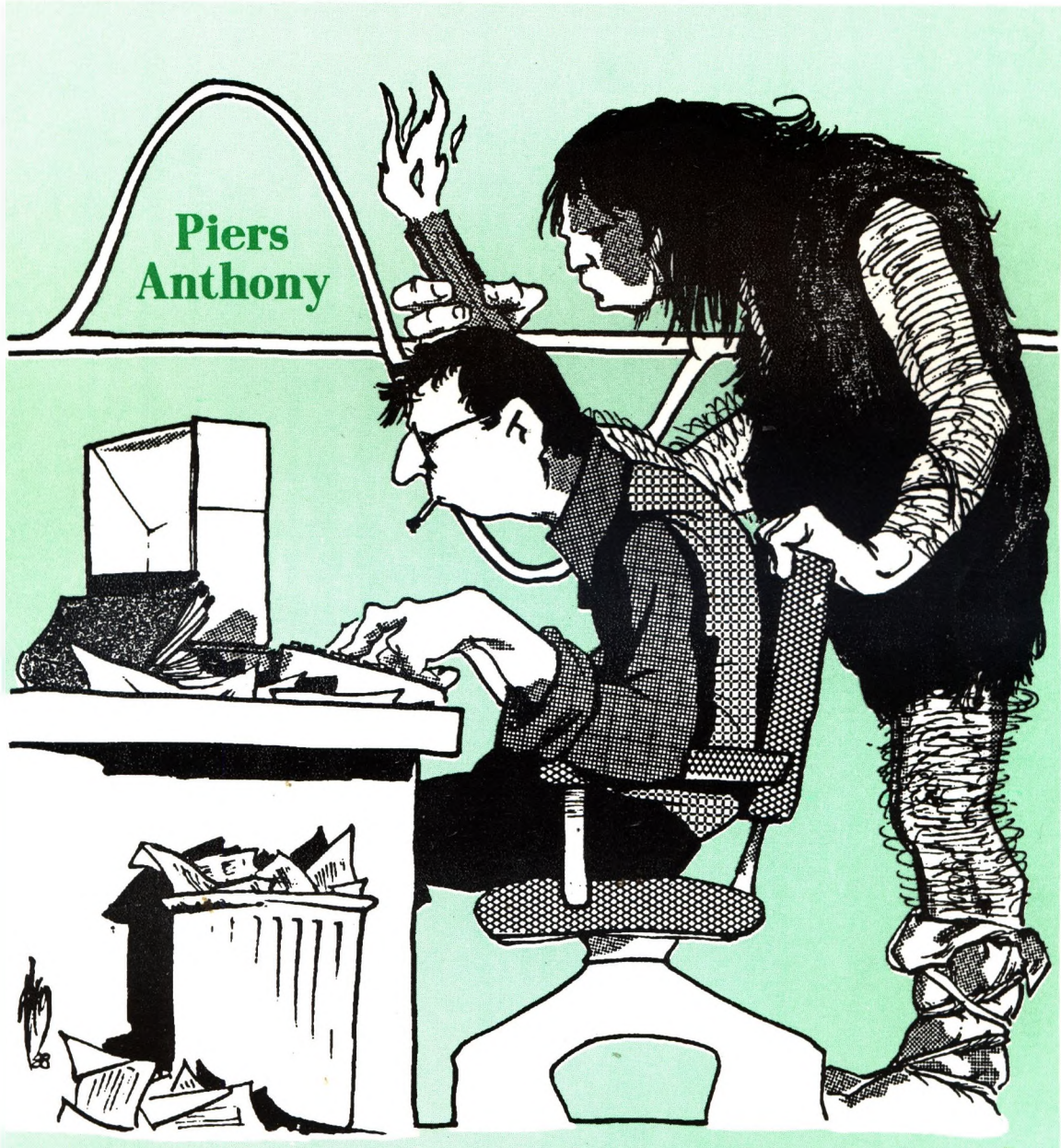
NIEKAS #37

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY



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SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

"The August Fanzine"

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Bumbejimas

by Edmund R. Meskys

Alternate histories are a major subcategory in stf and often done quite well. Once the favorite theme was the South winning the Civil War, but now it has been replaced by the Second World War. The usual departure is Germany's winning but Jerry Yulesman's *Elleander Morning* is an interesting switch: what if someone had killed Hitler while he was still a failed artist in 1913 and before he had a significant impact on the Germanic peoples?

Here again is an excellent novel on a stfnal theme written by someone outside our field. Jane Yolen criticized me for praising *Handmaid's Tale* despite its being written by an outsider. Well, here I go again! It has long been a cliche that when an outsider attempts to write stf he or she usually fails miserably. The earliest example I remember is Herman Wouk's *The Lomokome Papers*, which Robert Bloch satirized in a fanzine as "The Locomotive Papers." (This piece was reprinted in the o.p. Advent collection of Bloch's humor, *The Eighth Stage of Fandom*.). The Wouk novel had been serialized in COLLIER'S as had *If the South Had Won the Civil War* by McKinley Kantor. It ended with the reunification of the US and Cuba becoming a state. This was about the time we stopped regarding Castro as a hero for defeating the baddie Batista and began to see him as an enemy of the U.S. Only recently did I learn that shortly before the Civil War there was a movement to annex Cuba. Thus its incorporation into the reunified U.S. was not just jumping on the popular dislike for the current regime but might well have had a basis in history.

Even when an outstanding author of historical novels like Cecelia Holland turned to writing stf the results were disappointing, and when a trash novelist like Jacqueline Susann did so the results were disastrous. I must admit that I have not read these two books but am basing my statement on comments I have seen in fanzines.

The cliché of "outsiders" writing bad stf has become part of the mythology of fandom. This is because they did not know our literary conventions and expectations and had to re-invent the wheel. They made many mistakes we had long outgrown. They were far less concerned about scientific and logical accuracy than about characterization. Thus they were jeered at for their mistakes and not praised for their characterization which used to be less important in our genre. *[See "Science Fiction Attitude" by Ray Nelson, page 28.]*

Why are these people now writing much better stf—stf which is acceptable to the connoisseurs? The two books in question do not need the conventions of science fiction, and are (for the most part) quite logical in their extrapolations. Also the media successes of the STAR WARS series and STAR TREK have made many of our traditions, at least the more simple ones, better known to the general public—which includes mainstream authors.

Before I get back to *Elleander Morning* I want to digress a bit further. The best known novel of alternate World War II's is, of course, Phil Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*. Other books range from *Swastika Night*, originally published in the 1930's under a male pseudonym but recently published in paperback under the author's real female name, to *SSGB*. Greg Benford has even edited an anthology of short fiction on that theme. Mark Keller has published a great deal of research on alternate world fiction in other fanzines and his next article on the subject (dealing with the American Revolutionary War) will appear in upcoming issue of NIEKAS.

The timeline without Hitler in *Elleander Morning* is quite interesting, but I wonder just how realistic it is. The technology of this world where World War II never occurred is different from ours: more advanced in ways, and less in other. The zeppelin *Hindenberg* was lifted by helium rather than hydrogen and so never burned, and transatlantic zeppelin service survived into the 70's or 80's. In our timeline the Germans had to use hydrogen because the U.S. had a monopoly on helium and was reluctant to sell it to a potential enemy. The author has done a lot of excellent research which she uses without explicitly referring to it. I do not know how general the knowledge as to why the *Hindenberg* was lifted by hydrogen is, but the author did not mention it—just the results. On the other hand it wasn't just the *Hindenberg* fire that killed zeppelin travel but airships' susceptibility to destruction by storms. For instance, the U.S. zeppelin *Shenandoah* was destroyed by the winds of a thunderstorm causing unconventional stresses to the ship's structure.

