I had the SF section of the library half-read by the time I entered the school myself. My concept of what Science Fiction should be was formed in these years, and I was not a little influenced by his open, readable style with its interesting twists and thought-opening ideas.

I never met the man--my loss. All I know of him is his stories, his characters, and his dreams. Yet, as these things have shaped me, I hope to pass them on and shape the next generation.

Heinlein. What images does that name pull out of the dusty memory bins of my mind? Not a face or a voice, for I never met the man nor heard him speak. Not a philosophy or an opinion, for I have only read his fiction. Not a reputation, for all that I know about him I learned after reading his books.

What, then?

A scarred and tattered tomcat, searching for the door into summer. A teenage boy, knife in hand, stranded on an untamed world and waiting for the tunnel in the sky. A ship lost among the stars, its culture turned inward, the rest of the Universe ignored. Roads must roll, leading to an institute of long-lived people who must find their own planet in order to find acceptance. Characters, situations, plots, the books themselves, and the Junior High School library where they lived.



The planet was lonely and dark as it swung on its path through space. Lonely because it was the only offspring of a dark star, and dark, due to an absence of light. High on a rocky ridge sat Gei-Ga, one of the few remaining life forms of the planet. For many toks he had been trailing an odour emanating from a gaym. The gaym creatures were becoming increasingly scarce, so was the source of bhul which Gei-ga's stomach craved. Well he remembered the days when he and his brethren would flock to the hunting grounds, pass through a turnstile to the accompanying click-click of the Gei-Ga counter ...and then they would see the gaym. Those days were gone and Gei-Ga looked like following unless a new source of bhul appeared.

Then it happened. A roaring filled the air. There was a flash and as Gei-Ga's eyes readjusted he could see a huge spherical object settling to the ground. He fearlessly approached it in time to to see a rectangle of light appear on the sphere, and out stepped four dumpy figures. Gei-Ga's tentacles stiffened.... Here was

bhul, bags of bhul in fact! If only he could get aboard this strange craft, both he and the precious contents of his crnum would be saved.

* * * * *

Molton, skipper of the **Vacuum Beatle**, gazed around as he stepped from the ship. Suddenly he saw Gei-Ga. To Molton, the creature looked like a large flower. Molton stepped forward to pluck it, only to find it needed no plucking. Instead of roots, it had coarse tendrils which were apparently a means of locomotion, possibly for movement as well. At the top, two finer tendrils appeared, surmounted by a large ball.

"What do you make of it, Juanita?" he asked.

The Russian grunted. "Harmless. Let's put it in the mess-room."

One hour later, a crew member was found smeared across the mess room ceiling. A search revealed three more crewmen, all treated with the same smear technique. Gophknaw, as the only Neckist on board, examined the bodies and pronounced them dead. After X-raying their corpses with a multibranch Singloscope, he turned to the Skipper.

"Molton, this is hot stuff. There isn't a trace of brain matter in any of their skulls. Not unusual perhaps, but I have two deductions. Either somebody slipped up in Recruiting, or else that little Pansy we brought aboard has done it. I suggest we kill the thing immediately, if not sooner."

Molton scoffed and affirmed that no crewman was expected to have any brains. He blamed the smearing on an attempt by a secret faction to undermine his authority and added that nothing further need be done.

Gophknaw acted immediately. Snatching a vogtmeter from his pocket, he hypnotized the crew and set out after Pansy. He found it busily picking the navigator's brains. Snatching up a nearby bucket of weed-killer, he threw it over the creature. It had no effect.

Gei-Ga sucked up the last few scraps of brain matter, deposited a crnum cell, and attacked Gophknaw. Quick as a flash, his Neckist-tranied reflexes reacted. He grabbed a Tommy-gun from a handy wall-bracket and let Gei-Ga have it. Not understanding its function, Geiga handed it back and chased the Neckist down the corridor.

Gophknaw snatched a brick from his pocket and hurled it at Gei-Ga without any effect. Dashing through the hydroponic garden, he scattered radioactive dust behind him. In quick succession he tried a hand-grenade, a baseball bat, a pair of the cook's socks, hitherto considered an ultimate weapon--all to no avail. The creature still came on.

