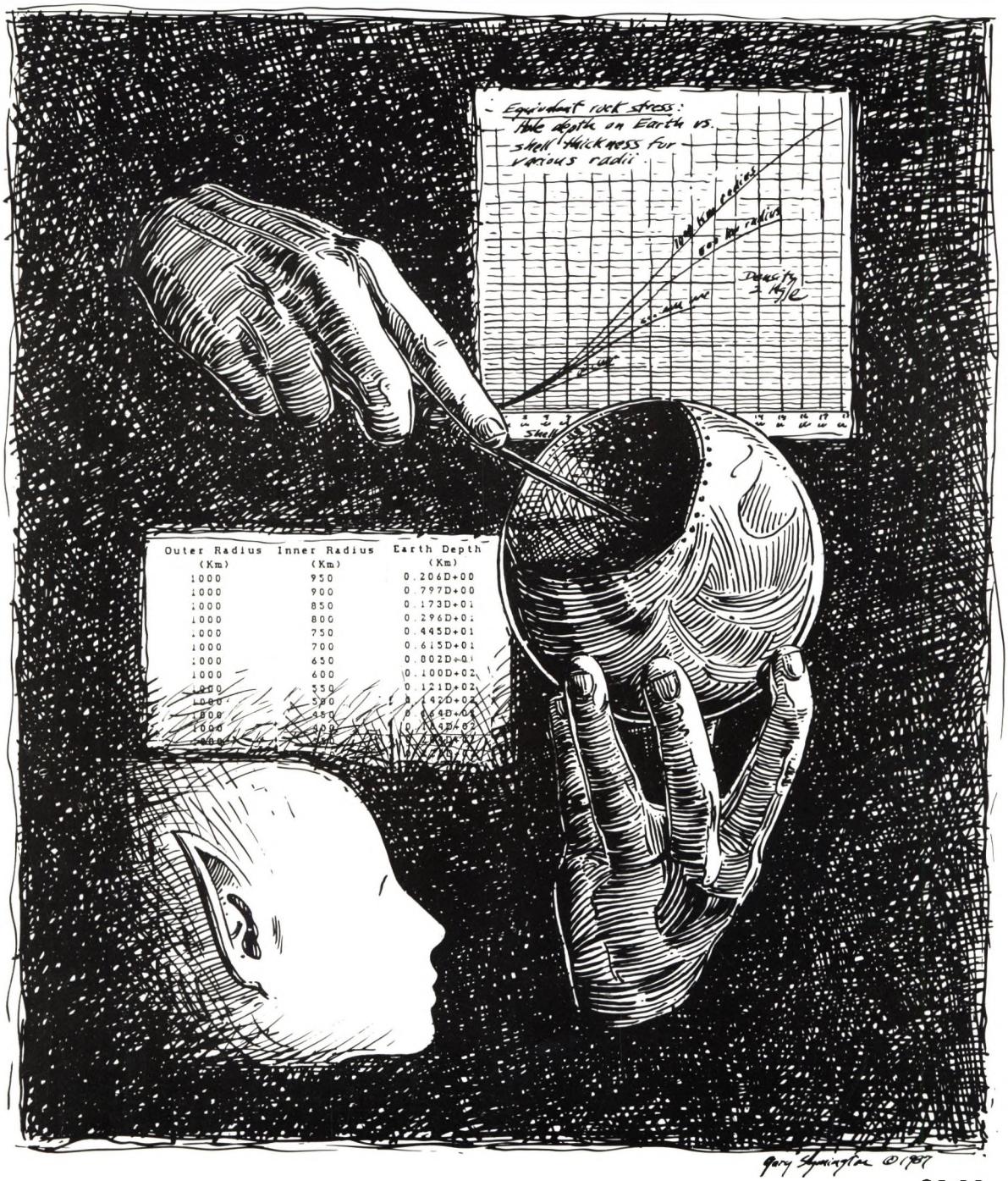
FEB 2 9 1989

NIEKAS #36

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



$3.00

Founded 1962 • Hugo Winner 1967

NIEKAS #36

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

"The Laser Writ Fanzine"

Edmund R. Meskys
Editor-in-Chief

Michael Bastraw
Editor/Art and Design

Anne J. Braude
Contributing Editor

Todd E. Frazier
Finance/Circulation

Columnists
Harry J.N. Andruschak
John Boardman
Fred Lerner
David Palter
Diana L. Paxson

Contributors
W. Ritchie Benedict
Frank C. Bertrand
Joe R. Christopher
Hal Clement
Thomas M. Egan
William Wilson Goodson, Jr.
Robert H. Knox
Sam Moskowitz
Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Jane T. Sibley
Laura Todd

Production
Aaron Frazier
Sherwood C. Frazier
Andy Johnson
Tamar Lindsay
Stanley Meskys
Sandy Parker
David Piper
Toni Piper
Jeanne Wardwell

British Agent
Roger Waddington
4 Commercial Street
North Malton N. Yorks
Y017 9ES U.K.

Layout
Mac'N Mike
Bayview Business Park, RFD 5 Rte. 11B
Gilford, NH 03246
(603) 293-0120

Niekas is published infrequently by Niekas Publications, RFD 1, Box 63, Center Harbor, New Hampshire 03226-9729. Subscription rates are $10 for 4 issues, $19 for 8 issues. Foreign orders must add $.75 per issue for surface mail or $2 per issue for airmail. For subscriber service questions call 603-253-6207. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Niekas Publications.

Copyright ©1988 Niekas Publications. All rights except non-exclusive reprint rights are assigned to the writers and artists.

Fanspeak, etc.

BUMBEJIMAS

by Edmund R. Meskys

• **FANSPEAK**

I showed some sections of Bumbejimas to a friend who had been active in fandom for 19 years, and was married for several years to a fan *well* versed in the traditions of fandom. However, she did not recognize the term "stf" and thought it was a typo. I was absolutely croggled! Hugo Gernsback must be spinning in his grave.

He invented the term "scientifiction" for our field several years, perhaps a decade, before he invented the term "science fiction." It is abbreviated stf, which is pronounced "stef" to rhyme with Jeff. Has the growth of fandom obliterated fanspeak? Do people still speak of fen rather than fans, egoboo, sercon, and the like?

I am getting to be an old fart, having been in fandom for 32 years, but that is still not long enough to get me into First Fandom or even Second Fandom, organizations of fen who date from the 30's and 40's. If they ever organize Seventh Fandom I would have a home. I came into the field at the tail end of the Seventh Fandom era, though no one has ever agreed when Eighth Fandom started, or what its characteristics were, or what Fandom we are in now. I try to get as many fanzines as possible and have them read to me, but I just cannot keep up. Have these terms faded or are they just rare, confined to a few faanish fanzines?

In the 1940's Jack Speer compiled and published *Fancyclopedia*, a dictionary of fanspeak and encyclopedia about fandom. Around 1960 Dick Eney revised, updated, and expanded it as *Fancyclopedia II*. It ran some 200 pages.

When Dick Eney was fan guest of honor at LACon in 1985 the concom announced that they would issue *Fancyclopedia III* in his honor. With word processors it should have been a more manageable project than compiling it and typing it onto mimeo stencil like the second edition. *Fancy II*, as I said, ran some 200 pages and much has happened since then. Countless expressions and concerns have come and gone. Unfortunately it has become a Dougherty Project—that is, beyond the capacities of the project originators. When I last saw Dick Eney at Lunacon in March, 1987, he still had heard nothing about the project. I do hope it is brought to fruition for it would be an invaluable reference work and might help revive fanspeak.

• **NEHEMIAH SCUDDER LIVES**

How much of Heinlein's "future history" is coming true! Oh, we had no Harriman bully private industry to land on and colonize the moon, or rolling roads, but look at the social trends in his chart. Didn't we go through the crazy years? And isn't Pat Robertson the first inkling of what might lead to a Nehemiah Scudder? There does seem to be a rising tide of political power and intolerance among the extremist- fundamentalists. How long to a Nehemiah Scudder?

I recently read *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, an interesting story of life in an America under a religious dictatorship which sprang up after some sort of disaster made most of the women barren, and society was using draconian means to try to preserve a population until the balance of fertility would restore itself with the next generation. The leaders of the revolution became the new ruling class, as was to be expected. In the reaction to pre-revolutionary conditions, the position of women became totally subordinate to that of men, as in a fundamentalist Moslem society. Woman's lib was totally reversed.

The wives of the ruling class were just as likely as any other women to be sterile, but they needed heirs. Enter the "handmaids." These are women from the subjugated class who *might* be fertile and live in a very strange social position in the master's house. On her day of ovulation she is checked by a doctor and the master tries to impregnate her in an absolutely cold manner in the presence of his wife. The handmaid is covered and the pretence is that he is trying to impregnate his own wife. If a child is born it is immediately given to the wife as if it really were her child. Talk about surrogate motherhood!

I suppose the name "handmaid" comes from the quote of Mary in *The New Testament*, when she agrees to carry the Christ and says, "I am the handmaid of the Lord."

When I got the book from the talking book library, I was reluctant to start it because I thought it would be depressing; but I found it very interesting. I can see why it was on the Nebula ballot even though the author is an outsider.

The book is in the form of a diary, and the postscript reveals that it was left on cassettes in the ruins of a safe house on an underground railroad to Canada, but the twenty-second century scholars who found it have no idea whether the heroine escaped or was caught. (I do not believe a cassette would remain playable after two centuries even if it had not been open to the elements in a burned-out house. I have heard that the adhesives used to bond the magnetic medium to the tape, like that holding together the layers of a compact disc, have a lifetime of only 20 years.) The implication is that the dictatorship fell after a century or so.

Heinlein never told the story of the rise of Nehemiah Scudder. There is some mention of him in "The Logic of Empire," but that is all. Heinlein said in the introduction to *Revolt in 2100* that the times were depressing and he didn't want to tell a depressing story. He is now filling in some details in the future history with his latest novels. *Cat Who Walked Through Walls* mentions that in one timeline manipulators prevented Scudder's birth and, because he didn't derail America, there was a nuclear war with Russia which set civilization back by several centuries. Thus far there has been no other mention of Scudder. I gather the newest novel, *To Sail Beyond the Sunset* (1987), will include the Scudder era; maybe it will say something more about him. I wonder if Heinlein has outlined the stories that he listed as untold in his future history chart, at least in his mind? If nothing else ever appears, I would love to at least read these outlines. Or perhaps some Heinlein fan could do for Scudder what Paul A. Carter did for Asimov's "Trends" in the October, 1985, ANALOG. As I said in my remarks at the end of Keller's letter in the alternate histories of World War II section of Gincas, Carter worked out the details of the alternate timeline which would from 1939 to the mid-'70's world of "Trends." The article is titled, "The Constitutional Origins of Westley vs. Simmons."

At the same time that Heinlein first brought out *Revolt in 2100*, Gore Vidal published *Messiah*, about a death-worshipping cult taking over the US. P. Schuyler Miller, in his review in ASTOUNDING, commented that this might be considered a substitute for the Scudder stories Heinlein never wrote and could be read at that point in the future history. Of course the names and details are different but it did sort of fit.

There have been many other tales of religious or pseudo-religious dictatorships in the US, such as Fritz Leiber's first novel, *Gather, Darkness!*

Atwood's book is not the only recent novel to worry at the bone of religious dictatorship. I think a lot of people, just like me, are looking at recent events and beginning to feel as uncomfortable as, to quote Tom Lehrer, "a Christian Scientist with appendicitis."

• WHO KILLED SF?

In the late 1950's the science fiction field was changing. The major form of publication was in magazines. There had been several booms in the field, the latest in the mid-50's when over 30 magazine titles were on the stands. Then they were folding left and right until a dozen or less were left, several of these quite shaky. Fandom was all astir. If the magazines with their letter columns and fanzine and con plugs were to disappear, what would happen to fandom? How would readers of books hear about us? Fandom would wither and die for lack of new blood. I remember a filk song of the time to the tune of "Poor Judd Is Dead" from OKLAHOMA, "Poor Stf Is Dead," whose punch line was "whose life blood wasn't read."

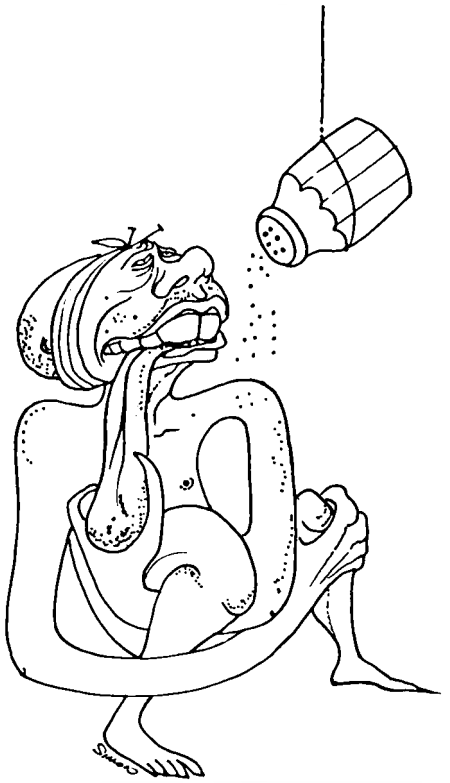
Two major writers had announced they were leaving the field. L. Sprague de Camp said he could not make a living in the field, no matter how much he loved it, and had to make a clean break. He was going to switch to writing historical novels and non-fiction which were financially much more rewarding. Isaac Asimov felt that after Sputnik he had to write nonfiction, especially for young people, to get them interested in science. Since he could write a non-fiction book in a tenth of the time it took him to plot and write a novel he was reluctantly going to leave our field. His break was so sharp that he abandoned what eventually became *The Robots of Dawn* half finished. When he returned to the book several decades later he had lost his notes and manuscript and had to start over from scratch.

Earl Kemp responded to the zeitgeist by initiating a survey of all the professionals in the field and saying that the only way they could get a copy of the resultant book was to be in it. Earl gave the book the obvious title, *Who Killed Science Fiction?* I heard about this when L. Sprague de Camp mentioned it in the course of a speech at a Philcon. I badly wanted a copy so I sent in an unsolicited reply, and got included in the book. (I lent my copy to Phil Dick in '65 and he lost it in one of his moves. If someone were to ever have a copy for sale for an affordable price I would dearly love to replace mine.) It won the fanzine Hugo, which sparked a lot of debate. Many felt that Bill Donaho's magnificent fanzine HABAKKUK was deserving of the award. Unfortunately I probably helped Kemp get his Hugo by writing up a rave review of WKSF for SCIENCE FICTION TIMES, the LOCUS of its day. Anyhow, the Hugo rules were changed to eliminate one-shots as a result.

A half decade later, thanks largely to Tolkien and STAR TREK, fandom was exploding. It had started to grow even earlier. I remember people muttering at Discon in 1963 that conventions were getting too large. The appearance of the paperback LotR and the debut of STAR TREK within a year of each other brought females into fandom, something virtually unheard of earlier.

The growth of fandom has continued apace. It reached a crisis point in 1976 with Midamericon in Kansas City. The concom was afraid the con would get so large that it could not be managed by an amateur committee. It was not large enough to afford professional management but too large for the traditional management. Therefore they put in all sorts of rules to discourage large attendance, including prohibitive at-the-door registration prices. Since the mid-'50's to date, con registration had crept up from $1 to $10 or thereabouts (I don't remember exactly but in 1971 I think I paid $5). Since then $75 at the door has become standard and people no longer flinch at it. Earliest possible presupporters are now paying $25 to $40, depending on the individual con, which is OK for an individual but prohibitive for a family.

We have now reached another crisis point. LACon in '84 reached 9000 people and seems to have survived. However, regional cons are in trouble and this is spilling over to



"Difficulties of One's Own Making"
Margaret B. Simon

worldcons. The '86 Norwescon in Seattle drew over 3000 and the '87 Boskone 4400. Last year the Norwescon hotel unilaterally cancelled its reservations for '87 and the con had to move to smaller quarters and limit membership. This year it drew 1700, and according to the con report in LOCUS, the con was enjoyed by those who were there. I do not remember why the hotel gave them the boot.

During the '87 Boskone there were a few minor incidents at the Boston Sheraton but the concom and staff worked well to combat them. Two jerks got into a pillow fight in an upper floor elevator lobby, breaking open the pillows. The resultant litter became permanently airborne and set off the smoke detectors. It could not be cleared from the air and set off the detectors several more times that night; the hotel staff and fire department were unable to do anything about it. Another minor incident of vandalism had similarly disastrous effects on another floor.

A few days later the hotel shocked NESFA by announcing that it didn't want next year's Boskone or the '89 Worldcon. The hotel claimed that it was bothered by the con's becoming a 24-hour-a-day event with high pressure on the staff all the time. The minor incidents of vandalism, uncontrolled non-guests wandering the halls at all hours, and the weird costumes were contributing factors.

The '88 Boskone will be in Springfield MA, a hundred miles west of Boston, where the NESFEN were able to get the best deal on the best remaining facilities. Still attendance will have to be limited to about 2000, and there will be less function space. The huckster room and art shows will be half the normal size. Also the only dates available were two weeks before the traditional weekend. And the whole question of where to hold Noreascon 3 is still up in the air. Programming will be in the Hynes Convention Center, but where are the fen to sleep and party? The Hynes is attached to the Sheraton and the Marriott is two blocks away, but neither wants us. The concom is working hard on the problem and latest word is that they are reaching accommodation with the nearby hotels. These problems and the surrounding publicity might help keep the size of Noreascon III down below the originally anticipated record breaking numbers.

Even back in 1981 I heard from wargaming fen that they were having troubles with hotels bumping their cons for something more lucrative, and it occasionally happened to SF cons. There was talk of setting up a cadre of fan lawyers who would share a database and handle suits of hotels.

Whatever happened to the good ratings stf cons had with hotels? It used to be that we were welcomed with open arms. We spent a lot (especially in the bars) and did very little damage compared with Shriners and other rowdies. Damage is still slight, but up with the increase in population. Maybe we are unique in that perhaps 10% of us are up all night, which has the staff edgy. But are the Seattle and Boston hotel problems the start of a major trend? Will the nature of cons, especially large ones, have to change? Will they still be fun?

One source of difficulties is non-fan teens who have heard that the con is a good place to get a cheap drunk. For the cost of registration, or even crashing without registering, they can access three nights of parties with lots of booze. To discourage this, NESFA has applied a ban on booze at open parties and is publicizing this widely. If someone has a bottle under the counter for friends, that won't really matter as long the general impression is out that booze is no longer widely available.

To avoid spooking relations with their new hotel NESFA has put in all sorts of draconian rules. *No* pets, especially snakes, will be allowed. Ditto on weapons including obvious toys. Hall costumes will be frowned upon. It sounds almost as stuffy as the World Fantasy Convention, where a progress report in 1984 said filksinging would not be allowed and people in costume would be kicked out.

Boskone had already been outgrowing its facilities and would have had to move into the Hynes before this happened. As a result they were talking of cutting back and becoming less of a regional worldcon catering to all interests. They had already decided to cut out video, cut back on films, and eliminate gaming and role-playing games. Also they will eliminate all local publicity and limit adds in fanzines. It looks like it will become a closed con, with no new people coming in; and if this trend continues to other cons, it again brings up the question of a quarter century ago: where will new fen come from? Instead of asking who killed SF, will we be asking who killed fandom?

Fred Lerner pointed out, after seeing an early version of the manuscript of the above, that while larger cons will shun publicity and walk-in members, most local clubs and small cons will still be seeking publicity and new members. Some local clubs are invitational but most need new blood, so fandom will not wither. And even Boskone, which will not admit unaccompanied fen under the age of 18 will make an exception for previous attendees and members of known local clubs.

And after proofreading another early version of the above Anne

Braude reminded me that the large size of worldcons has been turning off people for over a decade now. There are many active fen who refuse to go just because it is such a mob scene, and I heard the same thing said about the one large regional I am intimately familiar with, Boskone. Anne suggested that regional cons like Westercon now occupy the place in fannish life that the worldcon used to, and the smaller local cons occupy the place that regionals used to. To quote her, "like in the Mad Tea Party, clean cup, everybody move down one." This remark seems doubly appropriate since the theme of Noreascon III is Alice and the Mad Three Party!

I want to thank Fred Lerner and Anne Braude for their many suggestions which helped improve this piece.

• GOD IN A YELLOW BATHROBE

One of L. Ron Hubbard's best stories was a short novel titled *Typewriter in the Sky* which appeared in UNKNOWN in the early 40's. A shock from a faulty bathroom light fixture sends the protagonist into the created world of his hack writer friend. He must try to escape from the imaginary world before he is killed off as the villain of a buccanneer tale. His friend based the villain on him and he finds himself living the role. If the author writes the story the way it is going, our hero will end up dead in the story and probably in real life. As a Spanish Don he kidnaps a woman who obviously hates his guts. He takes hold of events and changes the direction of the tale. As part of his scheme to change the plot he succussfully woes the woman and she is on the verge of coming around to his side. The author finds the story getting away from him and tears up the last few chapters he had written. The hero hears a great tearing sound in the sky and finds himself reliving the last few days with the woman hateing him again,and it harder than ever to take hold of events.

Eventually he wins his way through and is back in the dingy apartment of the author, who is sitting in his dirty bathrobe in front of his typewriter. The hero leaps to a conclusion about the true nature of reality and asks, "God? In a dirty bathrobe?" In 1961 Robert Heinlein was guest of honor at the World SF Convention in Seattle. I was not there but I heard that he kept open house in his hotel room 24 hours a day. Charlie Brown took a slide of him in a yellow bathrobe which he often showed when he lived in the Bronx in the late 60's. He called the picture "God, in a yellow bathrobe." It was a magnificent shot of Heinlein in an informal pose.

Heinlein's 1986 book, *The Cat Who Walked Through Walls*, questions reality the way Hubbard did. In a recent phone conversation Anne Braude pointed out that most of Heinlein's books since *The Number of the Beast* dealt in some way with this question: Who is the author of reality? Even in *Job:A Comedy of Justice* the hero appeals to the supervisor above God and the Devil, and complains about the shoddy job of creating reality. She believed that the overbeing that he appealed to was the same one as in Heinlein's very early novel, *The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag*. When it was published in UNKNOWN it was called a novel though a better term would have been "short novel." The term "novella" had not been invented or at least not been popularized. I do not know whether it appeared before or after *Typewriter*. (It is interesting that Pratt & de Camp's Harold Shea stories also first appeared in UNKNOWN about the same time. The premise behind these stories is that major pieces of literature and folklore somehow resonate in nature and their worlds exist on some other plane or in some other dimension. I cannot find my copies of Don Day's *Index to the SF Magazines* or Stu Hoffman's *Index to UNKNOWN*, so cannot check the order of publication. It would be interesting to see whether there was any cross-fertilization of ideas.)

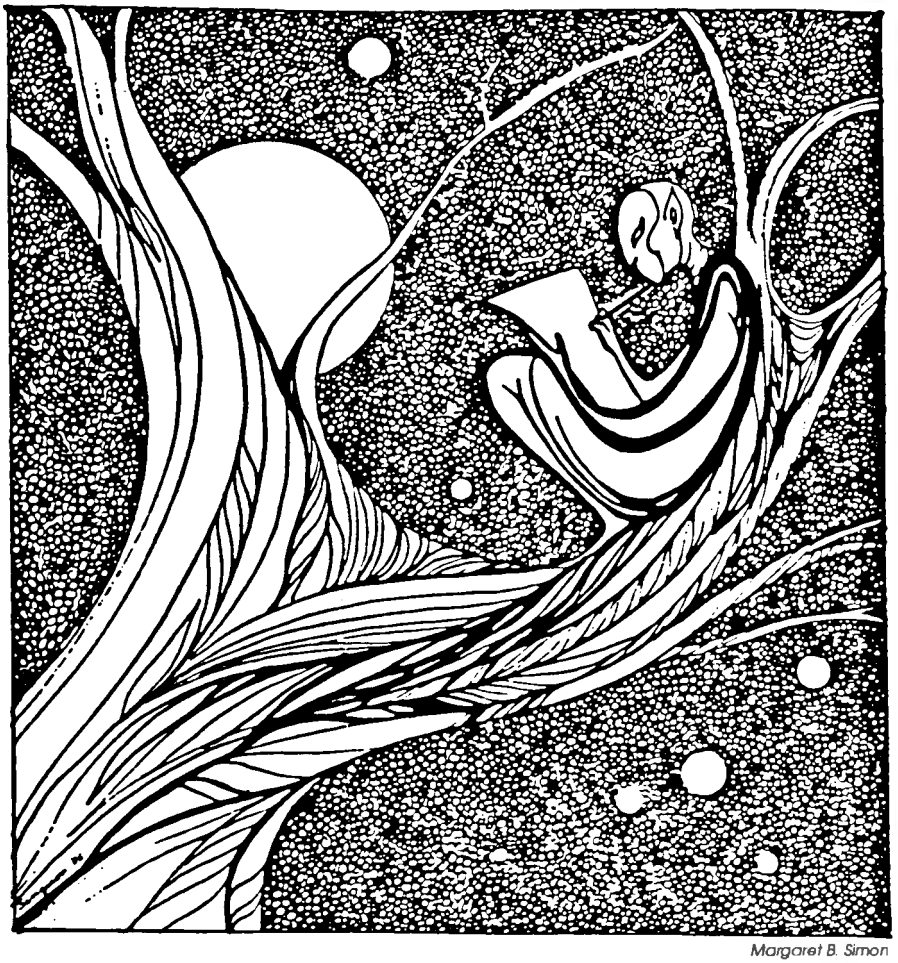
I never particularly liked Lazarus Long and am getting a little tired of him. I had mixed feelings about *Cat*. The opening was exciting and presented a fascinating world, as is always the case in a Heinlein story. I was a bit disappointed when the hero was brought into central command from which a change war a la Fritz Leiber's *Big Time* was being run. As I said before I found a good bit of enjoyable material in *The Number of the Beast*, but this reprise disappointed me. But there were two excellent touches I really loved: The hero is a son of Lazarus Long but hates his guts; and at the end when the hero, heroine, and kitten are lying there dying after a battle, the hero curses the author (Heinlein) who left him and *especially* the kitten in this situation. I understand the 1987 book, *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*, resolves this situation. I am looking forward to reading it despite its involvement with Lazarus Long.

A postscript—I just finished the fanzine FOSFAX #117, July, 1987 ($1.00 from FOSFA, Box 37281, Louisville KY 40233-7281). In *Cat* Heinlein established that his characters are dealing with nine, if I remember, timelines and they are labeled by who was the first to go to the moon. Apparently this is elaborated in *Sunset*. Grant Conan McCormick took the data as given in these two books and compared them with the facts as presented in other Heinlein novels and found a number of errors and inconsistencies. I enjoy pseudo-history and found this article very interesting. He admits he is nitpicking and refers to Emerson's quote on little minds in his title and twice in the article. But still it is very nice to have all this research done and presented in one place. For instance he found that time line #3 supposedly had Armstrong as the first on the moon but also contained *Stranger in a Strange Land* and *Moon is a Harsh Mistress*. However, in *Stranger* a Russian team was the first to land on the moon, and they stayed, while a joint US-Canadian mission was the first to return. Also something called the "Larkin Decision" controlled the ultimate ownership of the moon, which was different from the trust that controlled it in *Mistress*. He has found and enumerated a large number of such inconsistencies, some very important to the plots of the stories concerned. [GOTO Page 9]✷

Pros and Cons

PATTERNS AND NOTES FROM ELFHILL

by Diana L. Paxson



Margaret B. Simon

There was a time when most professional sf writers emerged, like the first lungfish dragging themselves landward on primitive limbs, from the great fannish sea. Sf conventions were themselves if not in the Devonian, then at least in the Cretaceous (which will tell you, dear reader, to what long and far-off times I refer).

In those days, everyone at a convention could quote the purple prose (in both senses—anybody remember the primal protoplasm of the hektograph?) in which the new pros had formerly expressed themselves in many a now-forgotten zine. There are Big Names still among us who could probably be blackmailed by a literary paleontologist willing to make plaster castings of the newsprint now moldering in fannish cellars. Some of them loftily deny the primal ooze from which they sprang, and I will not betray them. The point I wish to make is that, in those days, pros (at least those who went to sf conventions) understood fans pretty well, for lo—they were us.

Although the phenomenon of the fan who evolves from apas and little stories in fan magazines to the lofty eminence of professional publication is still with us, that is no longer the only road to pro-dom. Today a significant number of neopros attend their first sf convention *after* making their first sale, and even those who began as fans have rarely been involved enough to have participated in the running of a convention. And many of the fans who run conventions have never had an opportunity to interact socially with pros. As a result, there are sometimes misunderstandings because neither group is aware of the expectations and assumptions of the other.

I first encountered fandom (in 1965, which is beginning to look like quite awhile ago) near the beginning of the population explosion in fandom. Ed (who knew everybody and was still speaking to all of them) introduced me to a number of local fans and pros, including Marion Zimmer Bradley. Marion was one of the writers who came out of fandom and has never been ashamed of her roots, and when I married into her family, it was natural to follow her example. As a result, I have been on both side of the fence at conventions—having chaired a small convention and done publicity, been program chair, etc. for several others

of varying sizes, and having been on more panels than I like to think about at conventions of all sizes.

The readers of NIEKAS include quite a few individuals in both categories, and in hopes of improving communications, I would like to share with you my perception of what pros and concoms have a right to expect from each other. Perhaps those who are not on Concoms themselves will pass these ideas along to those who are running the next Con they go to, and perhaps some of the writers will spread the word among their peers.

SF cons fall somewhere between professional conferences and media cons in what they offer program participants. At an academic conference, *everybody* pays to get in and competes for the privilege of presenting a paper. In sf, the Science Fiction Research Association conference, Mythcon, and the World Fantasy Con follow this pattern—the first and last because they are attended mainly by professionals, and Mythcon because it is also a literary conference (and runs on a shoestring). Media Cons, on the other hand, are profit-making operations that use celebrities' names to attract fans, and not only offer memberships but often room and board and an honorarium.

Basic standard practice at sf conventions is to provide a membership for everyone who appears on the program. The more prosperous cons often offer a free membership for the panelist's guest as well.

Only the Guests of Honor, special guests, and toast-person (toaster?) get free room and board and usually transportation for the guest and companion. It is almost unknown for anyone to get an honorarium. The assumption is that the GoH etc. are well-known enough so that their names on the Con publicity will attract members. It is also assumed that the Guests will work their tails off (health permitting)— with multiple panel appearances, autographing, judging dog and pony shows where needed, and being the life of the party generally (at the fan parties, rather than hiding out in the SFWA Suite).

What the main Guests and the Con are doing for each other is fairly clear. What sometimes gets confused is the relationship between the Con and the rest of the panelists.

It is certainly true that if the pros did not write there would be no books for the fans to read, and hence no conventions built around them. But the physical presence of those who write the books is certainly not essential. Fans are quite capable of providing their own entertainment—I have been to Cons where the program was so vestigial that attendees had to do just that. Many fans have just as much expertise (not to mention stage presence and entertainment value) as any pro. (I remember being amazed by how much more profound and worthy people considered my ideas once I had a novel on the stands—my thinking had not improved, but the magic of my name in print gave whatever I said a new authority.) Conventions are, in fact, a good place for writers to collect tame experts in areas such as astrophysics or brain surgery.

There are, furthermore, numerous fans whose primary interest at Conventions is costuming, gaming, videos, or simply yakking with others of like mind, who never get to a panel at all. This is a situation which writers and booksellers may deplore, but cannot deny.

Given these facts of Convention life, the pros should disabuse themselves of the idea that they are superior beings whose presence blesses an unenlightened populace. For one thing, the lowly fan of today may be the fellow-writer (and Nebula nominator) of tomorrow (and is certainly a potential Hugo voter today). And even the rapidly growing number of published writers around today can provide considerable competition for panel seats. Think not what your Convention can do for you (dear pros) but what you can do for your Convention. . . .

For the first few years after I began to sell, I conducted an active campaign to get put on panels at Conventions. Even now, when I go to a Con I feel rather lost if I am not on at least one panel a day. It is not just that I like to talk—I could do that in the hotel bar—or even that I often learn a great deal from the other panelists. But (to be crass) appearing on the program of a Con is great publicity. The writer's name (and bio, with information on new books) in the program book will reach fans who never attend the panels. The panels themselves often offer opportunities to plug one's new book—er—mention it in a way that will intrigue potential readers. For writers who already have a following, Cons offer an opportunity to get some feedback. Sf writers are almost unique in this regard—writing is always a lonely business, but at least at Cons you get evidence that someone is out there waiting (eagerly?) for the results. You also can count on the fact that if there are any errors in a book, some fan at some Convention will bring them to your attention. I find that fact a great inhibitor of sloppy research.

Clearly, then, the writer benefits a great deal from appearing at a Convention. The professional necessity of making such appearances is what justifies the tax deductibility of those expenses. However, despite what I have just said, the Con also benefits from the presence of the writer. Even though many fans never attend a panel, panels are the bones of the program, and a Con with a poor program will become infamous (even if everybody actually had a rather good time). The Convention program chair needs warm bodies to put up behind those tables, and hopes that they will be entertaining. Sheer numbers of pros are impressive when the Con report appears in LOCUS. Names in the pre-publicity do attract members.

But the writer who agrees to appear on a program has the right to expect certain things from the Convention. One of the most important is prompt communication (I should, however point out that the chances of this are improved if the pro returns the acceptance card promptly instead of phoning at the last minute or just assuming the committee knows he is coming and what panels he would like to do).

Writers who have responded by

the date requested should be notified that they are on the program early enough to make hotel reservations (and should be sent a reservation card), as well as being put on the general mailing list so that they will receive progress reports. This notification should also explain what information they should provide for the program book (bio? picture?) and when.

The program chair should let the panelists know what topics are being considered for the program early enough so that the pros can make choices in time for their preferences to be taken into consideration when panels are assigned. The letter should remind the pros that they need to indicate when they will be at the Convention, and whether they have taboos about the times of day at which they are functional, fellow-panelists they would like to appear with or refuse to, etc. which should be observed. If a pro who has agreed to be on the program is unable to attend, he or she is honor-bound to inform the Con committee (even if this means phoning them at the hotel)! It makes the Con look bad to advertise people who do not show, and writers who flake out consistently must not be surprised if the word gets around.

The committee needs to get its program planning done in time to send each panelist a list of what he or she will be on, and when, by three or four weeks before the Convention. This letter should also explain where to go on arrival to pick up badge and program packet (which should include an accurate list of what panels the writer is on), and the location of the Green Room. This will allow time for people with objections to make them, so that the program can be revised. (Setting up panels for a Convention always reminded me of trying to force elephants into coke bottles. This final period is when the elephants start climbing out again!) Furthermore, panelists have a right not to be scheduled for three panels in a row that extend through the lunch hour, for two simultaneous panels, or even for two contiguous panels at opposite ends of the hotel.