Space travel, aviation, and nuclear weapons were developed much later because there was no war to drive them forward. Transoceanic aviation advanced slowly from the Pan American Clippers and was still seaplane based, though now the seaplanes were jet powered. There are arguments for and against this sequence. A boat hull would be a lot heavier than a wheel assembly. Airfields would be developed for inland service so once sufficient fuel capacity was developed for transatlantic service, land-based planes would be used. On the other hand, after World War II there were serious proposals for building a series of floating refueling stations in the Atlantic. I remember seeing articles and sketches in magazines like POPULAR SCIENCE at the time. For reasons explained by Willy Ley in his book *Engineers' Dreams*, they were never built. I suppose that a slow evolution of seaplane technology could have led to jet-powered seaplanes but I wonder about it.

The Germans retain their technological superiority in this timeline and achieve a moon landing in 1980 and test a nuclear explosion in Antarctica a few years later. There is no Cold War and the world does not fear the results of the experiment.

On the other hand, land transportation is far advanced over that in our timeline. In the opening scene the heroine takes a maglev train running in a vacuum tube from Los Angeles to New York, and makes the trip in about 45 minutes. North America and Europe, and perhaps other lands, are crisscrossed by these vacuum tubes, so they are an established, profitable technology. I find it hard to imagine such a dramatic leap forward in land transportation; but if it did happen there would be little

need for inland air transportation, so a network of large airports would not have developed. This adds to the reasonableness of jet-powered seaplanes.

Social history has also taken a number of interesting turns. There never was, of course, a Second World War, but there was an extremely violent civil war in France. Dates and causes are not specified, but I am sure the author had the details worked out. I would like to hear from her the details of her alternate history which are only implicit background in the novel.

She uses a technique I first saw in John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar*, that of placing between chapters short excerpts from news stories. While Brunner used stories contemporary with the action of the story, Yulesman used stories from any point in the history up to that point which would help fill in the background. I understand Brunner introduced the technique from Dos Passos' mainstream trilogy *U.S.A.* Some were important headlines, others were minor pieces of news about unimportant persons in that timeline whom we would recognize as major figures in ours, like a major figure in the Manhattan Project who was working in a small prep school in Los Alamos. In her timeline the dead WWII hero Joe Kennedy had a term as President instead of his younger brother John. I know that Joe Sr. had planned for Joe Jr. to eventually be President, and switched to John when Joe was killed.

Czar/Robert H. Knox

"Vat if, indeed...?"

Like most good SF and contemporary novels, this one is not linear but leaps back and forth in the new timeline between very early in the century to 1913 to many steps in between, often coming back to the "current" time of the novel, following the young granddaughter of Elleander Morning. There is only one brief scene in our timeline, about halfway through the novel, showing Elleander dying of old age and willing herself back into the past.

All of the important people in Elleander's life had died while she was still a young woman, and she had made no new close friends. As I said, as she was dying she willed herself back in time and ended up in her younger body, but she also took with her the contents of her room: a magnificent bed, a TV set, and a dozen books, including the TIME-LIFE History of the Second World War. She immediately set out to change history and prevent the death of her husband and friends. There was no way to prevent the imminent First World War, but in 1913 she traveled to Vienna and killed the young failed artist Hitler. He already had a few of his political ideas and a few cronies of like mind that he hung around with, but had no real following or impact.

There are two views of history—strong willed men and women turn the tide of history, or they are merely tools of destiny. I have a feeling that the truth is somewhere in between and while killing Hitler would alter the timeline drastically, still the impact of the humiliating Versailles Treaty and the depression and inflation in Germany would have given rise to a similar fanatical regime. Perhaps a wiser man would have arisen who wouldn't have turned away the proffered help of the minorities in the Soviet empire who hated their masters and looked to Germany as a potential savior. Hitler's Russian campaign could have had a very different outcome. I wish I knew the author's reasoning about the circumstances which led to peaceful relations between post WWI Germany and the Allied Nations.

I find another point disturbing. The granddaughter has Elleander secretly disinterred, as well as the body in an unmarked grave next to hers. One is the body of the Elleander of the alternate timeline, who was killed in Austria a short time after she had killed Hitler, but the other is the same aged body from our timeline. How did that body get there? Elleander made the transition as she was dying, several days before she was buried, and she went into the young body of herself. She did bring along a few material objects, but how did her buried body come back?

The novel begins with the granddaughter, also named Elleander, inheriting her father's estate in England and going over from the US to find out just what it is that she inherited. She finds a letter from the father she never knew, a very strange autobiographical work by her supposed grandfather, and the TIME-LIFE History. She slowly comes to realize what her grandmother had done and turns to her father's solicitor for help in understanding. He has connections and gets a number of important people to look at this strange history of a war that never took place. Eventually the TIME-LIFE Corporation of the new timeline re-prints the books as an interesting "what if."

The Jewish people are living in peace in the powerful Germany, but the books inspire a small minority to imitate Hitler and start a hate campaign against them in order to gain power. They imagine themselves as conquering the world because they have space travel and a monopoly on nuclear weapons.

Elleander's granddaughter and her German lover realize what must be done—Elleander's act of assassination must be repeated. The German diplomat's uncle is the ringleader and must be killed. The two lovers carry it off, killing with a bomb the leader and his entire shadow cabinet, correcting history again.

If the timeline were as the author said, would it be so easy to get the German people onto such an irrational path? Anne Braude read for me several articles, including "Politics and the English Language" and "The Principles of Newspeak" by George Orwell and "The Hollow Miracle" and "A Note on Günter Grass" by George Steiner. The gist of these is that the language of a people inspires or perhaps feeds back on a mode of behavior. The logic of the German language inspires a certain sort of autocracy. Anne referred to this in passing, without citing sources, in NIEKAS 36's Mathoms, and several readers took violent exception to this. (See Laiskai or Gincas in this issue.)

Anyhow, the book is an exciting and enjoyable novel with much food for thought.✹

You're Entitled to Your Own Ridiculous Opinion

Mathoms

by Anne Braude

Freedom of thought is the most cherished principle of our republic. As freedom of religion, speech, the press, and assembly, it is enshrined in the first article of the Bill of Rights. The framers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution were men who had fled religious and political tyranny in Europe, or the descendants of such men; they created a system under which (when it worked) everyone was entitled to his own opinion. The system doesn't work perfectly, but on the whole, it works better than any other system of government in the history of the planet.

But there is a glitch.

"All men are created equal," says the Declaration.

"Everyone is entitled to his own opinion," says the cliché.

This has produced a semi-syllogism with a false conclusion: Free speech means that all opinions are equal. Partly as a result of shoddy thinking (Jefferson's ideal informed electorate has never materialized), partly as a result of clever propaganda, freedom of speech has come to mean not only equal time for each opinion but equal credibility.

We can be proud of our history of tolerance of diversity of opinion. Our government does not persecute people for their political views unless they use or advocate violence; admittedly it tries to, but sooner or later such efforts get whacked down, usually by the Supreme Court or by an aroused public voting the rascals out. Our record on official religious tolerance is even better, despite an unappetizing history of unofficial bigotry dating back to the Massachusetts Bay Colony: unless it advocates illegal acts (like the polygamy of 19th century Mormons or the animal sacrifices of Santeria), a sect can believe pretty much what it chooses.

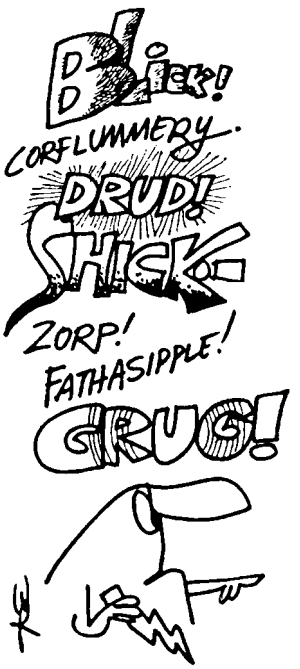
The problem comes when every statement is reduced to an opinion. Evolution is just a theory, say the creationists; give our theory equal time in science classes—we have a right to our opinion, don't we? Freedom of speech! What they ignore, and what the majority of the American public doesn't seem to realize, is that "theory" means something different to a scientist ("a formulation of apparent relationships or underlying principles of certain observed phenomena which has been verified to some degree") than it does to a layman ("a speculative idea; a mere conjecture or guess") or, for that matter, to a musician ("systematic conception or statement of the principles of something" would apply to music theory; definitions from *Webster's New World Dictionary* and *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). An opinion is only as good as the mind which produced it and the facts on which it is based. The guy who cleans the urinal at the bus station is just as "entitled to his opinion" about our policy towards Iran as the head of the National Security Council; but the latter has access to all sorts of classified data to help him to make up his mind, while the former probably can't even read his newspaper very well (or he'd be able to get a better job). Are we to grant their opinions equal credibility?