In desperation, Gophknaw energised the walls with a form of force. He energised the floors; he even energised the ceiling, all this after donning dry socks to avoid energising himself. Gei-Ga grabbed a spare pair of socks and did likewise. Gophknaw was becoming desperate. He found himself pressed back against a wall. Something stuck into his back. His hand reached back, grabbed the object and waved it ferociously before him.

It was a Neofanzine, complete with blotched ink, cruddy illos, multiple typos, misspellings and naughty words.

Gei-Ga took one look, screamed, shrivelled up into a tiny ball, crumpled away and vanished. No wonder, thought Gophknaw as he slid to the floor in a dead faint and bashed in his skull on the heavy pile of carpet.

He never recovered--and as far as I know, the crew of the **Vacuum Beetle** are still in a state of hypnosis. |*|

Terry Jeeves is the editor of the British fanzine Erg, which has been published for some 34 years. He sent me this parody of A. E. Van Vogt's The Voyage of the Space Beagle which I lost, forgot I had, then found again. I hope Terry forgives me for the lateness of getting this into print.

--Lan

Letters of Comment on the Special Issues:
Arthur C. Clarke, Lester del Rey, Isaac Asimov, Roberet A. Heinlein

John Thiel
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I was glad to see the Arthur C. Clarke appreciation. He is one of the first authors I remember dimly staring at, before I started reading science fiction, when The Sands of Mars was being offered as an inducement to join the SF Book Club. I kept encountering him in odd anthologies and wondered if he weren't distributed better in New York City better than in Chicago. Certainly he's an epochal man, one of those who's been keeping pace with NASA. Of course, he may be wanting credit for his scientific designs, too. Let's hope he gets that credit.

Del Rey is an author I've underread, although I did read the articles about him in this issue. I read "Helen O'Loy," and am just reading Invaders from Atlantis. I don't much like the criticism of the Senator's endurance in that one, but I know that a boy loves his dog. But you, Lan, have done me a great service in the del Rey bonus. You have enabled me to prove that "For I Am a Jealous People" existed! Now all I have to do is find someone who has a copy, because I want to put that and "So Shall Ye Reap" by Rog Phillips on the same bookself.

I saw Preferred Risk listed as being by Pohl and Kornbluth in a dealer's catalog. I always like seeing who really wrote it. It's as unmerciful as "Quien Sabe."

Henry L. Welch
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In regard to the content of issues 33 and 34, I have mixed emotions regarding the two authors honored. The first Heinlein novel I read was Stranger in a Strange Land. Unfortunately, I read it somewhere in my early teens and was not able to fully appreciate it. My next encounter with Heinlein was The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress and I was fascinated by the concept of intelligent computers (no wonder I find myself in artificial intelligence). I didn't read any more Heinlein until about four years later when I ran out of novels by John Brunner, Anne McCaffrey, and Harry Harrison.

My introduction to heavy reading of F&SF (as opposed to being a TV-aholic) was through Tolkien and Lewis's Narnia series. At this time both Herbert's Dune and Asimov's Foundation were suggested (and I read them), but I was not overly impressed by them. Later experiments with Asimov were uninspiring except for Fantastic Voyage, and I, Robot. I don't think I started reading F&SF exclusively until after I'd been to my first con (SCI-CON 2) at the age of 16. From there I read one or two books by various authors until I got hooked on John Brunner prior to the Baltimore Worldcon in 1983.

Probably my most annoying habit to date is reading series from beginning to end, even when the stories get horrid. I can recall during one summer that I read all of L. Ron Hubbard's Mission Earth, the first nine Xanth novels, and all ten of the Alan Dean Foster's Star Trek Logs, as well as other books. The volume of my reading has declined substantially since then. |*|

Gordon R. Dickson
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A minor point, but one that I find a little irritating in myself. I'm afraid I gave a wrong impression by something I said about Kipling in my obituary piece on Robert Heinlein. Toward the very end of that bit of writing I mentioned that Kipling was so undervalued in his later days, that he was never offered the poet lauriateship of England, although he was a stronger contender for it than any of those who held it at the time...

This is very probably gave the impression that Kipling was simply overlooked as far as the poet lauriateship went. This, I'm sure, was not the case. To quote from the most recent authority I can find which is the 1988 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, there is the following paragraph:

> Kipling is said to have twice declined the Order of Merit, one of the highest distinctions that could be conferred upon a British subject, and

also to have intimated, in 1908 that he would decline the poet lauriateship should it be offered to him.