If a SFWA meeting is scheduled, writers should not be scheduled for panels opposite it (also, the SFWA meeting should not be scheduled early in the morning, and there must be coffee available if it is any time before noon!) If the Con can provide a SFWA suite, it is much appreciated (especially if the Con also stocks it), but a well-run Green Room can be almost as useful.

Having a Green Room is a relatively recent and very welcome Convention custom. This is where panelists meet before their panels so that they can discuss what they are going to do, and so that the Committee doesn't have to search the bar—er—the hotel to find them. It should have coffee and a basic snack tray. Lupercullian banquets are not necessary, although I must admit that there have been conventions where a tight budget made the Green Room my major source of food. It should also have an up-to-date schedule posted visibly, and calm, helpful gofers who can explain what is going on (this assumes that the Concom itself knows what is going on).

If the Committee goes to all this trouble to set up an attractive and effective Green Room, the least the panelists can do is to show up there when requested. There's not much you can do about oversleeping except apologize, but if you wake up five minutes before your panel and realize that you are too hung over to function, you should at least phone the Green Room and inform them that you have fallen victim to the Tatooine Two-step. They may not believe you, but at least they won't waste time waiting for you to arrive.

The key really is communication, and sometimes more than a little patience as well. Weeks of talking to characters who cannot (usually) talk back sometimes makes it hard for writers to deal with other human beings. The pros, on the other hand, should remember that Concoms are composed of people who have been going crazy for the past month trying to manage endless details (one might question their mental stability for having agreed to be on the committee in the first place, but let's not throw stones—the sanity of anyone who believes he can make a living writing is a bit questionable as well).

Oh dear—

I've just realized that someone is probably going to argue with me about this column at the next Con I attend. Quick, Bronty—where's the nearest primeval ooze?✹

"Tryouts"
Margaret B. Simon

The Care and Feeding of Nothing

BASTRAW'S BASTION

by Michael Bastraw

Bless me, reader, for I have written. It has been 3 years since my last column—these are my words.

I would like to address several matters relating to NIEKAS. Nothing of an executive nature—Ed takes care of such things in his column; rather, those things which have to do with the bodily functions of the magazine as a living, breathing, money-hungry organism.

NIEKAS is voracious beastie. It eats not only words and pictures but gobbles down large quantities of filthy lucre before it finally excretes what you have in your hands. As most of you know, NIEKAS is an un-profit enterprise. It is supported by material donated by our writers and artsists as well as monies we take in through subscriptions, sales of back issues, special publications, audio tapes, t-shirts, and the like. We also get direct cash input from several of the people who appear on our masthead.

What can *you* do to help?

If you are already a subscriber, renew and get several friends to sub or re-up *their* subscriptions. If you are not a subscriber, please become one. We offer incentives to anyone who subscribes before the next issue:

We will be presenting our John Myers Myers issue, edited by Fred "Across the River" Lerner as a NIEKAS Special Publication. This will include a complete glossary of *Silverlock* and previously unpublished poetry by Myers Myers. Cover price will be $5—subscribers will get it as part of their regular subscription. You also have the Arthurian issue, edited by Anne "Look What They've Done to My Material Again" Braude coming up with articles by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Vera Chapman, Ruth Berman, Esther Friesner, Jon Singer, Susan Shwartz, John Boardman, Diana L. Paxson, Poul Anderson, Andre Norton, Alexei Kondratiev, et al, et cetera, et tu Brute...

Our goal is 200 new subscribers or renewals. It can be done.

You have probably noticed that this issue of NIEKAS is *easier* to read with much less squinting and nashing of eyelids than before. This is because all type has been set, composed, and laid out electronically on a computer.

To most people who inquire what type of system I use, I reply (just like in the television ad), "Hire me and I'll tell you." But we NIEKAS types are family of a weird sort, so I will tell all.

The "front end" for my system is an Apple Macintosh SE with a LaserWriter Plus doing the actual printing. My software tool box contains Macwrite and Microsoft Works for word processing; Aldus Pagemaker and ReadySetGo4 for layout; Macpaint, Superpaint, Macdraw, Cricket Draw, and Adobe Illustrator for graphics; Daynafile and an Apple Personal Modem for file transfer; and a Datacopy 730 flatbed scanner and Macimage software for graphics inputting.

This is how it goes.

Ed receives material for publication and has it read onto tape. He then transcribes it using his Leading Edge computer (an MSDOS, IBM-XT clone) and PC Write word processor (a public domain program which Ed will supply to prospective contributors). At this point it is either printed out at NIEKAS Central to be sent to a proofreader (who may or may not be the author) or it comes directly to me by telephone using his modem or by mail on floppy disk which I pop into the Daynafile and translate/transfer into Macintosh. I take the raw text which is then formatted for style and passed through my spelling checker (WorksPlus Spell) and imported into my page layout program where I start tinkering with the design of the various pages. The galleys then go to someone for final proofing, corrections are made upon their return, and then it's off to the printer.

From the above you see that our first choice for media of submissions is a floppy disk (either MSDOS or Mac) with the material on it using one of the word processors that I have mentioned. We can also translate other Mac/IBM files—WordStar and Microsoft Word come to mind. Second choice would be your material read onto a cassette tape making certain to include paragraphing, punctuation, and indications of proper names and other things that might not be apparent when vocalized (whether an item is a book, magazine, short story, film...). Thirdly, and lastly, send us your tired, your weary, your typewritten manuscripts; please double-space like the good pros that your are/will be.

Use this issue as a style sheet of sorts. Underline book titles which we then italicize. Type in all capital letters for movies and magazines. Short stories and items from larger works are in quotation marks. Also let us know about any diacritical marks to be included—we can add most of the more common ones but, ironically, we are not well-stocked with Lithuanian marks.

The main body text of this issue is set in New Century Schoolbook using 10 pt. except for "On the Shoulders of Vanguard", Gincas, and Laiskai where we use 9 pt. because of space limitations. (Jeez, Ed, do we really need all that stuff about Kent State and Hiroshima? Significant events both but what does it have to do with the price of tea on Trenco?) Column headings are a combination of Avant Garde and Trekfont.✹

First Contacts and Final Solutions

MATHOMS

by Anne J. Braude

Ever since writing my series on detective fiction, I have been thinking about doing a companion piece on true-crime writing and its quite different appeal and fascinations, showing it to be as entertaining in its way as the fiction. But then I encountered a true-crime tale that cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called "entertaining," but is nevertheless perhaps the most gripping story ever told. And it knocks my notions about Lizzie Borden and Jack the Ripper and suchlike clean out of my head.

I am speaking of Claude Lanzmann's marathon film SHOAH, which was shown on PBS during the last week of April, 1987. The title means "annihilation" in Hebrew, and it is an account of the Holocaust through the eyes of those who were there: Jewish death-camp survivors, Nazi functionaries (filmed with hidden cameras), and—most importantly for Lanzmann—witnesses: villagers and peasants who watched the trains roll through and smelt the stench from the crematoria as they continued to go about their daily lives. The film sounds as though it would be deadly dull: there are no action scenes, merely shots of the ruins or empty fields where the camps used to be, interspersed with still photographs and interviewees talking, usually with subtitles and most of it repetitious. But it is absolutely riveting. You can't believe what these people are saying—people don't do these things—but you can't help believing it—it is one dull little fact after another, totaling enormity. Two moments will stay with me forever: One is the Polish villager who, when asked if it bothered him when they came to take away his Jewish neighbors, quoted a proverb to the effect that "when you cut your finger, I don't bleed." The other is the ex-Treblinka functionary filmed on hidden camera who when the interviewer mentioned that executions at Treblinka reached a peak of 16,000 per day spluttered "Nonsense! A slander! There were never more than 13,000!"

Most of us, in our sheltered middle-class American way, tend to think of cruelty and hatred as motivated: a man kicks a dog for some reason, even if it hasn't harmed him; he does it because he himself has been bullied or oppressed or hurt somehow. But maybe he kicks it just because it's there and it happens to be a dog. The Polish peasants who talked to Lanzmann expressed a routine, reflexive anti-Semitism. The Jews deserved what they got because they were different from the Poles, and often because they were better off (though there was no indication that they cheated, exploited, or underpaid the Christian Poles to achieve that prosperity).

A lot of people these days seem to think we should put the Holocaust behind us and stop thinking and writing about it. (A surprising number of these people happen to be Germans. A recent [August, 1987] network news story described how young Germans, most of them infants or not yet born at the time it took place, didn't think they should feel guilty about their country's past. Responsible, no, but guilty? There is obviously something in the German national character, with its love of neatness, efficiency, and order, its obedience to authority, its uncritical admiration of pretentious philosophizing, its historic refusal to take the blame for anything, that makes the German people vulnerable to the likes of Hitler. Guilt about their past may be a life-saving precaution, like a recovering alcoholic asking if the punch is spiked or a diabetic checking the sugar content of a can of fruit.) I sometimes think that maybe we shouldn't be thinking and writing about anything else, believing as I do in the maxim that those who will not learn from the past are condemned to repeat it.

But this does not mean that the rest of us, who are not German, are somehow immune. Do you remember the shocking (no pun intended) results of Dr. Stanley Milgram's obedience experiments, published some years ago? The subjects were instructed to push a button giving another subject (actually an experimenter) an electric shock of increasing intensity whenever the latter gave the wrong answer to a test he was supposedly taking. 65% of the adult subjects, as long as the experimenter didn't object, continued pushing the button up to and beyond the lethal level, even with the "subject" (not really connected to the electrodes) screaming and begging for mercy (quoted in M. Scott Peck, People of the Lie, 1983). How is it that people can do this to other people? Obedience to authority, or the abandonment of conscience to collective responsibility, is only one answer. The other may be even more deeply engrained in the human psyche.

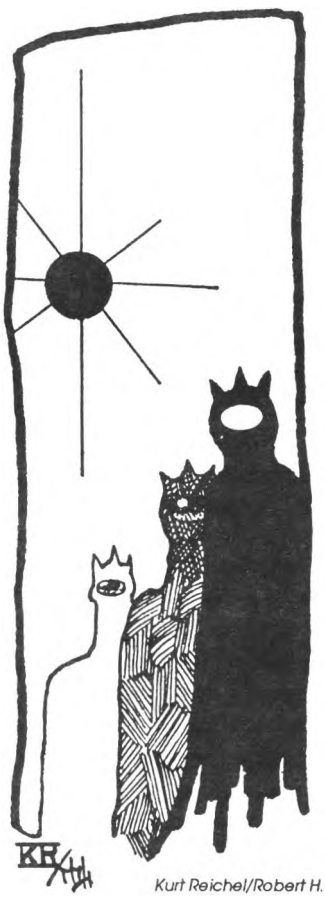
In her discussion of cruelty in *Ordinary Vices* (1984), Professor Judith N. Shklar summarizes the argument of Jean-Paul Sartre's Anti-Semite and Jew: "These two are merely examples of the universal cognitive situation of all human beings. We are all victims and victimisers in that we perceive one another as objects of observation; we all look upon

one another as things. Some, to escape this uneasy subjugation, turn to sadism. They become the fear they inspire....The sadist simply cannot bear the double burden of limits and possibilities." (p. 20) It is akin to Original Sin, as C.S. Lewis points out: The moment that the creature perceives that it is other than its Creator, and possesses a will of its own, the possibility arises that it can say "Not Thy will, but mine, be done." The moment that I recognise that you are different from me—in sex, in skin color, in race, in accent, in religious practice, in dress, in which hand you write with, in economic status—you become an Other; and if I define myself as human (which of course I do), you become, at least potentially, Not-Human. The more existentially sophisticated among you will point out here that I am not in fact human: that I belong to the original class of Others—women, as explicated at length in Sartre's long-time companion Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. (I don't know if Dorothy L. Sayers ever read de Beauvoir, but in a couple of feminist essays she referred to society's classification of women as "the Human-Not-Quite-Human.")

Well, we have seen what we do to Others; I have expanded upon that point in Laiskai elsewhere in this issue. What will we be likely to do if we ever meet a real Other—an extraterrestrial?

Early science fiction—the stuff before the late nineteenth century that we have retroactively appropriated—was usually philosophical fantasy in the vein of Utopia, with extraterrestrial cultures idealized versions of our own, intended to make the authors' metaphysical or moral points. When writers like David Lindsay and H.G. Wells started the trend of inventing really alien aliens, which became a staple of pulp fiction for decades, they took it for granted that they would be inimical to us: Bug-Eyed Monsters who wanted to enslave or eat us, and whom it it was our destiny to destroy. The whole attitude towards our possible achievement of space travel in these days was reminiscent of the Manifest Destiny rhetoric accompanying our nation's expansion across the continent; books were published with titles like *The Stars My Destination*, *The Conquest of Space*, *Destination: Universe*, and, quite simply, *The Stars Are Ours!* The idea that these stars might already be someone else's no more troubled the SF community in these days than the Sioux Nation's claim to the Black Hills troubled the land-hungry nineteenth-century pioneers.

In the late forties and fifties, as we



Kurt Reichel/Robert H. Knox

began to assimilate the enormities of Hiroshima and the Holocaust, writers conscious of man's inhumanity to man began to write stories in which inhumanity to aliens was no longer acceptable; and they no longer took it for granted that any ET's we met would be our moral inferiors. In *Out of of the Silent Planet* C.S. Lewis gave us not only portraits of alien races so noble and good as to inspire humility in his Christian protagonist, but also a sharp and effective satire on the manifest-destiny rhetoric of the Earth-Firsters. Zenna Henderson's *People* are improved versions of humanity, possessing not just psychic powers but more evolved social skills enabling them to live largely without cruelty and violence, very much in accordance with the state we ourselves have long aspired to. The visual media have given us a succession of lovable aliens, from Mr. Spock to E.T.

There is now a recognizable category within SF of the first-contact problem story, of which the most famous example is probably James Blish's *A Case of Conscience*. It is a major theme in the works of Ursula K. Le Guin, who has suggested in her criticism that the matter of dealing with the Other is the theme of science fiction, and perhaps of fiction in general. The tendency of these stories is to suggest that in any encounter the aliens, unless they are technologically vastly ahead of us, will be victimized. Those who have read Carl Sagan's *Contact* will remember the scene in which the SETI staff, after all the highfalutin' messages they have been sending out for years, discover to their shock that the first message from Earth received by the aliens was the early television broadcast of Hitler's Nurenberg rally. (In my own more pessimistic moments, I assume that the fact that the aliens have been picking up our newscasts for the past half-century or so accounts for the fact that our SETI signals have received no response: we are probably regarded by the members of the Intergalactic Union with the same enthusiasm with which we regard a team of Jehovah's Witnesses on the doorstep.) Even in comedy, mistreatment of non-humans is taken for granted. The ailurophagic protagonist of the TV series ALF, obnoxious as he is, is sheltered by the family in whose garage he has landed because the alternative is turning him over to government scientists anxious to dissect him. When the heroine of the film SPLASH is discovered to be a mermaid, she is simply seized and taken away to be studied and perhaps vivisected; only her lover, his brother, and, eventually, the scientist who caused the trouble in the first place think of her as a sentient person with feelings and rights to be respected.

Most of the first-contact options are canvassed in *Decision at Doona*, which I still regard as Anne McCaffrey's best SF novel. Because of a misunderstanding that caused the entire population of a planet to commit suicide, Terran government has established a rigid prohibition against colonizing inhabited planets. The Doona colonists are horrified to discover a village of civilized felinoids on a planet declared empty by Survey; they don't know that the Hrrubans are not native but another colony. The humans agonize over whether to report the matter, thus losing all hope of a better life away from overcrowded Earth, and how to keep from contacting, and thus inevitably harming, the aliens; meanwhile, the children of both species are making friends. A variety of good, bad, and in-between characters of both Hrrubans and humans complicate the scenario; the decision in the end is that humanity has matured enough for there to be a chance that a second try at contact will be successful for both parties. The book is a pretty good synthesis of the Bug-Eyed-Monster thesis and the Noble Alien antithesis; and it would make a terrific movie. It's not the final word (there is a good deal of oversimplification, McCaffrey not being Le-Guin), but it is a good example of the way SF can contribute to exploring basic human problems. Marianne Moore characterized poetry as giving us "imaginary gardens with real toads in them"; SF at its best gives us imaginary fences with real gates in them.

Given Sartre's view of our inescapable alienation from the Other, is there real hope that a species which cannot seem to accept the humanity of women, let alone blacks and Jews, can accept and love alien beings, should we ever encounter them? C.S. Lewis took a dismal view of the possibilities in an essay published in the CHRISTIAN HERALD in 1958 called "Will We Lose God in Outer Space?" (reprinted in *The World's Last Night* [1960] as "Religion and Rocketry"):

"It sets one dreaming—to interchange thoughts with beings whose thinking had an organic background wholly different from ours (other senses, other appetites), to be unenviously humbled by intellects possibly superior to our own yet able for that very reason to descend to our level, to descend lovingly ourselves if we met innocent and childlike creatures who could never be as strong or as clever as we, to exchange with the inhabitants of other worlds that especially keen and rich affection which exists between unlikes; it is a glorious dream. But make no mistake. It is a dream. We are fallen.

We know what our race does to strangers. Man destroys or enslaves every species he can. Civilized man murders, enslaves, cheats, and corrupts savage man. Even inanimate nature he turns into dustbowls and slagheaps. There are individuals who don't. But they are not the sort who are likely to be our pioneers in space. Our ambassador to new worlds will be the needy and greedy adventurer or the ruthless technical expert. They will do as their kind has always done. What that will be if they meet things weaker than themselves, the red man and the black man can tell. If they meet things stronger, they will be, very properly, destroyed.

It is interesting to wonder how things would go if they met an unfallen race. At first, to be sure, they'd have a grand time jeering at, duping, and exploiting its innocence; but I doubt if our half-animal cunning would long be a match for godlike wisdom, selfless valour, and perfect unanimity.

I therefore fear the practical, not the theoretical, problems which will arise if ever we meet rational creatures who are not humans. Against them we shall, if we can, commit all the crimes we have already committed against creatures certainly human but differing from us in features and pigmentation; and the starry heavens will become an object to which good men can look up only with feelings of intolerable guilt, agonized pity, and burning shame.

Of course after the first debauch of exploitation we shall make some belated attempts to do better. We shall perhaps send missionaries. But can even missionaries be trusted?

But let us thank God that we are still very far from travel to other worlds.

I have wondered before now whether the vast astronomical distances may not be God's quarantine precautions. They prevent the spiritual infection of a fallen species from spreading." (pp.88-91).

But even Lewis suggests that if his worst scenario became fact, good Christians and good aliens would stand together against bad men:

"Those who are, or can become, His sons, are our real brothers even if they have shells or tusks. It is spiritual, not biological, kinship that counts.."(p. 91).

Is there a way out of Sartre's existential trap, in which otherness condemns each of us to choose to be either anti-Semite or Jew? Yes; and appropriately enough, it was suggested by a Jewish philosopher, Martin Buber. He believed that we should meet each other not as self and Other but as I and Thou—as God meets each of us. Even among those who do not share his theism, the idea has gained wide currency in recent years. Once I recognize that you are as fully human as I am, it becomes less easy for me to reject or harm you. And it becomes possible for true meeting to take place. It has become commonplace to close discussions of the Holocaust with helpless references to "the mystery of human evil." If we are to be sure it can never happen again, we need to pay more attention to the even older mystery of human love. If we can truly learn to love our brothers, then maybe we can learn to love our neighbors. If we can learn to love our neighbors, then perhaps we can learn to love our enemies. If we can learn to love our enemies, is it possible that we could be friend and brother (or sister) to our spiritual kin in alien form? That would be a final solution to the problem of Otherness to which we could truly aspire.✹

"WATER!"

ACROSS THE RIVER

by Fred Lerner

This has been one of television's great years. American public broadcasters have been showing some fine nonfiction series: THE STORY OF ENGLISH, OUT OF THE FIERY FURNACE, THE DAY THE UNIVERSE CHANGED, THE AFRICANS. I'm watching a lot more television than ever I thought I would, and I don't feel guilty about it. There are some subjects that television can handle far better than print. And the increasingly common practice of co-producing major series among several broadcasting entities makes it possible to put together the money necessary to realise an ambitious project.

All of which brings to mind a notion for such a series that occurred to me a good twenty-five years ago. It was an ambitious concept then, and it's no less ambitious now, even after year upon year full of blockbuster series. For even the most ambitious of today's international productions cover their subject-matter in six to ten hour-long segments. The subject I have in mind could not even begin to be covered in ten hours, and even a hundred would just begin to do the job. But no matter! It's a topic of endless fascination, and it's hardly one that lends itself to the linear treatment characteristic of television documentaries. In fact, it wouldn't really be a documentary series at all, but rather an anthology of individual perspectives on a single though all-encompassing subject: water and its influence on human life.

Sometimes the titles of documentary series get a bit far-fetched. OUT OF THE FIERY FURNACE is certainly a fitting title for a series on metals and man from prehistory to the present, but the program's subject-matter isn't obvious without the subtitle. THE DAY THE UNIVERSE CHANGED explores individual discoveries and concepts that changed man's understanding of the universe. It takes most the first episode for James Burke to get across what he means by that title. Sometimes, of course, titles are self-explanatory: there's no confusion regarding the subject-matter of THE AFRICANS or THE STORY OF ENGLISH. The title of my proposed series is about as straightforward as one can get. I would call it "WATER!"

And what might its subject-matter encompass? Well, the compass, for one thing: the history of navigation, from the first caveman on a fallen log to the way in which space travellers will pattern their voyaging and its governance upon the law and custom of the sea. That would be but one example of the sea as source: a source of food, of course; but also a source of weather, of song, of law. The seas and the seasons—El Niño and the Greenhouse Effect; monsoons and hurricanes; icebergs and desert isles. The Songs of the sea, of merchants and pirates, smugglers and fishermen, exiles and emigrants. The law and custom of the sea, and its spread to outer space.

Not all water is salty. There are tales to tell of the lakes and rivers of the world: Tales of man's search for fresh water, and the wars that have been fought over it. There are tales of peace, as well, tales no less exciting: of bridges and canals and their builders; of flumes and fountains, aqueducts and ice-houses, motorboats and mill ponds. And what of the magnificent edifice of law that the nations of men have raised to govern its use?

Let's not forget the water within us. Our blood is an imitation of seawater, and the tissues of our bodies are made up largely of water. Nor is that the only link between human biology and the sea. Cephalopods and molluscs have nervous systems so much like ours that they are used to study the way the human mind works. And tidal rhythms are suspected of playing some role in the governance of our bodily fluids.

The alchemists of the middle ages sought the Universal Solvent. Little did they know that they were surrounded by their desire; for what solvent in nature or artifice is more persistent and more ubiquitous than plain water? The shape of rock, the texture of soil, the circulation of the air are all the work of two things only: water and time.

So there is no end to this story. Water is everywhere, and everything we are and do shows its effect. We have an infinite number of stories to tell about water, and there's nobody on Earth who can't add his bit to the tale. "WATER!" could well be the ultimate international co-production. Every national television service, every local station, every independent producer in the world, could contribute to the series. And, just as all the rains that fall across the world add their bit to the ocean that girds our planet, so every culture, every nation, every broadcaster on Earth could contribute to a planetwide understanding of what we are and what has made us that way.✹

The Dream Is Dead

ON THE SHOULDERS OF VANGUARD

by Harry J.N. Andruschak

In the wake of the Challanger disaster, the magazine AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY reported that NASA would have to lay off at least 25,000 contractors and support personnel. I was one of those 25,000, mostly because all JPL flight projects have come to a halt, and some may even be cancelled. Ed Meskys wrote and asked if I wanted to do another column, as long as it wouldn't date too badly.

Sure, Ed. No problem. I have a few things I want to get off my chest. What is Fact and what is Fiction?

Well, here is the fiction.

It is from the Matt Helm series of books, written by Donald Hamilton. In book #11, *The Menacers*, Matt Helm is about to be killed, death and destruction will rain down on Mexico, causing war between Mexico and the USA. Pretty grim situation, folks, but first listen to what the Russian agent has to say as she points the gun at Matt:

"That is the great American fallacy, that there is such a thing as an administrator, per se, and that what he chooses to administrate is unimportant. Your schools are run by educators who know nothing of what is taught; your government is run by politicians who know nothing about governing; and now you commit the final absurdity of entrusting the delicate task of international intelligence to a pipsqueak who only knows how to outmaneuver other pipsqueaks for positions of administrative importance."

That was written in 1968 and, of course, Matt Helm foiled the plot.

18 years later no hero came along to stop NASA managers from telling the Solid Rocket Booster engineers to take off their engineering hat and put on their management hat. That was how deep the rot had eaten into NASA. So the managers launched Challenger. Of course nobody will be punished, except for an early retirement or two. Seven people died to uphold the American ideal that Managers are superior to Scientists and Engineers.

It wasn't always like that in NASA. But the problems started in 1969, with the first of the massive budget cuts. Two out of three persons were laid off. To stay on, you had to justify yourself, and who could do that better than the paper-pushers of management? The Scientists and Engineers were laid off; what was left went on to design, build, and operate the shuttle.

Even at the Jet Propulsion Laboratories, we no longer have a Scientist in charge. We have an Air Force General in charge of the lab. He is a great Manager. He has said he has no qualms about terminating the planetary exploration program and having JPL do more work for the Department of Defense. That is a real management decision. And the rot continues. As you may guess, one of the reasons I was laid off is that I am not a Manager. Managers are not being laid off, just Technicians like me, and Scientists, and Engineers.

I would like to be able to write that things will get better because of what happened to Challenger. They won't. Things are going to get worse. And the best proof of that is the fact that President Reagan has brought back James Fletcher to run NASA. Whatever else Fletcher is, he is certainly a Manager.

Fletcher is the man who justified the shuttle to Congress on the grounds that it would reduce the cost of launching to orbit to one-tenth that of the costly, obsolete rockets, or Expendable Launch Vehicles as NASA prefers to call them. He had a point there. We needed, and still need, a low cost system. I cannot argue about that.

But as 1972 passed into 1973 and 1974 and so on and so forth, the tune began to change. The shuttle would launch to orbit about 5 times cheaper than rockets, then twice as cheap, and then the subject was dropped. And so were the rockets. Putting all of NASA's eggs into the shuttle basket, he had to do some creative accounting to conceal the fact that it now cost 50% more to use the shuttle than to use rockets. Good managers are experts at creative accounting.

So here it is 1987, and Fletcher wants to build a replacement shuttle. There is no real need for it. All you NIEKAS readers itching to get to your typers and write to me that we need the shuttle for manned space activities: I agree. But how many shuttles do we really need if the shuttles are used only for those missions where a manned presence in space is essential? Two, with the third as a back-up ready for the next inevitable crash of a shuttle.

So, if it is cheaper to use rockets for most missions, rather then the shuttle, why order a replacement shuttle? Mostly to avoid admitting that the shuttle was a gross mistake, that it has been a burden to NASA, sucking up funds at such a rate that most other NASA programs have been permanantly crippled. Managers do not like to admit that they made a mistake.

That is the main reason the Space Station is being built. It gives the shuttle something to do. More importantly, it gives the managers something to do. The space station has the earmarks of being another financial drain on NASA, a superboondoggle in the sky. A monument to management.

Why? Because it still costs too much to launch to orbit. Even though rockets are much cheaper then the shuttle, they are still too expensive. Fletcher was right about that...we do need to reduce costs of launching to orbit to one-tenth of the current cost. But to do that, we need real Scientists and Engineers in charge of NASA. Not Managers.

As such, I see no hope for NASA in the near future.

And on that sour note I guess I might as well end my column for NIEKAS. It was nice knowing all you folks, but right now I have the Sunday paper to wade through. Got to find someplace willing to hire a 42 year old computer technician laid off by NASA Managers.✹

Farewell to Og, Son of Ug

NIHIL HUMANUM

by John Boardman

> *"The thing to remember about ancient history, and indeed about all past history, is that it relates to men and women of the same species as ourselves. The majority were occupied, as we are, in getting a livelihood, in the day to day battle with nature, in courtship, marriage, and the rearing of children, and, when necessary, in defending themselves against enemies. They knew less than we about the world in which they lived, they had less command over nature, and were less critical than we of tales of the marvelous, but their basic needs were the same as ours."*
>
> **Archibold Robertson, *How to Read History***

This is a comment on a couple of books written by a Scandinavian writer about the people that populated his land many centuries ago, and their interactions with one another and with nature. This author uses his fiction to promote certain ideas of his own about his forebears and about the origins of those great abstractions and institutions which play so great a role in our everyday lives.

Björn Kurtén, who is a member of Finland's Swedish-speaking minority, is chiefly famous as the greatest living authority on the Cenozoic fossils of Europe. His books, *Pleistocene Mammals of Europe*, *Pleistocene Mammals of North America*, *The Cave Bear Story*, and *The Age of Mammals* are informative for specialists and for the public. (One of Kurtén's books, *Not From the Apes*, has not held up so well. Written some 15 or 20 years ago, it claimed that the human stock branched off from the other primates many millions of years ago. Since it was written, new paleontological and genetic evidence indicates that the diversion point may have been no more than some 5 or 6 million years ago.)

In 1980 there appeared two novels on the life of our ancestors at the time when Neanderthalers and humans of the present-day type were interacting with each other in Europe, Kurtén's *Dance of the Tiger* and Jean Auel's *Clan of the Cave Bear*. *Dance of the Tiger* is placed earlier, some 30,000 or 35,000 years ago during a relatively warm interval between the last two glaciations. *Clan of the Cave Bear* is some 20,000 or 25,000 years ago during the last, so far, of the glaciations of an ice age which may or may not be over. (For information on this point see Imbrie and Imbrie, *The Ice Ages*.) That is why *Dance of the Tiger* is set in central Sweden while *Clan of the Cave Bear* opens in the Caucasus Mountains. Since then, Auel's book has had two sequels, *Valley of Horses* and *The Mammoth Hunters*, while this year saw the publication, in English, of *Singletusk* (Kurtén has translated his novels into English.)

Auel's books have been enormously successful and the first one has been filmed. However, they are in my opinion far inferior, both from a scientific and a literary standpoint, to Kurtén's. Auel's books, in fact, remind me of the Og, Son of Ug, school of writing about prehistoric people. This was a style popular in children's books and serials in BOYS' LIFE 40 to 60 years ago. In these books one "cave man" in one lifetime domesticates the dog, discovers the use of fire, leads his people away from the glaciers, and invents monogomy and monotheism. Except that Auel's protagonist is female and there are a lot of oddly lifeless sex scenes, her ponderous volumes are Og, Son of Ug, revisited. (My views are based only on the first two books; I could not get more than a few pages into *The Mammoth Hunters*.)

However, Auel has a streak of mysticism that I find repellant. Her characters, from time to time, have visions extending into the distant past or the distant future which the author clearly intends to be real. By contrast, Kurtén's cave folk may have visions but they are either genuine dreams or the product of some intoxicant. In one of his informative afterwords he explains that every human society known to us has them. It is quite realistic to assume that the use of intoxicants was familiar to our remote ancestors and will be known to our uttermost descendents. The hope of driving them from our society by legislation is utterly futile and has produced and will produce effects far more damaging to society than the use of any intoxicant can be to it.

Both authors deal with the interaction of Neanderthalers with Cro-Magnon types, and with the utter replacement of the former by the latter, humans of our own type. Auel preserves the old Og, Son of Ug picture of Neanderthal folk: brutish, stooped over, inarticulate, crude, and with less

native intelligence than our kind of people. She cannot, however, deny them a rich life of the mind and ritual. Since the Og, Son of Ug type of books first appeared Neanderthaler grave sites have been found with ritual objects accompanying the dead, and flowers strewn over them. The first Neanderthaler remains found were those of an arthritic old man, which froze into popular consciousness the shambling ape-man picture of them. Actually, to judge from the evidence of footprints, people have been walking upright in an essentially modern posture for three or four million years, compared to which even the Neanderthal man is of yesterday.

The question as to whether they could articulate sounds and produce languages as complex as ours is still open and hotly debated. For their own literary purposes both Kurtén and Auel suppose that they could not, though Kurtén's afterword takes up this topic. In most of Europe there is evidence of a sudden transition between the two types. Neanderthal skeletons and artifacts are suddenly replaced by Cro-Magnon skeletons and artifacts with no indications of transitional types. Auel assumes that this points to a war of extermination. Several scientists in this field do so too, but Kurtén, probably animated by strongly anti-war views, has another opinion not involving systematic violent extermination. In what is now Israel, skeletons have been found with both Neanderthal and modern characteristics, and the facial characteristics of the Neanderthalers, small sloping chins, heavy brow ridges, very long skulls, and wide round eyes, are not unknown among us today.

Auel's Neanderthalers are swarthy and hairy. Kurtén's are somewhat more reasonably pale of skin and fair of hair compared to the Cro-Magnons who have just migrated up from the south. The further north you live, the more of a premium there is on a light skin through which the sunlight can enter and produce vitamin D. The Cro-Magnons and Neanderthalers are, respectively, blacks and whites in Kurtén's books, the blacks being approximately the shade of the people of modern India.

In both authors' books half-breeds are scorned by both races. Auel's heroine bears a child after being raped by the son the Neanderthaler chief, and the other Neanderthaler women don't think much of the baby for it can't even hold up its head by itself when newborn.

Of course prejudice against half-breeds is somewhat muted in Auel's books by the fact that her characters don't know what causes babies. It is said that the present-day Australian aborigines were ignorant of this matter until Christian missionaries began to teach it to them. (How can you get people to worship God the Father if they don't know what a father is?) However, could our ice-age forebears have been ignorant of this? Children do, after all, resemble their mothers' mates as well as their mothers. Can the fact that the male makes his entrance at the same place where the child emerges be lost on humans of twenty or thirty thousand years ago? This is certainly the impression of Kurtén's ice-age folk, and it is confirmed, if need be, by the fact that the children of Cro-Magnon and Neanderthalers have features and characteristics of both subspecies. He also makes much of the phenomenon of hybrid vigor.

The hero of his two books is a black chief named Tiger, the tiger here being the now extinct Homotherium, a beast of the sabertooth kindred which had the audacity, intelligence, and strength to prey on nothing less than mammoth. Other characters, both black and white, have names of mammals, birds, or plants.

The villain of *Dance of the Tiger* is the half-breed Shelk. (On the authority of the late Willy Ley I have disputed Kurtén's identification of the shelk as the gigantic Cervid popularly called the Irish elk. Willy said it was a wild stallion of the extinct wild ancestors of our domestic horse called Waldesel in German and *tarpan* in Russian. The name comes from the German schelsch mentioned in *Das Nibelungenlied* as a game beast slain by Siegfried along with elk, bison, and aurochs. [By elk Kurtén means the animal that North Americans call the moose. There are other animal names which Kurtén naturally gives in the European rather than in the American fashion; glutton instead of wolverine, diver instead of loon, and goosander instead of merganser.])