NIEKAS is basically a journal of opinion, though we don't usually call ourselves by such a highfalutin' moniker. It consists mainly of columns, letters (Laiskai), debates (Gincas), and reviews. And our regular readers (all five of you) get good practice in evaluating opinions.

And we certainly have a diversity of opinions. Our regular contributors include Catholics, Protestants, and Jews; liberals, conservatives, and Libertarians; science fiction fans, fantasy fans, and media fans; men, women, and children of all ages; the serious-minded and the hopelessly frivolous. As far as I know, nothing has ever been censored by the regular editors except for profanity or being excessively insulting to someone (we are not a feudzine). Moderate insult is tolerated—ask Piers Anthony. We throw everything we get at you and invite you to make up your own mind. (Maybe what Thomas Jefferson really meant was that it is every American's patriotic duty to subscribe to NIEKAS. Hey, we've got a constitutional amendment here....)

Implicit in our notion of freedom of thought, in America in general and in NIEKAS in particular, is the belief that in the free marketplace of ideas, a sort of reverse Gresham's Law applies—good ideas will drive out the bad. It ain't necessarily so. Which brings me to the point of all this: where, if at all, do we draw the line beyond which we will not tolerate certain views?

If someone tells us that he hears voices in his head telling him to kill everyone whose name begins with the letter "M," he is certifiably mad and we lock him up. If someone tells us that wearing the color green will attract benevolent etheric influences, we probably chuckle and go on about our business. These are individual delusions, dealt with on an individual basis. But what about shared delusions? I became sensitized to this issue while listening to the impeachment trial of former governor Evan Mecham on one of the local talk-radio stations, which opened its lines to callers whenever the Senate was in recess. What I learned was that Mecham supporters do not inhabit the same mental universe as the rest of us (not unlike their leader, who has never been able to admit that anyone can disagree with him without



being mad, mentally defective, dishonest, stupid, or ill-informed). According to Mecham's True Believers, he was ousted from office because of the machinations of homosexuals, liberals, the publisher of the Phoenix newspapers, Mormon-haters, or a powerful group of Los Angeles bankers with designs on Arizona's water resources—you pays your money and you takes your choice. It is impossible to convince them that over 300,000 people signed recall petitions not because they were evil or duped but because they decided they didn't like Evan Mecham and, more important, they didn't think he was a competent governor. Mecham's own argument on the three matters with which he was charged are equally contorted and, to the nonbeliever, illogical. I don't want to bore you with details of the charges and replies, but some of his defense depends on exactly the same logic as that of the toddler who, when adjured to stop pulling the cat's tail, replies, "It's the cat that's pulling. I'm just holding on." Yet this man was able to get 40% of the votes cast in the last gubernatorial elections. Religious cultism has also been in the news here lately, with the arrest of members of a Mormon polygamist splinter sect called, I believe, Church of the Lamb of God, whose members believe it is their duty to kill anyone who leaves the group. And last night (7/15/88) ABC's 20/20 had a feature that dealt with the Children of God, a cult whose leader compels female members to convert men by having sex with them and who is now advocating sex with children. They are now headquartered in Bangkok, having fled the US.

Clearly murder, forced prostitution, and child molestation are not going to be tolerated in the name of freedom of thought and religion. What about child abuse? The courts are now dealing with cases of parents whose fundamentalist or Christian Science views led them to forgo medical treatment for their children in favor of faith healing, and whose children therefore died. Many cults teach that children should be severely beaten as punishment for sin or to cast out devils believed to possess them. The line is being drawn. We can laugh at the Flat Earth Society and believers in the Bermuda Triangle; their shared delusions do no one any real harm. But what about Lyndon LaRouche's crackpot political cult, which has swindled gullible, patriotic elderly people out of thousands of dollars? Or medical quackery that rips off people for millions, and often induces them to stay away from treatment that might really help? So far I've been talking about two kinds of shared delusions: the harmless, which we don't have to worry about, and the criminal, which is somewhat answerable to laws already on the books. I'd like to turn now to a couple of belief systems which do not threaten anyone with immediate physical or financial harm but which are nevertheless, I believe, dangerous to our society.

The first is creationism. Its threat is to the quality of our education. The danger is real; for years one fundamentalist couple in Texas successfully pressured the state into refusing to buy any science textbook that discussed evolution. Because of the financial importance of the Texas market, this meant a de facto censorship of virtually all published science textbooks. As we move into a future that is increasingly dependent on science and technology, American students are falling farther and farther behind in science and math. To a non-creationist, their belief is a delusion; does everyone's right to his own opinion include a right to his own delusions? Even when that delusion affects the education of the children of other people who do not share it?

Maybe you don't see the creationists as that much of a threat. Maybe they haven't been hassling your school board or state legislature. Maybe you don't have any kids in school. But as the sort of person who reads this fanzine, shouldn't you be at least a little indignant over a powerful lobby that sees science as mere opinion?

Another delusion system, of particular interest to me as a person of Jewish descent, is the revisionist history of the Holocaust—people and publications teaching that the Holocaust never happened; the Jews made it up to manipulate public sympathy. It is perfectly legal in this country, though Canada has a law against teaching hate; a case brought under it was the subject of an excellent TV movie this past season. Anti-Semitism is of course part and parcel of revisionism. How far should we tolerate it? Should we agitate for revisionist publications to be removed from public libraries? Should we urge universities to remove revisionists from their faculties on the grounds that they are obviously incompetent scholars, or would this be the equivalent of German universities under Hitler revoking the earned degrees of Jewish scholars? Which course is more harmful to a free society, tolerance or repression?

Science fiction fandom is well aware of the ill-judged attempt of some scientists to prevent the publication of Velikovsky's theories; few would approve such a course today. And sometimes it seems as if every third SF novel written between 1925 and 1965 has as its theme rebellion against the thought control of a totalitarian regime. Certainly two of the most famous works in the genre, *Brave New World* and *1984*, do. We are proud of our tolerance of diversity and eccentricity. But we are also proud of our rationality and of being well informed. We know where reality ends and delusion begins. We play at alternate realities but we don't get lost in them. (Try telling that to the average mundane who stumbles into a con by mistake.) A local weekly ran a feature a few weeks ago on various New Age practitioners in the Valley. A letter to the editor from someone sympathetic to the subjects of the article contains the following statement: "If each was allowed to choose his own reality and if that reality was accepted as being right for him, ... peace would prevail at home, at work, and in world affairs." This is the ultimate entitlement to one's own opinion—choose your own reality. But, even in science fiction, is reality a matter of choice? Somewhere there has to be a bedrock of fact. Somewhere there must be a fair and legal way to limit how far freedom of thought for A allows him to defame or endanger B, even if A doesn't actually knock B down and spit on him. When the framers of the Constitution wrote the first article of the Bill of Rights, did they really have in mind the protection of HUSTLER magazine and the right of the KKK to have its own public-access channel on cable TV? I think they'd be horrified by both.

But of course...

...that's only my opinion.✹

Patterns

by Diana L. Paxson

Let us consider a proposition: *the essence of Truth is paradox, the dynamic tension between the positive and negative manifestations of neutral states or qualities.* For the purposes of this column, let us consider a further notion: *successful* artistic creation takes place at the point of equilibrium between tradition and innovation.* (*by 'successful', I mean here work that appeals to an audience as well as to the artist). What I am trying to say here is that any good idea carried too far in any one direction can become harmful. Balance is all. This is true for many things, including the arts (and among them, ritual, which has been defined as the 'art' of Religion). In this column I'd like to discuss some of the opportunities and pitfalls involved in using traditional material in both literature and religion.