Obviously, if he had made known the fact that he would have declined the post if it were offered, it would not have been offered--and I'm sure that was the case. He did, I understand, accept several academic honors, although I don't have a reference on that just at hand here.

My apologies. I've made a lifetime practice of trying to get my facts right before I write them for public consumption; and as I said earlier, it irritates me to either get them wrong, or give the wrong impression.

Gordon R. Dickson
August 15, 1990 [*]

Robert Bloch
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Much obliged by--and surprised with--the issues on Asimov and Heinlein. They uphold an old tradition of SF fandom which almost seems to have vanished. So many of today's zines convey the impression that their contributors are not fans of SF, but fans of one another. Not that I've anything against fan-fandom--it's just nice to know there are some of the SF-oriented out there too.

Dennis K. Fischer
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It was nice to get appreciations of Heinlein from Bob Tucker, Spider Robinson, Buck Coulson, Gordon Dickson, as well as your other distinguished contributors. I had been just rereading Have Spacesuit--Will Travel when this issue arrived. Additionally, the Asimov material was interesting, especially Ben Bova's contributions.

I don't know whether your school is participating or not, but the Academic Decathalon this year decided to concentrate on space and science fiction as its topics. The works selected for study were 2001: A Space Odyssey (the film), Samuel Delaney's Nova, Asimov's "The Martian Way," Heinlein's "Universe," LeGuin's "Vaster than Empires, and More Slow" and Walter Miller's "Crucifixus Etiam." (The Decathalon committee didn't bother considering whether these works would be generally available or not, but as I had copies of all of them, I was able to supply my school.)

As a result of helping our school's team out, I reread all these works. It was interesting to notice that Heinlein's use of the slang term "mutie" in "Universe," which could be derived equally from "mutineer" as "mutant." I also enjoyed the way he contrasted Hugh Hoyland, a character who believes truth to be fiction, with Joe-Jim, a character who believes fiction as truth. The themes of society disposing of the different and the gifted, of people losing touch with their past and accepting ritual as dogma, of leaders being so sure of themselves thet they won't check out the facts are as potent today as when the story was written. Why is it that we as a society have failed to instill a healthy, scientific skepticism into the populace (who start believing in ghosts, ESP, magic, astrology, flying saucers and lots of other nonsense simply because no one questions it in the mass media)?

Personally, I believe some of the blame falls on the push to make science classes more abstract, ensuring that only the most gifted gifted students will succeed in them, leaving the others bored and disinterested. Now I'm all for learning higher mathematics and physics, but I think we need to make science classes also appeal on a practical level that the average and below average students can relate to--put in that "sense of wonder" that Von Daniken exploited but give it a real scientific basis.

Trying to explain the scientific concepts assumed in the above stories was a revelation to me, as these kids, who were all bright kids by the way, were unfamiliar with scientific concepts that I had been long familiar with from reading science fiction as a teenager. SF was difficult for them to comprehend because they didn't have much of a basic scientific background to understand the background ideas that were taken for granted (things like why it would take so long to get to another solar system, or what time does as you approach the speed of light, etc.)

But then, I also had to point out the parallels to the McCarthy era that Asimov was drawing in "The Martian Way," a rare science fiction story of the era that actually dealt with the political manipulation going on. We still have people like Hilder creating the idea of phony "shortages" and blaming a group of outsiders as the culprits. I'll refrain from drawing any parallels to the current Middle East

situation.

The main point is, science fiction that deals in themes as well as problems, such as Asimov's and Heinlein's, remain timely, even when scientifically out of date. Thank you for your fine tributes to these masters of the genre.

Martin Morse Wooster
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Since you've included a fair number of reminiscences, allow me to give mine. I never met Heinlein, and only saw Asimov briefly at conventions, but both men did do their part to introduce me to fandom and conventions.

In 1959 my father, Harold Wooster, coauthored a letter with Heinlein in Science about the need to spend more money on space exploration. This feat gradually became known to the members of the Washington Science Fiction Association, who chose to honor my father at the club's annual Fourth of July picnic. He decided to take along the entire family, and at the age of three I found myself face to face with fandom. I panicked, and fled into the woods. It took the police all night to find me, and I made the front page of the local paper.