At the end of *Dance of the Tiger* Tiger kills Shelk for the second time, a matter which is explained in the book. Shelk, it seems, is the inventor of one of the most popular and enduring human institutions. An outcast from the tribes of both of his parents, the half-breed collects a group of other blacks and half-breeds and maintains them by raiding both white and black villages and killing everyone who objects. He drills his men so that they may better accomplish these feats and enslaves the captives so they can gather food and herd caribou for his band. Shelk, in short, has invented war.

In *Singletusk* we see that his influence continues after death. He begins to get worked into the mythology of both Neanderthalers and Cro-Magnon. Previously they had believed in "Guardians" of each animal species, who must be propitiated whenever one of their charges is killed. (The guardian of the hyenas has developed into a universal figure of mischief and evil, something like the Loki of the old Norse or the devil of the Christians.)

Now Shelk assumes larger and larger roles in the spiritual life of the blacks. By the end of *Singletusk* it becomes evident that he is on his way to becoming a god as the word is understood by the folk of our time.

War and religion are not the only institutions towards which the characters of Kurtén's novels are heading. In *Singletusk* a female character seems to be inventing prostitution. The Neanderthaler reaction towards the Cro-Magnons is in line with current speculation about human evolution of the neotenic features of the Cro-Magnon. (Stephen Jay Gould, a major exponent of the neotenic theory, wrote a foreword to *Dance of the Tiger*.) The coming decline of the Neanderthaler is seen by Kurtén as a sad necessity of human evolution. This is a great contrast to Auel's savage brutes who will

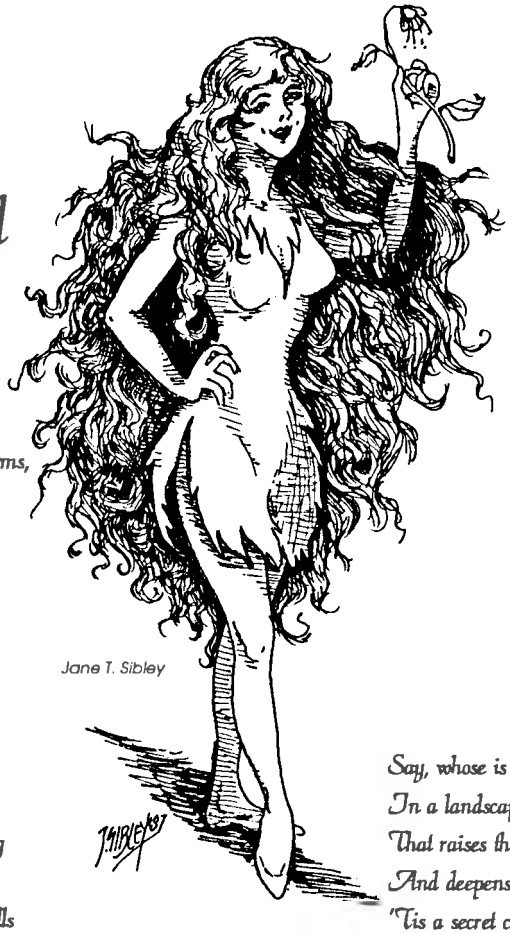
be shoved out of the way by the triumphal march of the tall, blond, clever Cro-Magnon folk.

The dialogue of Kurtén's books, and Auel's as well, is a welcome change from the ungrammatical mumblings in the Og, Son of Ug, school of fiction. Quite sophisticated concepts are developed, but these are also hunter-gatherer peoples living far closer to nature than any of us would care to do, and there are passages in *Singletusk* with a strong gross-out factor: the embarrassed young Neanderthaler woman who, with help from her friends, rids herself of a tapeworm in great detail, or the Cro-Magnon host who offers his guest, as finger food, a nest full of live fledgelings.

But finally, both writers have made serious attempts to tell us what the lives of our forebears might really have been like during the Ice Ages. As you might expect, the best such attempt is by a professional in this field who has already written several nonfiction works on closely related topics.✹

"On me the first effect of her voice was a sudden sharp pang that seemed to pierce through one's very heart. Then came a rushing of burning tears to the eyes, as though one could weep one's soul away for pure delight."—Lewis Carroll

Sylvie's Song of Young Adulthood



Say, what is the spell, when the male bird is cheeping,
'Which lures the drab female to nest?
Or wakes the tired woman, whose lover is weeping,
To console and to salve him to rest?
What's the magic that charms the sad male in her arms,
Till his ego will feel like a vex?
'Tis a secret, and so let us whisper it low—
And the name of the secret is Sex!
For I think it is Sex,
For I feel it is Sex,
For I'm sure it is nothing but Sex!

Say, whence is the voice, when their anger is burning,
'Bids the whirl of their tempest to cease?
That stirs the vexed souls with an aching—a yearning
For more than a hand-grip of peace?
Whence the music that fills all their being—that thrills
Around them, beneath, and betwixt?
'Tis a secret: none knows how it comes, how it goes:
'But the name of the secret is Sex!
For I think it is Sex,
For I feel it is Sex,
For I'm sure it is nothing but Sex!

*Say, whose is the skill that paints tower and *ghyll*,*
In a landscape so fair to the sight?
That raises the tower till it's swelling with power,
And deepens the valley its height?
'Tis a secret conveyed in some dreams unto Freud—
Exciting's the power of its lex—
'Tis a vision that's clear for the analyst here,
And the name of the secret is Sex!
For I think it is Sex,
For I feel it is Sex,
For I'm sure it's nothing but Sex!

by Joe R. Christopher

A Doubting David

TAPE FROM TORONTO

by David Palter

An element of mysticism has appeared in NIEKAS recently ["Climbing the Tree of Life", Patterns & Notes from Elfhill, Diana L. Paxson, NIEKAS 34]. This arose most specifically with respect to the Kabbalah, but also applies to other areas. In its broadest sense, mysticism includes all forms of magic, the occult, the spiritual, the supernatural, and the divine. Some forms of mysticism enjoy an excellent reputation—it is always socially acceptable and usually considered quite admirable to believe in God, particularly if your concept of God conforms fairly well to the ancient Judeo-Christian tradition. Less popular forms of mysticism are derided as forms of superstition or cultism, and are considered to be ignorant at best, and possibly indications of insanity.

The defining characteristic of mysticism is the principle that thought, rather than being just another aspect of reality, is a superior level of reality which can, under the right conditions, determine any other aspect of reality. The best example of this is the belief that God created the universe; God is thought to have accomplished this by will alone, rather than, let us say, by physically importing some materials from some other universe, and arranging them to His liking with the help of extra large construction equipment—in other words, the creation was an act of magic, not engineering. Once you accept the idea that the very existence of the universe is the result of magic, you can never entirely dismiss the many other forms of magic, even down to the lowly Voodoo doll or crystal ball. Magic could crop up anywhere. The more sophisticated mystic, however, in many cases regards God as a unique magical force in a universe which otherwise functions in a very dependable manner in accordance with physical law. The precise origin of these physical laws remains unknown, but wherever they come from, they describe aspects of reality that do not bend in accordance with thought—no magical incantation will counteract the law of gravity—and hence form the basis of a non-mystical world view. Of course the consistently non-mystical individual does not believe in God, either.

Many mystical systems, such as the Kabbalah, attempt to manipulate and explain reality through symbolism. This follows from the principle that thought controls reality, since symbolism is a potent means of organizing thought.

Well, symbolism does organize thought—but does it directly influence reality? Some people think so. Diana Paxson noted that her water bed flooded while she was studying Yesod, the Kabbalastic principle of water, and she states that this was an unexpected result of her studies, so that we are not to interpret it as a mere coincidence. A flood was invoked magically, if accidentally. We might extrapolate the conclusion that a more adept magician could cause such things at will, rather than by accident, and might have very considerable powers indeed. This would be very exciting, if true, and might inspire many of us to pursue some form of mysticism by which we could gain supernatural power. Of course, there also exist other reasons to study mysticism. Even if totally fictitious, the various mystical systems in existence are fascinating examples of human imagination and creativity, as well as having played a large role in shaping world culture and history. But the desire for personal power is a more persuasive motive.

I made a very determined effort myself, using the mystical system of my choice, Scientology. This effort was clearly a failure. It might be argued that I had simply chosen the wrong system. To be certain of my findings, I should try everything. I don't feel it's necessary. Even trying one system was not truly necessary.

Mysticism is not that hard to evaluate. The results are plain to see, exhibited for all who are capable of seeing past their preconceptions.

There are innumerable ways to simulate a mystical result. There is sleight of hand. There is the vaguely worded prediction which after the fact can be interpreted in the most favorable way. One can cast a curse on someone and produce an actual illness resulting from the victim's anxiety about having been cursed. Similarly, magical cures will sometimes result from the mere belief that one has been cured. This is actually psychosomatic medicine, not magic. I won't attempt to catalog the full range of simulated magic. But there is a lot, and people are convinced by it that magic is real. Then some people assume that magic must be real, because so many other people believe in it. Another good way to acquire a belief in magic is to use hallucinogenic drugs; then by confusing hallucination with reality, you

find yourself to be living in a world where anything can happen. Unfortunately it is only your mind, but not reality, which has become marvelously mutable.

There are coincidences, lucky guesses, assorted oddities which are not that inexplicable. With billions of people undergoing the assorted accidents of life, some of those accidents are going to look awfully funny. But it doesn't make them magical. They are part of an expected statistical distribution.

Close and objective observation has never verified a single case of clear and unmistakable magic--not one. It just doesn't happen.

Science is not in that position. Every phenomenon whose existence is asserted by science (even the controversial phenomenon of evolution) can be easily demonstrated and seen. That's why science is so useful. You don't have to nave faith in science, you only have to observe what is before you. Imagine how scientists—or the public—would react to the claim that a wonderful new machine has been invented, which inexplicably is never built. Such claims are greeted with skepticism. But mystics can claim anything they like, offering no evidence, and some people will believe them.

Bill Rotsler

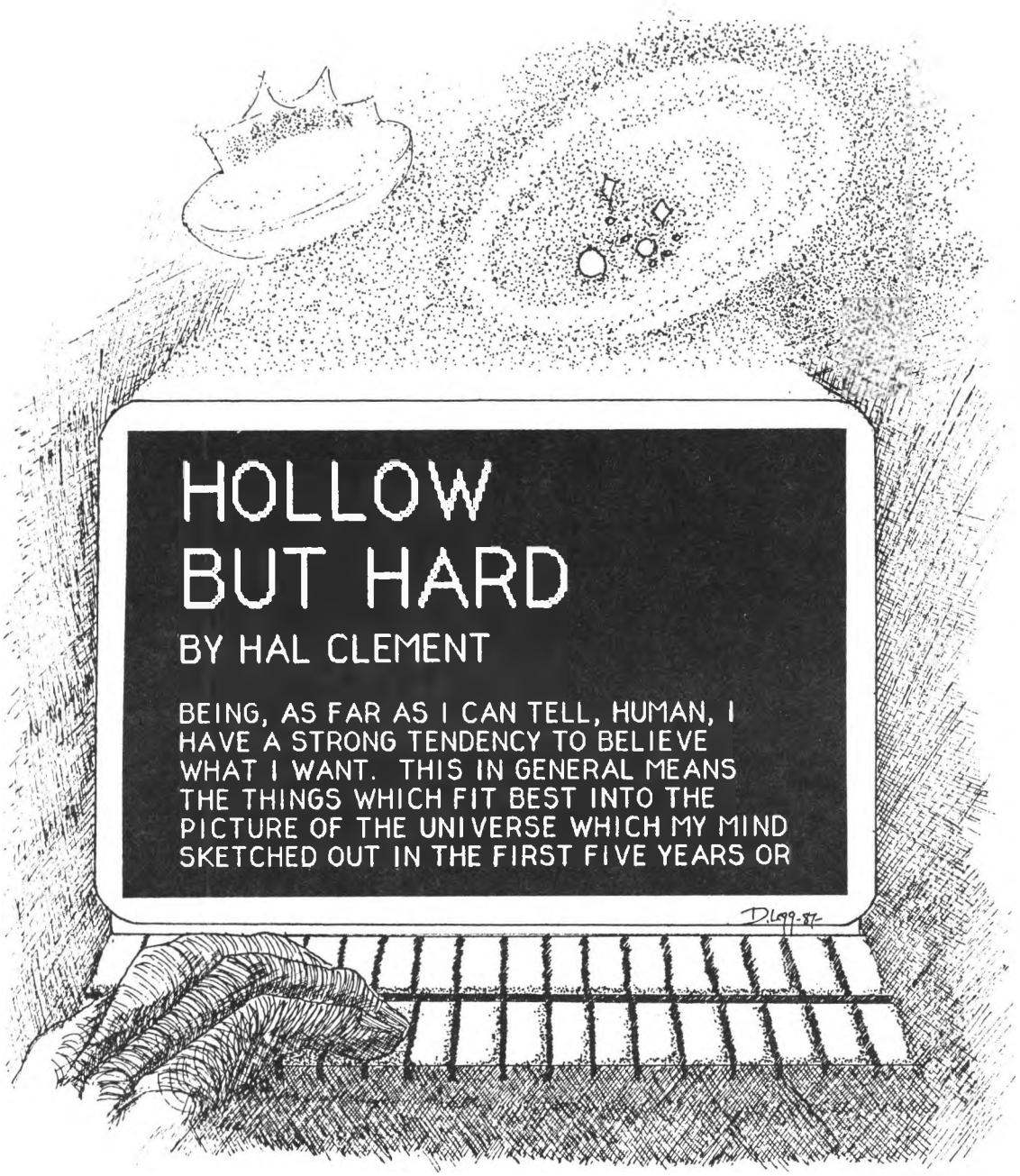
Mysticism is very seductive. It contains some very beautiful fantasies, and it is very satisfying to believe them. They make the world more meaningful, more exciting, filled with mystery, the awesome workings of supernatural powers, and best of all, the promise that you too can transcend reality, gain immortality, experience miraculous cures, etc. The promises are great. The delivery is non-existent.

Many of you will not believe my skeptical assessment of mysticism, and some (as I know from sad experience) will e en conclude that I have some evil motive for preventing others from achieving spiritual growth. To you devoted mystics I would like to say please do continue your mystical pursuits. Do, by all means, practice the Kabbalah, tarot, astrology, witchcraft, or whatever you choose. I won't even object if you also use illegal drugs. I wish you success! Nothing would tickle me more than for someone someday to achieve sufficient mystical power to be able to demonstrate clearly and with no trickery, that there really is some truth to the mystical approach. When that happens I will return to mystical pursuits myself. Until then I remain skeptical.

Another subject which I wish to bring to your attention is the release of a new record album by Phil Ochs, ten years after his death. The album, *A Toast to Those Who Are Gone*, consists of fourteen previously unreleased recordings from the archives of Michael Ochs, Phil's brother. Of these, twelve are from Phil's early period, stylistically resembling the material in his first two albums, and two are from his middle period, resembling his fourth and fifth albums. The songs are extremely good, particularly "The Song of My Returning" which compares well even to Phil's best work. The album is indispensable for any Ochs fan, and recommended to any folk music enthusiast even if previously unacquainted with Ochs. The album is available from Rhino Records, 1201 Olympic Blvd., Santa Monica CA 90404. Some readers of NIEKAS may wonder what relevance this news item can have to the concerns of an SF fanzine. The answer is: not too much. Nonetheless, I feel that this is an important piece of news which is worth mentioning, even in an unlikely context. But let me try to tie it in a bit. Filk music is a legitimate SFnal concern, and many of you are interested in it. One of the major filk singers is Leslie Fish. She is a Phil Ochs fan, and her personal musical style has clearly been influenced by him. If you like Leslie Fish, you will certainly like Phil Ochs as well. Phil Ochs himself, alas, never did any actual filk music, although Leslie Fish and I agree that he could have been a superb filk singer, if he had wanted to. That opportunity is gone for ever. But the music of Phil Ochs lives on.

Now just to show that I am really capable of sercon fannishness, let me discuss a recent fantasy novel, *The Serpent Mage* by Greg Bear. This is a sequel to *The Infinity Concerto*, and concludes the story. These two novels form one of the most exquisite and beautifully wrought fantasies ever written. In fact, I personally would rate it as being second only to the immortal *The Lord of the Rings*.

The most remarkable aspect of this novel is that it elegantly solves the immensely tangled and seemingly hopeless problems which are brought about in the first book. Greg Bear has a wonderfully deft touch. His fictional concepts make so much sense that they are totally plausible. The most impressive example of this is his interpretation of the Samuel Taylor Coleridge poem, "Kubla Khan." Although his explanation makes sense only in the context of his fantasy, it still makes such perfect sense that you know that no better explanation will ever be possible. Furthermore, this weird intellectual game plays a vital role in the plot. This is one of those literary inventions whose delightful ingenuity justifies the existence of the entire genre of speculative fiction. But beyond that, you will care for the protagonist, Michael Perrin, and you will care about the struggles of the human and non-human characters, and when you get through it you will be deeply satisfied. And you will want to read it again.✹



Debbie Rivero

so of my life and has been filling in with ever-increasing detail the ensuing sixty. Luckily I had some scientific training quite early, so "believe" does not mean quite the same thing to me that it does to a religious fundamentalist. I "believe" in the electron, in biological evolution, and in the near-sphericity and heliocentric motion of the earth not in any sense of regarding them as inviolable truths which it would be sin to doubt (I don't consider that doubting is ever a sin) but rather that each of these theories is the most detailed and coherent explanation so far offered for an overwhelming body of observational material.

I like to think that if better theories were offered in the place of any of them, I would listen to them tolerantly. I am not at all sure that I could really be this objective; I am getting well out on the wrong side of middle age, and while I am consciously trying to fight the phenomenon, I don't suppose for a moment that I am immune to intellectual fossilization. As admitted above, I am human.

My "hard" science fiction, in other words, has reasonably valid planetary and spacecraft orbits, but also includes faster than light travel—though I have little real hope that Einstein will actually turn out to be that far wrong. I would be very unlikely to use Atlantis or the Bermuda triangle as a story theme, since I consider that the former originated merely as an allegory and the latter as yellow journalism; but am quite willing to create intelligent characters representing a very wide variety of bodily shapes and biochemistries. It does seem very probable to me, however, that there are a lot of ways of building the highly complex self-replicating chemical machines we call life forms.

This attitude of being guided by what I think we "know" does not, believe it or not, restrict the possible number of story ideas; it frequently supplies them. My *doubt* about the feasibility of artificial gravity was largely responsible for my designing the planet Mesklin in *Mission of Gravity*. I did the calculating in the early 1950s before slide rules grew buttons, thereby giving the MIT Science Fiction Society the opportunity of amusing itself by finding many errors once its members could steal enough computer time, but this does not override the fact that the calculations provided an environment in which a lot of logical but hard-to-foresee events could happen.

I may sometimes

look foolish to specialists here and to religious extremists there, but I have never had a crescent moon rising in the east at sunset, had a character light fires with a short-sighted person's spectacle lens (unsilvered), or tried to bring realism to a scene aboard a deeply submerged World War II *Unterseeboot* by referring to the thud of Diesels in the background. I say nothing about my social-science blunders; I avoid talking politics.

During Noreason 2, in 1981 if my memory is moderately reliable, I was on a planet-building panel—not an unusual situation. I recall few if any of the details, but at one point must have expressed my disbelief in Pellucidar-type hollow worlds (this in no way implies disrespect for the story-telling abilities of the late Edgar Rice Burroughs; but he wasn't much of a scientist. I would judge that his oft-stated acceptance of evolution *was* essentially religious).

My disbelief was on two grounds: an Earth-sized world which was a shell only five hundred miles thick, as Burroughs (and others, more recently and apparently more seriously) described ours, would collapse under its own gravity—no trilobite would ever have gotten around to stamping its foot; and I could not see how such an object could ever form naturally (having it made supernaturally, or even by the Arisians, is a literary cop-out, I submit).

A few weeks later I got a letter from Lester delRey, who has been writing science fiction longer than I have and was famous when I was still a juvenile fan (well, fairly juvenile). Lester's fondness for argument, which he readily admits (brags about?), resembles my liking for finding holes in "of course" statements. Lester, bless him, suggested a plausible way in which a hollow planet might form naturally.

Now, "plausible" means, at least to a first approximation and to me, *intuitively* reasonable. I learned some decades ago not to trust my intuition on quantitative matters (predicting out loud that jets are unlikely to be practical as commercial aircraft because of their high fuel demands is non-habit forming). I have to calculate, and even after I've done that I feel safer if someone else checks the arithmetic. Anyone who has bought stock in a perpetual motion machine has probably not learned this. I therefore began calculating as many of the aspects of the whole question as I could.

The nice, straightforward ones were questions of just how big a hollow planet and its central opening could be, without gravitational collapse. Clearly (intuitively!) a Mount Washington sized asteroid of granite or sandstone could be hollowed out, since self-gravitation is clearly far weaker than the interatomic forces holding it in shape. Still, there has to be a limit somewhere. At the time I possessed only an HP-41 programmable calculator, but it proved possible even with this to make a reasonable attack on the problem. I am (or was until recently; I have just retired) a high school science teacher rather than an astronomer because I am not much of a mathematician. No doubt what I wanted could have been done elegantly and quite directly if I had remembered more of my calculus, but numerical integration sufficed (I repeated the work with ten meter increments after acquiring a real computer, and got essentially the same results). I assigned a density to the material and took it in successive hollow shells, figuring the load increase with depth integrating between various outer and inner radii. I expressed the answer in terms of how deep a hole would have to be drilled on Earth, under one normal gravity, to get the same compressive load as that on the inner surface of the hollow sphere.

Specifically, a shell made of material twice the density of water, with an outer radius of a thousand kilometers and a thickness of only a hundred, turns out to have about the same compressive load at its inner surface as the rock at the bottom of a 27-kilometer deep hole in Earth's crust. Many years ago, I read in some unremembered article that the limit for well drilling without losing to rock flow was about thirty miles—fifty kilometers or so. I don't vouch for this—I have spent a good deal of time in the last few years trying to find data on the rate of creep of various kinds of rock under various pressures, without any real success. Engineers don't seem to be planning for hundred thousand year periods. However, it seemed like a reasonable (intuition again!) figure. I repeated the calculation for various outer radii and shell thicknesses, as well as different densities (the intuitive idea that stress was directly proportional to density seemed to be right), to give myself an idea of how the rules of the game worked. Figure 1 is a copy of the resulting graphs for the original density of 2.0 kg/liter. The five curves are for different outer radii as labelled, the abscissa is shell thickness, and the ordinate equivalent hole depth under one Earth gravity, all in kilometers.

(I enclose a copy of the listing of the program used. It is in IBM BASICA; as used, it was compiled for the 8087 high-speed arithmetic coprocessor, making it possible to use 10-meter shell elements and still finish in reasonable time. It started with a 1000 km outer radius, printed out the load for shell thicknesses at 50 km intervals, and started over with successively smaller outer radii when it had taken the first batch down to 100 km. It then started over with the next density.)

Clearly (intuitively!) compressive load is not the whole story; if it were, the thinnest shells would be most stable. One also has to worry about bending stresses applied in a variety of ways, perhaps the most obvious being tidal forces. I evaded this question, I fear; I arranged for my planet to be the only one in the system, to have no satellites, to be a long way out from its sun, and to have a very slow rotation rate. I also gave it a very thick shell compared to the outer radius.

The admittedly arbitrary—except that they were chosen to keep me out of trouble, as outlined above—figures were: outer radius, 1473 km; inner radius, 637 km; thickness therefore 836 km. I dropped the assumed density to 1.73 kg/liter, to allow for the sponginess I wanted in an essentially silicate body.

The Hard Facts

"Hole" Program

```
*10 LPRINT "The following tables list the inner and outer radii of hollow"
020 LPRINT "worlds of specified density, and the depth of a hole on earth"
030 LPRINT "at which the rock stress would be the same."
050 CLS: KEY OFF
060 DEFDBL D,G,L,M,R
070 PRINT CHR$(27);"q,5,$";
075 FOR D=2 TO 3 STEP .2
080 LPRINT "Average shell density ";D;"kilograms/liter"
090 LPRINT TAB (3) "Outer Radius"TAB(20)"Inner Radius"TAB(37)"Earth Depth"
100 LPRINT  TAB(7)"(Km)"TAB(24)"(Km)"TAB(46)"(Km)"
110 FOR I=0 TO 18
120 FOR J=0 TO 18-I
130 L=0
140 RO=1000-(I*50)
145 R=RO
150 RI=RO-50-(J*50)          'inner radius of shell
160 M=D*((RO/6367)'3-(RI/6367)'3)/5.52       'mass of material farther in
170 G=M/((RO6367)*2)      'gravity in earth g's at current depth
180 L=L+.01*G        'load on rock equivalent to depth in Earth
190 RO=RO-.01
200 IF RO>RI THEN 160     'continue loop until down to inner radius
210 LPRINT USING "5 spaces ####.";R,
220 LPRINT USING "       13 sp.       ###.";RI,
230 LPRINT USING "              15 sp.      #.########";L
240 NEXT J
250 NEXT I
260 NEXT D
270 END
```

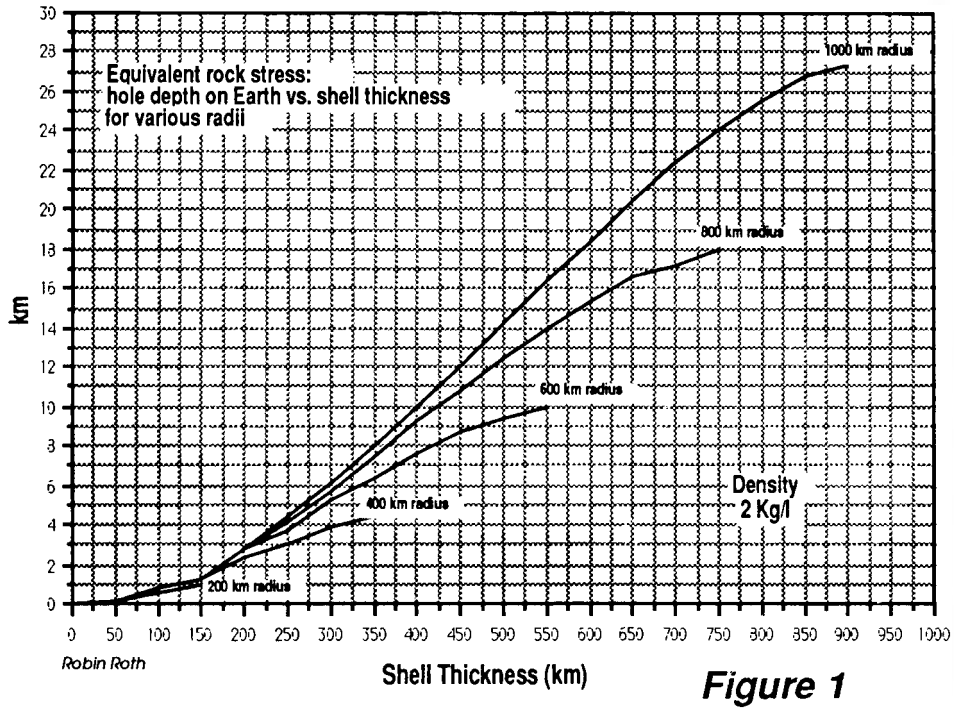


Figure 1

First Page of "Hole" Printout

The following tables list the inner and outer radii of hollow worlds of specified density, and the depth of a hole on earth at which the rock stress would be the same.

Average shell density: 2 kilograms/liter

Outer Radius (Km)	Inner Radius (Km)	Earth Depth (Km)
1000	950	0.206D+00
1000	900	0.797D+00
1000	850	0.173D+01
1000	800	0.296D+01
1000	750	0.445D+01
1000	700	0.615D+01
1000	650	0.802D+01
1000	600	0.100D+02
1000	550	0.121D+02
1000	500	0.142D+02
1000	450	0.164D+02
1000	400	0.184D+02
1000	350	0.204D+02
1000	300	0.223D+02
1000	250	0.240D+02
1000	200	0.255D+02
1000	150	0.267D+02
1000	100	0.277D+02
1000	50	0.282D+02
950	900	0.206D+00
950	850	0.794D+00
950	800	0.172D+01
950	750	0.294D+01
950	700	0.440D+01
950	650	0.607D+00
950	600	0.789D+01
950	550	0.982D+01
950	500	0.118D+02
950	450	0.139D+02
950	400	0.159D+02
950	350	0.178D+02
950	300	0.196D+02
950	250	0.213D+02
950	200	0.227D+02
950	150	0.240D+02
950	100	0.249D+02
950	50	0.255D+02
900	850	0.206D+00
900	800	0.790D+00
900	750	0.171D+01
900	700	0.291D+01
900	650	0.435D+01
900	600	0.598D+01
900	550	0.775D+01
900	500	0.961D+01
900	450	0.115D+02
900	400	0.134D+02
900	350	0.153D+02
900	300	0.171D+02
900	250	0.187D+02
900	200	0.201D+02
900	150	0.213D+02
900	100	0.223D+02
900	50	0.228D+02

The question of atmosphere fit into that of age. Presumably the evaporating comet ices (see origin, below) would provide gas for a while, given an appropriate temperature range—which in turn was settled by my arbitrary distance from the sun. The real questions are (a) composition, and (b) is it still there, considering the low mass of the body? I am assuming the planet is young enough so it hasn't lost all the gas—in fact, there could conceivably be solid ice still somewhere inside. The composition would presumably be that of any reasonable mixture of comet ices raised above their boiling point. I made it so.

And wrote part of the story.

And realized I had committed a chemical sin. Two of the gases in the mixture, ammonia and carbon dioxide, are thermodynamically unstable in each other's presence—not as bad as hydrogen and chlorine, or even hydrogen and oxygen, but they'd react to form a solid, ammonium carbamate (not carbonate).

I had calculated the temperature, pressure, and atmospheric density all the way from the center, through the spongy shell, to several hundred kilometers above the outer surface on the basis of the molecular weight and constant-pressure specific heat of the original mixture (a different but similar computer program). Theoretically, the limiting reactant of that mixture shouldn't be there. I had a writing choice: eliminate the limiting member of the reacting pair from the mixture and do the calculation over on whatever is left (actually, it would only have involved sticking slightly different constants into the same program), or think of some reason why things might be reversed, so that we have in effect a mixture representing an equilibrium between competing reactions. This is not unheard of; the grossly unstable oxygen exists in our own atmosphere in considerable concentration, if I need an excuse.

As I said somewhere above, the hard science supplies ideas; it doesn't really restrict them. You can guess which I did.

None of this, of course, touches on the delRey process of hollow world formation; it merely assumes the phenomenon has occurred. The scenario is much less easy to attack quantitatively than the result. Essentially, what Lester suggested was that an ice body like Pluto or a Saturn satellite had formed by whatever normal means they do form; that this had subsequently been covered with silicate material, as a Terrestrial body would be; and that the radioactive heat generated in the silicates had eventually vaporized out the ice core.

There are, of course, some improbabilities and questions involved here. An ice body must aggregate pretty far from its sun, a silicate one much farther in. Something must happen to perturb the orbit of the ice body heavily but not too often; this one had to stay in the ice-accretion zone long enough to reach respectable size before moving inward to the Terrestrial planet region. Assuming that the system in question is a wide binary pair with a quite eccentric relative orbit for the two stars (the usual state of affairs, after all) makes this a plausible if not at all certain sequence of events. The inward perturbation would not cause an orbit wholly inside the silicate-dust zone, but a rather cometary one; and at least at first, relative velocities between ice body and silicate grains would be very high. Impacts would boil off a lot of ice—or all of it.

I got around that with the assumption, still reasonable I think, that the boiling would produce an extensive if temporary atmosphere. Silicate grains entering this would match velocities as micrometeoroids do in our gas envelope even now, and most of the kinetic energy difference could radiate off into space. If the thickening silicate shell did warm up a little too much at times, there were always the long periods around apoapsis, when the planet was moving slowly in the outer part of its orbit and certainly far enough from the star to be, on the average, losing heat. It could be picking up comet nuclei—ice bodies—in this region, too; many of these collisions would be *fairly* slow, especially if still cushioned by an extensive atmosphere.

None of this lent itself to really quantitative analysis, but I was able to convince myself that the silicate shell could not only be accumulated around the ice core but could incorporate smaller ice bodies which would provide more ammonia, methane, and water when they liquefied, and even carbon dioxide if the pressure were high enough. This should justify the hope that ordinary chemistry would result in the silicate shell's *consolidating* in the geological sense of the term—that is, what had started as pretty fine sediment could reasonably become pretty hard sedimentary rock.

In other words, the various weaknesses in the original delRey scenario could all be patched without, I think, sounding too much like a creationist—though I certainly grant that what I wanted to believe was allowed weight all through the argument. The overall theory involves a rather improbable concatenation of events, but I don't see it as really impossible. After a few years of finding holes in his scenario and plugging them myself, I admitted to Lester that I owed him a hollow planet story.

There is, of course, a difference between a background and a plot, a difference which really forces itself on the attention once a contract has been signed. A plot involves events happening to characters. The background may provide a lot of possible events, but characters have to be invented independently. To me, the terms "plot" and "problem set" are practically synonymous; characters may be defined as the conscious beings who are motivated to solve the problems. (I have grasped that my attitude on this point is not universal among either writers or teachers of literature.)

Now, I have admitted my age, earlier in this essay. I am a member of something called First Fandom, which means I was involved with science fiction during the Golden Years of the 1930s, when the climax of a story was much more likely to involve chemical than psycho analysis. I *like* strange environments, and alien intelligences with strange personalities and stranger physiques and biochemistries.

But the hollow world has some sharp restrictions. Because of the uncertainty of creep rate, I felt forced to make it very young—a million or two years, leaving this in no doubt by making it the planet of an O-type supergiant which could not be very old either. The other star in the system was similar in type, mass, and luminosity; most of the material which might have formed planets had been either perturbed out of the system altogether by story time or accumulated by my planet—remember, I wanted no tidal stresses. I could not reasonably, therefore, give my world native life, however tempting this might be to a First Fandom type.

But this was all right. If my characters were all explorers visiting the place, there was all the more justification for having them represent a variety of species. Having several intelligent types native to a given planet is a bit of a strain anyway, though I expect to do it some day; it's an interesting challenge. Wait and see.

There remains the problem, admitted by many authors but not too well resolved, of having several intelligent types from different planets. The Drake equation lets us believe in lots of planets and lots of life forms, but it's a bit harder to justify a large number of them in approximately the same technological state of development during the same era in the same galactic neighborhood. Doc Smith's suggestion that all the planetary systems started at about the same time is no longer acceptable, and involves the additional assumption that evolution to intelligence always takes about the same length of time regardless of planet type. The notion that a single early group did a lot of relatively recent seeding is usable, but hard to apply to worlds of widely varying biochemistries. What we need is a technique for such species *finding* each other.