For several years the question of where and how to find non-European sources for fantasy has been a ubiquitous panel topic at sf conventions. The current boom in fantasy has resulted in a plethora of novels with pseudo-Celtic or medieval settings. Editors continue to buy them, so they must be selling; but from time to time readers (at least those who run cons) express a wistful desire for something different—hence the panels.

Every time I've been on one of these panels, one of the questions that eventually comes up is whether Europeans can successfully deal with material from other cultures—whether they have access to the resources themselves, and whether they possess the background to interpret them correctly.

It is certainly true that it's easier to find good information on the culture of medieval Europe than on that of Ethiopia, for instance; however, there are times when the availability and the accuracy of resources are not necessarily the same thing, and the very abundance of information may make it harder for the researcher to sort through it. This is particularly true in the area of Celtic culture, which has haunted the European imagination since the beginning of the Romantic era, and which Europe, and especially the English, has reinterpreted to meet the needs of each age.

Margaret B. Simon

The authenticity of James MacPherson's "Ossianic" poems has been hotly debated since he first revealed them in the mid-18th century. The gentlemanly portrait of Fingal they show is a far cry from the outlaw Finn MacCumhail we find in the early medieval Irish texts, and even those texts have probably evolved considerably from the original tales. The English have tended to view the Celts with much the same mingling of suppressed guilt and nostalgic affection with which Americans look at Red Indians (with some notable exceptions, such as the British in Ulster and the whites near Wounded Knee). Both countries have had a paradoxical genius for romanticizing the aboriginal culture while persecuting their descendents.

Or perhaps this is simply human—the Milesian Celts deified the culture they conquered as the Tuatha Dé Danann; the Navajo adopted the kachinas of the Hopi whose mesas they surrounded. To be fair, the history of the world is one of migrations and conquests, and there is hardly a people in the world (with the possible exception of the Australian aborigines) who has not conquered and displaced some other race from their ancestral homelands at some point in prehistory—and then told stories about them.

However, the topic presently under discussion is not political, but cultural imperialism. One may argue that at least the Celts and the Anglo-Saxons are both Indo-Europeans, or that the Anglo-Saxons have now lived in the British Isles for longer than some of the Belgic tribes had at the time of the Saxon invasions, or that the culture of the United Kingdom is an amalgam of both Celtic and Teutonic elements (not to mention important influences from French and Graeco-Roman sources), and that modern Englishmen therefore have a right to write about ancient Celts. But what about Americans? We can claim a genetic and cultural inheritance from Great Britain, but we are not sprung from British soil. Indeed, several of the above arguments could be used to justify white Americans' writing about Amerindians. If writers were required to choose their settings purely on the basis of genetics, I ought to be writing about the Iroquois, not the Irish—since I am one sixteenth Seneca, whereas my most recent identifiably Celtic ancestor lived during the 16th century.

Similar arguments can be offered in the area of religion. When early Christianity

was imported into Rome it was just another weird Oriental cult, but the established churches of today are the result of a long development during which Hebrew legends and moral precepts were modified by Mid-eastern myths, Greek Philosophy, Roman political ideas, and the Celtic and Teutonic cycle of festivals. Since the nineteenth century, missionaries have forced the product of this European evolution down the throats of Asians, Africans, and Native Americans with no doubts whatsoever regarding its universal applicability (scientific missionaries have preached Western technology with equal fervor, but that's a topic for another column!).

However, the latter part of the twentieth century has seen a distinct slackening in missionary zeal. We are no longer quite so sure that modern European culture has the answer to everything, and so we seek alternatives both in literature and religion. Some people profess to be surprised by the fact that there are folk in fandom who are simultaneously members of the L-5 Society and the Society for Creative Anachronism. They don't seem to understand that the point is not to reject the past or the future, but to find viable alternatives to the present.

Surname and even skin color cannot be allowed to constrain this search. America is a pluralistic society, as mixed in genes as in culture. We are the heirs of all the peoples who have contributed to this country's evolution, a list which continues to grow as Asians add their own elements to the culture. The United States is a melting pot, and each new group contributes another flavor. The metaphor reminds one of J.R.R. Tolkien's discussion of the "cauldron of story" (in his essay on Fairy Tales). Even when we are trying to be most original, we are dipping into that cauldron.

There are no totally new ideas. Joseph Campbell, among others, has demonstrated the unversality of certain archetypal themes. When Tolkien strove to invent a new mythology for the British Isles, he reinterpreted and recombined material from a variety of traditional sources. In contemporary literature, the ideal is to be inventive and new, but unless a work is based on patterns already established in the human psyche, it will be incomprehensible. In religion, the professed ideal has always been to be orthodox and historical, but in fact, each age has reinterpreted traditional material to meet its own needs.

Yes, I know—this is a paradox—but that is what I am trying to talk about, after all. A recent letter to NIEKAS suggested that it is wrong for anyone who is not Jewish to study Kaballah. Actually, in orthodox Judaism, my sex would be a greater barrier than my religion—our study group included several Jewish women who had been forbidden by fathers or grandfathers to read their books on the subject. The fact that they had to come to me for help in learning about the Tree of Life epitomizes the problem. A very similar debate is currently going on in neo-pagan circles regarding whether or not people of European descent should practice shamanism. The argument is that doing so infringes on the religious rights of native peoples, and that Europeans, who have already taken their land and livelihood, should at least leave them their spirituality.

Regarding Kaballah, if I am trespassing, I am only following in the footsteps of non-Jews (I'm not sure all of them would qualify as Christian) such as Raymond Lully, Cornelius Agrippa, and Paracelsus. I have never claimed to work with more than a portion of the Kabbalistic material, that having to do with the Tree of Life, or that my interpretation was orthodox in any sense of the word. In fact, there are now two distinct Kabbalistic traditions—the orthodox Jewish one, most accessibly presented by the works of Gershom Sholem, and what is sometimes called the "Christian" or esoteric Kaballah, which has evolved from the interpretations of the late medieval writers through the versions developed by of the Rosicrucians and the Order of the Golden Dawn. The latter is certainly based on the Hebrew system, but it bears about as much resemblance to it in practice as modern Christianity does to Judaism. I would therefore contend that it is no more wrong for me to use it than it is for Christians to use the Old Testament (or to co-opt pagan festivals for their feast days, for that matter).

The problem with the use of shamanic or Native American religious material by Europeans is in some ways similar. Judaism is a major contributor to western European culture, and therefore part of the American heritage . Shamanic practices are found all over the world (the word itself is Siberian, not Native American), and there is ample evidence for shamanic elements in Norse and Celtic religion and the European witch-cult. I would no more claim to teach any authentic tribal tradition than I would call myself a rabbi, however I do feel justified in using both tribal and Kabbalistic symbols and practices. I make such decisions on the same basis that I decide what cultures to draw on when writing. My first requirement is access to dependable resources, my second is psychological affinity, and a third is outside interest (a publisher and reading audience, in the case of writing, and the needs of other spiritual seekers, in the case of religion).

Is personal experience or identity a prerequisite for using cultural material? If this view were carried to an extreme, only women would be allowed to write characters from the female point of view (as has sometimes been argued by feminists), and the male point of view by men. Or one would only be allowed to recount accepted tribal traditions or one's own personal experience (which I think may account for the contemporary Native American distrust of historical novels such as *Hanta Yo*). If one follows such arguments to their conclusion, it becomes impossible to write fiction. On the other hand, if anyone can write about anything, one quickly loses any connection to reality (and indeed, there have been far too many novels which proceed with a blithe disregard for accuracy of fact or interpretation).