Thirteen years later, I showed up, a very confused sixteen year old, at my first Worldcon. I have very few memories of DISCON II, as it seemed to me too large, too confusing, and too hostile to a puzzled neo like myself. But my clearest memory of that convention is trying to find the debate between Asimov and Ellison and asking someone (who may very well have been Dan Joy) "Tell me, where is Dr. Asimov speaking?" to which I was told, "Oh, you mean Isaac. Everyone calls him Isaac."

So I can say that Heinlein indirectly introduced me to fandom and Asimov (or at least his reputation) first showed me how informal and friendly fandom was.

The Heinlein issue of Lan's Lantern is one-and-a-half times as long as the Asimov issue: this, to me, is both appropriate and apt. Heinlein was a far more influential science fiction writer than Asimov; there are many SF writers who claim to be heirs of Heinlein, or at least heavily influenced by him; I know of no SF writer who thinks of himself or herself as an "Asimovian." (Or is the proper term, "Asimovite?") Certainly Asimov is read, and is popular, but he doesn't have any literary descendants. There are plenty of people who want to be the next Heinlein, but I can't think of anyone who is claiming to be the Asimov of the future.

Why should this be the case? Because Asimov's most lasting influence, as Ben Bova suggests, is as a science writer. Certainly Asimov has done more than anyone to take the mystery out of science and explain to people what the scientific life is all about. But teenagers don't pick up science books; they read juveniles. So many more people were exposed to Heinlein at an early age than they were to Asimov. While many of your correspondents have fond and lasting reminiscences of the first Heinlein juvenile they read, the Lucky Starr novels are not mentioned at all. I think this is quite significant; because most of your correspondents have read science fiction when they were young, they tend to be more fond of Heinlein than Asimov. And since Heinlein tended to salt his works with moral lessons and handy little aphorisms for self-improvement, his voice tends to be stronger than Asimov's. Heinlein is thought by many to be the stern, loving father who told them all the things fathers should tell their children but so often forget.

"I know a lot of fans who wanted to know Heinlein," says James Wallace Harris. But they do know him. Because Heinlein (even in his sad, late work) was a very moral writer, and one with a very clear vision about the meaning, purpose, and destiny of life, his works come across as being much more vivid than those of his descendants who try to imitate him. Anyone who has ever read David Gerrold's A Matter for Men and its sequels will understand this; when imitated, Heinlein's morality comes across as bluster. But because Heinlein's principles can not be duplicated by imitators does not mean that they are invalid.

I wish someone of the Marxist persuasion would do a sensible critique of Heinlein's politics. Most people who comment about Heinlein's political ideas are libertarians, who devote their lives to airbrushing the warts from the master. It would be more useful to have someone who likes Heinlein's fiction but totally disagrees with Heinlein's politics to analyze Heinlein's works. As for the libertarians, it would do well for one of them to critique Isaac Asimov's work, since Asimov is a socialist secular humanist, and thus the polar opposite of the libertarian.

Joe Green's two essays are the best criticism in either the Asimov or Heinlein issues; Green is always a thoughtful critic well worth reading. But I'm surprised that Green has resurrected the old canard about Heinlein and the Manson family. What is clear about the "relationship" is to be found in Grumbles from the Grave: one member of the Manson family wrote Heinlein a fan letter, and Heinlein apparently wrote a response which was leaked. Charles Manson himself never read Stranger in a Strange Land, or for that matter, very much else. To say that Stranger "was purportedly a guidebook for the Manson Family" is seriously misleading, since the tenuous Manson "connection" rests on one of Manson's groupies writing one letter. (And an unfortunate consequence of the Manson affair is that a Playboy interview with Heinlein remains unpublished because Hugh Heffner apparently tried to hype the interview as having hidden sordid information about Manson; Heinlein refused to allow publication. One hopes that Frank Robinson, who conducted the interview, still has the tapes, and that Virginia Heinlein will allow publication.)

Your front cover art is fine; Teddy Harvia is very innovative, although the program he uses to generate images somehow manages to portray Isaac Asimov as having a lot of yarn on his head. But Greg Litchfield needs to learn to refine his technique; he makes Heinlein look like an aged Vulcan, and, amazingly, makes Isaac Asimov look like Jack Williamson!