Murray Leinster, many years ago in his "First Contact," made what I consider the key suggestion here, though as far as I know he never followed it up. He had a human and an alien exploring ship meet while examining the Crab Nebula. This is an object peculiar enough and luminous enough to attract attention from technologically skilled beings over a respectable fraction of the galaxy. I have taken the liberty for some years now of referring to such objects as "Leinster Sites," and suggesting that these are places where we might reasonably expect to find other star-faring races—assuming that faster than light travel is indeed possible and that a reasonable number of such species do exist in our Milky Way.

The specific one I chose for this book is the Eta Carinae area. If you want a good, detailed description, I refer you to *Maffei's Monsters in the Sky*; but checking back numbers of SKY & TELESCOPE or ASTRONOMY magazine, or any of several books on Milky Way structure, should be helpful. Just what Eta Carinae is is still in dispute, but it seems to be a star or cluster of stars whose apparent brightness as seen from here has varied widely in the last century and a half; there is a lot of interstellar gas and dust concentrated around the variable light source; and it *may* be a star-birth region. Beyond much doubt my O-type supergiants could be in the vicinity without violating any observational evidence.

For story purposes, I am assuming that there is not only a research station but a full-grown university spread over the planets of a red dwarf binary system in the neighborhood, with several hundred differing species represented. Until humanity arrived fairly recently, it was taken for granted among these beings that life was unlikely or impossible near any star hotter than about K8 because of the hard radiation; human beings are still regarded as a bit bizarre (the implication that most life develops near red dwarf suns would also make even more understandable the apparent fact that we haven't had any interstellar visitors yet—I assume the average s-f fan doesn't take von Däniken very seriously).

For story purposes, this has let me assemble an interesting cast. One, of course, is human—I am, after all, writing for a human readership. One other is humanoid. Two have a comparable similarity to each other but to none of the rest; the fifth looks, I confess, like an overgrown Mesklinite.

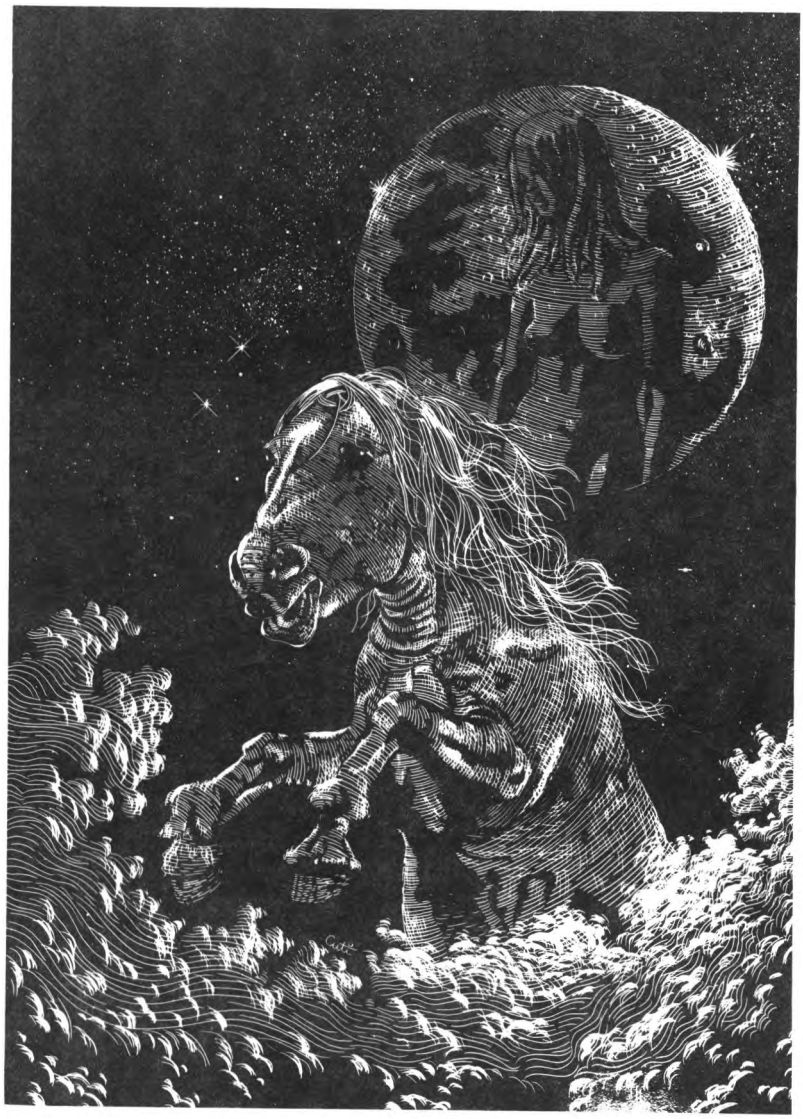
Three are female, two male (I think sexual reproduction is probably *nearly* universal among advanced species, because of its contribution to evolution. I consider more than two sexes very unlikely because of the vastly increased difficulty, which it seems to me would go up exponentially with the number of sexes, of getting the essential gametes together). Two are oxygen breathers, two don't breathe at all, and one breathes nitrosyl chloride. All but the human being have ammonia-based body fluids. The general idea has been to provide reasons for the group to split into uneven us-and-them sections on a variety of different grounds, with intelligence fighting possible emotional drives. Whether I've actually done it believably you'll have to read *Still River* to decide. I have not deliberately allowed blatant racism or sexism to come in, but some readers will take for granted that no human male of my age could avoid being influenced by his upbringing, which would have to be that of an MCP. They may, of course, be right. It will be interesting to see whether they can supply observational support from the book for the thesis.

The title *Still River*, by the way, like *Mission of Gravity*, has a secondary meaning relevant to the plot; but if you think I'm going to tell you what it is, guess again.

My five graduate students are doing a lab exercise: why does this low-mass planet have such a dense atmosphere?

What they find out is, I still think, "plot" within a reasonable definition of the term. Also, some of my characters are reasonably well motivated—if keeping alive counts.

But read it critically; I wouldn't ask anyone to do otherwise. The word "Gospel" is a nice figure of speech, but I don't expect it to apply to anything I write or say—or anything else I'm familiar with. Doubt is a nice, healthy state of mind, and makes for proper exercise of the imagination. It can also provide *you* with story ideas.✹



JESTAHIT

2.

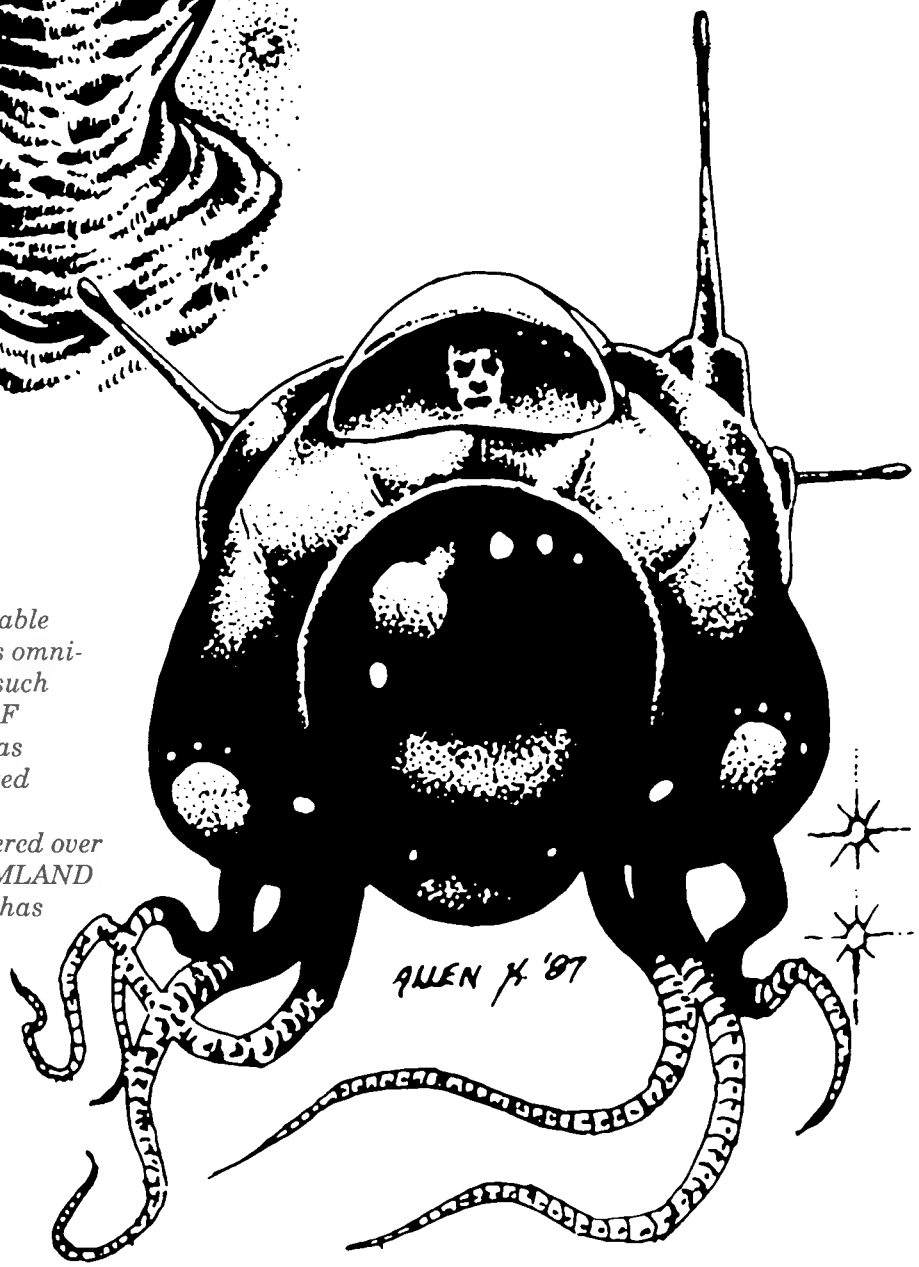
Robert H. Knox

We begin with the most welcome return of ***Nick Cuti*** *to our pages: two more examples of his intriguing scratchboard technique. Now living in California, Nick has contributed work to the magazines TWILIGHT ZONE, AMAZING STORIES, ALFRED HITCHCOCK, and others...and, for those who missed them, Nick's folio and cover in NIEKAS 33 are well worth a look.*

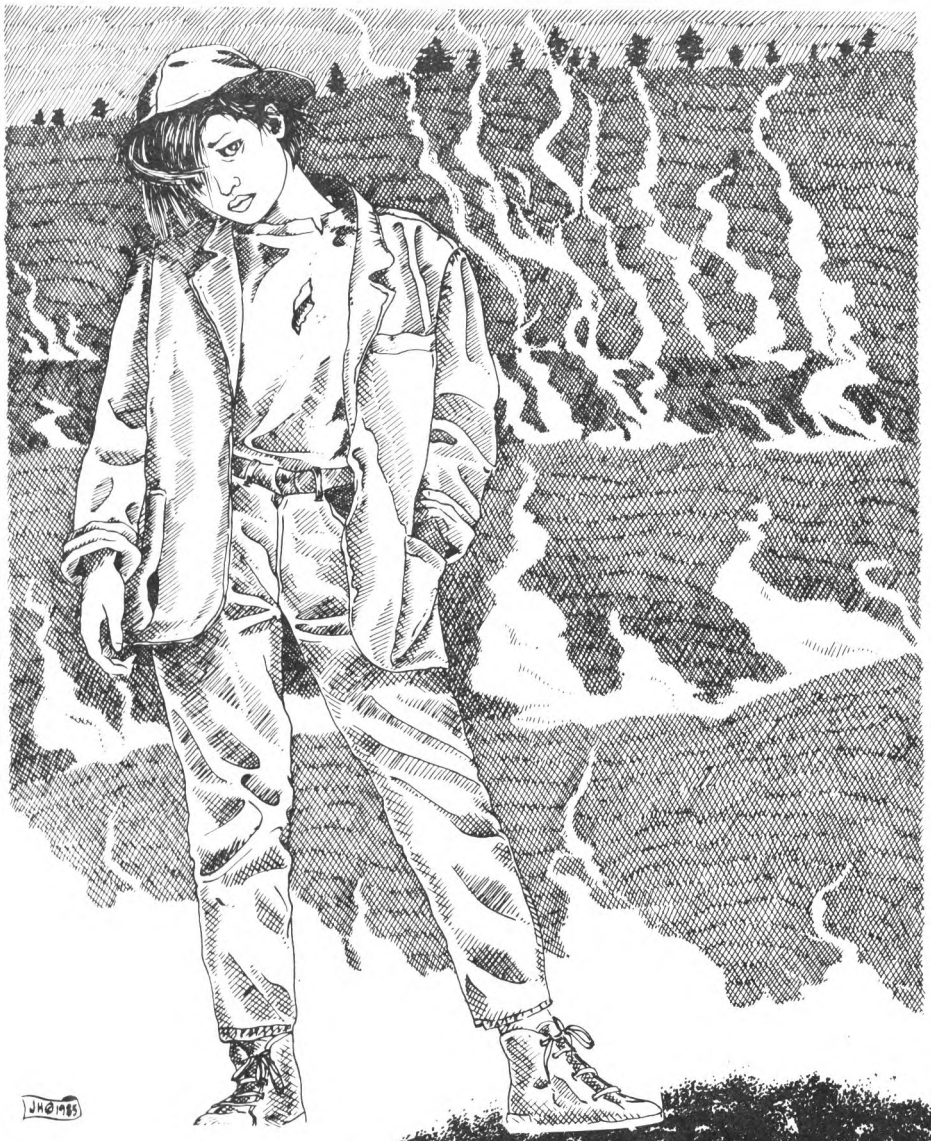
Next Page: (cockwise from right)
Two by ***Brad Foster****, Hugo winner for 1987's Best Fan Artist. This is the first appearance of Brad's work in NIEKAS, and we hope to bring you much more in the future.*

New Jersey Illustrator ***Judith Holman*** *contributed the* Swine-Things *and the* Storm Orphan*: examples of two very different but equally effective styles from the same artist.*

We encourage new art submissions for this column and NIEKAS in general. Spot placement illos of a miscellaneous nature are very useful. Send good quality reproductions in place of originals when possible.

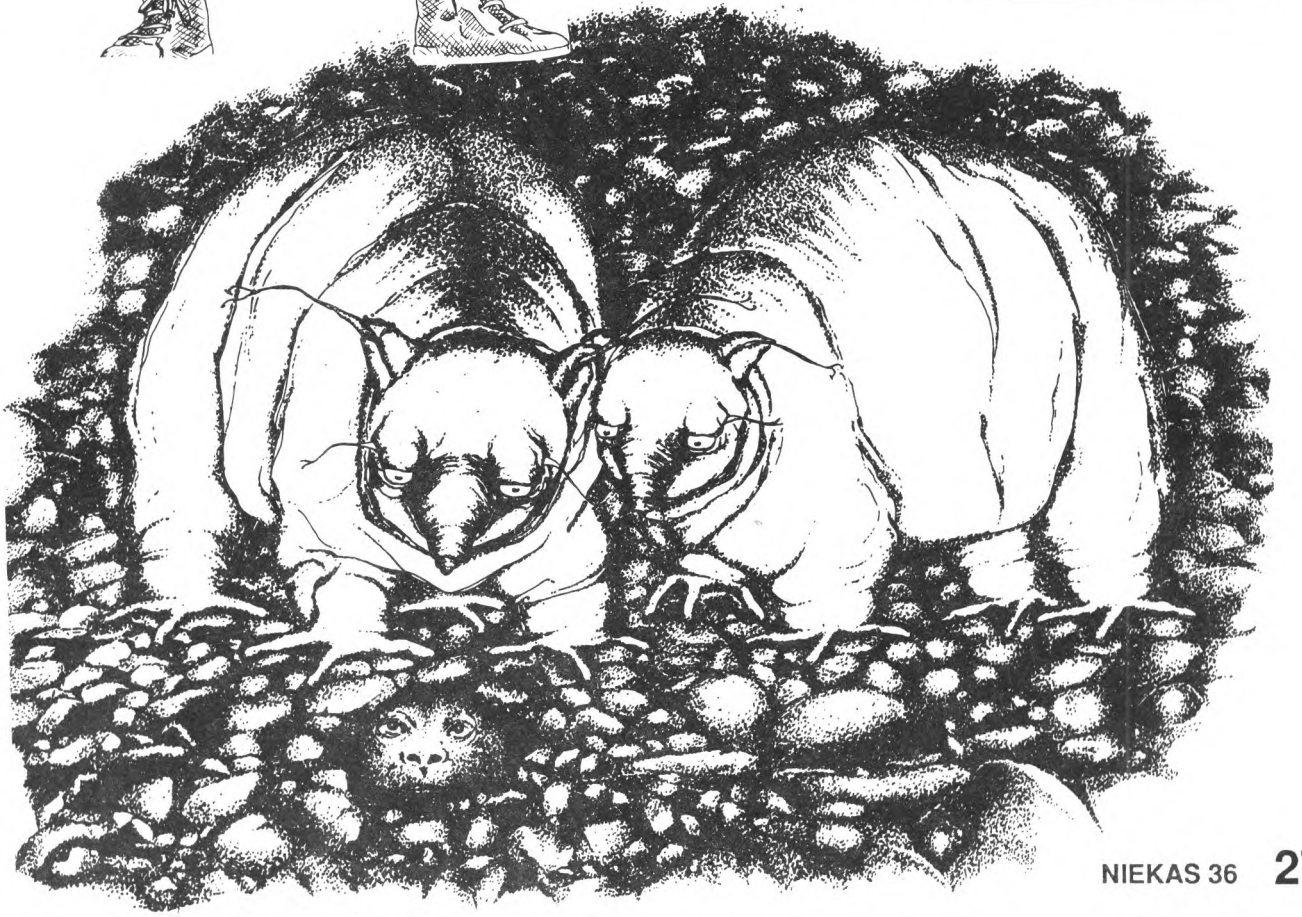


This Page: Two from the redoubtable ***Allen Koszowski****, whose work is omnipresent these days, especially in such Dark Fantasy zines as CRYPT OF CTHULHU and WEIRDBOOK, as well as Gary Svehla's film-oriented zine, MIDNIGHT MARQUEE (recommended to those who slavered over FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND way back when), to which Mr. K has contributed his very finest work. Allen has also proven himself more patient than most by his choice of the time-consuming stipple technique for most of his work. Atta boy.*


JH©1985


©brad w. foster-1987
ELECTRIC PEOPLE


©brad w foster 1985



JEWISH FANTASY

by Jessica Amanda Salmonson

A good author to begin with is I. L. Peretz. His *Seven Good Years* is readily available. There's an older collection, unfortunately scarce, with a wider variety of stories. In *Seven Good Years* the heavier stories have been excluded because the book was aimed at the children's market. But though they are by and large Peretz at his lightest, they are certainly far more than just children's stories.

Whether Singer was directly inspired by him I don't know. My sense is that there are far, far more Yiddish fantasists than we English readers know about first hand, and that Singer's influences are very widely rooted in stories of writers like Peretz. In the beginning of one of Singer's collections he reminisces about the Yiddish clubs, which sounds very much like literary societies for Jewish men. They sound like they were very interesting times, when all these guys were young and there was still Yiddish culture in Europe. I regret that women were excluded. Yiddish was a woman's language, after all, and it seems very unlikely to me that women writers of Peretz's and Singer's quality haven't existed during a century. I call it a woman's language insofar as women weren't allowed to study Hebrew but where literature was concerned they could go whole-hog for the Yiddish papers and such. Perhaps Orthodoxy suppressed their talents. Then again, perhaps it has just kept the existing works buried from our sight, and there are plenty of woman writers from those days if we could only get access. I still, from time to time, do a bit of rooting around to find out what I can. I found a couple of woman writers, but none, so far, of merit who predate the present generation and a half.

I recently discovered an interesting work, *The Tales of Rabbi Nachman*, by Martin Buber (Horizon, 1956). From a fantasy reader's point of view only the central portion of the book is interesting, the tales themselves. The first part of the book is an essay on mysticism, the latter part is about a journey of Rabbi Nachman. *The Sentinel* is a series of fascinating legends. I thought, when I picked up the book that it would be rather primitive, like folklore, but I found them rather polished and literary. The Hassidic point of view is quite different, if these stories are any indication, for they challenge Orthodoxy and promote a belief in the supernatural that is more pervasive than strict Talmudic philosophy. I thought that the Hassidic point of view was rather Orthodox but this book suggests differently.

I would love, someday, to edit a pair of anthologies, a matched set, one called *Christian Tales of Fantasy and Faith*, and one called *Jewish Tales of Fantasy and Faith*. I think I'd do a better than average job since, as an agnostic with no religious axe to grind, I could spot the pieces that are superb stories. Avon Books published a collection of Christian fantasy stories a few years back, and it was deadly and insipid fiction of interest chiefly to the faithful and not to a reader who expects something of style and suspense. My interest in religious fantasy is an aesthetic interest. To live any kind of orthodox life strikes me as essentially an aesthetic choice, and the fiction that grows out of it should, at its best, have the same kind of mystical beauty rather than a preachiness. There is, by the way, one extraordinary, though very short, fantasy story by Nabokov that I love, "The Thunderstorm." Usually he is dull.

I would love to see a specific collection of Singer's fantasies which ranges from fun-loving to very grim and sorrowful. There's enough of it for one enormous volume, or an average sized volume that wouldn't include a single

second-rate story, although it is not difficult to read through his general collections wherein about one in five stories are fantastic and the other four not bad either.

Howard Schwartz, who compiled an excellent book of Hebrew fairy tales only a couple of years ago, has contracted with Harper and Row for a collection of horror stories. Schwartz, who is a leading American Jewish scholar, is bound to make these mystically wonderful. I have high hopes for the collection.

A rare early collection of short short prose was *A Blessing Over Ashes*. I have a copy but I've never seen a second copy in my life, and Schwartz says it's very rare, his first book from a small arty publisher. I've reprinted a couple of the pieces in FANTASY AND TERROR with his permission.

Some other important authors of specifically Jewish fantasy might be mentioned. Joanne Greenberg, best known for her *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, has published two collections of short stories under the pseudonym Hannah Green: *Rites of Passage* and *High Crimes and Misdemeanors*, each with some fantasy therein. Her well-known novel is at least borderline fantastic itself.

Cynthia Ozick is another modern writer of interest with three collections to her credit. The title stories of *The Pagan Rabbi* and *Levitation* are superior fantasies. Mark J. Meresky is a largely unrecognized fantasist whose *Secret Table* was published in 1975. Some Jewish specialty journalists may have reviewed it but it certainly wasn't noticed among collectors of fantastic literature.

A classic anthology is Joachim Neugroshel's *Yenne Velt, the Great Works of Jewish Fantasy and Occult* (Stone Hill Publishing Co., 1976). These are specifically from the Yiddish, and many authors otherwise unavailable in English are included. Meyer Levin's classic *Hassidic Tales* is mostly fantasy, a bit rustic, more like folk tales than literary pieces, though the collection is varied in this regard. So is Howard Schwartz's *The Captive Soul of the Messiah*, a mixture of well-developed literary pieces and imitative folk tales that are sometimes too simple to work as stories. Both the Levin and Schwartz collections can be considered adjuncts to Martin Buber, the best interpreter of Rabbi Nachman's fantastic legends.

The other Schwartz volume I mentioned as forthcoming is called *The Soul of Lilit*. Some of the stories first appeared in FANTASY AND TERROR. The Harper and Row collection might be available by the end of 1986. In any case it's a collection of horror stories from medieval and later sources, often from the Hebrew, and a bit more folkloristic than some of the other highly literary authors.

A rare collection of stunning merit is Louis Golding's *The Wanderer*. Typical of the stories in this collection is "The Window of Broken Magic" about the soul of a little Jewish boy trapped by a godless artisan in the stained glass of a Gothic cathedral and the last village Jew who throws a stone to free the little Rabbi from his glass prison—very beautiful story.

One side point is that hassidic tales, while profound and fascinating, are shockingly misogynist even in the hands of excellent writers. Other Jewish fantasists, not so limited to Hassidic supernaturalism, are by contrast often of feminist interest, if not exactly feminist. In particular refer to Sholam Ashe's lovely story "The Carnival Legend" in *Children of Abraham*, in which it is shown how the women of the ghettos often suffered the most and were sometimes the bravest as well.

It is interesting to note that Israel Zangwell, a great Jewish writer, has written fantasy with no Jewish interest per se. I've often wondered why.

There are many more authors than I've mentioned, but I've limited myself to those about whom I have an immediate and personal knowledge. Others have been too hard for me to find as their books are so scarce and I've yet to find copies for my collection. My knowledge is somewhat limited as well and I'd welcome anyone else's input who might be able to add titles to my list of authors to seek out.

I'd like it pointed out that Ed cobbled the foregoing from two impromptu letters, and made much more of an article of it than I thought was possible. Seeing it before publication, I'm struck with the slight amount of information in it, and will close with a hasty list of especially fine stories: "The Malicious Matzah" by Sholem Aleichem in *Old Country Tales*. "Scars of Battle" by Rufus Learsi in *Kasreil the Watchman*. "The Three Offerings" and "Two Deathbeds" by Peretz in *In This World and the Next*. Weisel's *The Golem*, and Singer's *The Golem* as well. Singer's *Stories for Children* are not merely for children. His best horror stories are excluded from his "collected" short stories, so you have to find the individual collections; an especially frightening piece is "A Cage for Satan" in *Old Love*. "The Jewbird" by Malamud and other extraordinary fantasies are to be found in his *Complete Short Stories*. Obviously one should read Kafka's complete works. Bruno Shulz, the Polish Kafka, was killed by an SS officer. Two of his books in English are *The Street of Crocodiles* and *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*, uniformly brilliant weird fiction. William Tenn's "My Mother was a Witch" is in *Square Root of a Man* (the rest of his work is largely science fiction). "From the Beyond" by Sholem Asche in *Children of Abraham*.

There are more examples around here but in my disorganization I can't find all of them in a hurry. So I'll close with a list of books I don't have but have been trying to find, and if anyone has copies for sale, do quote them to me. All have a fantasy content, I've been told: Martin Buber's *Tales of Angels Spirits and Demons*; H. Iliowitz' *In the Pale*; Peretz' *The Book of Fire* and *Case Against the Wind*; and Abram Tertz' *Fantastic Stories*.

I have made no attempt to list Jewish science fiction, but refer you to Jack Dann's work and his anthologies *Wandering Stars* and *More Wandering Stars*. I've also excluded noted authors of fantasy such as Romain Gary and Jakov Lind because their weirder stories don't regard their Jewish heritage to any marked degree. I've left out many from ignorance or premature senility, I realize.✹

The following interview was conducted by mail in January, 1980. Intended to be but the beginning of a long, in-depth discussion and exploration of P. K. Dick's interest in philosophy and the manifestation of that interest in his stories and novels, it was cut short by a disagreement over how to best continue, by letter or by phone. Nonetheless, what P. K. Dick has to say is a brief but informative overview of his interest in philosophy.

INTERVIEW

Conducted by **Frank C. Bertrand**

PHILIP K. DICK

FCB: I would like to start by asking a cliche question phrased a bit differently. How do *you* define Science Fiction? In asking this, though, I do not seek a dictionary-type definition, but rather what is it about a work of fiction that when you read it causes you to say, "This is Science Fiction"?

PKD: SF presents in fictional form an eccentric view of the normal or a normal view of a world that is not our world. Not all stories set in the future or on other planets are SF (some are space adventures), and some SF is set in the past or the present (time-travel or alternate world stories). It is not mimetic of the real world. Central to SF is the idea as dynamism. Events evolve out of an idea impacting on living creatures and their society. The idea must *always* be a novelty. This is the core issue of SF, even bad SF. That events accord with known scientific truths distinguishes SF from fantasy. Good SF tells a reader something he does not know about a possible world. Thus both the news (novel idea) and possible world (setting) are inventions by the author and not descriptions. Finally, SF makes what would otherwise be an intellectual abstraction concrete; it does this by locating the idea in a specific time and place, which requires the inventing of that time and place. Characters need not differ from characters in non-SF; it is what they encounter and must deal with that differ.

FCB: *Why* is there Science Fiction? That is, why is it written, why is it read? Would literature be better or worse off if it had never come into existence? Just what function does SF fulfill in literature and for those who choose to read it, or write it?

PKD: There is SF because the human brain craves sensory and intellectual stimulation before anything else, and the eccentric view provides unlimited stimulation, the eccentric view and the invented world. It is written because the human mind naturally creates, and in creating the world of an SF story the ultimate in human imagination is brought into use; thus SF is an ultimate product of and for the human mind. The function of SF psychologically is to cut the reader loose from the actual world that he inhabits; it deconstructs time, space, reality. Those who read it probably have difficulty adjusting to their world, for whatever reason; they may be ahead of it in terms of their perceptions and concepts or they may simply be neurotic, or they may have an abundance of imagination. Basically, they enjoy abstract thought. Also, they have a sense of the magic of science: science viewed not as utilitarian but as explorative. The writer of SF has in his possession ideas not yet committed to print; his mind is an extension of the corpus of already-written SF. He is SF's probe into the future, its vanguard. There is not a vast difference between reading SF and writing it. In both cases there is a joy in the novel—i.e. new—idea.

FCB: Would you please recount just when it was that you first became interested in philosophy? Was it a particular course or book or idea that initially generated your interest? Or a particular teacher? In high school, before, after?

PKD: I first became interested in philosophy in high school when I realised that all space is the same size; it is only the material boundaries encompassing it that differ. After that there came to me the realization (which I found later in Hume) that causality is a perception in the observer and not a datum of external reality. In college I was given Plato to read and thereupon became aware of the possible existence of a metaphysical realm beyond or above the sensory world. I came to understand that the human mind could conceive of a realm of which the empirical world was epiphenominal. Finally, I came to believe that in a certain sense the empirical world was not truly real, at least not as real as the archetypal realm beyond it. At this point I despaired of the veracity of sense-data. Hence in novel after novel that I write I question the reality of the world that the characters' percept-systems report. Ultimately I became an acosmic pantheist, led to this point of view by decades of skepticism.

FCB: Once your interest in Philosophy was sparked, how did you then pursue this interest? What books did you at *first* read? What courses if any did you take in philosophy?

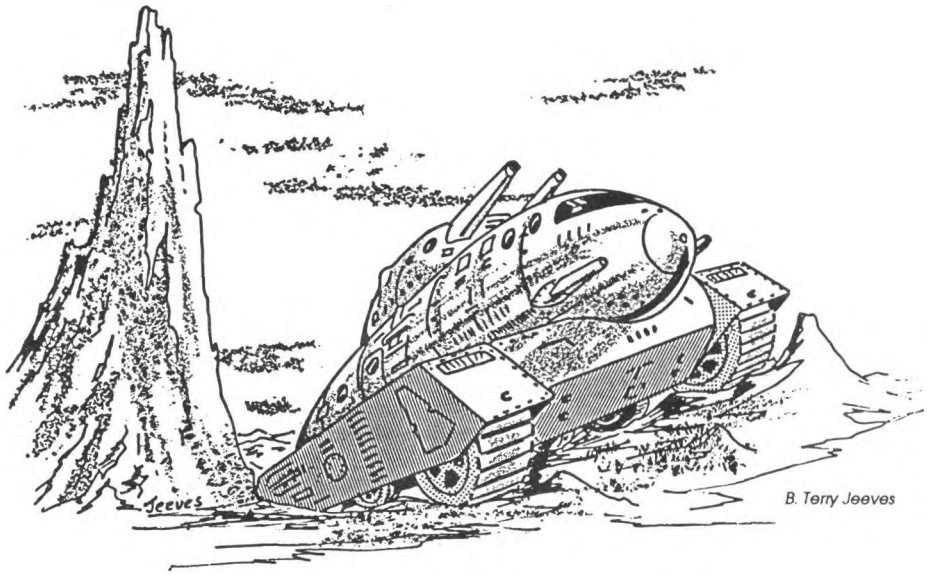
PKD: I dropped out of college very early and began to write, pursuing my interest in philosophy on my own. My main sources were poets, not philosophers: Yeats and Wordsworth and the seventeenth century English metaphysical poets, Goethe, and then overt philosophers such as Spinoza and Leibnitz and Plotinus—the last influencing me greatly. Early on I read Alfred North Whitehead and Bergson and became well-grounded in process philosophy. I did take a basic survey course in philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley, but was asked to leave when I inquired as to the pragmatic value of Platonism. The Pre-Socratics always fascinated me, in particular Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus and Empedocles. I still view God as Xenophanes viewed him. Gradually my interest in philosophy passed over into an interest in theology. Like the early Greeks I am a believer in panpsychism. Of all the metaphysical systems in philosophy I feel the greatest affinity for that of Spinoza, with his dictum, "Deus sive substantia sive natura;" to me this sums up everything (Viz: "God i.e. reality i.e. nature.") After flirting with bitheism for years I've settled down to monotheism; I regard even Christianity and later Judaism as heavily dualistic and hence unacceptable. To me the truth was first uttered (in so far as we know) when Xenophanes of Colophon, an Ionian, stated, "One God there is...in no way like mortal creatures either in bodily form or in the thought of his mind. The whole of him sees, the whole of him thinks, the whole of him hears. He stays always motionless in the same place; it is not fitting that he should move about now this way, now that. But, effortlessly, he wields all things by the thought of his mind." My interest in Pythagoras came from reading Wordsworth's "Ode," and from there I passed on to neo-Platonism and to the Pre-Socratics. The German Aufklärung influenced me, especially Schiller and his ideas of freedom; I read his "Wars of the Dutch Lowlands" and the "Wallenstein" Trilogy. Spinoza's views regarding the worth of democracy also influenced me. Especially I studied the Thirty Years War and the issues involved, and am sympathetic to the Protestant side, in particular the valorous Dutch. When I was twenty-one I wrote a piece on the superiority of the American governmental system of checks and balances, praising it above all other systems of governments either in modern times or in antiquity; I sent a copy to the then governor of California, Earl Warren, to which he replied, "It is a gratifying experience to receive such an expression of appreciation of the government for which all of us work and serve. And although it may be that many others have the same depth of feeling you expressed, few are so articulate. Certainly your letter is unique in my experience, and I have received many through my years in public office." That was in the year 1952, when my first stories were published. It coincides, therefore, with my appearance as an author in the world of SF.✹

"The function of SF psychologically is to cut the reader loose from the actual world that he inhabits; it deconstructs time, space, reality."

by Sam Moskowitz

BUTTING BUDRYS' BUTT: Fiction Versus Fact

During 1985, Oswald Train: Publisher issued my biography and marginalia of A. Merritt titled *A. Merritt: Reflections in the Moon Pool* (Box 1891, Philadelphia, PA 19105, $20.00). A review of it appeared in THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION for January, 1986, by Algis Budrys. It damned with faint praise and incredible condescension and, among other things, stated that I "get my facts wrong with some regularity...over the years has produced repeated incidences of scholarly error...the conclusions he draws from them are often indefensible," that I have a very large number of books in libraries "with a very large bulking of questionable conclusions and not unimpeccable assertions...." I rarely touch on sociology and all this applies in spades to *A. Merritt: Reflections in the Moon Pool.* He tolerates it because I am "a solid citizen of the community."