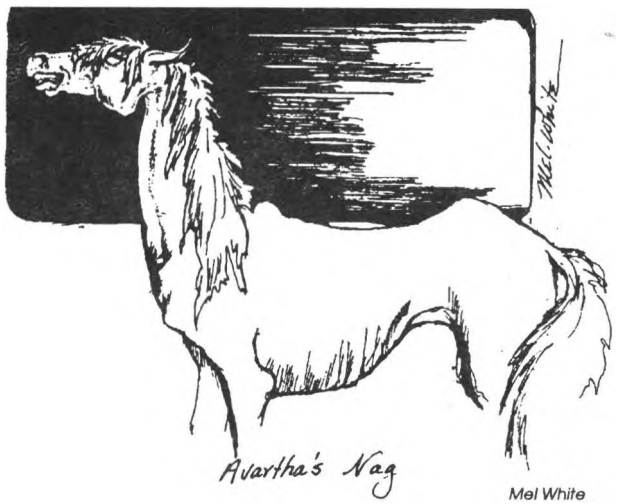
There must be a way to resolve the paradoxes confronting those who wish to make original use of traditional materials. Surely it is better to credit one's sources than to distort them or to pretend a spurious originality. In a pluralistic society, cultural integration without exploitation has to be possible. We need a sense of identity and of continuity with the past. At the same time, the perspective of each time and place is unique, and requires a reinterpretation of tradition.

The trick is to find that point of equilibrium between tradition and originality, between integration and exploitation; to treat the past with respect, and the present with imagination. If we do it well enough, our work will become the tradition of the future, and the next generation can tackle the same problem all over again!✱

A Day in the Commonwealth

Across the River

by Fred Lerner



Mel White

I've been working on *A Silverlock Companion* for years, and just because the project has been completed and the book finally published I haven't lost interest in *Silverlock*. I hope that I haven't reached the point of obsession. But sometimes the most unlikely things will trigger an association with the novel.

The other day my five-year-old daughter received a postcard from Walt Disney World. My parents had been there, and they want us to join them there someday. I think that Elizabeth is a bit too young for that; and anyway, we have other priorities. My taste in fantasy lands runs more to Sturbridge Village or Mystic Seaport; and Sheryl and I have long-standing plans to return to Colonial Williamsburg, site of our honeymoon, for our tenth anniversary. Our little *tertium quid* will be just old enough for their children's programs by then. Walt Disney will have to wait.

Looking at the Disney World literature got me to imagining a theme park based on the Commonwealth. There's more to *Silverlock* than picaresque romance and literary allusion. John Myers Myers wrote a pretty fair adventure story: a lot happens to Silverlock and his friends on their journey. With a bit of imagination, a fair amount of technology, and a *lot* of money, the typical American family could be put through *its* paces by the Delian. So come with me as we spend a day at Commonwealth Park.

Our journey to the Commonwealth doesn't start off quite so adventurously as A. Clarence Shandon's. Instead of being lost overboard during a storm at sea, we wander an ocean of asphalt. Once we've found a parking place, there's the long trek to the gate. Nobody said that a day at a theme park was going to be easy. Or cheap. But the admission price covers everything save food, drink, and souvenirs. We have our passport to the Commonwealth, and all day to use it. Let's get going!

Once through the gate we find ourselves in Ilium, though everyone just calls it "The City." In the background stands the Arch King's Palace—it seems there are certain constants to the practise of theme park design. Nothing much happens in Ilium. Behind exotic facades stand prosaic vendors of T-shirts, photographic film, and suntan lotion. The Hell Fire Club houses nothing more diabolical than a cajun-style fast food eatery. And the Fir Cone Tavern is just a glorified soda fountain. But as the crossroads of the Commonwealth, Ilium is an excellent starting-point; and its streets and alleyways are a likely place to meet its more prominent citizens. We can use some of our film capturing Elizabeth sitting on Don Quixote's lap, or riding in Miss Kilmansegg's gilded sedan chair. (We'd do better to buy a picture postcard; but that wouldn't be in keeping with the theme park spirit, would it?) I wouldn't be too surprised to run into a few foreigners while we were about it. Distinctions aren't maintained too rigorously in these places, so I'd keep an eye out for such folk as Daunt Godolphin and Bobby Yare. Not to mention Doc Holliday, Jack Swilling, and the San Francisco Vigilantes!

But we didn't come here to spend the day mingling with hired help in costumes. We're here for adventure!

Where to start? Brodir Hardsark's Viking longship ride? The line's a short one, so we jump on board. Now we see why there wasn't much of a wait! This is no mechanical imitation of a longship. We're on those benches, three to an oar, and it's up to us to get the boat moving! Fortunately there's a bard on board, and we have a strong beat to time our oarstrokes. (The rowing is suspiciously easy work, and there's a funny noise from within the hull. Maybe our oars aren't telling the whole story.)

You can't see much from the oar deck of a Viking longship. Once ashore, it's a different story. The Battle of Clontarf is being fought in that little valley below us. It doesn't last long: ten minutes at the most. But if you want more, stick around. They fight it every half hour.

If cruising appeals to you, there are several more relaxing voyages available. A ride down Long River on Huck Finn's raft ('ware the steamboats!), or a short scenic journey on Lorel's barge, might be just the thing. And water's not the only path through the Commonwealth. If the sight of all those houyhnhnms from Lorel's barge has awakened a fondness for horseflesh, you might want to try the pilgrimage to Hippocrene. But keep your wits about you—the leader might call on *you* for a song or story. If you're one of those barroom cowboys given to showing off on mechanical broncos, a ride on Avarta's nag ought to satisfy your cravings.

I know the ride I'd be most eager to try. I do the New Purchase Monorail every time I go. The backdrops are always changing, and lately there have been some exciting loops through some *very* strange stars and skies.

There's one ride that you *must* take. I've done it—once. You won't want to repeat it, I assure you. But you'll never be the same after that batwing tour of the Pit.

All this is getting a bit strenuous. Time to slow down a bit. How about a spot of lunch?

What's your pleasure? A venison on rye at Robin Hood's Deli? Steak and kidney pie, a tankard of ale, and a hot-blooded serving wench at the Inn at Upton? Or

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I'm Back!

The Haunted Library

by Don D'Ammassa

It's been a while since this column saw any activity, so this time I want to cover a number of individual topics, although they are in fact related.

The field of horror fiction is quite possibly the fastest growing sub-genre of fiction at this moment, and at least one publisher, Tor, has invested major effort in developing this line. There have been numerous horror fiction books from both major and minor publishers, and several major films have been released, some even derived from novels. We have also seen major science fiction writers switch wholesale to horror fiction—such as Dean Koontz and Charles Grant, and many others have dabbled with the supernatural, including Poul Anderson, Michael Bishop, and Lucius Shepard.

Given all this, it is probably not surprising that there has been some resentment among science fiction fans. What does surprise me is the depth of resentment. The complaints I've heard seem to boil down to the following:

1. Horror fiction is non-rational, denies science, is in fact anti-science, anti-progress, harkens back to the superstitions we'd be better off without.

2. It steals good writers from science fiction.

3. Horror fiction is formula fiction, lacking originality.

Well, let's look at each of these points briefly. Horror fiction is non-rational, in the sense that it assumes that our rational understanding of the way the world works is not entirely accurate, that there are more things than are dreamt of in our philosophies. But so does fantasy fiction in all of its forms, and that even more popular genre, which also attracts science fiction writers, doesn't raise nearly as much animosity. That, of course, partly addresses the second objection.

But objection #2 is a false one in any case.

Good writing is good writing, regardless of the genre. Let's take a specific example. Assume, for the sake of argument, that we accept that Robert Heinlein's *The Puppet Masters* is a good science fiction novel. Now, if the aliens were replaced by evil spirits possessing the various people concerned, the novel could be pretty much the same but it would be horror fiction.

*Cover art for **Blood Beast**; a soon-to-be-released Pinnacle paperback by Don D'Ammassa.*

Finally: the charge that horror fiction is formula fiction.

Well, for the most part, that's absolutely true.