[[Teddy did not use a computer program for his are; it's his own work. I like both sets of covers; and I had no trouble telling who each was suppose to be.]]

Michael Waite's piece is charming--and provides more evidence that Robert A. Heinlein, despite his gruff exterior, was truly a gentleman.

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In LL #33, it is interesting to compare two essays which appear in sequence, one by John Thiel followed by Sandra Taylor's. In this Heinlein memorial issue, both of these articles are severely and harshly critical of Heinlein (much more so than my own moderate complaints about Andre Norton, which some readers had judged to be unsuitable for the special Norton issue), yet both conclude that Heinlein, for all his terrible faults, is still of value as a writer. I might take issue with Sandra on a few points, but whether you agree with her or not, it is clear that she expresses herself extremely well. Her arguments are intelligent, lucid, and persuasive. She raises questions about Heinlein which deserve to be considered. John, on the other hand, does not achieve even syntactical, much less philosophical clarity. He is incapable of effective use of the English language. His writing is a ghastly muddle, and has nothing to recommend it. I am, therefore, forced to ask you why you would devote valuable fanzine space to the incoherent ravings of John Thiel. Why, Lan, why? True, there is something gloriously democratic about the idea that absolutely anybody can express their views in Lan's Lantern, however, the fact remains that those who annot express their views clearly are wasting everyone else's time. Think about it, please.

Of John Thield's contribution to LL 34, the Asimov issue, I can say that while it is at least inoffensive. For him, it is outstanding.

In general, both the Heinlein and Asimov issues contain a great wealth of excellent writing, and some exellent art (Allen Koszowski's piece on page 25 of LL 34 is my favorite; I also must admit that the two covers by Harvia are excellent). The tributes are a success, and I am impressed. Despite your delayed publication schedule, for which you apologized (unnecessarily, I believe; punctual publication has never been either expected or required in the fanzine field) you continue to be amazingly productive.

[[I have noticed an actual increase in coherency in John's letters, and have encouraged him by publishing his material. True, it may not always be good by overall standards, but he is getting a lot better.]]

Sheryl Birkhead
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I don't have much to say about Robert Heinlein other than that I read and enjoyed his "juveniles," but gradually liked his writing less and less. But, I always appreciate the chronicling of any fan member (pro or otherwise), and feel "we" need to have this information.

The melange/montage (well, sorta) style of both covers is interesting. It is a challenge to see how many of the small "inserts" one can match with the inspiring literature. (You mention leaving PL Caruthers-Mongomery off the contributors' list in #33. Tsk, tsk--she did such a nice job for you!)

I read the Good Doctor's Black Widowers' stories whenever I can--and I read most of his stuff, except the recent "Robot" stories. Unlike Gerri's taste in humor, so far, I feel my sense of humor parallels the Good Doctor's somewhat. Heaven forbid--it would be a fulltime job just to keep up and read all of his output.

Not being a capable critic (I merely know what I like, and even I am tired of hearing that), I tried to write up something "useable", and thought I'd comment on the artwork (there, I ought to be capable of that!), then I realized that "I really like..." COULD get just a bit redundant. But...

The Litchfield back covers are great, and a nice match to the front covers; nice to have the sets. (Heck, I'll just go down the Table of Artists.) PL did a super job for you with the titles; Harvia--great as always. The Margosian pieces are just a bit unusual but nice. The Pinjuh pieces (new artist to me) are also a tad different; I like the one on page 41 a tad better than page 9. Ranson--beautiful as always. Thiel: appropriate waldos indeed! The Tortorici on page 29 is TREMENDOUS as is page 50. Phil can be a bit "overwhelming" but these are really perfect. Gads--did Bill Ware design the cover shown on page 44 along with his review? [[Yes!]]

Mike Glicksohn
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I read the entire Asimov Special Issue and most enjoyed the joyed the critical piece by Greg Hills, at least in part because it was the only contribution long enough to sink one's teeth into. (Ben Bova's introductions were most competently written, of course, but rather too superficial for any serious praise.) I guess it's a commentary on Asimov's status as a ghodlike figure and his relative isolation from run of the mill fans that much of the issue seems to be somewhat remote in tone, with little of the sense of personal involvement that highlighted some of your earlier specials. Still, despite its bitty qaulity the issue gives your reputation as someone who cares about the SF field and takes the time and energy to repay those who've put so much into that field another boost (as if it needed any!). I hope Asimov appreciates what you've done on his behalf (and forgives you for those caricatures!).