B. Terry Jeeves

In spite of his statement that "when called on this, [my sins] he very rarely accedes, and never gracefully," I wrote the magazine the following letter.

Ed Ferman
FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION
Box 56
Cornwall, CT 06753

Dear Ed:

Every now and then you run some letters, so perhaps you might run this reply to Algis Budrys' review of my book *A. Merritt: Reflections in the Moon Pool* because it is less a review of the book than a personal attack on my professional competence as a researcher and critic of the fantasy scene, which now that I have retired will represent an increasingly important part of my income. He says he wouldn't do me any personal harm, he just would like to stop anyone from employing my services or libraries from buying my books.

It is very difficult to rebut a generality that my books are full of errors if the accuser doesn't list any! It seems to me it would be only human decency to send me or even publish a list of the errors so that I can correct them in my next printing. When he fails to do so, he falls into the same class as Barry Malzberg, who made the same charge and when asked to produce the errors admitted that he could not pinpoint any from his own knowledge but he had read the statement somewhere.

Each of my books contains thousands of facts, the majority of them in print for the first time anywhere, the product of original research. Between eyestrain, typos, inadequate proofreading, or bonafide goofs, it would be incredible if an occasional error was not produced. However, there are those who think my record for accuracy is far above average. Among them is Muriel Becker, compiler of *Clifford D. Simak: A Primary and Secondary Bibliography* (G. K. Hall, 1980). She permits me to quote the following statement: "I used your article on Clifford D. Simak in *Seekers of Tomorrow* as the starting point in my bibliography and checked out every item listed and confirm I could not find a single error in titles, dates, places, publications, and when I interviewed Clifford Simak, he volunteered none."

The only evidence that Budrys produces is his claim that I misinterpreted how the "tanks" in H. G. Wells' "The Land Ironclads" moved. I had said in an introductory remark to the story in my book *Science Fiction by Gaslight* (1968) that they were a precursor to the caterpillar treads of today. Budrys triumphantly pointed out that Wells had said there were "feet" on the tank. Even if he were right, you would think he would allow me to invoke the Statue of Limitations, since my book was published in 1968, 17 years ago. Since he will not let go of it, I will defend it.

First of all, Budrys confuses "feet" with "legs." "Feet" are the lowest extremity of legs. The legs do the moving, the feet cushion them. There are no legs on Wells' "Ironclads." The story was originally published in THE STRAND MAGAZINE, December, 1903, in England and January, 1904, in the American edition. On page 756 of the English edition Wells writes: "You must conceive these cabins as hung clear above the swing of the axles, and inside the big wheels upon which great elephant-like feet were hung." The ironclads were propelled by driveshafts and wheels, the "feet" were pads that served the same purpose as the detachable metal treads on today's tanks, to grip the ground, prevent slipping, to assist in climbing uneven terrain. (It is quite possible the term "treads" was not in use at that time because tanks had not yet been invented and Wells was improvising.)

The reason I concluded they were like today's linked metal treads was because on page 756 Wells, in speaking of the Ironclads, said: "Behind it, across the plain, it had scored the grass with a train of linked impressions, like the dotted tracings sea things leave in the sand." "Feet," striding, could never have a linked impression. There was, however, a more convincing reason. On page 764, the artist who illustrated the story shows a close-up of the tank on a tread and on another illustration. showing three tanks moving in the far distance, the artist seems to have drawn treads. Now I am willing to keep an open mind, it is always possible the artist may have misinterpreted it as Budrys claims I did, but I think on the evidence I deserve the benefit of a doubt! I should also like to note, that the fact that Leonardo da Vinci sketched an earlier tank-like vehicle, which Budrys offers without the source as a tank earlier than Wells, he actually picked up from the introduction I wrote to the story and represents no wisdom on his part. (It may be of interest to note that what we call the caterpillar tread today was patented by Gideon Morgan of Calhoun, Tennessee, and sketches with an article describing it were a front-page feature of FARMER AND MECHANIC for December 19, 1850.)

Budrys in another gratuitous swipe at me also refers to "sociology, a discipline with which Sam is less comfortable, not often seeing it as anywhere near the core of SF's appeal and or ultimate worth." Budrys seems unaware of my book *Strange Horizons: The Spectrum of Science Fiction* (Scribner's, 1976), which has a chapter apiece on the following subjects: religion, anti-semitism, civil rights, women's liberation, birth control, psychiatry, crime, teen-agers, war, unexplained phenomena and art. There are over 100,000 words, with a comprehensive index. I am not aware that anyone in science fiction has ever done more on these social subjects.

Budrys belongs to the school of those who want to take the easy road to criticism and scholarly recognition, and so subscribes, as indicated by his review, to the philosophy that the more research and study a historian does, the less valid his opinions become; conversely, the less research a critic does, the more valid his criticism becomes.

* * *

After nine months passed and my reply did not appear, another column by Budrys prompted me to attempt to get it into print for the record. What that column was and my reaction to it follows.

There is the old adage that "people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones," particularly when the target is shatterproof glass. Magazine and newspaper critics have the advantage of not having to print rebuttals or

if they do, replying to them cheek by jowl, or better yet printing only that part of them which is not damaging. Therefore, their own incompetence is protected, their errors unreported and they wear the cloak of omnipotence.

It is fortunate that there are alternate avenues of reply and even though they may reach only a few hundred, those few hundred are influential individuals. In his column in the September, 1986, issue of THE MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION, Budrys reviews *The John W. Campbell Letters* (Rt. 4, Box 137, Franklin, Tennessee 37064, $5.95.). The volume is of landmark excellence and Budrys likes it, but in his review he makes the cardinal mistake of attempting to give "facts" instead of his customary generalizing from end to end. When you avoid giving any facts, everything else becomes opinion; and even if your opinion is off the beam you are entitled to it.

When you have tried to downgrade another, as Budrys has attempted to do to me, by asserting that my factual information cannot be trusted, you had better display some factual integrity of your own, because I am not a fake and I will prove Budrys is. On page 26, in attempting to show the influence of Edward E. Smith on John W. Campbell, Budrys states: "Smith's long-unpublished novel *The Skylark of Space* had been successfully rewritten by a gifted female amateur named Lee Hawkins Garbey."

There are quite a few things wrong with that short statement. Lee Hawkins Garby did not rewrite *The Skylark of Space*. She was not "gifted" and her name was Garby, not Garbey.

The facts are, that on a hot summer night in 1915, E. E. Smith engaged in a conversation with Carl D. Garby, Ph. D. while sitting in a men's smoker, on the temperature in outer space. Other men contributed to the conversation and when the group left for the night Garby told his wife Lee Hawkins about it and she later urged Smith to put the essence of the discussion into fiction form. He liked the idea but doubted that he could handle the love interest. She suggested that she write the love sequences that would then be inserted into the story where appropriate. Spasmodically through 1915 and 1916 they worked on it, finishing about one third, of which only a very minor portion was love interest and that instantly recognizable in the original AMAZING STORIES printing as by a nearly hopeless amateur (August-December, 1928).

In 1919 Smith, saddled with babysitting, resumed writing the story, finishing it all himself, including the love interest, completing the story in Spring, 1920. He submitted it to every reasonable market for the next eight years finally clicking at AMAZING STORIES and receiving a check for $125. Out of loyalty to Garby for urging him to write the story in the first place and assisting in writing the love interest, where he felt he would be weak, he paid her half of what he got and added the lines in much smaller type "in collaboration with Lee Hawkins Garby."

When Thomas P. Hadley asked for book rights to *The Skylark of Space* in 1946, E. E. Smith revised the novel, including Lee Hawkins Garby's love segments. This can easily be established by comparing the original magazine version from 1928 (August to October) with the Hadley edition published under the aegis of The Buffalo Book Co. in 1946. (There is also a foreword in the book that did not appear in the magazine version.)

As for Garby's "gift" here is a quote from some of her orginal love interest: "But you know that I love you all the same, even if I appear to neglect you," he continued with fierce intensity. "I love you with everything there is in me. I love you, mind, body and spirit; love you as a man should love the one and only woman. For you are the only woman, there never was and never will be another. I love you morally, physically, intellectually, and every other way there is, for the perfect little darling that you are."

She moved in his embrace and her arms tightened about his neck.

"You are the nearest thing to absolute perfection that ever came into this imperfect world," he continued. "Just to think of a girl of your sheer beauty, your ability, your charm, your all-around perfection, being engaged to a thing like me, makes me dizzy—but I sure do love you little girl of mine. I will love you as long as we live, and afterward, my soul will love your soul throughout eternity. You know that, sweetheart girl."

"Oh,, Dick!" she whispered,her soul shaken with response to his love. "I never dreamed it possible for a woman to love as I love you. 'Whither thou goest....'"

This speaks volumes for Budrys' ability to judge "gifted" literary "talent." It should also raise serious questions about the value of his other literary judgements.

Now, is all the foregoing proprietary information that Budrys could not conceivably have had access to? You will find it all with embellishments in my critical biography of Edward E. Smith in *Seekers of Tomorrow* which first appeared in AMAZING STORIES in 1964, was published in hardcovers in 1966, has appeared as a Ballantine popular-priced reprint, has never been out of print in hardcover and trade paperback at any time since its first hardcover publication, and can be found in most libraries in the country, even in small towns.

Budrys with true humility has a footnote apologizing for having told the readers in a previous column that John W. Campbell had worked for the White Truck Company, but he discovers in the volume of letters under review that it was for Mack Trucks that he had actually worked. I might mention that that fact also appears in my essay on Campbell originally published in 1964.

Now what was my source for the information on Smith (Budrys gives no sources for his)? My source was E.E. Smith in a four-hour private interview. Not only do those notes still exist, but they have emendations in Smith's own handwriting where I asked him to spell out names, which proves he read them for accuracy.

Now, why wouldn't Budrys have checked my book for reference?

Two reasons I can think of. First, he may have been too lazy. Second, he really believes his own statements that my books are full of errors and cannot be consulted. So he prints his own "accurate" material, for which he has no attributable source.

We are not through yet with that page of errors by Budrys. On that same page (26) he says: "Campbell was eventually hired first as a junior editor, and then, editor-in-chief of a magazine called ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE." The facts are that the last time the magazine was called ASTOUNDING STORIES OF SUPER SCIENCE was in March, 1933, and when Campbell was hired by Street & Smith in September, 1937, it had been called ASTOUNDING STORIES for four years. Budrys repeats this error again a few paragraphs later. This error requires considerable explanation on his part since the original title of the Clayton ASTOUNDING is today in the category of a quiz question tossed at guys who have been reading science fiction since 1930, for few others would be aware of it. For this goof Budrys would have had to do research! What was his source?

We are not through with the errors on that single page. Budrys says that Campbell was hired by Street & Smith "not too long after his graduation from Duke University." Since he graduated from Duke University in 1934 (See my critical biography of Campbell in *Seekers of Tomorrow*), 1937 is a good long while after. Source for my date is John W. Campbell in another four-hour interview with similar notes.

Generously, Budrys does not confine his unreliability to a single page. If we proceed to page 30 he tells us of Campbell's death that it was "a lifetime that ended with an almost casual and instantly fatal heart attack." It so happens that Campbell died from an aneurism of the abdominal aorta. He was feeling poorly and complaining of abdominal and severe back pains; his doctor, Ralph Hall of Westfield, N.J. was called, arrived at 4:00 P.M. July 11, 1971, and was unable to diagnose any problem. He had lost most appetite and at 7:45 P.M. his wife gave him a glass of milk and some cookies, while he watched his favorite entertainment on television, wrestling. At 8:00 P.M. when she returned to the room he was dead. There had been no cry of distress, no violent movement. An autopsy found that the aorta in his abdomen, which can be from one half inch to an inch in diameter depending on the individual, had ruptured, flooding his abdominal cavity with blood and probably killing him from shock and trauma almost instantly. In real terms, he bled to death. My source for this information was his wife Peg and the death certificate. What is Budrys' source for the heart attack?

Was this proprietary information which Budrys could not have had access to? It appeared in an article written by me, "John W. Campbell: A Personalized Obituary" in the WSFA JOURNAL, August-October, 1971, the widely circulated popular organ of the Washington Science Fiction Association edited by the late Don Miller. Perhaps Budrys considered my information unreliable and preferred his own.

Normally, Algis Budrys specializes in a form of reviewing that can best be described as figuratively contemplating his navel and polishing it occasionally with a mink-tufted brush. In other words he is far more interested in how he says something than in what he is saying. It is top-of-the-head self-indulgency. Someone like myself who believes in factual documentation of the information he is providing represents a threat to acceptance of his casual and irresponsible form of reviewing because I offer content as well as criticism and analysis. To discredit the content Budrys makes the assertion that my abundance of solid facts is inaccurate. He gives no examples, pretending that it is a commonly accepted fact.

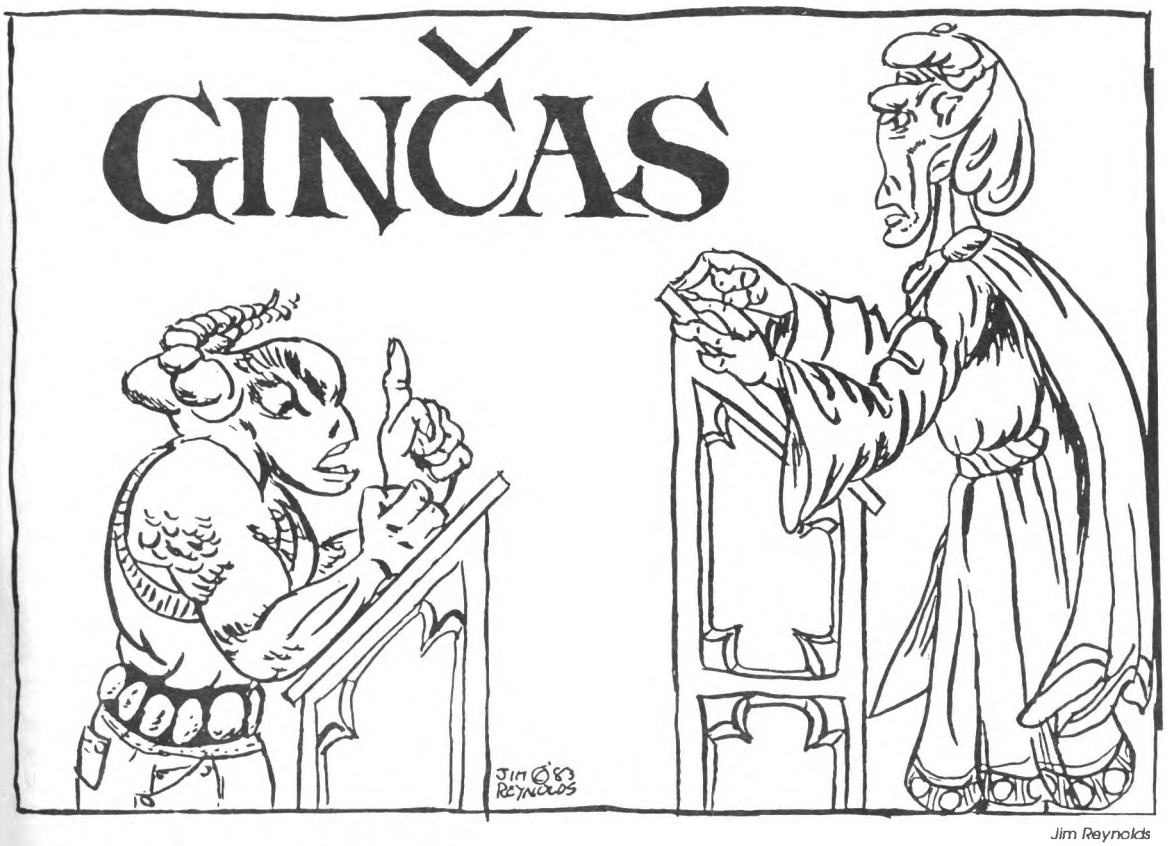
The actual truth of the matter: his material is full of errors, as has been liberally demonstrated, and a simple reading of mine would have given him the factual, accurate information to avoid these errors. The nature of his misinformation is not of the type that can be glossed over as minor human error. In the case of E. E. Smith he is actually saying that the success of *The Skylark of Space* was due to the "gifted" revision of Lee Hawkins Garby, changing history to make it seem that Smith would never have appeared on the scene or sold that first story without her, when the truth is that he sold it in spite of her.

When the facts are wrong, the interpretation is wrong. Garbage in, garbage out.

He is wrong on the title of the magazine Campbell was editing, wrong on when Campbell graduated from Duke University, wrong on what Campbell died of; he had been previously wrong on the company Campbell worked for; how valid are the other conclusions drawn from his confused memory? He would have the readers believe that the thousands of facts I present in each book I write, and the opinions drawn from them, are open to question. In other words, the more intensive and careful documentation an individual makes of his subject, the more certain, Budrys would have you believe, that the conclusions are suspect. Whereas when someone like himself does no research at all, muddles his facts as he tries to remember what he once read somewhere, Budrys would have you believe that he is the one you should rely on.

The sad thing is that others will pick up his mistakes and repeat them in articles, in encyclopedias, and still others will cull them from those sources. At the same time, he warns everyone away from my books, which in many cases are the only place that the accurate information can be obtained. He deplores the circumstance that so many libraries seem to purchase my books. He seems unaware that librarians are trained professionals who are capable of distinguishing a good reference from commentary that is of no value except as entertainment. He possesses an arrogance that seems derived from the mistaken inpression that a writer of fiction is somehow better qualified genetically to write about literary subjects than a scholar who has made a specialty of it. He has yet to demonstrate the validity of that belief.✹


Varlak the Wizard
by J.SIBLEY ©'87
HELP!
OH NO - IT'S TOM COVENANT AGAIN - GOT THAT NEW DRUG READY, VARLAK?
FIRST IT'S ELRIC, TIM BENZEDRINO, AND NOW THIS! NOBODY WANTS ANYTHING BUT DRUGS THESE DAYS!
WAIT 'TILL THE F.D.A., A.M.A. AND N.Y.P.D. FIND OUT ABOUT THIS...
I'VE HAD ENOUGH! I'M GOING ON A VACATION!
I'LL KEEP THE HOME FIRES GOING... SIGH
LATER...
PLEASE HELP ME! A WICKED SORCERER'S PET DRAGON HAS COME!
NO, HELP ME! MY FATHER'S BEEN IMPRISONED IN A CRYSTAL CUBE!
NO, FREE ME FROM THIS EVIL CURSE!
I CHALLENGE YOU...
LATER...
WELL, I'M BACK - ANYTHING INTERESTING CROP UP?
THE BILLS GOT PAID...
WHY DO YOU GET TO HAVE ALL THE FUN?



Jim Reynolds

WHO?

Sherna Comerford

Tamar wrote to me after seeing the manuscript of my part of the special section, and we are in correspondence about the show. What fun! We also had a long talk at the Pennsic War. After writing my article I did get a VCR and I have been having a good time running barefoot through the tape collection of a local long-time Whovian. Tamar has also promised me some material.

She points out (through private communication) that Tom Baker's Doctor also has his down side. Yes, he does, and I probably should have pointed out that in the article. There is such a thing as being too invulnerable, and he is. He must be in complete control of his own territory, himself, the TARDIS, and his companions, even though he despises the idea of being in power over people. He expresses physical pain but emotional pain gets a grim stone face. He will not confront interpersonal problems involving himself as one of the principals. He will not confront his own pain. He will not grieve, a necessary process in humans, at least. He will smile and be happy, even carefree, but I have never seen him let go with laughter. He doesn't like to touch or be touched.

I'm sure I'll be hit with examples that seem to disprove the last comment. I don't say he never touches anyone, but when he does he is brief and distant. His predecessor and successor are also men of reserve but they manage to convey a certain dignified warmth that he lacks.

Some people seem to think that expression of feelings is a weakness. I feel that their denial is the real weakness and that it usually takes a hidden toll. In this case it made a wonderful character less wonderful than he could have been. But he has still given me many hours of enjoyment, and more to come.

The rumor mentioned in my article, that the sixth Doctor (Colin Baker) may soon be replaced by a seventh, has been laid to rest. He was at a one-evening "convention" here recently, and said that he expects to play the role for several more years. [As most Who fen know by now, Colin "The Unsackable" Baker has been replaced by Sylvester McCoy. MB]

Tamar Lindsay

Another good example of the trickster is in FERRIS BUEHLER'S DAY OFF. Ferris Buehler is the trickster in its pure form. Arsene Lupin is another example. THE SAINT is a milder form.

Ed Meskys

I recently listened to tapes of a PBS TV series called PLANET FOR THE TAKING in one installment of which mythology was discussed. Here are some relevant quotes:

"Mythology preserves the insights gained over generations of wondering about life and death, about origins and destiny. Myths also preserve in imaginative form stories about day-to-day conduct that provide a framework for social harmony as well as survival. Of course mythologies and ways of life do change over time, but for 99% of humankind's existence we've lived together in family groups of hunters and gatherers.

"Here at the edge of the Kalahari Desert in Botswana are the last remnants of that way of life. Perhaps in the stories of the San people we can learn something of ourselves, something about our basic humanity, that we tend to forget in our rapidly changing modern world.

"Traditions have given the San both a wealth of practical details about living in the desert and a poetic understanding of their place in the world they know.

"Their myths speak of an intermingling of the natural world and the world of spirit, of the lives of animals and people. This story chronicles the time when animals and people were the same and lived together. That was when the handsome Corey Bueller was married to the beautiful Python Lady. But then entered the villain, the trickster Jackal. She kidnapped Python Lady and in disguise tried to take her place. But Jackal's eating habits gave her away.

"Many mythologies have a trickster figure, a symbol of how unpredictable nature can be. In this story the other characters have their revenge. They make up a bed with poison arrows hidden in it. When Jackal was tempted to lie down, her sleep soon became death. And once mistrust and

suspicion had entered the world the original closeness between people and animals disappeared, and ever since they've gone their separate ways."

Don D'Ammassa

There were, I think, some small errors in the articles on DR. WHO. The granddaughter did not leave him on another planet. She left the Doctor on a future Earth, in London in fact, during the Dalek invasion of Earth.

The differences, incidentally, between the BBC version of this and the full-length movie starring Peter Cushing as the Doctor are substantial. Among other things, in the movie Cushing incorrectly identifies himself as Doctor Who. *Sigh*

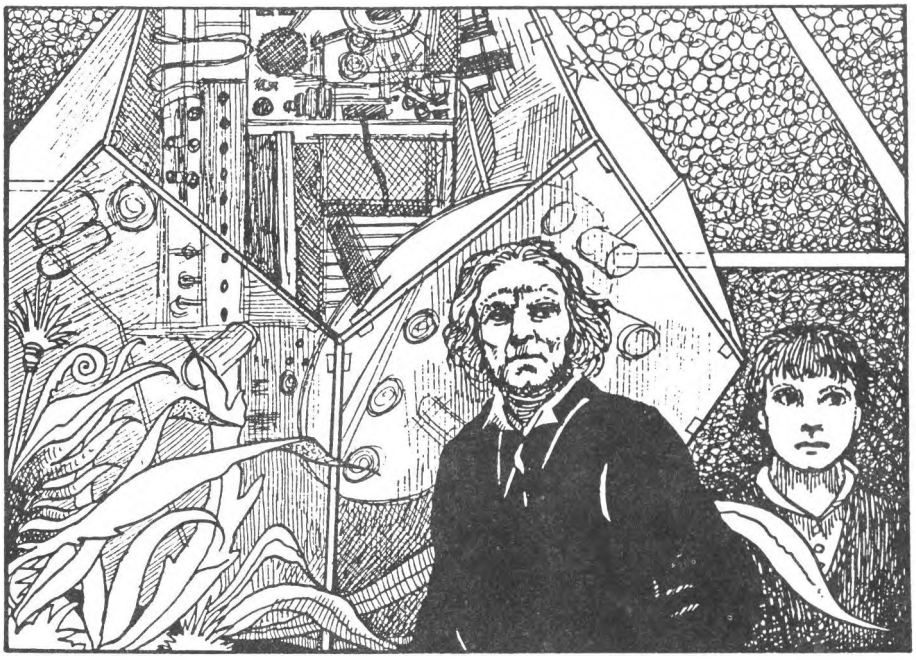
I believe that the name ascribed to the Doctor is also incorrect.

The aliens in "The Web Planet" are hilarious. I can't really explain what the attraction of the show is, but even my mother faithfully watched the Baker ones until Davison showed up.

Donald A. Wollheim

I have only recently discovered this series. I have seen the First Doctor episodes which are showing in NY and have also borrowed from Joe Schaumberger (who is now with DAW) some videos of the Tom Baker episodes—in full color and running about two hours each as he taped them. In my opinion the work is excellent and in general quite superior to most of the SF junk eminating from Hollywood (STAR TREK and Spielberg excepted). The episodes, especially the later ones, have clever intricate plots, good acting, and do not insult the intelligence too much. They do suffer from the necessity of the producers to string them out into so many half-hour segments that often things get repetitious, and there are anticlimactic elements put in to make for more length—but on the whole, they are really quite delightful. Cheapies they are—scenery, background are repeated—there are lots of corridor and tunnel scenes, for instance—and most of the evil alien s are obviously human beings in odd costumes, but...better than most TV sci fi!

I recall the first London worldcon [1957] when we were all invited to the planetarium and the actual Dalek machines were on display. Harry Harrison got into one and started trundling around making like an alien! Now, when I see a Dalek appear in a WHO film, I always think that Harry is inside it. Come to think of it, maybe he is!



Hannah Shapero

Colin Langeveld

I remember watching the very first episode on a late Saturday afternoon—I was a mere lad of 21 at the time, and if memory serves me well, they (the BBC) put on two episodes for reasons that I will never know.

Things are not looking so good for the Doc of late. The Beeb tried to "see him off" about two years ago but this raised such a hoohaw with the fans that they had to concede and keep him on—at a cost, though. The series is only shown for five or six weeks. I have a feeling that the intention is to gradually fade him away, so gradually that we won't notice it.

Milton F. Stevens

The DR. WHO series has one definite point of superiority over most of the other SF TV series that have that have been done. The producers of DR. WHO seem to know what they are doing. If they need some scientific sounding gibberish, they get some complete gibberish. They don't have explosions in helium mines and enemy spacecraft approaching at six microns. In general, British television seems to assume a higher level of education than American network television does. The producers also seem to have an awareness of what has been done in SF, so they can steal creatively.

Anne Braude

Our PBS station has just started running the Colin Baker episodes. I find him a poor imitation of Tom Baker, much nastier and more obnoxious in personality than any of the other Doctors. (We haven't had the first two.) One thing I like is that the Doctor's female traveling companions are usually both sensible and competent, rather than just rescue material. My favorite was Leela, the barbarian warrior. The current plots seem to have more interesting elements of social satire than prior episodes have displayed. My pet peeve of the series remains the frequently-repeated situation of the Doctor surrendering to the villain to save the life of his companion when doing so will apparently lead to casualties on a galactic scale. I don't think a Time Lord, with his sense of responsibility for order in the universe and his own long life in comparison to which a human life span must seem ephemeral indeed, would think this way. (Of course, that sort of thinking may be one reason he's a renegade Time Lord.)

I can't altogether go along with Sherna in seeing the Doctor as the Trickster. Joseph L. Henderson, in "Ancient Myths and Modern Man" (in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung, 1964) points out that Trickster is an infantile figure: "Lacking any purpose beyond the gratification of his primary need, he is cruel, cynical, and unfeeling," (p. 104) though his reference to Hermes/Thoth as "Trickster in a different role as a messenger, a god of the cross-roads" (p. 155) is closer to the Doctor's usual role. I see him more as a positive animus figure like Merlin or Gandalf, who "can personify an enterprising spirit, courage, truthfulness, and in the highest form, spiritual profundity." (M.L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation," idem, p. 207). He usually helps a group of

subjugated people to free themselves, rather than doing it for them. In his adventures on Earth and elsewhere in the universe, he himself generally takes on alone only the transcendent superhuman figures of Evil (The Master, Davros, etc.) as Gandalf and Merlin left the actual quests to Men, Hobbits, and Knights of the Round Table.

HEINLEIN AGAIN

Alexei Panshin

Boy, you sure know how to put a piece of writing at a disadvantage: two years out of context, scrambled pages, typos so insidious that sometimes I wasn't sure myself what I'd really said.

The title, "Heinlein, Moskowitz, and Me," has made me want to punch myself in the snoot for rampant arrogance. There! Take that, you punk!

An addition to the tale of how Heinlein has reacted to my discussion of his work: Cory and I have been working for many years on a book that tells the story of the conceptual development of science fiction from the first glimmerings of the possibility of science beyond known science to the attainment of human galactic empire. All the authors whose work is considered who are still alive have been sent the manuscript and asked for comment and corrections of error, particularly where their own work is concerned. A year ago my publisher wrote to Heinlein and asked him that he look over the pages concerning his work so that the book might not have any unnecessary inaccuracies. Mrs. Heinlein answered, "While we can sympathize with your desire to have any book you publish as accurate as possible, Mr. Heinlein will not be able to look at the book by Mr. and Mrs. Panshin. Any such reading and correction, if necessary, might constitute acquiescence toward what the Panshins choose to print. We reserve all rights for legal remedy."

The way I understand this is that if I had made any errors Heinlein won't correct them but if we're unfortunate enough to let some misstatement get into print Heinlein will have our asses in court. There's something very familiar about this ploy. Oh, yes...it's the very same double bind that Heinlein threw on Advent over *Heinlein in Dimension* twenty-two years ago, except that poor fannish Advent lost its nerve for a couple of years, and this time my publisher only asked me to identify every reference to Heinlein in the entire manuscript so that his lawyer might check them over. This was a year ago and there have been no requests from my publisher for changes, so I guess we are OK. Phew! [Both you and SaM had submitted your items without title. Since I called SaM's "Heinlein and Me" it was natural to call yours "Heinlein, Moskowitz, and Me." I apologize for any embarrassment, and for the error in page sequence. ERM]

David Palter

Alexei Panshin's article describing his conflict with Robert A. Heinlein was particularly fascinating. Prudence would dictate that one should hear both sides of any argument before making up one's mind, and if RAH were to send in a reply to NIEKAS I would be most interested in reading it. However, I don't expect that he will, and so necessarily I will have to assess Alexei Panshin's depiction of events by itself. And the result is, the article is highly believable. I conclude that RAH is indeed an irrationally egotistical man who has seriously wronged Alexei Panshin. This does not alter the fact that he is a great SF writer, possibly even the greatest. However, our gods do have feet of clay.

Elliot Kay Shorter

Thank you for publishing Alexei's side of the story. One has only heard rumor, rumor, and more rumor, in bits and pieces over the years.

Piers Anthony

Alexei Panshin's rebuttal to Sam Moskowitz interests me on a different level, because I have been victimized similarly over the years, and perhaps it is time I commented. Panshin has done what I approve: he has put it on the line, and he makes a convincing case, which I hope is not garbled for too many readers by the mis-numbering of pages 20 and 21. I confess I'd like to read Heinlein's side of it, too, but because only that way can the full story be appreciated. You see, I have also experienced the other side of this sort of thing, and without suggesting that there is any sort of similarity between the cases, perhaps I can suggest why an author might object to a book written about him.

Two different scholars set out to write booklets on me, and I'm sure they researched diligently, and I helped in whatever way I could. One foundered and was never published, to my regret; the other was in due course published. Unfortunately when I read it I concluded that the author, however well intentioned, simply did not properly understand my work. He was not negative; it was a complimentary commentary. I just felt his view of my work was not sufficiently perceptive. I tried to explain in a private letter, giving examples and commentary, but he did not reply. I learned later through a third party, that my letter had seriously hurt his feelings, because he had spent something like a decade studying my work, only to have it, as he saw it, thrown in his face. I regret that; I had thought my commentary helpful. When I want to hurt feelings, I do so more directly, as this letter will demonstrate anon. But this matter leaves me with the impression that perhaps if any book is to be written about me, I had better write it myself. Accordingly my autobiography (to age 50, a natural cutoff point), *Bio of an Ogre* will be published by Berkley in 1988, perhaps about the time this issue of NIEKAS sees print. I can see how Heinlein might feel the same.

Which is not to question Panshin's competence. Some years back, as I broke my daughters into proper SF reading, I recommended to them the finest Heinlein juvenile ever written: *Rite of Passage* by Alexei Panshin. That's right: it is my opinion that Panshin studied Heinlein so well that he did a juvenile better than Heinlein did. I did not like Panshin's other novels as well; indeed, I suspect that my candid (not negative, merely cautionary: beautiful style, insufficient content; this stuff would not sell enough copies) comments on them alienated editor Terry Carr who as a result committed the biggest mistake of an otherwise illustrious career by rejecting with violent prejudice my novel *Macroscope*, and thereby, as it turned out, costing me my shot at the annual awards and his Specials line a heavyweight Ace sorely needed at that point. (In those days I valued awards; today I do not, which is why, to answer a Sandra Miesel charge, I now do not mention them.

Thus deviously do we interact, sometimes to mutual damage despite the best intentions. Thus perhaps Heinlein was cynically wise to avoid this sort of thing, however coincidentally . Still, I admit it does look mean-spirited of him, and I really would like to see his clarification.

William Wilson Goodson, Jr.

I agree. *Rite of Passage* is not a pastiche of any Heinlein book. [Panshin and Heinlein] both examined some similar ideas, but which writers don't?

Buck Coulson

Poor Alex doesn't seem to have any luck with his Heinlein material. Some people don't answer. Some threaten to sue. And *you* publish his article out of order.

Donald A. Wollheim

The Panshin-Heinlein discussion is a strange one. I can appreciate Heinlein's desire for privacy; he is entitled. But one wonders why his obsession was so intense? None of our business, however.

B. Terry Jeeves

Panshin was interesting (hope Heinlein doesn't sue you), but can't raise much steam over the issue. Heinlein as a person is one thing. Heinlein as a writer (up to *Stranger in a Strange Land*) would always get my vote. Heinlein's work after that has no interest for me...sponging nipples and all.

Milton F. Stevens

The article by Alexei Panshin reads like something out of the dim and distant past. If I knew that someone was researching my private life, I don't think I'd like the idea. I wouldn't like it no matter what sort of methodology the person followed. So I can easily accept that Panshin feels he acted reasonably and that Heinlein didn't like it anyway. This disagreement seems inherent in the situation. It doesn't seem to be an important enough issue to be still under discussion twenty years after the fact.