The traditional British style ghost story is almost as rigid a form as the sonnet or haiku. So what? How can a fan of space opera, Burroughsian adventures, ASTOUNDALOG psi stories, and so on accuse other genres of being formula-ridden? And horror fiction is changing. The influx of excellent writers into the genre made that inevitable. That all said, let me try to really upset science fiction purists.

As a long-time and ongoing fan of science fiction, I am firmly convinced that horror fiction is for the most part better written than science fiction.

That ought to raise a few eyebrows.

The truth is, I think, that it is harder to write good science fiction than to write good horror fiction. This is because of a number of factors such as the difficulty of incorporating accurate, realistic scientific content into fiction without the explanations interfering with the story. But the real problem is the result of one of those things they teach you in creative writing.

Write about things you know, they say.

Well, none of us really knows the future, or aliens, or other planets, or how things will be in outer space, at the end of time, in other dimensions, and so on. But all of us know the real world, such as it is, and all of us have our non-rational fears and understand, in at least a limited sense, how those fears make us feel. So writing about them is easier and even less-talented writers can produce a coherent, entertaining, consistent story.

A mediocre science fiction writer stands out like a sore thumb; a mediocre horror writer gets by.

The corollary to all this is that it is easier to get bad science fiction published than to get bad horror fiction published. There isn't all that much good science fiction, and many editors aren't able to tell the difference anyway. A lot of science fiction is published that really shouldn't be. On the other hand, almost any editor can tell the really awful horror fiction, because it is inconsistent with our familiar reality. The end result: while horror fiction may cluster around the center more than most fields, with a large proportion of acceptable but undistinguished fiction, and only a very small amount of really good or bad stories, science fiction spans the spectrum profligately, with scores of terrible novels, hundreds of medium range novels, but still only a very few truly outstanding works.

The last point I want to make here is about marketing. Horror fiction is very popular right now and the result is that many science fiction novels are being published and marketed as horror. This has always been true of novels of clairvoyance and ESP, Stephen King's *Carrie* and

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Moriarty's Vulcan

Andy's Shack

by Harry J.N. Andruschak

I had a chance to re-read my column written right after I was laid off from my job at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena where I had worked for 13 years. The tone is bitter but I see no reason to change it. Nothing has happened in the last year which shows that NASA is going to get better. NASA is down and out without any real support from President Reagan, Congress, or the general public. The managers are still in charge so on 26 September, 1986, I received my final paycheck from JPL and walked out the front gate never to return. For one year I tried to find a job and finally on 26 September, 1987, I was hired by the United States Postal Service as an electronics technician, pay grade PS8 which works out to $12 per hour. I had lost all my savings when I was hired so I am now in the process of trying to rebuild my retirement funds. One year of unemployment is rough. The job market is hell if you are over the age of 40 and also considered to be both over-qualified and over-specialized in your talents. Of course I tried everything in my battle to find a job but the truth is that I wound up at the Postal Service because nobody else wanted me. Only the Postal Service seems to be in compliance with the laws about discrimination. I have very mixed feelings about all this and a year of constant rejection by every aerospace and electronics firm in the area has not helped me emotionally. I think the milk of human kindness in the veins has soured.

So, as I sit here typing on 8 March, 1988, my mind looks forward to 17 March which will be the 30th anniversary of the launch of Vanguard I satellite, which is still in orbit. I doubt that any of the newspapers or scientific magazines will notice this anniversary, not even AVIATION WEEK AND SPACE TECHNOLOGY. It all happened so long ago in a land far, far away. 17 March, 1988, is also the day I celebrate four years of sobriety. As a recovered alcoholic I appreciate the support that science fiction fans and pros have given me in my four-year battle. And by the way, spare me the letters about "recovered" instead of "recovering." I will be writing about that topic in a future column. Too many fans and pros have died from alcoholism so maybe a discussion on the topic is in order. But for now, "recovered," not "recovering," and most certainly not "reformed."

Before that, though, I want to write about a topic I did a lot of basic research on during my last months at JPL concerning the question of what Professor James Moriarty wrote about in his now lost paper, "The Dynamics of an Asteroid." Alas, Dr. John H. Watson left few details about this paper, leaving the field wide open to speculation. Suggestions have ranged from the sublime to the stupid. The sublime suggestions wonder if Professor Moriarty managed to solve the general three-body problem. A good example of a stupid suggestion is from Dr. Isaac Asimov who turns Moriarty into a pulp fiction mad-scientist trying to blow up the world. (See the story "The Ultimate Crime" in *More Tales of the Black Widowers*.) My own research has convinced me that the paper, written in 1875 or so, was about the dynamics of an unnamed asteroid that was thought to exist—unnamed, that is, because it was not yet found.

Vulcan.

At least the French called it Vulcan. They did this because Urbain Jean Joseph Leverrier called it Vulcan, and he was the most famous and influential French astronomer of his time. This was the man who, in 1846, had put his reputation on the line by publishing papers concerning an unknown planet beyond Uranus. A superb mathematician, he had worked out from anomalies in the orbit of Uranus that a new planet had to be in orbit well out in the solar system. On 23 September Encke Galle and d'Arrest of the Prussian Observatory found Neptune pretty much near the place Leverrier said it would be. There were celebrations and congratulations all around and all was very friendly. Leverrier was the man of the hour.

So why were the English astronomers insisting that some obscure student named Adam had also done the calculations and deserved equal credit? The squabble for the priority for working out the location of Neptune soured English-French relations for many years and was a prime factor in the publication of Moriarty's paper.

Leverrier was not a person to rest on his laurels and enjoy tenure. He began to study the other planets, including Mercury. He discovered that the perihelion of Mercury shifted by 43 seconds of an arc per century. He published this finding also. It was, in fact, a wonderful piece of observation for its time because Mercury is not the easiest planet to observe thanks to the glare of the sun.

By this time Leverrier was the director of the Paris Observatory and on 2 January, 1860, gave a famous lecture in which he suggested that the problem of Mercury's orbit could only be solved by assuming a new small planet or asteroid inside the orbit of Mercury. He called on the French astronomers to find it first, before the English or Germans did.

For the next 15 years the French astronomers tried to find this small asteroid which by now had acquired the name of Vulcan. I believe it was the intention of Moriarty's paper to show that such an asteroid could not possibly exist. That is why he chose the somewhat strange title of "The Dynamics of an Asteroid." If such an asteroid did exist inside the orbit of Mercury what could its orbit actually be to account for the observations of Mercury's orbit? This, of course, is a special version of the three-body problem in physics, and it was a problem that only a true mathematical genius like Moriarty could be expected to handle. Proving that such an asteroid did not exist, exhausting all possible cases, all possible orbits, and all trajectories, must have been daunting. No wonder that Sherlock Holmes declared that only a few people could understand the entire paper.

But the French seemed to have understood since the paper was most likely written in French. It is a fact that after 1875, when the paper was published, interest in the alleged asteroid inside Mercury died out among the French astronomers. This is history. All this explains why we have been

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The Other Elfquest

Nihil Humanum

by John Boardman

"Know then, that it is not the function of prophecy to delineate coming events. The existence of the prophecy is in itself a catalyst in the shaping of the future, specifically in causing men to attempt to thwart or implement its realization. Therefore, no prophecy can literally come true, for as soon as it is uttered, it has altered the course of events."

from *The Book of Alacazar*

"Life without honor remains life."

Immi proverb

A small, pointy-eared folk live in the forest, as they have done since uttermost antiquity. These elves are a very close-knit group, expert archers, and fell fighters when they have to be, though they do not seek the company of others for trade or warfare. But great events are astir, and they intrude themselves on the peace and quiet of these elves, bringing great destruction to them. One of the elves sets out on a quest to deal with this crisis. He is at first uncertain as to what he is to do, but gets advice and assistance from various quarters. In order to pursue his quest, he gets a weapon from a smith of marvelous powers, and is clad in the unfamiliar weight of armor instead of his accustomed clothing.