For various personal reasons I found the Heinlein Special much harder to read through thoroughly than just about any of your previous Specials, and I must admit I ended up largely skimming most of it. I put this down to the fact that, whereas I readily acknowledge the fact that I too started on much of Heinlein's earlier work and would undoubtedly enjoy it even today if I could find time to reread it, over the years I became increasingly disenchanted with both Heinlein's philosophy and with his willingness to market rubbish just to make money, and the tendency of people within the SF community to deify the man bothers me.

Admittedly many of the contributors to the issue acknowledge their own dissatisfaction with various aspects of Heinlein's later career but the overwhelming tone was still one of almost cloying hero-worship and that's just not the way I view Robert Heinlein. He was an important and influential figure in his early years as a writer, yes, but I don't believe he actually had or deserved that reputation throughout the last decade of his writing life and I wish his career would more consistently be viewed in its entirety, rather than through the rose-colored glasses of people whose lives he undoubtedly had a profound influence upon. However, that's just a personal view and it in no way invalidates the work you put into gathering and publishing this memorial issue, for which I once again offer you sincere congratulations even if the end result doesn't quite sit well with me.

Victoria A. Smith
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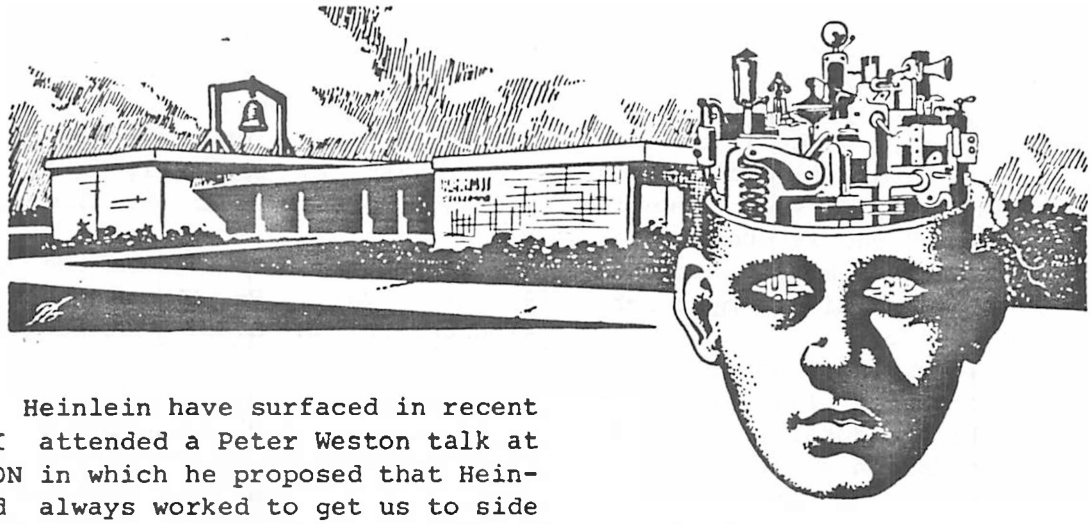
I was exposed to Heinlein whilst in my teens, and his development of group living arrangements as one way to better secure the future of the group's children has long appealed to me; I think that that's why I like Stranger in a Strange Land (my most favorite), The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress, and Time Enough for Love so much. Also, MIaHM's "beat up on authority and win!" theme struck a chord in this adolesent. However, various critic-



isms of Heinlein have surfaced in recent years. I attended a Peter Weston talk at CONFICTION in which he proposed that Heinlein had always worked to get us to side with terrorists, militarists, political wheeler-dealers, and the "minority-who-is-right", stacking the deck so that it was very tough to take an opposing view. Weston stated that Grumbles from the Grave support his view that Heinlein, in the 40s and 50s, greatly reduced his original manuscripts to fit printspace, thus cutting out unnecessary stuff. He added that, after the unexpected success of Stranger in a Strange Land and Starship Troopers, editors feared to cut Heinlein's pagecount or to encourage editing of the orations. The same thing has happened with other science fiction writers; Marion Zimmer Bradley springs most readily to my mind.