Mark Blackman

We tried something novel on a Heinlein roundtable at NYClone last July. The panelists discussed RAH as a writer, not as a political theorist, and without discussion of his private life.

KENT STATE

David Palter

Anne Braude's comments about Kent State, in reply to my letter in this issue, would much more appropriately have been made in reply to Buck Coulson's in the last issue. If you recall, I originally cited the Kent State Massacre as one of the damaging consequences of the Vietnamese war, in my comments on a letter from Jerry Pournelle. Buck Coulson then wrote in to object to my inaccuracy in failing to consider the criminality and foolishness of the students in throwing rocks at the National Guard. [Never tease a hungry dragon. SP] I then was obliged to clarify the point, acknowledging the degree to which the students were responsible for their own fate, but affirming that the event was still tragic and still an injustice. And now Anne Braude had to contribute her own objections, telling me that the students were killed merely for using obscene language and gestures, and that two of the victims were not even part of the demonstration, and were leaving the area.

Why didn't you speak up after Buck Coulson had made his comments, Anne? Personally I think it is entirely unfair that I am being maneuvered into into arguing both sides of the same question. I am being overburdened. You should have had this argument with Buck Coulson. However, I cannot escape now, and must reply. I haven't read James Michener's account of the event, but according to my information, some of the students were throwing rocks, which is a more dangerous act than making obscene remarks and gestures. So no, obscene remarks are not a capital crime. Throwing rocks is also not necessarily a capital crime, but equally it is not a crime for people to use deadly force to defend themselves from others who are throwing rocks at them. [Yes, it is, unless (as was not the case at Kent State) the rock-throwing is life-threatening. AJB] (And many people have been killed by thrown rocks; you will recall that stoning was a favorite execution technique in the ancient world.) As for the two students who were just trying to leave, it is a sad thing, but people who accidentally get in the way of a violent demonstration, are likely to get hurt. The fact remains that it is the violent demonstrators as well as the violent National Guard who share the blame for this tragedy.

L. Sprague de Camp

If Miss Braude thinks that all the revolting students at Kent State did was "obscene language and gestures" I fear she is misinformed. [I was referring to the students who were actually shot, not all the demonstraters. AJB] The night before the shootings, as I recall, the guardsmen had stood at attention for hours while the students bombarded them with bricks, stones, and pieces of concrete. One guardsman had most of his teeth knocked out. The students also burned the ROTC building and a number of trees on the campus. Next day they began again, and the guardsmen's control slipped. The wonder is that they had not opened fire sooner.

To harass and assault a man with a gun, regardless of the rights and wrongs of the case, is like pulling a lion's whiskers. If I had a gun, and a man approached me shouting threats and insults and throwing missiles, I should regard shooting him as legitimate self-defense. A five-pound-rock can easily kill one. It is too bad that some more or less innocent bystanders became victims. In that case the fault is parents', for not teaching them that in a situation where shooting is likely, one should get the hell out.

Susan Shwartz

David Palter's observations on Kent State: Because I was born in Youngstown, Ohio, the killings at Kent State affected me profoundly and personally. Sandra Scheuer, who was a speech therapy student at Kent and a good friend of many people I knew, was leaving the area of the demonstrations; I doubt if she had even participated in the student strikes. A stray bullet hit her, and she died—along with Bill Schroeder, who was, as Michener says, middle American to the max, the activist Jeffery Miller, and the pacifist Alison Krause. Not to mention Dean Kahler, who was paralysed by another bullet. Not only that, their memories were terribly defamed, and, as I know for a fact, Sandra's parents at least were subjected to terrible abuse. Nor was Kent the only place where students were killed: don't forget Jackson State, where a number of black students were gunned down. (Because the Kent atrocity touched me personally, I have remembered the names only there.)

Not a May 4th has passed since then that I haven't said Kaddish for the people who died—and been bitterly and resentfully ashamed that the governor of my home state would allow combat ammunition to be issued to guardsmen, and that the then-President and Vice-president of my country would create a moral climate—if you can call it that—in which the murder of students would be sanctioned and in which people could take sadistic glee in defaming the victims thereafter.

At the time, I was a student participating in my own college's strike against the bombings in Cambodia. But after May 4th, I felt as if all of us in the anti-war movements were somehow students at Kent State. The way I read the killings at Kent State was that resentment had built up against students for protesting, to such a degree that they could be killed with impunity.

I am no longer a pacifist, largely be-

cause I've assimilated the medieval doctrine of the "just war." But that does not mean that I sanction atrocious behavior, wherever it occurs.

David's comment about the "stupidity of the students" is cruel, and his irony ("Alas for our tarnished martyrs") is inappropriate. I imagine, however, that it's tempting to make epigrams when you're safely out of things—which is why, as a person who was (unjustly, I thought) draft exempt, I did not presume to tell men concerned about being drafted what I believed that they should do.

Anne J. Braude

I commented on Palter's remarks rather than Coulson's because I originally hadn't intended to say anything at all; only when the subject was raised a second time did I feel moved to contribute my two cents' worth. As to the facts of the matter, I refer readers again to Michener's book: I trust his exhaustive research rather than what Sprague de Camp "recollects" two decades later, since unlike Susan Shwartz he didn't have the events burned into his memory by personal associations.

I am really disturbed by the Wild West mentality exhibited by the letters of Coulson and de Camp (both of whom write from farther East than I do), who suggest that if you act provocatively toward a man with a gun, you deserve what you get. There is no assumption on their part that possession of a lethal weapon imposes an obligation of restraint in the use of same. Their attitude was normal a century ago, when Wyatt Earp was marshal of Tombstone; but as a contemporary legal theory it just won't wash, despite the acquittal of Bernhard Goetz. Our social contract holds today that it is not normal, acceptable behavior to carry a gun (pace the National Rifle Association). You can't even own one without a license, and only the military and the police are entitled routinely to carry guns. Since security personnel have this special right, they also have a special responsibility for not abusing it. Every time a police officer fires his gun, he must justify his act before a review board. (Similar reviews, both military and civilian, were carried out after the Kent State massacre; not one concluded that the National Guard had acted properly, even though neither civil nor criminal lawsuits against them were successful.)

The National Guard at Kent State were not in a life-threatening situation: at the time that they fired, they were too far away from the rock-throwers to be seriously harmed. If we shrug our shoulders at the summary execution by the military of people who have not committed capital crimes, we might as well be living in Chile or Peru. I write from the perspective of one who has lived in an American city occupied by armed National Guardsmen (Berkeley, California, at the same time as the Kent State incident and under Ronald Reagan's governorship)—and as the daughter and granddaughter of career Army officers.

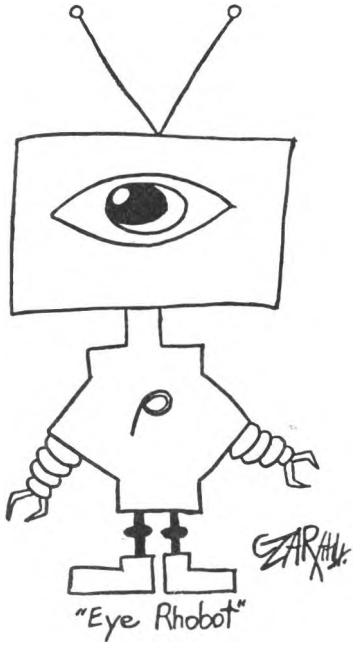
Ed Meskys

Two decades later these incidents still arouse very strong feelings. This is, however, the last time we will dwell on them in NIEKAS.

BLIND PANTHERS

David Palter

Kenneth Jernigan's address and report, in the back, were immensely powerful. I am glad to have been able to read them, even though I do not, at this time, plan to actually join the NFB. It is a worthy cause but my current strategy of altruism is to direct my energies to individuals rather than organizations. [He will spend time and money recording his still unpublished novel on quality tapes. He has also recorded many fanzines and dubbed stfnal radio programs, filk songs and other music for me, which I share with a network of other blind fen. ERM] In any event I have currently been made more aware of the problems faced by the blind, and the types of solutions which are needed. You are doing very good work, for which I admire you.



Czar/Robert H. Knox

Joseph T. Major

I am not surprised by the National Federation of the Blind and its attitude. There is a huge market for special privileges from the government and thus groups of all sorts try to get the benifits handed out in the name of "equal results." As a result, all the special-interest groups are at war with each other. Consider, for example, how the nowadays organized blacks and women hate each other because they see the other group as competing for the limited supply of government grants and privileges. This is reflected in such works as *The Color Purple*, which presents black males in terms from the Klan's lexicon. The NFB wants in on that gravy train. As long as the government gives out such privileges, such hostilities are inevitable.

B. Terry Jeeves

Incidentally, was intrigued by the blind report that such people can operate concessions inside post office bases and draw a percentage of profits. Over here in the U.K., our post offices are either sacrosanct monolithic buildings dispensing only postal items...or "sub" post offices run by people who live on the premesis, operate the postal but also run stationery, sweets, and so on as a sideline. I was also disturbed by the couple hassled by the airline. Surely they could sue for damages?

Leland Shapiro

This is a letter to Dr. Jernigan with a copy to NIEKAS:

"Terry McManus, the bus rider cited in Kenneth Jernigan's presidential address, was 100% wrong, as you can see easily by asking, "How did the bus driver know McManus was blind?" Obviously there was some distinguishing mark, a white cane or a collision that a sighted person would have avoided. Not only was McManus wrong but he was also bad mannered. It is an insult to reject a favor when somebody is courteous to offer one. So McManus not only insulted the driver

but caused inconvenience to everyone else on the bus. The idea is, if you want to be treated exactly like a sighted person you must be willing to behave exactly like one. Jacobus tenBroek, founder of your organization, knew this better than anybody. He taught at the University of California, Berkeley, and showed no distinguishing marks. He used no cane or guide dog but memorized literally every foot of his route. One would suspect his blindness only from his slow and deliberate gait. Indeed, some of his own students didn't realize he could not see, e.g., the student seeking permission to leave class early and waving an official pink slip in fromt of his face. If you want all the privileges of a sighted person you must be willing to pay the price. TenBroek knew this, McManus didn't."

Kenneth Jernigan

[Excerpted from BRAILLE MONITOR for Sept, 1987] Now it so happens that your humble Editor was an intimate friend and close associate of Dr. tenBroek. I traveled throughout the country with him on numerous occassions; I went with him to restaurants; I attended meetings with him—and I also visited some of his classes at the University of California. Therefore, I can tell you from personal knowledge and first hand experience that the letter writer's claim is without foundation—or, if you like, false. Dr. tenBroek carried a cane; his students knew that he was blind; and although he was not belligerant about it, he would have thought it beneath contempt to try to immitate anyone—blind or sighted, old or young, black or white, Jew or Christian, male or female, or anybody else you could mention. He was himself. That was enough. The next time you hear somebody talking about what the National Federation of the Blind believes or what Dr. tenBroek or I have done or thought, consider the vagaries of faith and think about Dr. Sapiro's letter.

Ed Meskys

The Federation is not looking for handouts, as Major implies, but for equal treatment. As for Leland's remarks, a blind person is not deaf or physically crippled. We are tired of having waiters asking our companions what we want, and of being treated as if we cannot walk or stand. Thoughtless airline ground personnel try to put us in golf carts or wheelchairs because they think we are incapable of walking. This treatment is irritating and the organized blind have reached the boiling point and might occasionally overreact. It is fine, and to be encouraged, to ask a blind person whether he needs some help or a seat. He like anyone else might have arthritis or back pains, unconnected with his blindness, which might make it difficult for him to walk or stand. He might not have complete mobility skills and need some help across a street or to find a particular building. But it is like assuming that every Jewish person is Hassidic and wears sidelocks and does not want to associate with Gentiles, and a person with a beard and sidelocks does not speak English, is lost, and must be shouted at and pushed in the direction of the nearest synagogue.

Incidentally, the long white cane was invented by Dr. Hoover around 1947 and before that most blind persons had to behave like Leland claims Dr. tenBroek did, or use a sighted guide. While The Seeing Eye, the first US guide dog school, was founded in the 1930's, less than one percent of all blind people could have gotten a dog by the 1940's. Both the guide dog and the Hoover cane were slow in being accepted. Perhaps Dr. tenBroek did rely on memorization of routes before adequate mobility aids were available, and then he adopted their use later. This would reconsile Dr. Jernigan's statements with those of Dr. Sapiro.

Anne Braude

Despite the "let's you and him fight" efforts of the white male Republican power structure, blacks and women's groups are natural allies in many causes, such as civil rights, aid to the poor (including welfare reform), and opposition to the nomination of Judge Bork to the Supreme Court. The conflicts between them in the area of equal employment opportunity, which have been blown out of all proportion, pale in comparison.

An interesting vignette of the way we perceive and treat the disabled occurred in Phoenix earlier this year during a convention of administrators of mass transit systems. A group of the disabled formed to lobby for better access was picketing the convention. Most of them were in wheelchairs, and their principal objective was to have all buses equipped with wheelchair lifts, a measure all the mass transit people pooh-poohed as too expensive and in excess of actual need. When the demonstrators proposed a sit-in, which would have gotten arrested, a police spokesman appeared on TV to assure the public that the nearest jail had adequate facilities for the expected 30 to 40 wheelchair-bound arrestees. One is forced to the conclusion that the not-atypical Phoenix city council assumes that someone in a wheelchair is about ten times more likely to commit a crime than to ride a bus.

On courtesy toward the disabled, see Judith Martin's *Miss Manners' Guide to Excruciatingly Correct Behavior* (1982) pp. 89-92.

SHARED WORLDS

Richard Brandt

Diana Paxson brings up what may be a problem with the shared world anthologies, that some of them became too much like novels. When anthologies like Thieves' World started it was interesting to see different writers dealing with the same territory, when each writer had his or her own style, viewpoint, and themative concern. But as time goes by those qualities are subordinated to the telling of a novelistic plot throughout the series, which it seems would require each writer to suppress the individual quirks of his or her style to keep each chapter reading the same. Of course now series like Thieves' World and Heroes in Hell have complete novels coming out, so it's just like one more series of novels. All I note is that the only two stories that I really enjoyed in the seventh Thieves' World book, which I picked up after missing a couple in the series, are the entries by Andy Offutt and Diane Duane which have nothing to do with the continuing story line.

I also picked up the Friends of the Horseclans anthology, but, having read a couple of other Robert Adams' books and deciding reading more would be a mistake, I did so only to read Effinger's Maureen Birnbaum parody. Turns out I'd read just enough of the series to appreciate it.

In summation, the shared world anthology may have started out as a way to breathe new life into the short story market but unless they deviate from the trend I described they may drive more nails into the coffin of the short story.

Joseph T. Major

I usually like Diana Paxson's "Patterns and Notes from Elfhill." This is interesting given that I have read three of her books and found all of them, well, gooey. (This is why I might never write fiction myself—there are too many differences between a fiction style and a nonfiction style. I could never write well enough to please myself.)

At first description a shared world sounds like an excellent idea. How interesting to see the combination of several talents giving a multiple viewpoint on a world! How better a reflection of the fact that the "real" world (whatever that is) is itself seen from multiple viewpoints! How interesting itself the blending, juxtaposition, and cross-mixing of varied talents!

How disappointing that because of one missing factor, it fails.

As for me, the problem crystallized upon reading *Thieves' World #7: The Dead of Winter*. I noticed that there seemed to be a number of highly-powered characters in the various stories in the anthology. There is also an onerous political situation. It was clearly within the powers of many of these high-powered people to affect the situation, and clearly the situation was capable of affecting them. Did they do anything about it?

Not according to *Thieves' World #8: Soul of the City*. The situation was changed, though, by a very powerful individual. More on this later.

After that, I became aware of the problem in other contexts. I am interested in history. When it was announced that a shared world anthology series using historical characters was coming out, I was intrigued. I went to some trouble to get the first two books. By the quirks of publication, I read the novel *The Gates of Hell* by Janet Morris and C. J. Cherryh, before I read the anthology, *Heroes in Hell*.

There were certain anomalies. For example, Gregory Benford went to great lengths to establish that this was a place of torment; food was tasteless, sex was pleasureless, and in general enjoyable things had lost their savor. Meanwhile unpleasant things were redoubled in their intensity. Yet in the original novel the protagonist had indulged in the pleasant things with no sense of loss or feeling that there was something missing. Also, David Drake depicted a nasty kind of creature called "liches." Liches were mean, nasty, and around—or so he said. No one else did. Finally, certain historical personages appeared to have changed radically since their deaths, particularly at the hands of Bill Kirby. Now people change, but the idea seems to me to be that of presenting the historical characters with unusual problems, and why bother if you're going to change the character radically?

Now there were justifications set forth, some by co-author Morris in a LoC to our fanzine FOSFAX. She said that some of the anomalies stemmed from the varying feelings of the authors about the people involved; others would be resolved by the later stories; and yet others stemmed from the nature of Hell itself. After all, Hell was not and could not be homogeneous. Anything might change or be changed at any time. (This presages more things to come.)

And did the later stories change the situation? One example springs to mind. The second novel, *Kings in Hell*, presented a major change in the situation: Alexander the Great found Boukephalos and was shifted off to another place. This change was something which had been sorely lacking; up until now the actions of the characters had geen seemingly pointless, as they could change neither the world nor themselves. (This needs to be touched on in more detail.)

The next anthology, *Crusaders in Hell*, contained a story by Chris Morris which undid all that. Clearly there was something about the series.

Let us zero in a little closer, to a series with which Paxson is connected and on which she has commented: The Blood of Ten Chiefs, run by co-creator Richard Pini with the aid of the only begetter, Robert Lynn Asprin, and the ubiquitous Lynn Abbey.

Mark C. Perry and the ubiquitous C.J. Cherryh have a gripping story of how the elfin chief Two-spear led the Wolfriders against the humans, burning their huts, trampling down their crops, and scattering their flocks. After I read that, I went and looked back at the original Elfquest story, set many hundreds of years later. I looked at the hunter-gatherer humans living in caves and said to myself, "Now, how did they lose agriculture?!"

The introduction by Richard Pini is no help. He says, in fact, "There are no inconsistencies."[page 5] He invokes as explanation different writing styles, hazy memories, and varied motivations. None of these factors will take away agriculture.

Carelessness will, however. [I haven't read any of the Elfquest stuff, so I'm not quarreling with your criticisms; but I can think of at least three legitimate ways that a culture could lose agriculture: (1) A climatic change, like the onset of an Ice Age, that their food crops are not hardy enough to withstand; (2) being driven by a more powerful enemy into territory not fertile enough to support crops (like much of Arizona); (3) soil exhaustion and/or drought, as in contemporary Africa (Something of the sort seems to have caused the disappearance of the mysterious Ho-hokam people who built the original irrigation canals here in the Salt River valley several hundred years ago). AJB] Unconcern about the relationship between the different views of the situation will produce on-again, off-again monsters. Need to keep a profitable series profitable (on the grounds that the readers want the same old stuff) will allow such old-fashioned virtues as character and plot development to take a back seat. What is the missing factor? EDITING. (I have avoided using that word until now.)

Hypothetically, an editor of a shared world series should be a hard worker. He should check over every story with the greatest of care. He should determine which differences among the stories are to be attributed to the factors above (and are therefore only apparent, and to remain), and which differences are due to a failure of perception on the part of the writer (and are real and therefore to be eliminated). He should have a firm grasp, himself, of the background and so be able to spot such real and apparent inconsistencies as well as being able to guide the authors through the metaplot of this volume of the series. At the same time, he must be careful not to impose himself too heavily on the contributors, lest the individuality of their contributions be lost.

Obviously, the current creators of the shared world series have failed as editors.

Why is this? Consider the origins of shared world stories in fan fiction. [Star Trek, Who, Darkover, etc., not general amateur fiction in anthology fanzines. ERM] I have noted a consistent lack of critical attitude in fan fiction: everything is beautiful in its own way, we are told. The virtues of fan fiction are supposedly that the characters and background are given, thus allowing the writer to concentrate on plot and description. But something else intervenes. The writer cannot change the background, or have the characters change the background, to any real degree. The writer cannot change any of the established characters. What does this sound like? TV SERIES. (Why be surprised?)

And where are those masterpieces of writing, of storytelling, of sparkling dialogue in TV series? Pretty rare, given the immense amount of material available. The ratio in good to poor material in fan fiction may well be better than the similar ratio of TV series, or so it seems to me. It is still "few and far between." And thus with shared worlds.

Everything said about fan fiction applies to shared worlds; after all, the main difference is that the background is made up for the occasion. One other factor seems to dominate. There is a cliquish air about shared worlds; there is the group of

people who seem to go from one series to another, while other series seem to be done by different bunches of friends. This ties in with the plaint above about the lack of editing. Being unwilling to comment adversely on the writing of friends does well for the friendship, but poorly for the writer.

One other comment: many writers have allowed other writers to use their established backgrounds. The latest example of such is the Isaac Asimov's Robot World series; well, it can be no worse than the proprietor's miscegenation of the Robot and Foundation series. [I believe these were seen as in the same universe by the author almost from the beginning and I have vague memories of Charlie Brown of LOCUS telling me about a future history chart similar to Heinlein's being in some old pulp. Does any reader know whether this is true? ERM]

He's not the best-known of these, though. Paxson lists many of them under the category of shared worlds. I have noticed that writers who allow (encourage?) fans to write fan fiction in their universes tend to end up writing to please those fans.

For example: Marion Zimmer Bradley started writing a science fiction series about the conflict of cultures. The fans got into it and to her; as a result, she is now writing a fantasy series about the anguish of feminists over the unwillingness of reality to yield to their whims. Strangely enough, the fan fiction was mostly by feminists anguished about the unwillingness of reality to yield to their whims writing about the anguish of feminists over the unwillingness....

Or there is the case of Anne McCaffrey. Dave Langford wrote the definitive criticism of *Moreta: Dragon Lady of Pern* (see HOLIER THAN THOU #19) which I can inadequately summarize by saying that the book is a gooey paean to the wonderful dragons. Every point that Langford stresses—the proliferation of names for spear carriers, the inability of McCaffrey to create a believable reason for anyone opposing the dragonriders, the unnecessary emphasis on the dragonriders themselves—stem from dragonrider fandom, which concentrates to the point of overkill on the dragons and dragonriders. She wrote a novel the dragon fans would like. (Though she left out those cute l'il fire lizards. What do you mean it would have contradicted the other books? Moreta already did in several other ways.)

This is nothing more than continuing the works of popular writers, the difference being that they used to wait until the original creator was dead. Of course, those had problems as well. Every Sherlock Holmes continuation that I have read has had at least one gross error of style or background. This is for a character who is excellently documented, with four novels, 76 short stories, and thousands of background articles and books.

A lot of this comes from the fact that the continuing author brings to the work his own background and beliefs, which rarely coincide with those of the original writer. I read Conan novels by deCamp, Anderson, Karl Edward Wagner, Andrew Offutt, and Robert Jordan and ended up with the feeling that I was reading about five different guys with the same name. (And of course, they all felt constrained to contradict something the creator Robert E. Howard had said about the character or background.)

Segueing to the Star Trek movies—at the end of ST IV Kirk is punished/rewarded by being assigned to the command of a starship, as he is so well fitted for that job. Along with him are his companions. We are now back to the Good Old Days of the TV series, with Spock at the sensors, Scotty running the engine room, Sulu at the helm, Checkov at the weapons, Uhura on the communicators, and McCoy ready to patch them all up. No one notices or cares that this one ship has enough brass to staff a flotilla of ships.

Also, in ST III it is established that the old Enterprise was being laid up because it was obsolete. We are now back to the Good Old Days of the TV series with a new Enterprise of the same class of starship. No one notices, or cares, that this class of starship is obsolete. In short we are seeing the Star Trek movies as fan fiction. Back to the good old days of Captain Kirk, Mr. Spock, Dr. McCoy and The Crew on the good old Enterprise! Never mind that the world changes, for us THE FANS it will be the same, and we will tear up realism to get it!

Toni Piper

As Diana said, there can be one author's world with everybody writing about it, or there can be the world where several people get together to build a situation where anybody can write. Both types provide openings for beginning writers to get started in the professional field. It is also an opportunity for a writer to try writing in different styles. Darkover stories have, pretty much, a single style of writing. The stories are flavored by each different writer but still follow a specific outline. On the other hand, in Thieves' World several people got together and said "Well, this is the location. Have fun!" Here you can develop your own style.

Of course anything done by people will have a human error factor, and in all shared worlds you are going to find somebody who thinks it should have been done his way, and who feels that he is inhibited in his style because it is not done that way. The Thieves' World series started out in a medieval culture-plus-magic milieu but with no alien life forms. Writers who felt the need for such a life form later introduced the "beysib" or fish folk. Thus in a combined universe of this type there are ways around the original constraints.

One of my friends asked me why, if I like the Darkover stories so much, don't I submit a story for the Friends of Darkover. In that one you definitely have a specific world, though you have all kinds of time frames you can work with, but it is very specific in how things are done, how you can work with the star stones, etc., and I don't know that I could tie into that so closely.

One of the most active type of shared worlds, as Diana Paxson mentioned, is the role-playing game. Some of those games could very well be translated into stories and come across OK, and then everybody has an input. Everybody who is in on the game wrote part of it. In my gaming worlds, as a shared universe, I set up conditions for a specific reason. In D&D a magician can do pretty much any kind of magic, whereas in one of the worlds I operate a magician can't operate in all fields. He can pick ice or fire magic to work with, and again water magic is something entirely different. Some of the players have objected to that because they think it's too restrictive, but working within restraints can be a challange. It depends on how much you are willing to let go and what you are willing to let other people do with your world.

Piers Anthony

Yes, these shared world volumes represent an interesting trend. I have recently participated in a couple of new ones, The Fleet and Light Years. Well, that last is actually a different creature: a round-robin novel with a formidable cast of ten authors. I lead off, and I understand that Philip Jose Farmer has written the second part, and the others will (I hope) read the prior installments before adding theirs. Thus it should be a unified novel, shared by ten authors. This sort of thing used to be

done by fans; I'd participated on one when I belonged to NFFF in 1963. With professionals it should work better, because there will be no weak links. Though this is a novel, I suspect it brings the story values into play, because each author has under 8000 words to play with. I actually did adapt a story I wrote in 1963 (uh, no, not the same as what I did for N3F) for my entry because I believed in the story and

Michael Bastraw

felt it appropriate for this position in this novel. [The British Detection Club did several mysteries this way back in the thirties, which have been recently reprinted. AJB]

Brian E. Brown

I disagree strongly about the worth of shared world anthologies. Those that I've read have been uniformly lackluster. Worse is the notion that these are some kind of training ground for novice writers. Writing stories where the characters and settings are given teaches a writer nothing. Setting and character are 90% of a story. The rest, plot and dialogue, are mechanical operations. The uniform insipidness of shared world stories probably stems from the same cause as insipid TV serial writing. Nothing serious, i.e. real, can happen to the characters. Nothing can damage them, so every episode is irrelevant to their lives.

Buck Coulson

I think another aspect of the shared world series is due to the TV mentality. Like a TV series they are designed to go on for ever without an ending. In fact, of course, they stop whenever the profits go down, but they don't end in a literary sense. There is no conclusion to the various intertwined stories. I wonder if the shared worlds sell as well, proportionately, in England, which has a much higher proportion of finite series (miniseries, if you prefer) than we do. [Ken Bulmer series about searching for earth has run over 30 volumes! While not a shared world, this is one of the longest-running open-ended series and originates in England. ERM] The shared worlds appeal to people who want their favorite characters to go on for ever as do the people in American TV. I noticed this particularly because I loathe that particular aspect and avoid reading shared worlds, or have avoided it since Thieves' World failed to live up to my original idea that it would be a world with major characters dying now and then as they do in real life. [One is reminded of the popular outcry that forced Conan Doyle to resurrect Sherlock Holmes, much to his disgust. The late John D. MacDonald is rumored to have left a final Travis McGee novel for postmortem publication, in which he kills off that series character; it will be interesting to see how he manages to depict the death of a first-person narrator. AJB] [I notice that Magnum was resurrected on US TV. Here, however, it wasn't public demand but actors contracts that pulled off the miracle. ERM]

Anne J. Braude

As I said above, I'm not familiar with the Elfquest books; but I have read most of the Thieves' World series (capitalize that last word and you have a whole new story idea), keeping at it because of the undenyable talent of the authors even though, as I pointed out in a review of the first few books, it is not a pleasant subcreation in which to dwell. The more I think about it, the harder I find it to see how Sanctuary keeps going. Towns from Ur of the Chaldees to Silicon Valley have traditionally grown up because there was an economic basis to support a large population. The earliest ones developed in proximity to rich agricultural lands and water for irrigation—it is no accident that one origin of civilization is an area called the Fertile Crescent; with diversification and specialization, commerse became the lifeblood of the towns and cities, which arose first at ports and river crossings, later where roads met, still later near resources like mines, quaries, and sourses of water power. To support a large population, you must be able to produce something lots of people want or provide a place where goods can be conveniently bartered or sold. If you bring a railroad in from one direction, where there are a lot of hungry people with money, and drive herds of beef cattle in from another direction, where they meet you get Dodge City. The explosive growth of Silicon Valley is a result of its being handy to a lot of universities where high-tech research is going on.

Sanctuary is a port, but the disrupted political situation makes normal trade impossible. There is fishing, and there some craftsmen; but they don't appear to produce enough for export. The vast majority of the population seems to consist either of theives, mercenaries, magicians, and ripoff artists or of idle and non-productive aristocrats. There are numerous inns and taverns, mostly scrofulous; but the only productive citizens I can think of offhand are Dubro the blacksmith, Diana Paxson's Lalo the Limner, and Hakiem the Story-teller, the last two of whom are not exactly contributing to the balance of trade. Who in his right mind would want to start a pottery, a drapers' shop, or a basket-weaving business in Sanctuary, even supposing they could get ahold of the raw materials? If you have anything left after taxes and paying out protection money, somebody would knock you over the head one dark night and take it. The only communities Sanctuary resembles are the medieval robbers' nests or Wild West rustlers' roosts and the pirates' stronghold of the Spanish Main, but none of these were self-sustaining communities. They lived by preying on the profits produced by farmers, ranchers, and traders; and if they took too much, trade died: the producers packed up and moved away (except in a community based on slavery or serfdom, in which the owners and creditors were one and the same), leaving the thieves nothing to steal. Or, if rich enough, the bourgeois hired their own muscle (conbotierit or Billy the Kid and Wyatt Earp) to beat the preditors at their own game. A Thieves' World is a living oxymoron.

I much prefer the shared world of Liavek, conducted by Will Shetterly and Emma Bull through three volumes so far. Liavek has an interesting gimmick: the source of magic is luck, possessed by every

Liavekan in direct proportion to the length of his or her mother's labor. On the anniversary of the birthing process, the luck can, with difficulty, be "invested" in an object which can then be used for magical purposes—but it must be reinvested every year. This means that although there are plenty of wizards in the town, every Liavekan has some potential for magick; and the story possibilities are wide open.

And Liavek is a real community: in addition to wizards, soldiers, nobles vile or virtuous, and shady characters, it has respectible inns, shops, bakeries, lawyers, for heaven's sake, and not only artists but an art critic as a running character. There is a religious order of sworn suicides who somehow, for good and sufficient reason, never get around to killing themselves. There is even a distinct local cuisine. Everybody in town seems to keep at least one cat. Now that's what I call civilization. Liavek is changing, too. They have flintlock guns and the printing press, and there is a transcontinental railroad a-building. While you probably can count on one hand the really likeable denizens of Sanctuary, Liavek is full of nice people, people one wouldn't mind having lunch with. It is quite possible (though not that frequent) to get through an entire story without anyone's suffering grievous bodily harm. And while Sanctuary stories are generally about people being more or less miserable (the most lighthearted I can remember is a Diane Duane offering in which the characters literally go to hell), there are a lot of funny stories in the Liabek books, and, in the current Wizard's Row, a stunning psychological horror story by Alan Moore. And don't miss Emma Bull's terrific first fantasy novel, War for the Oaks, about the Seelie and Unseeli Courts of Faerie on the loose in Minneapolis.

FIRESTORMS & INVASIONS

Buck Coulson

Whether or not Coppel intended to make a point in *The Burning Mountain*, the point that the atomic bomb caused fewer deaths on both sides than an invasion would have done is made and very graphically. Considering that Coppel's best science fiction was a post-atomic novel titled Dark December, a psychologist might say that he was obsessed with the bomb and wrote *The Burning Mountain* to reassure himself that it was, after all, the lesser of two evils. Of course I consider that bullshit but I wouldn't be surprised to see it mentioned sometime.

Don D'Ammassa

The discussion of firebombing overlooked one book that did examine the effects of the firestorms on cities other than Dresden, *The Night Hamburg Died* by Martin Caidin. It is a very effective and very chilling treatment of the subject. Ballantine did a paperback edition of it some time ago, though I imagine it is probably out of print by now.

William Wilson Goodson, Jr.

Firestorms are not senseless. They are a very effective means of killing people.

Mark Keller

Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo was not about the firestorming of Tokyo; rather it was about the Doolittle raid over Japan in April, 1942. It was four months after Pearl Harbor, and the US public was sick of news about endless Japanese victories. They wanted to hear about a strike back at Japan. At the time, the only way to do this was to fly Army twin-engine bonbers off the deck of a Navy aircraft carrier out at sea, 800 miles from Japan. The one-way flight dropped a few symbolic bombs on Tokyo, then the bombers flew on to land in China. It was more than just a propaganda raid. True, the bombs dropped did very little damage, but the humiliation of seeing enemy planes over the Emperor's palace caused the staff of the Imperial Navy to loose all caution and judgement.

The IJN was furious to wipe out the insult of the Doolittle raid. The core of the Japanese Navy was sent to Midway Island in June, 1942, to lure the US fleet into one big final battle that would sink all the American ships for good. It was too much of a risk. The Americans ambushed the Japanese, instead. In that battle, two-thirds of the Japanese carrier force was sunk, which erased all hope of Japan controlling the Pacific Ocean. You can trace this back to the raid by a forlorn hope of US Army bombers over Japan three months earlier.

* * *

There are a few books about the firestorm bombing of Europe. Martin Caidin wrote *The Night Hamburg Died* which describes the attack and the fires accurately. In some cases, Caidin relied on doubtful sources, which means you can't trust all the details. For example, he took material on people who were splashed with burning phosphorus from a novel by the Italian Curzio Malaparte, *The Skin*, written in 1948. But bombs filled with liquid phosphorus weren't used on Hamburg.

More accurate is *The War Against Hamburg*, written by Martin Middlebrook in 1980. Middlebrook says the battle was not between the air forces of Britain and Germany, but between the Royal Air Force and the fire department of the city of Hamburg. This is a clearer view of what happened; you can see how the fire and rescue departments were overwhelmed by thousands of tons of incendiary bombs.