It sounds like Cutter, from Wendy & Richard Pini's *Elfquest*, doesn't it? Well, consider matters further. This hero is, as he would himself be the first to admit, a complete coward. He will fight if he has to, but prefers to take to his heels when he can. He regards lying as a totally appropriate way to get out of a tight squeeze, and will abandon the self-appointed comrade-in-arms if he feels his own hide is in danger. All his people are the same sort of pragmatists, "for the natural avarice of the Immi was tempered by an even greater prudence." And, instead of the well-paired couples of the Pinis' elves, "The Immi had no words for things like seduction or rape, for their women were extremely willing... in fact, none of them had ever been known to say 'no'."

A parody of Elfquest? No, not quite. For Wallace Wood first started blocking out this story in WITZEND #4, which was published in 1968, nine years before the Pinis began Elfquest. It achieved publication in a more finished form in *The King of the World*, one of the cosmopolitan comic art productions which have filled the shelves of the more serious comic art shops in recent years. (*The King of the World* was published in 1978 by Les Editions du Triton. Printed in Milan, and distributed by Sea Gate Distributors right here in Brooklyn.)

Panel from ***The Wizard King*** *by Wallace Wood ©1978*

WITZEND was a comic art showpiece zine of semi-pro status, which ran eight issues which command fabulous prices from collectors. The first four issues were published by Wallace Wood. The fifth issue still listed Wood as the founder but gave the publisher as "Wonderful Publishing Co." The sixth issue, the first with a cover in color, listed Ed Glasser as publisher and Bill Pearson as editor, and appeared in 1969. The seventh issue had Pearson as editor and publisher, and Phil Seuling as associate publisher. The eighth and last issue, which appeared after a long delay in 1971, had only Pearson's name on the masthead, and the whole operation had been moved from Manhattan to Brooklyn.

The pages were in black and white, and the material was considered too controversial, too raunchy, or both, for the ordinary comic books of the period, and of too high artistic quality for the "underground comics." (The cover of #7 shows what happens when a Vaughn Bodé mutant graphically shoots a woman through the back of the head.)

Early issues of WITZEND had light, whimsical pieces by Wood, Kurtzman, Spiegelman, and others. However, WITZEND began increasingly to run to more violent fantasies. The artist whom most comic fans are likely to connect with WITZEND at this late date is not Wood, but Steve Ditko, whose "Mr. A" series took us into a world of absolute good and absolute evil, which scorned compromise and kicked the hell out of anyone who disagreed with his own absolutist morality. In #7 Bill Pearson and Tim Brent put a parody, "Mr. E by Steve Diktato," but the damage had been done. As the current rebirth of a Fascist Batman shows, it was Ditko and not Wood, Pearson, or Brent who had seen the wave of the future coming. (Wood, however, did slyly poke fun at Ditko's brutality in #4, with a character who solemnly informed the readers that "there are good guys and bad guys and the job of the good guys is to kill the bad guys.") "The World of the Wizard King" appeared as a three-part serial in #4, #5, and #8. (Except for a piece written and drawn long before for an EC publication, the final installment was the only thing by Wood to appear in any of the last three issues.) It

consisted of a story with illustrations, rather than the usual panel-and-balloon format. In this edition, the forest elves are called "the Peepl," and one of the characters is that stock deity of modern fantasy, a god whose powers wax or wane according to whether he is worshiped or ignored. (The god's name is "Iam!") This god had placed the world under the benevolent rule of Aristos, the immortal Wizard King. But the evil Zor lured Aristos out to the Tree of Death, which stunned the king before he could finish plunging his magic sword Ironsteel into its trunk. The tree was killed and the king rendered helpless. Zor dismembered the Immortal King, shackled his half-elven Queen Alva to the tree, and instituted the worship of the demon Horrob.

This sets the scene, centuries later, for the heroism of the elf Odkin the Sly, "forty-seventh son of Idward the Peculiar.... Odkin and his father appeared to be the same age, and could have been brothers. In a sense they were, for they both had the same mother." A wizard named Weer hoodwinks Odkin into going on a quest—which, of course, involves drawing the magic sword from the tree, de dum, de dum. But, as you might expect of real metal in real wood, the sword snaps. This wakes the Queen, who has been in a magic sleep. They proceed to screw each other silly but, resuming his quest in her company, he finds that the sword is making him unnaturally brave. The Queen sinks in the quicksand and is lost as they cross the fens, but Odkin goes on and on, slaughtering all the enemies who cross his path.

When Odkin returns to the forest village of the Peepl, he finds it under siege by the forces of Zor. Thanks to catapults hidden under their roofs the Peepl manage to fight off these enemies. They decide to evacuate the village before Zor returns, but Iam's inspirations direct Odkin to a sky-boat—a sort of row boat with an eagle figurehead, wings, and a tiller. Odkin flies to the land of the Fenmen, and is called by Iam to walk into the quicksand. He does so, to find that this is a route to safety, and that Alva and the rest of the Peepl are safe in the caves below the fen. (Caves below a fen is rather unlikely, but this isn't a geology textbook.) Recovering the head of Aristos, they find that he has gone mad, and a touch of Ironsteel destroys him. Odkin finds that not only has he won the love of Queen Alva, but is now the King of the World.

By the time Wood rewrote this work for color publication in panel-and-balloon form, he made several changes. Iam was gone, and a living shadow appears to get Odkin moving on his quest. The tribe of forest elves is now called the Immi, although another diminutive folk appear later in the adventure as "the Peepl." An Immi council decides that Odkin should get the advice of the wizard Alacazar. (Weer, in this version, has become a small reptilian servitor of Alacazar.) New characters are introduced, including a Conan parody called Iron Aron. (On their second meeting, Odkin asks Iron Aron what became of the naked woman who had accompanied him previously. "Oh, I sold her—back to her father. He gave me this fine horse and armor for her." An explanation by Wood informs us that "actually they were more in the form of a dowry, or wedding present, but Aron was concerned with maintaining a certain image....") As before, the sword breaks off when Aron tries to pull it out of the tree; he is knocked unconscious and Odkin makes off with the blade. When he recovers, Aron hacks the tree to matchwood and gets the other half. After both leave, a strong, brave, pure-hearted knight arrives, "just the sort who could have pulled out the sword... perhaps it is just as well, for he was also a bit of a fool."

In the decade or so between WITZEND and "The King of the World," a few changes had obviously taken place in Wood's view of the world, and everyone else's. Heroism and respect for authority had received a very poor press in the years between the years from 1968 to 1978. A great flood of fantasy paperbacks obviously produced a desire in Wood for parody. Before sending Odkin off to find the tree with the sword, Alacazar gives him a magic pouch: "Each time you lift the flap, a fresh loaf of bread will appear." In the next panel, "resisting the temptation to head for the nearest town and start a bakery, Odkin started out."

There are, of course, villains for Iron Aron to demonstrate his heroism against—the monstrous Unmen, who serve the same purpose to Wood as Orcs did to Tolkien—mass-production bad guys who do the dirty work for the head villains, and who can be slain in large numbers if the development of the plot demands some action. (In the game of Dungeons & Dragons, the heroes go through Orcs like a child goes through a bag of salted peanuts.) The scene in the sky boat is retained, but with Weer rowing Odkin towards the home of Alacazar. Nor is Alacazar quite the wise old Gandalf type, either.

The wizard king's name is changed from Aristos to Atlan, and his enemy from Zor to Anark, reminding us of the evil King Anarchus in Rabelais' tale of the giant Gargantua. This time the queen is killed rather than ensorcelled, so there'll be no sex scenes later with Odkin. Resuming his quest, Odkin heads back to Immiville but is denied entrance by his kinfolk, who want no part of the malevolent powers that are now hunting him. He is then drafted into an army of mercenaries headed by one Vandall, whom Alacazar has recruited to fight Anark's anthropophagous Unmen. There is a climactic battle in which Odkin realizes that the magic sword is forcing him to behave in a totally uncharacteristic manner. Instead of the usual Immi cowardice he goes out and fights the Unmen.