Ben Indick
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For me the problem with the good Doctor is just that, as one of your writers said, he will go on to 2000 books. A fearful prospect considering that his last few were dreadful (I hasten to add: my opinion only, a humble one at best) and that he has lent his name to dubious projects where only his name is in evidence while someone else writes the story. We do, however, have the glory of books past. He has always, despite a hand-some collection of cardboard characters, an idea man par excellence. Who knows, maybe there is another good one left.

To Heinlein, a glory of my reading youth long since faded, I agree with Sandra Taylor who found his female characters ludicrous. I recall in-was it The Number of the Beast?--the women discussed their teats. For gosh sakes, man, THEIR TEATS! What the heck are they, cattle? I reread a while ago his Puppet Masters, which had so engrossed me thirty years ago. And The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathon Hague et al. And before that, numerous stories of the past. Fortunately I did not reread "Universe" and "Goldfish Bowl"; it might have ruined fond memories. Time sat heavily on them, but not as heavily as they sat on the page. Still, for the golden memories of yesteryear, for the imagination and daring, for their outspokenness, for Asimov's humor and Heinlein's strength, hail to the memory of the latter and long, happy years to the former!

Buck Coulson
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Interesting that James Wallace says that he's not sure "if any work of fiction can be powerful enough to change a person's life", while in the same issue I detail how a Heinlein story did change my life. I think, though, that in the way Harris meant it, I sort of agree with him. The change didn't depend on the power of the story, and it didn't make me into a better person. (Certainly not when you consider my fan reputation of, say, 20 years ago.) It didn't even change my goals in life; I'd always wanted to be a writer. What it changed was my entire social life, which was quite a big enough change for me. And I wasn't growing up in the Sixties, as Harris was; I'd already grown up, in the Forties. Harris has a particularly good article; I see why you led off with it. (I empathise with his being a loaner, too; I've always been one, and sometimes I'm shocked at the number of close friends I have acquired over the years. I never meant to acquire them....)

I chuckled at Sandra Taylor's article, since I've heard much the same from Juanita, about his female characters, though her particular bane is the heroine of "The

Menace from Earth." Do his male characters feel "real" to men? Well, not to me, but only because they're always superbly competent in any situation, which is an idealized view rather than a real one. It's why I like his stories; I see no fun in reading about some nerd who is dumber than I am. If I want to know more about that sort of person, I can cultivate my neighbors, or read fanzines....

I enjoy Asimov's writing, usually, but he's never been one of my favorite authors. I mostly recall the jokes. At an early MIDWESTCON, when Martin Alger had driven down with a load of books and was selling them out of the back of his hearse, a group of neofans including me were standing around looking the stuff over and trying to get the most for our scanty money. Asimov walked by on the sidewalk, completely unknown to any of the fans except me, looked at what we were doing, asked "Do you really read that crazy Buck Rogers stuff?" and walked on, not even pausing to see the reaction to his joke. The reaction was considerable, and Alger and I were the only ones who got to enjoy it.

At a somewhat later MIDWESTCON, shortly after Sputnik took to orbit, Asimov gave a mock-outraged speech on how the Russians were taking the bread out of science fiction author's mouths, and ended with the ringing declaration, "If God had meant bas-ketballs to fly, He'd have given them wings!" It brought down the house, of course.

As a turnabout, there was a Worldcon--I have no idea which one--shortly after it had been revealed that the "Lucky Starr" series of juveniles, by "Paul French", had really been written by Asimov. For some reason, we and the DeWeeses ate lunch at a drugstore counter, and Gene DeWeese and wandered over to the book rack and spotted a certain Lucky Star Dream Book. Gene and I looked at one another. There was to be "Meet the Authors" session that afternoon, combining talk and autographing, and I was intending to go to get Willy Ley's autograph on Conquest of Space anyway. Gene and I bought the Dream Book, and at the after-noon session took it up to Asimov, imitated eager neofans, and said something on the order of "Please, Mr. Asimov, sir, would you please autograph this?" He took the book, looked at the title, screamed "What??!!" and then caught on and laughed. After autographing it as both Paul French and Isaac Asimov, he said, "At first I thought they'd brought out another one of those things without telling me." (The book itself is carefully--well, sort of carefully--preserved in our library.)