In England, and even within the ranks of Bomber Command, there was some doubt as to whether it was moral to destroy enemy cities and to kill all those women and children, presumably innocent. The English clergy and politicians who objected agreed that yes, the Nazis were brutes, but was firestorming a city the sort of revenge a civilized nation could take? Even against Nazis? Even to retaliate for Coventry and the blitz over London?

But RAF Bomber Command settled on area bombing of German cities in 1941, not after moral debate but simply out of desperation. It was the only method the RAF could use that worked at all. No area mass bombing meant no raids on Germany, and thousands of RAF bombers put up in mothballs, thus admitting that twenty years of air planning and strategy were a dismal failure.

The British bomber fleet was massive, ultimately 5000 planes, and expensive, absorbing almost one-third of all UK productive capacity. (Yes, one-third.) But the planners of the RAF neglected navigation systems until very late, say 1942. Good radio-direction-finding to guide the RAF bombers didn't come until 1944, so until then, how did the bombers find their targets? The big four-motor Lancasters could carry seven tons of bombs, and the planners assumed they could fly over Germany in daylight and drop the bombs right on factories and shipyards. Early runs over Germany by day in 1939 and 1940 resulted in horrific losses for British bombers, chopped to pieces by anti-aircraft guns and Luftwaffe fighters. For 20 years the RAF had assumed that the bombers would always get through, to demolish enemy transport and production centers. But over Germany the defences were just too good; the RAF could loose half the bombers it sent out, each mission.

So the British switched to night bombing, sending the air fleets over enemy territory after sunset. Losses dropped off; the

Mark Bondurant

Germans did not have many planes ready for night-fighting, and the flak wasn't very accurate. But the British did not have competent guidance systems. They could land bombs within maybe five miles of a target, no better. They could hit a city, but not a factory. So the RAF said that hitting cities was what they wanted, to "destroy German morale".

The RAF did not admit it made mistakes. If British heavy bombers could fly over Germany only at night, why then, night attacks were best. The Jerries could not see you at night, and besides, it kept them from getting any sleep. If the British radio-navigation system could only direct to within a mile of the target point, why then, mass attacks with firebombs were best. The Huns would loose all the housing for factory workers, and the German people might turn against Hitler for letting their houses be destroyed.

By mid-1942 the British could stage thousand-plane raids on Germany, night fire raids. The Americans arrived in late 1942, and wanted to fly daylight raids over Germany, precision bombing of factories and oil plants. The RAF scoffed, "Hah! We tried that two years ago and it doesn't work."

But the Americans tried anyway. Their bombers were more sturdy than the British planes, and had a lot more defensive guns. Many American bombers were shot down by German fighters in 1943, but the majority got through. Even by daylight the percentage of American bombs actually on target was dismal. So the US also shifted to area bombing: American bombers by day, British bombers by night. Only after the Luftwaffe fighters were driven from the sky (early 1944) did the US precision bombing of synthetic oil plants become effective. Still, the American and British carpet bombing fire raids continued in Europe right up to the end.

* * *

Besides Coppel and Westheimer, another alternate-history novel about the invasion of Japan is Ronald Clark's *The Bomb That Failed* (Morrow, 1969). The British edition was titled *The Last Year of the Old World*. Here, the atomic bomb project fails because Klaus Fuchs slips in some wrong figures regarding critical mass; the Trinity test in July, 1945 is a dud. It takes the British and American teams six months to find the error.
Meanwhile, Operation Olympic has gone in, the non-nuclear invasion of Japan in November, 1945. Suicide troops and a typhoon drive the US landing force back into the sea. The furious Americans spray the Japanese rice fields with spores of crop diseases in 1946, and the Japanese armies are starved into surrender, after massive civilian deaths. The US atomic bomb project is terminated as a dead-end waste of money, still with no working bomb. Senator Joe MacCarthy makes a name for himself accusing Oppenheimer of being a money-wasting traitor.

Coppel, Westheimer, and Clark all assume that the Japanese were still able and eager to fight in August, 1945, and that the US had only two ways to force the surrender of Japan, two sledgehammer blows that would crush all resistance. It was either atom bomb in August, 1945, or a full-scale invasion over the beach in November, 1945. Our world saw the atom bomb, the three alternate versions saw the invasion. An unstated message is, "The invasion would have killed 50,000 Americans and a million Japanese, so really using the atom bombs ended the war faster and was more humane."

But that first assumption, the ability of Japan to keep on fighting, is open to some question. The US had other options. Evidence shows that Japan was in such bad shape economically that even without a US bomb in August, the surrender of the Empire had to come by October, 1945. This is before any invasion, either.

The US government in August, 1945, may not have realised exactly how bad off Japan was. There is still debate going on among historians.

It doesn't make quite as dramatic SF novel, the surrender of Japan without atom bomb or invasion. But consider: Japan was not self-sufficient in either food or war materials. Supplies came in by ship from all over the Empire in a steady flow: oil from Borneo, rice from Vietnam, tin and rubber from Malaya, fish from the China Sea, iron ore from Manchuria, nitrates from Korea. The Imperial Navy was out there to protect the shipping lanes and keep the goods flowing into Japan. What Japan sent out was mostly guns and soldiers.

But then the fast carriers of the US destroyed the Japanese Navy, and the American submarines came in to destroy the Japanese merchant marine. By 1944 we had 150 submarines in the Pacific, with about 50 of them right around Japan at any one time. Oil tankers and rice ships and ore carriers got torpedoed, and if no big ships came out of harbor, the American subs would surface and shoot up little wooden fishing boats. By mid-1944 Japan was running out of raw materials and running short of food.

Especially short was oil for the Japanese Air Force. In mid-1944 Japan ordered that no more dry cargo be sent from South

Jerry Collins

East Asia: no rice, no tin. Instead, all freighters would be converted to oil tankers, to try to sneak a few thousand tons of feul oil along the China coast to Japan. That didn't work either. There was a month's supply of gasoline in the Home Islands, hardly enough for combat missions. The factories could still turn out airplanes, but how could new pilots be trained? Pilots needed at least 500 hours of flying time to reach pre-war standards for Japanese combat flying. There was not enough feul to give students 50 hours of practice flying, or even 10 hours. The kamikaze pilots were novices sent off with barely an hour's training time at the controls of an aircraft. It is no surprize they often could not even find American ships let alone fly a straight course to crash into them.

So the American submarines blocked the flow of resources into Japan. The Japanese troops in China stole all the rice they could find, but it piled up in the warehouses of Shanghai, since there was no way to get it to Japan. Factories in Yokahama turned out canons and ammunition, but there was no way to get them to the Japanese troops in Burma who needed them. Worse than this were the American bombers, the fleet of huge B-29 Superforts that came over Japan every day beginning in Spring, 1945. The bombers dropped a thousand tons a day of firebombs on the cities of Japan, destroying them one after another, working down the list. Hiroshima was about #50 down on the list when the atom bomb was dropped on it; all the cities above were already bombed out.

When the B-29 fleet wasn't dropping firebombs by day on Japanese cities, it was dropping mines by night into every harbor and anchorage along the coast. The cargo ships were sunk, the fishing boats could not slip out to sea without risk of hitting a mine. Small coastwise vessels could not carry cargoes of rice from farm regions to the cities. The Japanese government announced that samurai spirit would allow the struggle to continue even with no oil, no guns, no rice. But the war machine of Japan was running on empty. It could not last beyone September or October, 1945, at the latest.

Thus, no atom bomb and no invasion. But Japan would still collapse, by the attrition of submarines, firebombs, and mines.

You know, it might make a very interesting alternate history SF novel. War ends with V-J Day in September, 1945. The Russians have occupied Manchuria, north Korea, and the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido by seaborne invasion. The US first tested a-bomb in October, 1945; it works fine, but it was never used in war. Japan recovers with US aid, or at least South Japan does. The north of Japan is the Russian zone, which remains poor and occupied by the Red Army. Has any Japanese science fiction writer used this framework for a story?

* * *

[The following discussion of bomber capabilities was taken from a tape recording of a conversation at NEConin July, 1987, which also covered much of the above material. While not directly related to the subject of this section I found it very interesting and append it here. ERM]

The normal load for a bomber was three tons. The B-17 could carry 5 tons and the B-29 10.

The B-36, not ready until after the war, was designed to carry 30 tons, the same as the B-52. That was designed in the early 1940's specifically to take off from the east coast of the US, fly across to Europe, drop a bomb load and fly back nonstop and land on the east coast. It was designed to stay in the air for 24 hours. Originally it was going to be all propeller, and not even turbine propeller but reciprocating, and have eight engines. The US was considering the possibility that England might fall and therefore that we would have to bomb the Germans from North America.

The final model that went into production had six engines plus two jet pods. It was still underpowered because it took something like a three-mile runway to get it into the air. I've seen one of the tech manuals for it, declassified, and there were in North America something like four airfields where the B-36 could land in 1950 when it was in full-scale production. If the plane could not land in Kansas, it would have to land in Florida or Massachusetts or northern California. And that was it! Otherwise there was no way you could get that thing down without it running off the end of the runway. Of course it had to be a concrete runway because the plane was sufficiently heavy that if it landed on any thin runway the pavement would crack. There were attempts to get around it. The whole development of JATO (jet assisted take off), putting little rockets under the fuselage to boost the plane up into the air, was originally designed to get a fully loaded B-36 off the ground in less than five miles. When the B-52 came in in 1955 it was considered a great advantage because while it weighed as much as a B-36 and could carry as heavy a bomb load, its engines could generate five or six times as much power.

Ed Meskys

I received the above letter at the same time as the recording of the June, 1987, SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN which had an interesting article on the history of the US chemical and biological weapons program. Just as the US Manhattan Project was started in fear that Germany would develop nuclear weapons first, so also was a separate chemical and biological weapons project. While the German nuclear project was ineffective and would not have led to an atomic bomb, they never had a chemical and biological weapons project. The US was considering chemical and biological attacks on Japan with no real decision when the war ended. The parallels to the atom bomb are interesting, and the Clark novel could well have come through. England and the US rationalized the bombing of civilian populations, and we could well have applied the same reasoning to the use of these other "unspeakable" weapons on Japan.

Another interesting non-nuclear end to World War II can be found in the nonfact article, "The Constitutional Origins of Westley vs Simmons" by Paul A. Carter, in the October, 1985, ANALOG. See also my remarks in Bumbejimas. The alternate time-line of this piece agrees that even without nuclear or bio-chemical weapons Japan was ready to surrender in late 1945.✹

REVIEW & COMMENT

W. Ritchie Benedict
Anne J. Braude
Thomas M. Egan
William Wilson Goodson, Jr.
Laura Todd

A BARNSTORMER IN OZ, Philip Jose Farmer, Berkeley Books, NY, 1983, 294 pp., $2.95.

Oz revisited: a tarnished image?

Millions of Americans remember the wonderful fantasy movie, THE WIZARD OF OZ, and its gorgeous exotic locales and characters with heartfelt sentimentality. Far fewer remember the original Oz book by L. Frank Baum and its many sequels. To those who still dream and wonder about what might have happened after the original movie came to a close Philip Jose Farmer cannily addresses his book, *A Barnstormer in Oz*. Its good and bad points are entwined with the author himself.

The time is the early 20's, an era of America's frantic "return to normalcy" amidst the folly of Prohibition and a corrupt national government. Spectacular feats of derring-do were the national rage, and our hero, the son of little Dorothy who voyaged to Oz, is no exception. He is young and rich, a would-be air-devil with his Curtis-Jenny biplane which barges by accident into the other-dimensional world of Oz and its adjacent kingdoms. To catch our minds with how strange the real world can be, Farmer includes some actual newspaper and magazine excerpts and headlines of the 1923 period.

Hank Stover is a bit too cocky for a satisfactory hero, but even he is confounded more than once by the Witch-Queen Glinda the Good whose Machiavellian brain knows how to keep romance in its proper place and a smart young Yankee puzzled as to the real nature of the witches and the Ertha (the planet joined to our Earth by what links?).

Oz is more amoral than the children's novels of Baum, but it is still

fascinating to wander into. There are varied peoples (Quadlings, Gillikins, Munchkins, etc.) ruled by witches, good and bad, beings like the generous Scarecrow and Tin Man who rule as kings (the Cowardly Lion takes a back-row here) but prefer the simple life of the road (try an impatient American like Hank in argument with such as these, and see who wins!), strange politics that has bears, dogs, rattlesnakes, and pasture animals acting as senators in Glinda's elected Parliament, and lots of intriguing cultural speculations. The American Indians are linked to Oz, so too the ancient Goths, Celts, and even Neanderthals.

American politics itself jumps into Oz with an army of invasion—at the devious orders of President Warren G. Harding and his cohorts. The actual circumstances of that currupt leader's death in 1923 is interwoven by Farmer into his skein of Fate. There are battles with the American Air Force, battles with the new evil force of Erakna the Red Witch, and battles of our hero, Hank, with varied means too numerous to mention.

Religion here is a jumble of ancient Arian Christianity, pagan savage ritual, and occult forces (the "fire foxes" are a superb invention by Farmer here). Even the Devil makes a covert intrusion into the struggle (whether that struggle is truly "good versus evil" in traditional terms, or old-fashioned power-politics is something the reader will have to ponder). Plenty of meat in the adventure tradition—with some questions left for us to chew over.

Its readability is undeniable. Fast-paced action, good logic in background for figures of fantasy and environment, and environment, good plot and optimistic mood (with just a touch of sardonic cynicism about folk in general, even the hero!), and a quite faithful knowledge and use of Baum's creative series—all these are here for Oz fans.

But this is marred, both by the third-person structure of the book (instead of making it a lost memoir or a pseudo-scholarly analysis of varied imaginary documents as in Farmer's previous *Tarzan Alive* and Doc Savage "biographies," both published by Ace/Berkeley, giving the reader the needed sense of authenticity), and by the slant toward "adult" sexual coyness (fornication is very exuberant in Farmer's world of Oz, with the hero, Hank Stover, quite frank about his amours and not at all in keeping with the chaste behaviour of the Baum books). What tips the balance in its favor is the wonderful inventiveness of Farmer in following his own map of what Oz ultimately means. ***tme***

[It might have helped to mention in greater detail that Farmer likes to do what the Baker Street Irregulars do, namely pretend that a work of fiction is real history and extrapolate from there. Also Farmer took only the first of Baum's 14 Oz books as historical and the others as Baum's fictional extensions. Finally the Oz fen in BAUM BUGLE were very upset by this tinkering with their beloved universe. It might be interesting to compare Farmer's treatment of Oz with Heinlein's in *The Number of the Beast*. Heinlein's is so sexless that the pregnant visitors stop gestating. I wonder which book was published first and whether one influenced the other. ERM]

THE CAT WHO WALKS THROUGH WALLS, A Comedy of Manners, by Robert A. Heinlein, Berkley Books, 1986, 382pp.

The cat of the title appears late in the plot and he goes by the name of Pixel. He is a sort of cousin of the famous Schroedinger cat of quantum physics. He appears to walk through walls (because he is so young, he doesn't know it is impossible) and may turn up anywhere....

Fans of Robert Heinlein will be pleased to know that this new novel, like his last—*Job, A Comedy of Justice*, is a vast improvement over the wordy and ponderous works he turned out in the mid and late 70s. The ending of this one appears a bit inconclusive but his next novel, *To Sail Towards the Sunset*, wraps things up.

In some respects the book resembles one by the late Philip K. Dick as it corkscrews its way through surprising revelations and reality inversions. It begins on July 4, 2188, aboard the Golden Rule space habitat, an orbiting condo ruled in old West style by Judge Sethos. A man named Enrico Shultz approaches our hero (Col. Colin Campbell alias Dr. Richard Ames alias Sen. Richard Johnson alias Richard Colin) at a restaurant table. Shultz has barely enough time to broach a scheme to liquidate one Ron Tolliver ("We'll all be dead if he's not dead by noon Sunday.") when he himself is killed. Campbell has problems even convincing his wife, Gwen Novak, that he is not guilty. He is further hampered by his artificial leg which he keeps stuffed with microfilmed business files. Campbell, Gwen, and an indentured-servent slave, Bill Johnson, head for Luna City with the assistance of a friend, Tiger Condo.

It isn't long before the trio runs into more trouble. Campbell finds himself under accusation of masterminding a terrorist attack on the lunar rover in which he himself is riding. Dictator Mr. Mayo is about to throw the book at him when he is saved by the testimony of an old lady, Aunt Lillibeth. Further complications ensue as Gwen reveals her real name to be Hazel Mead Davis. Davis was believed to have perished over a century earlier in a failed attempt to rescue Adam Selene, chairman of the Revolutionary Committee. Selene was a self-programming computer who created the Lunar Revolution as a bit of a joke. The people who want Selene to stay dead attempt to wipe out all of Luna City with biological weapons, they are that anxious to kill Campbell.

A group calling itself Time Headquarters rescues Campbell by taking him to 4400 A.D. and a location 7000 light years from Earth. He soon learns of the existence of alternate time lines and his missing leg is replaced. He is rejuvinated to the age of 18 and meets Lazarus Long, a character from some early Heinlein novels.

At this point a number of other people from Heinlein's Future History

Stu Shiffman

make their appearance. Long comes from a universe where the first Lunar landing was accomplished by the employee of a financeer. Gwen, Campbell, and a team of Time Corps personnel are sent back to rescue the robot Selene as Long needs a monitoring computer to assist in creating multi-universe projections. However, nothing quite goes as anticipated and the novel ends with the main characters in dire peril.

Heinlein has never been very good in handling female characters but Gwen is a better drawn than most. Slightly talky and overly cute in its prose in the early chapters, this is nevertheless vintage Heinlein and can be enjoyed by any reader, even if you are not familiar with his characters and Future History. If you are, so much the better. It is good to see the old Heinlein back in business again.

wrb

CATCHFIRE, Graham Dunstan Martin. Houghton Mifflin, 1981, $8.95.

This is the promised sequel to *Giftwish*, which I reviewed in NIEKAS #29, and it is a bit better than its predecessor. Ewan, now king of Kendark and, as the wearer of the Crown of Unity, rightful king of neighboring Feydom, must persuade the present king of that land that instead of barring Kendark's magic, he must allow it access to his realm; otherwise the drought now destroying Feydom cannot be lifted. With the help of the witch-girl Catchfire, who is the psychic twin of the king's ensorcelled daughter Starfall, he seeks a way to lift the binding spell against magic. They must contend with the wizard Hoodwill and the evil lord Fetch, who is betrothed to Starfall and sworn to kill Ewan in a ritual sacrifice to strengthen the binding spell. The book is more consciously Jungian than *Giftwish*, and Martin's debt to Middle-earth and Earthsea is obvious but not obnoxious, except in names and language, on which I commented negatively before. Ewen and Catchfire are once again likeable and intelligent protagonists. Particularly well done are the sky dragon Whirlwind, mate of Earthquake from the previous book (she makes a brief appearance here), and Ewen's visit to the realm of the dead to find a most unusual means of undoing the binding spell. The story started in *Giftwish* is brought to a satisfactory conclusion, with Ewan and Catchfire set to reign over the united kingdoms and the principal villains scotched; there are a couple of loose ends that could lead to further volumes. Temperately recommended (translation: get it from the library).

ajb

[Note: My reviews this issue were submitted five years ago but have only now emerged from NIEKAS's friendly neighborhood time-warp. AJB]

THE ELEVEN MILLION MILE HIGH DANCER, Carol Hill, Penguin Books Canada, Ltd. & R R Donnelley & Sons, 1986, 447 pp., $8.95.

It is always a bit amazing to the regular science fiction fan how often non-SF readers are taken by an idea that has been around in the field for twenty years or more. On the one hand it is pleasing to see the idea has finally reached the mainstream. Contrarwise it is irritating to see how long it has taken them to catch up with the rest of us. Normally, I try not to read any reviews of a book that I'm going to review for a magazine as I do not want any bias from someone else creeping into my work. In the case of this book by a newcomer to the science fiction field I did read one highly negative reader's criticism by a well-known SF author. Since he is a bit arrogant anyway, I wasn't sold by his arguments. One thing he was right about, however, is the comments by everyone from the WASHINGTON POST to NEWSDAY that lead off this book. No one who is just starting in the science fiction field should have to bear such heavy freight. I found myself feeling a bit sorry for Ms. Hill. What do you do for an encore? Actually, this is Ms. Hill's fourth book but her first venture into science fiction/fantasy, and for a first novel it isn't bad at all. It reminds me a bit of *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, sort of a light comedy-fantasy with a touch of Monty Python.

Amanda Jaworski is a female astronaut taking to roller skating through the halls of NASA. In addition to being beautiful, smart, and headed eventually for Mars, she is also a sub-atomic particle physicist who, appropriately enough, owns a cat named Schroedinger who appears to be suffering from narcolepsy. He is so comatose everybody thinks he is stuffed.

It isn't long before Amanda and a number of other government officials become aware that something decidedly peculiar is going on. Sheriff Eberly of Reno, Texas, is puzzled by reports of vanishing Indians. The Russians are busy trying to deal with two Cosmonauts who had returned from orbit slightly more than somewhat deranged, being only able to repeat, "Nerp, nerp." A friend of Amanda, an American astronaut named Hooper, dies mysteriously, apparently of a heart attack. But what are the top brass trying to cover up? Or is he dead at all? Amanda sees him vanish in front of her car as he points

to an oncoming truck which vanishes as well. Then there is a chimp that is extremely fond of stealing hats and driving any car around that has the keys left in the ignition. A black man in an odd uniform shows up in her kitchen and has the disconcerting property of shape-shifting whereupon her boyfriend, Ponchkis, thinks she is going crazy.

When she finally does take off on her space mission she vanishes from earth tracking traveling at apparantly impossible speed. Things get decidedly surrealistic from this point on. There is a creature called the Ooze and the GCB, the Great Cosmic Brain, who may be anything beyond this earth's conception. There is a danger to earth posed by the GCB and she may have to give it her precious cat in order to save her home planet. Or perhaps that semi-comotose cat is not what it seems to be, either.

There are a lot of insights into such things as ecology, the human brain, quantum physics, and mysticism along the way, including an afterword by the author giving a brief rundown on the oddities of the quantum world. As such, this book is right in touch with a number of recent science fiction novels: *Job, A Comedy of Justice*, *Infinity's Web*, *The Coming of the Quantum Cats*, *Worldmaker*, and *Borrowed Time* which also deal with this peculiar branch of modern science. There are, admittedly, some flaws in the book, a few parts that could be edited, but generally it is very good for a beginning SF writer—full of a wide sense of humor and quirky characters. I find myself more than a little annoyed with the reviewer I mentioned at the start of this review. If we were all given such a hostile reception with our first effort no one would ever write anything again. I would not rave about it like the literary establishment has done but I would give it a good solid rating for an entertaining book, somewhere between a B+ and a A-. It will be interesting to see if Ms. Hill is encouraged to stay within the science fiction world. We need all the good writers we can get and she shows a lot of potential. ***wrb***

HARD BOILED DAMES, Bernard Drew, editor, St. Martin's Press, 1986, $16.95.

Bernard A. Drew's stated purpose in this anthology is to collect a "series of stories featuring woman detectives, reporters, adventurers, and criminals from the pulp fiction magazines of the 30's." He is only partly successful. The shortage of stories about women in the male dominated pulps has compelled him to use at least three stories (out of fifteenish) in which the lead female character is a minor sidekick of the male hero. This is inspite of his having searched through such publications as GUNMOLL'S MAGAZINE and SAUCY ROMANTIC ADVENTURES. The quality of the stories is not really very high. They are intended to display certain types of pulp material, not just the very best action oriented material which has been reprinted so often. In the end, only one, "Flowers for Violet" by Cleve T. Adams, has the kind of raw excitement the pulp detectives were best known for.

"The Episode of the Secret Service Blackmail" by Eugene Thomas is a modestly interesting piece of espionage based fiction. Two pulp super heros appear in this collection, both of them Shadow types: "The Domino Lady" from SAUCY ROMANTIC ADVENTURES and "The Moon Man" from TEN DETECTIVE AGENCIES. These stories are, perhaps by coincidence, the weakest of the collection. The long Yingyan piece is just plain boring.

The best two stories are both from 1933 but are very different. "Wolves of Monte Carlo" by Holbert Footner appeared in ARGOSY, the top adventure pulp, in some opinions the top adventure magazine of all time. The lead character is Rosita Storey, a professional detective driven by curiosity, a sense of justice, and the need to make a living. Her techniques involve planning ahead of her opponents and avoiding tough guy antics.

The other top story, "Death to the Hunter" by Judson P. Phillips, appeared in DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY. The lead character is Ivy Trast, a vamp to make Angela Channing's blood run cold. She arranges a murder and a kidnapping making sure someone else takes the risks and receives the punishment while she gets the money. Daniel Blubering, the hero, shows a good forty years earlier than Dirty Harry what happens to a policeman who is forced into too much danger and violance.

The most intriguing part of *Hard Boiled Dames*, the part that makes it into a collector's item, is its format. Each story is printed in the same typeface and arrangement as the original magazine used. Each is accompanied by original introductary blurbs, illustrations and advertisements. This gives those of us who enjoy Doc Savage and The Shadow but have never seen the older pulp magazines a real feel for what it must have been like to go into a newstand and pick up that week's delivery. I cannot, however, recommend this book if you have trouble with small type. ***wwg, jr.***

MYTHAGO WOOD, Robert Holstock, Berkley Books, 1984, $2.95.

Ever since I was a child I've been fascinated by the concept of a haunted wood, a place where space folds, a

doorway into another reality. Mythago Wood is such a place. It is the remnant of a post glacial forest untouched for thousands of years. It is six miles in perimeter yet it takes days to traverse its outer zones. Those who persist in trying to go further are plagued by hallucinations and disorientation. It is as though the wood is alive and determined to repel intruders.

Set in post war England, the story is narrated by a returning soldier named Steven. His father has had a life-long obsession with the wood which borders their remote lodge. When Steven returns from overseas he finds his father dead leaving only a cryptic diary behind. Furthermore, his brother has gone mad with the same obsession which killed their father—to find a mysterious woman from out of remote legend who has appeared in the wood.

As Steven delves further, he finds that the wood acts upon the minds of those who enter. It possesses a magical life force which brings to life the mythic figures from humanity's collective unconscious. These creatures, these mythagos, are the heros of every epoch: Saxon warriors, Celtic leaders, prehistoric shamans. Myths or not, however, they seem solid enough, and their weapons can kill. And the legendary woman named Guiwenneth is real enough to capture the affections of both Steven and his brother.

Ultimately their rivalry becomes a death struggle which, curiously, is part of the mythology of the wood's inhabitants themselves. This paradoxical boxes within boxes strangeness makes for a deliciously spooky tale. It is not really creepy or horrifying, yet one might use the word "haunting." Imagine how you would feel if, while hiking in the woods, you happened upon a deserted overgrown Roman road, or a tribal settlement from 10,000 years in the past. All of this is convincingly portrayed, especially the character of Guiwenneth. Though she comes from a culture which is totally alien to us in its primitiveness you feel as if you know her. This sheer strangeness is the strength of the book. If you examine the plot structure too closely you will find that it looses focus and begins to ramble, but if you get into the spirit of things you won't really mind. Like kids around a camp fire you'll be too busy gazing into the embers and imagining and shivering. ***lt***

THE NEW RELIGIOUS/POLITICAL RIGHT IN AMERICA, Samuel S. Hill and Dennis E. Owen. Abingdon, 1982, n.p. ***THE CREATION CONTROVERSY: SCIENCE OR SCRIPTURE IN THE SCHOOLS***, Dorothy Nelkin. W. W. Norton, 1982, $16.95.

These two books deal with closely allied subjects that have been discussed a lot recently; the discussions have usually been marked by acrimony and shrillness. Here we have a refreshing change: name-calling and doomsaying are replaced by academic analysis. Hill and Owen are professors of religion at the University of Florida, and Nelkin teaches the sociology of science at Cornell; she was also a witness for the plaintiffs in the court case striking down the Arkansas law authorizing the teaching of creationism. Both books provide an informative, valuable, and often surprising picture of who these "funnymentalists" are, where they are coming from, what impact they are having, and where they are likely to go.

Hill and Owen, an historian and an anthropologist of religion, trace the New Religious/Political Right back to colonial America, when Roger Williams' claim that he was being persecuted for following his conscience was met by John Cotton's statement that Williams was being "corrected" for disobeying his conscience, which would of course acknowledge the orthodox Puritan position. As the authors point out, "Here is a mind-set that precludes honest disagreement, substituting instead charges of moral perversity." (p.135) The same is true of the style and tone of the NRPR today. Who are these people? Not who you would expect. The common assumptions that lump Evangelicals and Fundamentalists together and identify them with the NRPR do not hold up under examination: Evangelicals in general are not part of the NRPR and do not join organizations such as the Moral Majority, and the Fundamentalists who are the NRPR's mainstay are drawn from independent churches rather than the denominations. The authors' historical analysis is particularly illuminating. In the last century, American Protestantism divided into what they called the Public Party and the Private Party. The Public Party espoused what is now usually referred to as the social gospel, involving itself with the world and ministering to it, as in the civil rights movement, and remaining open to the influences of the secular culture, including the theory of evolution. The ecumenical movement was another manifestation of the decrease in rigidity of dogma. The Private Party, rejecting ecumenicism, secularism, and Biblical scholarship which tended to cast doubt on the inerrancy of the text, concerned itself with personal salvation, moral purity, and the literal authority of Scripture. The NRPR is simply the Private Party now going public, and attempting to deal with social and political problems according to the methods and values appropriate to individual purity and salvation. This results in a head-on confrontation with a society now pluralized and largely secularized, which they attempt to deal with in the manner of John Cotton, as quoted above. Hill and Owen find that the members of the NRPR share a common sense of powerlessness in modern society, a feeling of being manipulated by faceless authority, which manifests itself in a style of vindictive self-righteousness. (In the type of Fundamentalist churches from which NRPR types are drawn, ironically enough, the congregation is basically an audience dominated by a charismatic preacher. Few if any NRPR people come from the liturgical and sacramental churches, in which the congregation has an important participatory role in the order of worship.) The authors are critical of the NRPR, making their

point most effectively with quotations from Evangelical leader Carl Henry, also a biblical literalist, as well as comments from more liberal theologians; but it is a condemnation tempered with understanding.

They see its emergence now as resulting partly from a vacuum in what they call the civil religion, America's sense of its purpose and identity as a nation and its role in the cosmos, due to the emptiness of a materialistic, consumption-oriented society and to the anti-Americanism of liberals, both secular and Christian, reacting against racism and Vietnam. Though the people in the NRPR may be decent and well-meaning, the movement as a whole is totalitarian in style, ideology, and structure. It exercises clout out of proportion to its actual size, as it is narrowly based and not growing rapidly. As for where it is going, the authors suggest a variety of possibilities, few of them appetizing but none of them equating with Apocalypse Now.

While Hill and Owen illuminate a political phenomenon by examining its religious bases, Dorothy Nelkin does the same for a religious issue, creationism vs. evolution, by looking at it in political terms. After a brief summary of the controversy from Darwin to the Scopes trial, she examines in detail what has happened since 1957, when the successful launching of Sputnik 1 led to a widespread concern with the quality of science education in America. Under the guidance of the National Science Foundation, standardized "teacher-proof" courses were introduced into schools all over the country, first in the physical sciences, then in biology, and finally in social science (the semi-infamous Man: A Course of Study or MACOS). The last two of these naturally dealt with evolutionary theory, a subject that science textbooks had been tippy-toeing around ever since the Scopes trial. Protests arose because Biblical literalists saw this as an attempt by the Federal government to impose alien beliefs upon school children against the will of their parents. Thus the issue was not only the truthfulness of evolution as opposed to creationism, but Federal vs. local control of education, the rights of parents to decide what their children should learn, and the right of dissenting voices to be heard. The last of these illustrates the prime peculiarity of the whole conflict: it is seen in democratic terms, as an issue of equal time of the sort guaranteed by the FCC to political candidates, rather than as an issue of fact. And it is on this basis that there is astonishingly widespread support for the demand for the teaching of "creation science" in schools. This is explained by one of the book's appendices, a survey of public knowledge of science: the vast majority of the respondent groups, ranging in age from nine to 35, had assimilated and could recall scientific facts from their education but had little or no understanding of the methods and fundamental principles of science. It is this ignorance that makes it possible for the creationists to present their case as a political issue and justify it by appeal to the democratic process. They have also successfully brought about a public perception of the issue as a two-valued, either/or proposition, brushing aside both the fact that scientific understanding of evolution entertains several different hypotheses and the point of view held by many people (including myself), theistic evolution: an acceptance of established scientific understanding of how life originated and evolved, combined with a belief that this process is not random and meaningless but purposeful and the work of a Divine Logos (which is of course not subject to scientific proof or disproof).

The best thing in the book is the judge's decision in the Arkansas case, striking down the law mandating the teaching of creationism, which is quoted in its entirety. It is a model of clarity, objectivity, and logic, testifying to the sometimes inspired ability of the judiciary to make sense out of a great deal of confusing material outside the normal legal bounds—and to maintain a straight face under extreme provocation. I'm thinking of starting a fan club for U.S. District Judge William Overton.

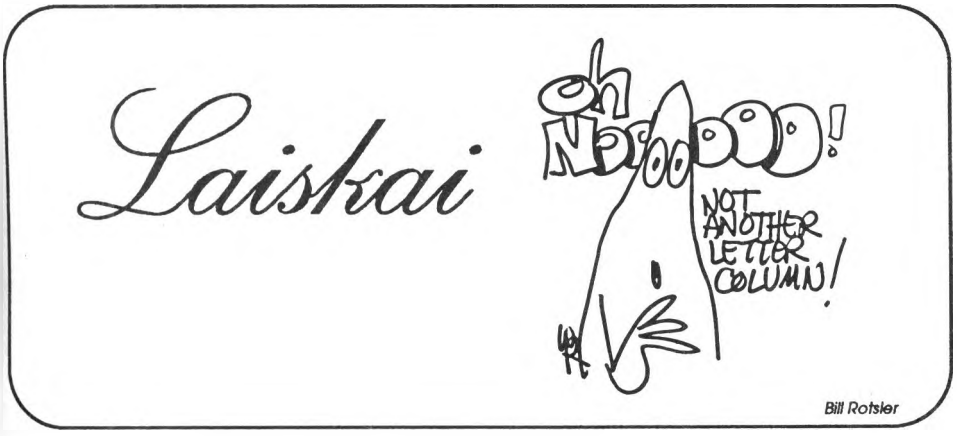
I strongly recommend both *The New Religious/Political Right in America* and *The Creation Controversy* to anyone concerned with the issues they discuss; both books shed light on some very dark corners. ***ajb***

WITCH WEEK, Diana Wynne Jones. Greenwillow Books, 1982, $9.50.