Roy Tackett
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As one of those old goats who is still around who can say that I read "Lifeline" when it first appeared in Astounding, I appreciated your special issue on Heinlein. Despite assorted complaints about his opinions and what was perceived as his politics and his aloofness, he set the standards for the SF field for years and younger writers could do a lot worse than to study Heinlein's stories to see how science fiction should be written.

I'm only a little surprised than, of all those who contributed to the special issue, only Anthony Blokzyl seems to have picked up on the fact that Heinlein was still writing hard science fiction at the end. Most readers dismiss his last few books as wish-fulfillment fantasies but they are not. RAH was extrapolating on the far out fringes of science. He was dealing with the way-out-there speculations of quantum mechanics in which, apparently, almost anything is possible. Or so they tell us. Some of our most popular SF themes, such as time travel and alternate universes, have their roots in quantum mechanics, not to mention the spookiest of all--the Universe as Myth. Other SF writers have dealt with parts of this but none to the extent that Heinlein did in his last few books. Hardly fantasies, these are stories that use quantum mechanics to chip away at the foundations of reality and are done so smoothly that most readers do not realize it.

Heinlein was never one to hammer at us with science. It was there in the background for observant readers to pick up. from irising doors to the possibility of visiting Oz, it is all based on scientific speculation.

I'll meet you at the inn outside the universe and we'll have a drink with Heinlein and Campbell and discuss whether it is really possible for us to be there at all.

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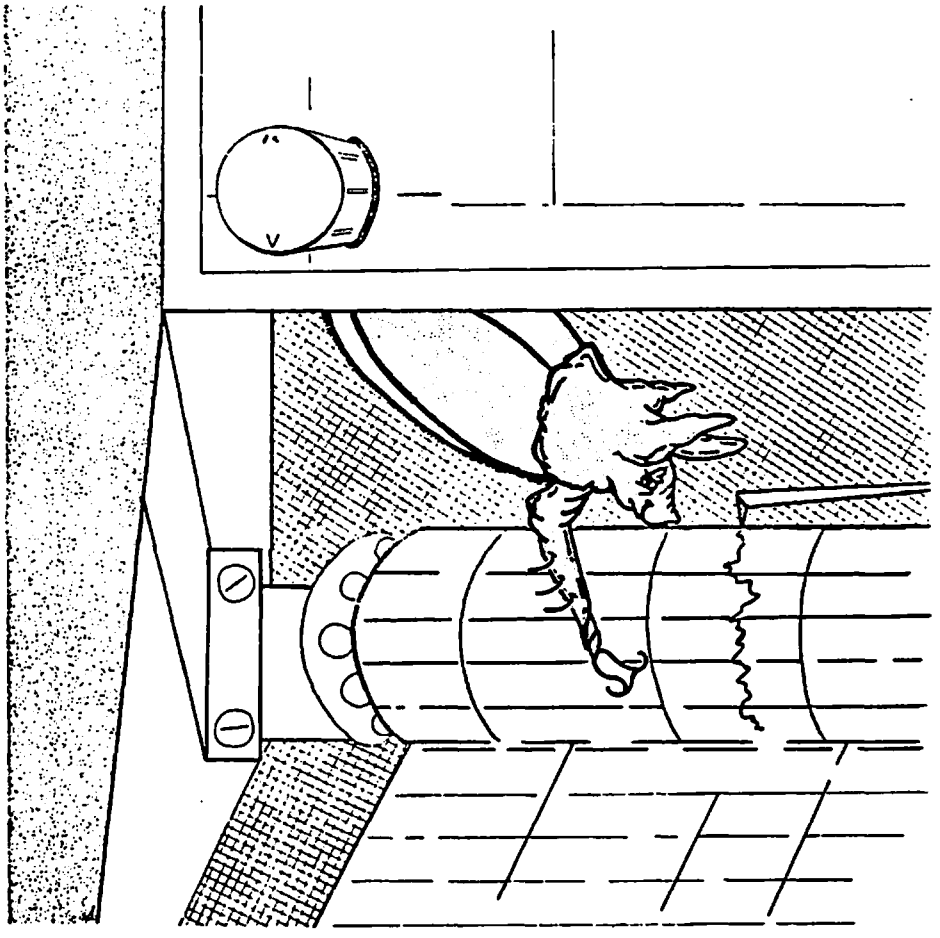

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