SOMEONE IN THIS CLASS IS A WITCH.

This anonymous note, passed to the teacher of 6B at Larwood House, perhaps the most objectionable educational institution this side of Dickens, is the start of the trouble—a LOT of trouble. The story is set in a world more or less identical with ours, except there are a lot of witches around, and inquisitors are busy finding and burning them. And many of the students at Larwood House, a school for misfits, are witch-orphans. What is more, in the panic and pandemonium ensuing on the note, it is discovered that the accusation is not quite accurate: 6B has more witches than anyone expected. Witch Week is, in addition to an often hilarious story of magic, a scary portrait of a persecution-ridden world and a penetrating realistic study of several socially outcast children and how they cope with being rejects. Their discovery of magic naturally presents itself as an occasion for paying off old scores; the results are about to produce disaster all round when a couple of the young witches manage to conjure up Chrestomanci (I don't need to explain him to you, who have of course read *Charmed Life* and *The Magicians of Caprona*). Even his imperturbable omnicompetence is put to a severe test before he finds out what is wrong with this world and puts it right.

Witch Week is not as much sheer fun as the early Chrestomanci stories; its concern with children with real personal and social problems is more reminiscent of the author's *The Ogre Downstairs*. Like all her books, it is very well done on a variety of levels. Strongly recommended. ***ajb***



Frank C. Bertrand
135 Rockhill Ave.
Portsmouth, NH 03801

It certainly is different, in the sense of enlightening, to find in NIEKAS #34, a publication ostensibly devoted to exploring and explicating SF and that insidious infestation, Fantasy Rot, Anne J. Braude's article, "Will the Real Secular Humanist Pleast Stand Up?" Accolades to you both, but I think her piece could have been even more effective and relevant if she had incorporated SF: that is, what science fiction authors and books manifest or don't manifest secular humanism, and is that a good or bad thing? Should we even care if science fiction comes or doesn't come to grips with secular humanism? [But my point was that Secular Humanism, as defined by the funnymentalists, doesn't really exist! AJB] The apathy factor in SF readers comes into play here. Are there "funnymentalists" in SF? Is there even "informed discretion"? This latter aspect, in view of the rise of functional illiteracy, does not bode well for SF or SF criticism. It has, instead, incestuous scholarship and critical stripmining.

As for "Christian ethics" being a tautology—a needless repetition of an idea, statement, or word—I would think it's even more self-evident that "Christian ethics" is an oxymoron. In this respect I strongly commend for your and Anne's consideration the book by Dr. Joachim Kahl titled *The Misery of Christianity*, tr. by N.D. Smith (Penguin Books, 1972). As Dr. Kahl writes at one point in chapter one: "So, whether Christians remain united 'under the authority of the gospel' or whether they continue to defame one another, one thing is certain—nothing can put an end to the anarchy that reigns in their ethics." This pithy observation could equally be applied to SF and would make an excellent subject for study, perhaps one Anne Braude would like to do.

Mark Blackman
1745 E. 18 St. #4A
Brooklyn, NY 11229-2113

Ed, I am, as always, interested in reminiscence on Phil Dick. I haven't read *Philip K. Dick: In His Own Words*, but there's a new book out on Dick, *Only Apparently Real* by Paul Williams, his literary executor. I haven't read that either, but there was an extensive review of it a couple of months ago in someone's APA-Q zine. PKD's paranoia may have been tied in with his agoraphobia, fear of crowds. It was later fueled by the legendary break-in of his place in November, 1971. His files were looted while valuables were left behind. Still, rather than turning him into a misanthrope, Dick's agoraphobia, his limits and fears, gave him a feeling for the underdog and a strong sense of empathy which come through even his most seemingly despairing scenarios. It is perhaps appropriate to end this paragraph on a mixed note of triumph and sadness. Dick's only film work received a Hugo; BLADE RUNNER, based on *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* opened a few months after his death.

Anne J. Braude: It seems impossible to have an education curriculum that is not in some way value laden in what it says or doesn't say. (Secretary of Education Bennett has said schools should teach how Abe Lincoln walked three miles through the snow to return money he borrowed so students will be "morally literate.") Rather than joining the schools to push the basics, Fundamentalist parents are fighting against a science curriculum that includes evolution, a reading list that includes Hans Christian Andersen or Anne Frank (works that "foster occult practices and diverse religious beliefs." This quote refers to the case in Tennessee, no surprise, in which a federal judge ruled that parents could take their kids out of reading classes whose texts offended their First Amendment religious rights, so characterizing Andersen and the Diary). And U.S. history courses that omit the presence of Christianity. They call Secular Humanism a secular religion whose precepts (like tolerance?) schools unconstitutionally advance. What they really object to is secularism. (To them, non-Christian always equates with anti-Christian. I've yet to hear of a Fundamentalist call for science classes to teach a creation based on Hindu or African creation myths.)

Enlightening piece on Kabbalah by Diana Paxson. (Was that the ultimate "koan" or Kohen?)

Not sharing Joseph Christopher's religious background, nor being a D&D player (though, to use an old cliché, some of my best friends are), I don't agree entirely with all of his points but I appreciate his attempts at objectivity. I agree that some of the Fundamentalists' outrage at D&D is faddish, and add that the game is a convenient scapegoat for parents whose very ignorance of their children (though they strongly profess otherwise) may have led to the kids' suicides. (As we see in the Dallas Egbert case, a book about which is reviewed in NIEKAS #34.) Too, historically, the churches have condemned as Satanic playing cards ("the Devil's picture book") and even chess. Beliefs encompassing creation by fiat and virgin birth are not lacking imagination, and there have never been campaigns against fantasy role-playing Cops and Robbers (who are euphemistically called "bad guys" rather than "chaotic"). Again, the real objection is the creation and acceptance of a non-Christian (and therefore anti-Christian) context. If that mother objects, she can check out Christian bookstores for Christian-oriented FRP games, suspiciously like D&D but which Fundamentalists apparently find (sorry, I can't resist) kosher.

Laiskai: Placing Ed's comments on my feelings about the Gordons in *The Number of the Beast* before my section of my letter in which I made the comment is confusing (to everyone other than me). And I'm confused by Robert Knox's reply to me; not only are First, Comico, and Eclipse still around but it seems more and more "indies" (independents) are appearing on the stands every day, though most of them make me think Sturgeon's law is far, far too generous. (The Space Rabbi is still going strong—"The Klutz Who Whacked Through Walls" and "Foodfall" were written earlier this year and I've begun work on "The Night of the Levened Bread, or The Rabbi Horror Pesach Show.") Further along, "conversationalists" is certainly a

creative typo for "conservationists" (is that a conservationist who's all talk?).

Enjoyable issue as ever.

David Palter
137 Howland Ave.
Toronto, ONT Canada M5R 3B4

I disagree with Jessica Amanda Salmonson's conclusion that because the Nebula award tends to be awarded to books which have been published in cheap mass market editions, the meaning of the Nebula is that SF is gobbledygook which should be published in as junky a manner as possible. I believe that the reason that so much SF is published in cheap mass market editions is because most SF readers are unwilling and/or unable to purchase expensive hardcover editions, only because they can't afford to spend that much money on SF, not because they regard SF as gobbledygook. In fact, if SF was actually gobbledygook, the logical way to deal with it would be to refrain from publishing it at all, not to publish it in cheap editions. Worthless prose remains worthless even when it is available at low cost. Similarly, excellent prose is still excellent, even when published in paperback on cheap paper. In fact, excellent prose is deserving of being made available to as broad a readership as possible. Hence, the mass market edition. The Nebula awards are given only on the basis of the writing, not the publishing. Perhaps a separate award should exist for best-printed SF novel of the year for the sole purpose of recognizing excellence in printing.

Robert H. Knox: I like your drawing on page 14. Very strange. It should be called "Invocation of the Cat Monster." Steven Fox's elephant man is also excellent.

Richard Brandt
4740 N. Mesa #111
El Paso, TX 79912

#35 was a nice production job with lots of nifty artwork.

Enjoyed the reviews and news in your editorial and some of the book reviews. Resnick doesn't pull his punches, which I like. On the other hand Tom Egan tends to drag into the discussion of any particular book all kinds of extraneous background and history, set down in the flattest book-report narration. Really liked the movie reviews, though, which have the kind of depth, comparison, and psychological evaluation usually reserved for upscale fiction. Dennis d'Asaro sort of dances around my feelings on the STAR TREK movies, which is that as time goes by they become worse movies, perhaps, but better STAR TREK episodes. He also captures some of my feelings for THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER, that awful movie with the world's astonishingly longest sustained action-chase sequence. And BLOOD SUCKERS FROM OUTER SPACE may be the cinematic equivalent of the White Boned Demon this issue.

Don d'Ammassa
323 Dodge St
E. Providence RI 02914

DNQ letters: I recall an incident where I wrote a personal letter to someone who had just mailed me a fanzine. She interpreted the letter as a LoC, printed it including some nasty comments I made in an intemperate mood. I have therefore assumed, subsequently, that everything I put in writing will be exposed to the public sooner or later, and rarely anything that I don't want to be public knowledge. That is why you won't find a DNQ in any of my LoCs. On the other hand I have been known to say things in private which are definitely for the ears of the listener only.

Elliot Kay Shorter
Merlin's Closet Books
166 Valley St
Providence, RI 02909

Jack Gaughan actually only moved halfway upstate, not all the way to the Albany area. He was in the New Palz area.

My first feeling was that there was something wrong with the idea of dropping book reviews, even short reviews. Book reviews often show a cultural bias which you want to know about after a number of years. What did people think about what came out twenty years ago, as you pull off the shelf an old issue of NIEKAS or LOCUS or SF REVIEW or one of Don d'Ammassa's collections of reviews. If these reviews are not here what do you have? The reviews in NIEKAS tend to be long reviews with a lot of detail, so you can deduce the bias of the particular reviewer. The author has enough room to say what he feels about the book and therefore these reviews should continue. Also I just had an opportunity to listen in to a discussion between Jinjer Buchanan and Andy Porter about the loss of review magazines in the science fiction field. A literary oriented fanzine like NIEKAS should definitely want to continue to be an area for reviews to appear, even if they are late. [SF REVIEW folded in 1986 and FANTASY REVIEW is converting to an annual 300 page hard cover book with a $60 price tag. ERM]

To some extent this also holds for the movie reviews but I am not so vehement about it. I did enjoy reading a review of THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER seven years after it came out. It's accurate but he didn't mention the three-bladed sword that splits apart. Only the three blades are not in one plane, together, but they are parallel with at least two fingers worth of space between each blade. Believe me, this movie is, as the review says, so bad that it is good.]

Piers Anthony
P.O. Box 2289
Inverness, FL 32651-2289

You do seem to be maintaining a regular schedule. #33 arrived here on Apull 20, 1985, and #34 arrived on Mayhem 12, 1986, and #35 on jeJune 24, 1987. Thus you have a 13 month cycle. I shall expect the next issue in awGhost, 1988. So few things in life are certain that it's nice to have this assurance.

Well, for once I'll give you a long, feisty letter since I'm not doing a column now.

I agree with Roger Waddington: it would be better to have a plethora of story markets so that every hopeful writer had his chance, and let the readers (not the critics) decide what was best. Alas, we are unlikely to see it, and the multiple-author books seem not to be open to newcomers. Not every hopeful writer is as persistent as I am, and not everyone can wait almost a quarter century to get a deserving story into print. The market is too limited, which is one reason I support small presses: they seem more open. I agree also with Diana's remark about college writing courses corrupting writers into stylish but pointless exercises. I believe I have said it before: those who place style above content are literary idiots. Style should be the means to present the content, not an end in itself.

Ruth Berman's comment on the use of dragons in fantasy—maybe I'm old fashioned, but I feel that dragons remain essential to fantasy. I read once that dragons appear in the lore of every culture of earth: a mystery of alignment, if they never existed. That is a mystery I can readily solve: those cultures discovered not the dragons but the monstrous bones of dragons—enormous reptiles. So they knew there were dragons, at least in the past. They were right; today we call them dinosaurs. And you know there are striking new inter-

pretations of dinosaurs these days. I read *The Dinosaur Heresies* by Robert Bakker as a skeptic and was convinced: they were after all warm blooded, and the brontosaurus avoided the swamps, instead feeding on upland foliage. My dinosaur novel, *Orn*, is thus undermined; I may have to write another to get things right.

And the letter column. OK, let's plow through what relates to me, a morass of opinions by folk who evidently have not checked their sources, or choose to distort the record to my disfavor. I never suffered fools or hypocrites gladly, and indeed I have not changed. Well, on with it:

Craig Ledbetter asks why I allowed Charles Platt to print the interview, since I didn't like it. Because I believe in freedom of expression. I feel the appropriate way to handle a negative or unfair comment is to respond and refute it, rather than to try to suppress it. I questioned Platt's judgement, not his integrity; he printed the interview, I printed my objections, and he printed his objections to my objections. Neither of us tried to censor the other. That is the way it should be done. You folks in NIEKAS have a perfect right to make your ignorant remarks, even those of you who will manage to miss both the humor and the fundamental principles here, and I have a right to respond to them in a manner that makes you look like jerks. If you really don't understand this, you do not belong in NIEKAS.

Brian Brown says I am unchanged from the days when I was feuding with Ted White and Dean Koontz in OUTWORLDS: cantankerous, which he says is putting it politely. This is part of what I mean by distortion of the record. I believe that Ted White would agree today that we were not feuding, we were putting on a show; such shows abated when the press of business commitments became too great. It was a good show, though the ignorant have condemned Ted as unfairly as they have me. Ted was always a significant asset to a fanzine, a master infighter whose expertise in this regard I respected; when I bested him, I bested the best. We were not enemies; indeed, as editor he published two of my novels, and I regard him as one of the better editors the genre has seen, because he labored under extremely adverse conditions. Anyone can publish great material if he has plenty of money to spread about; not anyone can do it if he is limited to a penny a word, as Ted was. In addition, Ted was an underrated novelist. I was sorry to learn of his more recent problems, and hope he gets back into writing again.

Dean Koontz was a different case. I believe anyone who has access to those old issues as wishes to check will discover that Koontz was the cantankerous one. I had remarked passingly that he was getting quite successful; he responded with several pages vilifying me in the type of language I have never used in such a forum. Among other things he stated that he earned eight to ten times what I did in my best year, and took that as evidence of my inferiority. I responded by commenting on two of his novels, which were good ones, and analysing his character, which was a bad one. Brian Brown's memory is plainly skewed, and I invite any third party who has the magazines to verify this. Koontz's belief that earnings represent quality of character in itself suggests the quantity of his discourse. The truth is that character is independent of earnings, and independent of quality of writing; Koontz has shaped up into a skilled and significant novelist.

And here in the middle of the muck a breath of sanity: Anne Braude, who remarks that she wishes that readers would argue against what she really said rather than what they think she said. I don't even have an argument with what I think she said. Finally, Sandra Miesel, who argues against what she thought I said. Sandra, I never commented on the idium "follow like an Anthony pig" because this is the first I heard of it. Did you do all that fascinating research on St. Anthony and the pigs in an effort to chide me about your mis-memory? Well, such misapprehension is hardly the first time. Back in NIEKAS #32 you responded to my favorable commentary on Gordon Dickson's Childe Cycle with a muzzle-foaming attack on me. (Again, I invite readers to check both my column and her response.) You begin by saying you remember how I berated Bob Tucker about my superior earning power. As with the other comment on Koontz, you have it backwards. Tucker was berating me, by saying that he earned as much with a single novel as I did in my entire career. Check the original text. Why were you so eager to blame me for Tucker's statement? You call yourself a professional critic in the same missive—which I fear shows the problems with critics as a class. Instead of reason you proffer a vindictive mis-informed harangue. I am not certain whether this will get through to you, but here is some advice: you are doing no favor either to Gordon Dickson or to your reputation as a critic by misrepresenting the position of another writer whom you choose to think is competitive to your idol. Dickson's work can speak for itself, and should be allowed to do so. I, for one, regard *Final Encyclopedia* as one of the major science fiction novels of the decade. Certainly it speaks to me, in ways I suspect are beyond your comprehension; I hardly need your interpretation of it. It is evident by your comment in NIEKAS that the concepts of accuracy and fairness are foreign to you; no doubt you could quote dictionary definitions, but your practice shows that you have no genuine devotion to them. This would be unfortunate in an average reader, but it is a disaster in a critic, whose standards are supposed to be superior. Continued activity of this nature can only embarrass you and those you seek to defend. [Piers, you did indeed praise Dickson's writing; but what drew the diatribes were your negative remarks about his character. AJB]

And on at last to the review section. Recently I read *Lyonesse: Suldrun's Garden* by Jack Vance, the Underwood Miller edition. I'm glad your review was favorable; that means that reviewers aren't always wrong. If Dickson's novel is the significant science fiction of this decade, the Vance novel must be the significant fantasy for this period. I wouldn't call it perfect, but it comes close. It is my regret that novels such as these do not receive more recognition, so that a wider audience might appreciate what science fiction and fantasy can be.

William Wilson Goodson, Jr.
11108 Johnson Davis Rd.
Huntersville, NC 28078

Computers cannot beat note cards for address files. You cannot read a floppy disk without a large monitor, etc. This means you cannot get any work done on the bus or even sitting on the living room couch with a large screen television. [a "Type N'talk" in my case, though you could use a laptop computer...and there are talking laptops. Since typing the above I saw the announcement of a talking pocket computer with 200k of available RAM, weighing one pound and measuring 8 x 6 x 2 inches, for $895. It's operating battery will run for 12 hours without recharging and the memory chips have built in batteries with a ten year plus lifetime so you can write and read on the road, and then download to a regular computer, printer, or Braille printer when you get home. While this sounds useful to me, it is low on my priority list and I probably will not buy one for about two years. The "Braille N Speak" is from Blazie Engineering in a

suburb of Baltimore. ERM]

Fred Lerner: you will, as you try and remember your child's infancy at future times, regret not having a Polaroid of every second. Note: I am a devoted bachelor!

Ruth Berman: I rather suspect the best fantasists do write what they know. It explains many strange events in the lives of Howard, Lovecraft, and Dunsany.

Brian E. Brown
11675 Beaconsfield
Detroit, MI 48224

I most enjoyed Panshin's article rebutting the statements made against him and his book on Heinlein, followed closely by Anne Braude's comments on literal interpretations of the Bible. I hadn't realised that biblical cosmography was specifically flat earth. I always figured that if God were going to leave a message for us he'd write it in the fabric of the universe and not some book. So I'm convinced people who deny reality when it contradicts the Bible are in effect denying God.

Buck Coulson
2677 W 500
N. Hartford City, IN 44348

I'm surprised that Jessica didn't add a few swipes at capitalists in her comments on the Nebula because they'd be quite true. Authors regularly withdraw the hardcover editions of their works from consideration because paperback editors are much better about sending free copies to members, and they're better about it because free paperbacks are a much smaller drain on the profits than are free hardcovers. And members don't notice stories in magazines like ANTAEUS because they can't afford to subscribe to everything that might publish science fiction and neither can their friendly local librarians. I'm not a SFWA member but Juanita is and I know what comes into the house in her name, and it's mostly paperbacks, and, at voting times, scads of short stories photocopied. Anyone who can afford to buy all the new science fiction on the market and has the time to read it isn't an average SFWA member.

Susan Shwartz
1 Station Sq, #306
Forest Hills, NY 11375

Thank you, Ed, for your apology in the most recent issue of NIEKAS for running a DNQ section of a letter that I sent you. I certainly thought, after ten years letterhacking, that the DNQ would be respected. It seems to me, however, that Bob Knox's statement that he finds "the entire incident hilarious" is highly unfortunate. He is quite right that the comment should probably not have been written—but, as the person whose indiscretion his sloppiness showed up, I must say that I find his statement "[it] needn't have been written at all, 'DNQ' not withstanding" a poor attempt to get off the hook for sloppiness and violating what I've been given to understand is a fannish tradition of respecting such requests. (But I'd probably try the same thing myself.)

Nor am I totally thrilled with David Palter's strictures on the subject. His observation, "I never write down anything that I would fear to have others read," has me marveling, seeing that he makes polemics even more easily than I make bad puns.

I'm extremely embarrassed that what I meant as a confidential remark, thrown out in a flurry of irritation, to a man I've known for ten years, would be printed. Certainly, I owe a debt of respect to Piers Anthony (and his levelheaded daughters) in this situation. [There has been a lingering controversy of DNQ in Bruce Arthurs' UNDULANT FEVER. It seems to me that the only appropriate time to use it is in a letter which is mixed LoC and personal communication, to an editor who is also a friend or acquaintance. In such letters I usually keep the two sections separate, but occasionally the personal may intrude on the LoC. For example, after contributing to a discussion of some social problem like alcoholism, abortion, lycanthropy, or violance in the streets, one might wish to tell the editor qua friend (but not qua editor) that one's opinions were derived from personal experience; this does not materially affect the discussion and does not need to be shared with the readership in general. As an illustration of this, I see no need to tell you which of the listed social problems I myself suffer from, and the entire membership of my Werewolves Anonymous support group agrees with me. AJB]

I am somewhat confused about Jessica Salmonson's letter. After mentioning some right wing theocratic activism in the Northwest (and God knows, I share her hopes that it is defeated as ignominiously as it deserves!), she writes, "Why does one rarely hear about Jewish organizations for the suppression of human rights in America "Please, Jessica, tell me that this is a rhetorical question! It brought me up gasping when I read it. [I suspect Salmonson is thinking of the followers of Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League, now a member of Israel's Knesset elected on a platform of discrimination against Arabs. The US JDL, however, is not fairly characterized by her description. AJB]

Jane Yolen
Phoenix Farm
31 School St., P.O. Box 27
Hatfield, MA 01038

I want to take small issue with Ruth Berman's comments in NIEKAS 35 (Hi, Ruth!) where she says that one must "write what you like." Having just finished working on a novel about a child in a concentration camp, I have to disagree. There was nothing about my heroine's situation that was likeable. Not even close. I wrote the story because it fretted me, it gnawed, it rumbled in my ear in the middle of the night, it simply would not let me go. In the end, I believe, that is the only reason to write a story or a book or a poem. And Ruth, who is an excellent poet, I am sure would agree. Love has very little to do with it.

I second Jessica Salmonson's recommendation of Laurence Housman, one of the almost forgotten fairy tale writers from the early part of this century. His writing has a clarity and a purity that only intensifies his vision. He was A.E. Housman's brother—but don't hold that against him! As a starter kit, may I suggest *The Rat Catcher's Daughter*, an edited edition of his tales with some biographical information put out a couple of years ago by Ellin Green of Atheneum. It has about a dozen of his wonderful fairy tales.

B. Terry Jeeves
56 Red Scar Rd.
Newby, Scarborough, YO12 5RQ
England

Lovely cover, nice layout.

In response to Diana Paxson, I prefer anthologies to the endless stream of sword, sorcery, and heroic questings in never less than three boring and predictable installments which currently fill the market.

Liked "Jest Ahht," but not that near-illegible vertical lettering used to title it.

I did enjoy the reviews and lettercol, though.

Milton F. Stevens
7234 Capps Ave.
Resita CA 91335

I don't even remember how long it's been since I've written a letter of comment

on NIEKAS. It's certainly in the neighborhood of 15 to 20 years. In the three years since LACon II, I've become a fairly active letterhack again. The thought of sending off for a current issue of NIEKAS crossed my mind a couple of times, but it didn't get past the Real Soon Now stage. At the recent Westercon, I finally bought a copy of NIEKAS 35 in the fanzine room. While I doubt that many people are introduced to fanzines by fanzine rooms, they do provide useful services for existing fanzine fans.

Computers that can both read and talk suggest some interesting implications. We can now have verbal sounds for previously unpronounceable alien names. Of course, this doesn't guarantee that we can pronounce those sounds. Since computers must have some standard rules for pronunciation, do we accept them as the authority? For instance, I'd been mentally pronouncing Art Widner's fanzine YHOS as "yose." At Westercon, I discovered that Art pronounced it "eehas." I would accept Art as the authority on the subject, since it's his fanzine. What if the computer disagrees? Is Art now officially wrong as to the pronunciation of his own fanzine title? [There are many speech synthesizers, each with its own ROM software to convert text to speech, each with slightly different rules. I use the "Type N'talk" which always pronounces "read" as if it were in the past tense, even when it is part of a longer word. Thus "reader" is pronounced "redder." It says "computer" as "com-poo-ter." Strings of consonants are silent or almost inaudible clicks, as in the name of the word processor I use, "PC-Write." Ditto for PM, NH, etc. When the prototype Kurtzweil Reading Machine was demonstrated at the 1977 NFB convention, people came back saying it sounded like Fidel Castro trying to speak English. ERM]

Reading computers might prove to be a valuable editorial tool for business and government. For all of its defects, spoken English can usually be understood. This is not true of all written material. People could detect many defects if they had to listen to their own written material read aloud. This wouldn't help those officials who don't have the slightest intention of being understood. [I have seen adds on TV for a new, experimental word processor—I think from IBM—that can interpret spoken English and type it correctly, even in the sentence, "Write to Mr. Wright right now." We've come a long way from Victor Borge's phonetic punctuation. AJB]

Ruth Berman's comments on developing fresh dragon ideas reminded me of the time Poul Anderson had a character defeat a fire-breathing dragon by inducing a boiler explosion. Now that was a fresh idea. The idea just occurred to me of two dragons discussing how plate armor allows them to cook their meals in the shell without scorching. Logically, knights ought to wear wet long-johns with strategically placed ice bags to fight fire-breathing dragons.

As to what is to make NIEKAS more readable, larger type would help. Since the advent of computerized fanzines, faneds have been able to use smaller and smaller type. With the labor-saving of word processing, they can also produce more and more pages. This is making the job of the habitual fanzine reader harder and harder. I can read a maximum of ten pages of the iddy-biddy type at a sitting. I can read material in the type size that is used for Diana Paxson's material for hours on end.

Joe R. Christopher
English Department
Tarleton State University
Stephenville, TX 76402

By George, I've caught Anne Braude in an error—in her letter in NIEKAS 35 (page 41). At least, I think I have. The Book of Job is not the model for Milton's *Samson Agonistes*; the model there was the Greek tragedy writers, mainly Aeschylus and Euripides. But in the preface to book two of *Reason of Church Government*, Milton cites The Book of Job as a model for the brief epic. Surely what Anne meant to say is that The Book of Job is the model for *Paradise Regained*. (Comedy and tragedy have nothing to do with it, as generic forms.) [I checked my Merritt Hughes edition of Milton, and you are perfectly right; what is more, the notion of the Book of Job as an epic goes back to St. Jerome. This shows why, in disputed readings of a text, the more logical one is more likely to be wrong: logically, Job is more like *Samson Agonistes* than *Paradise Regained* because to the modern mind it is more like a drama than an epic and because it also deals with the themes of the questioning of the questioning of God's justice and of the temptation to despair. Samsom's three temptors also suggest Job's three conforters. AJB]

I thank the various fen who wrote in about my "Letter to a Christian Mother." I particularly appreciate Harry Henderson and Anne Braude (again!) who corrected me on my identification of Good and Lawful and of Evil and Chaotic. At the moment, I have no plans to reprint that essay, but if I ever do, I'll follow their guide and correct it.

Vytautas J. Vitkauskas
7033 S. Campbell Ave.
Chicago, IL 60629

In NIEKAS #35, Fred Lerner argues that reality is profaned by flashbulbs and microphones. The great philosopher George Santayana was thinking along the same lines when he wrote, "In the contemplation of beauty, we are raised above ourselves, the passions are silenced and we are happy in the recognition of a good we do not seek to possess."

Even though I am a photographer, I am often content to live in real time, like Fred. I feel sorry for those people who unknowingly spoil the beauty around them while trying to preserve it with a camera pressed to their faces. I hope anyone who doesn't understand this rereads Fred's article.

Anne J. Braude
6721 E. McDowell #309A
Scottsdale, AZ 85257

When I made up my hypothetical First Amendment legal case in NIEKAS #35, I used belief in the flat-earth theory because I wanted a patently preposterous example that wouldn't sidetrack the discussion into any of the specific issues involved in the various real-life lawsuits. But I reckoned without our ever-lovin' Governor, Evan ("Martin Luther King doesn't deserve a holiday") Mecham, and his chosen education adviser, a fellow called Jim Cooper. In testifying before a legislative committee, Cooper stated that it was improper for a teacher to attempt to change any idea that been inculcated in a student by the student's parents—even, he added in response to a question, if the parents had taught their child that the earth is flat.

"But what about standards of excellence in education?" inquired the first committee member to recover.

"Oh, I'm not concerned with that sort of thing," replied Cooper airily.

Cooper has since resigned, citing the pressures of office and his advanced age; and the campaign to recall the governor is steaming right along. Mecham is currently the subject of a series of DOONESBURY strips and, by the time that this appears, will have been the subject of a 60 MINUTES piece. Ironically, the previous governor, Democrat Bruce Babbitt (you know him: the presidential candidate with the charisma of styrofoam), managed to work quite well with the Re-

publican-controlled legislature which is now in revolt against Republican Mecham. If the recall fails, I am going to start a petition to change the name of the state to Fantasy Island.

I vote for continuing to publish reviews for two reasons: (1) The review is more than consumer information; it is a literary form in itself which can be enjoyed even if one has no intention of using it as a buying guide (as I enjoy watching SNEAK PREVIEWS and SISKEL & EBERT even though I never go to the movies these days). (2) Unlike a Hostess Twinkie, a book review doesn't become valueless when no longer fresh—unless, of course, you assume nobody ever decides to read a book that isn't hot off the presses. This is particularly true in the SF field, where new fans are constantly discovering the good old stuff. Unlike category romances, SF books don't disappear from human ken at the end of a month. And one of my favorite books is *Constant Reader*, a collection of Dorothy Parker's book reviews which appeared in THE NEW YORKER between 1928 and 1933.

Both Jessica Amanda Salmonson and Brian Brown seem to see religion, in one form or another, as a force for evil. Salmonson remarks that Christians' concept of public service seems to consist of trying to pass laws against gays: what about the good works done all over the world by the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), plus Catholic Relief, Church World Service, the Salvation Army, St. Vincent de Paul Society, and others I can't think of at the moment, not to mention innumerable local groups? It is just as unfair to claim that all Christians see legislating morality as the only form of public service to engage in as it is to claim that all gays spread AIDS.

Brian Brown calls religious fundamentalism "the greatest evil on the face of the earth today." While not wishing to excuse in any way the evils perpetrated in the name of fundamentalist religion, I think that statement needs to be taken with a whole pillar of salt. For openers, while Brian impartially condemns Islamic, Jewish, and Christian fundamentalism, only the first-named is presently preaching that it is permissible to slaughter unbelievers simply because they are unbelievers. The other groups (except for minuscule fanatical hate cults) seem to have evolved past that point, no matter what their ancestors may have thought and done. (C.S. Lewis suggests somewhere that judging by their actions, Oliver Cromwell and his ilk may have worshiped as God a being we would recognise as the Devil. The point is that while people calling themselves Christians three centuries ago might have thought such atrocities as Drogheda pleasing to God because they were inflicted on the non-Elect, no reasonably sophisticated Christian today could sell himself such a bill of goods.)

Furthermore, a lot of the so-called "religious" conflicts today have deeper roots in class or ethnic factors. The hatred between Israelis and Palestinians is based not on religious differences but on the fact that both lay claim to the same land, and both legitimately regard it as their ancestral homeland. The fighting between Sikhs and Hindus in India, and Hindus and Buddhists in Sri Lanka, derives most of its violence from conflict over political power. The bitter conflicts which have made a bloody chaos out of Lebanon, once proudly claiming the title of "Switzerland of the Middle East," began as a fight over the sharing of political power between Christians and Muslims; inasmuch as it is now primarily religious, it is largely vendetta and as likely to pit Muslim against Muslim of different faction as to pit Muslim against Christian. And the Protestant-Catholic struggle in Northern Ireland began as purely class warfare—a civil rights movement almost identical with our own on the part of Catholics victimized by discrimination, which fanatics on both sides succeeded in escalating into a holy war for reasons of their own having more to do with power than with piety.

Some of the most violent and most devastating warfare of our century has been waged on behalf of political or ethnic goals, with no religious element involved; Stalin's extermination of an entire class, the kulaks (landed peasantry), because they resisted collectivization; the Basque separatist movement in Spain; Red China's Cultural Revolution; the killings and bombings perpetrated by Marxist revolutionaries, especially in Latin America (and by right-wing death squads and officially sanctioned torturers as well), and by Italy's Red Brigades and the Baader-Meinhof gang; and the almost incredible slaughter in Kampuchea, the dimensions of which we are only now beginning to realize. I recently received an object lesson in how cruel social warfare can be when I watched a PBS series, THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR. Most of the atrocities of the later part of this century were first tried out here; and though religion played a part, it was certainly not the dominant one. (The various leftist groups that made up the Republican side were all more or less violently anti-clerical; and the Catholic Church, to its eternal shame, did nothing to curb the cruelties and excesses of the Nationalists who claimed to be its champions.)

And if we look for the basic factor that throughout history has caused the most cruelty, persecution, and massacre, I think we have to concede that it is racism, the motive and justification of so much evil perpetrated against blacks and Indians in our own national experience. It is still a dominant problem throughout Latin America, as it has been since before the arrival of the Spaniards; and Britain, so long smugly superior to America's racial problem, has acquired a virulent one of its own and has had to restrict immigration from non-white Commonwealth countries. And is there any one who really believes that the Nazis exterminated six million Jews because they disagreed with their religious practices?

Instead of assuming that somehow we could all live together in harmony if we only got rid of religious fundamentalism, Brian would do well to remember Braude's Corollary to Finagle's Law. (The Law: Under carefully controlled laboratory conditions human beings will do what they damn well please. The Corollary: and they will claim to be doing the will of God when they do it.)

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Elizabeth Peters (NIEKAS is a superior publication, and I greatly enjoyed it. Best to you and the other contributors.), Randy Moore (I think your magazine is one of the most worthwhile books published. Your articles are some of the best reading I've ever done. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it.), Margaret B. Simon (I was very excited over viewing NIEKAS, particularly the artwork. I went straight to the art department, with the front by Dickison and the back by Freas, and interiors by such a large and varied group. Well, I was off and overwhelmed. You've done a masterly job in accumulating and formatting the artwork to correlate with this publication.), Harry Warner, Marty Cantor, Paul S. Ritz (NIEKAS 35 is great as usual. Wow! NIEKAS was 25 this June. A long time. Loved the art.), Nicholas Faller, Gene Wolfe, Sam Moskowitz, Robert Bloch (As usual you crammed a lot of good material into the issue), Ned Brooks, Loraine Moranda, Harry Andruschak, Paul Demzioquoi, Czar, Malcolm South, Roger Waddington, Colin Langeveld & Leo M. Gallagher.✹

Mac 'N Mike