This ended "The King of the World" in its 1978 version, in the middle of the story. Les Editions du Triton apparently felt that completing the story in another volume would be financially unrewarding so the completion appeared with other works in a volume called "Wood Works." As I did not buy this volume when it first came out, and it now seems to be totally unavailable, I fear that I cannot continue the story. But, as I recall it, there were further divergences from the earlier WITZEND version.

At the present time, the sword-and-sorcery adventure is a major field of fantasy. The bookshelves at Forbidden Planet are overrun with paperbacks in which a sword-bearing hero (often female, often Keltic, and not infrequently both) travels around a vaguely medieval sort of world, sometimes in company with a bard, a wizard, or a familiar, to right some wrong or fulfill some quest. Parody is long overdue. *Bored of the Rings* and "King of the World" have barely scratched the surface. Something needs to be done for the Keltic-twilight-plus-telepathy novels, and for the bearskin-jockstrap novels, comparable to what Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra did for the medieval knightly epics when he wrote *Don Quixote* nearly 400 years ago.

Despite its appearance in comic art form, with art by the inimitable Phil Foglio, I do not regard Robert Asprin's "Myth" series as the parody for which contemporary fantasy fiction has been waiting. The novels are funny, and Asprin's ability to sustain the gag is still in fairly good shape. But the plots are basically get-the-hero-up-a-tree-and-then-throw-rocks-at-him; the definitive parody on sword-and-sorcery fiction, when it comes, will have to do better than this.

Ron Goulart has recently brought out a book about the great comic artists, and a couple of pages are devoted to Wallace Wood. They begin with his discovery by the

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Tape from Toronto

by David Palter

It would be particularly perverse of me to make my present column's subject the events at Kent State. Ed would of course refuse to publish this, I would then scream that I was being censored, and resign in a huff. However, I'm going to be almost as perverse, and discuss a subject which is inspired by the discussion of Kent State.

Presently in the occupied territories of the state of Israel, we are seeing a similar type of occurrence. Violent demonstrators are being shot by military forces. This is causing a similar sort of outcry about excessive use of force. The situation is a bit more difficult in Israel because it is quite apparent that Palistinian rights are a very present danger to the survival of the state of Israel, whereas student unrest in the US did not seem to represent such a major threat. However, there is this thread of connection.

It is now approximately 40 years since the founding of the state of Israel. During that time Israel has been continuously at war with all of its neighbors with the exception of Egypt which has signed a peace treaty. It has faced mounting unrest on the part of its own Arabic population within its borders and within its occupied territories. This problem has only worsened over the years and no end is in sight. Israel is now in the position where the pressure of world public opinion is going to force it to make concessions. Israel is completely dependent upon military and economic aid from the United States, and therefore it is absolutely compelled to make concessions should US public opinion be sufficiently strong. The concessions we can expect will be that some or all of the presently occupied territories will be given up by the state of Israel and will no longer be occupied by Israel, and will become some form of autonomous Palistinian state. This, however, is a very difficult remedy for Israel. The territories were occupied in the first place because Israel's military position was too precarious previously. The Palistinian state, once it is formed out of the presently occupied territories, will once again constitute a dire threat to the military security of Israel. It is almost inconceivable that this new state will not form a base for new terrorist attacks against Israel. It will also be a promising site for actual full- scale military assaults on Israel. Both the economic and military base of Israel as a nation will be greatly lessened by the loss of these territories. In addition Israel has a considerable sentimental attachment to these areas which it considers to be part of the historical state of Israel dating back to the time of King David. So this is a very difficult solution yet, seemingly an unavoidable solution.

So the immediate problem of Arabic unrest is soluble but the long term problem of the survival of the state of Israel and the ability of Israel to get along with its neighbors, is not only unsolved but likely to become worse. Hence I feel that nobody as yet is working towards a solution that is viable in the long-term. Of course the obvious solution would be for the various Arabs and Arabic factions to become friends with the Israelis as well as to discontinue their own internecine warfare, and for everyone to cooperate and live in peace. Everyone stands to gain from such a visionary approach, nobody stands to lose, and the middle-east could be transformed into an area of prosperity, happiness, and progress. As I believe everyone realizes this is not going to happen. The accumulated ill feeling of many decades of exceedingly bitter and ugly strife, will prevent any such *reprochement*. Even the truce that Israel did arrive at with its neighboring Egypt, remains strained, and faces continuing opposition within Egypt. One must realize as well that Israel has a large Arabic population even within its borders much less within the occupied territories, and Israel therefore cannot escape the problem of dealing with Arabs. This is also a problem in the sense that Arabs do not have the same political rights in Israel that Jews have, and therefore Israel is in some sense a racist state. It is becoming an entity almost like the Republic of South Africa in that the total Arabic population under the control of Israel is now larger than that of the actual Jewish population so we have in effect a minority regime based on racial principles. This is an extreme paradox in the case of Israel because Israel was actually founded for the purpose of creating a refuge from racism. Anti-Semitism exists virtually everywhere in the world, it has had incredibly ghastly consequences as we all know, and Israel was specifically founded to create one country where it would be absolutely guaranteed that anti-Semitism would never become established. Unfortunately the alternative has been the creation of anti-Palistinianism. So the attempt to escape from racism has not been entirely successful. If Israel were to abandon its policies and extend full citizenship privileges to all people residing within its borders regardless of race, Israel would cease to be Israel as we know it. The fundamental policies upon which Israel is based which include freedom of immigration for any Jew around the world wishing to come to Israel and the guarantee against the appearance of any anti-Semitism within Israel, would be fundamentally endangered. On the other hand, the failure of Israel to grant equal rights to Palistinians within its borders represents the failure of Israel to live up to its belief in democracy and human rights for everyone. So we are facing a profound and seemingly insoluble dilemma.

In retrospect the decision of the world Zionist movement in 1948 to create the state in Israel by utilizing the Palistinian territory, then controlled by the British Empire, was a mistake. The fact that a very large indigenous population was adamantly opposed to this idea and has remained opposed to it through all the following decades, was not properly considered by the Zionist movement. They assumed that because they had a prior historical claim they would simply overrule all this dissent. In practice the result has been the creation of one of the most bitter conflicts the world has seen subsequent to World War II. I would like to suggest a different approach to this problem, which I realize will not be taken seriously, but which is nonetheless an interesting approach to consider. We as science

fiction fans are always given to the contemplation of unlikely speculations and strange new ideas, so therefore I think I might be able to get an audience here where I might not receive an audience in other types of publications.

My proposal is basically that the state of Israel be moved in its entirety from its present location in the Middle East and relocated within the United States in the state of New Mexico. I have thought through the many factors involved in this ambitious undertaking, and I feel that all of the various problems can be addressed.

First let us consider the economics of this move. The nation of Saudi Arabia is monstrously wealthy, and literally does not know what to do with its money. It has been spending billions of dollars building huge sports stadia and airports in the middle of the desert, where there is nobody around to make any use of them. It has built magnificent luxury hotels that absolutely nobody, except for the royal family of Saud, can afford to live in. It has immense financial reserves and it is very much interested in helping out in the solution to the various conflicts that plague the Middle East. It seems reasonable to me that the nation of Saudi Arabia should buy all the real estate in Israel. Israel can go on sale as a block for a reasonable price that will not cause any undue financial loss to its present owners, and can be purchased by Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia will find it a desirable investment, and can rent it out to the Palistinians. The Israelis with the money they receive for this sale will be able to purchase new real estate and new possessions in the state of New Mexico. This solves the economic aspects of the relocation.

Then we will consider the political aspect of the relocation. The basic premise of the state of Israel is that any Jew can move there in order to escape from anti-Semitism anywhere in the world. Present US immigration policies would not make that possible. Although Jews can immigrate to the US they do not have any absolute guarantee that they will be allowed to immigrate to the US. What I propose is an amendment to the constitution of the United States, which will stipulate that the state of New Mexico is henceforth officially established as a refuge from anti-Semitism, and that any Jew living anywhere in the world will be allowed to move there for that purpose. Why should the United States undertake such a generous act? Well, the United States is presently spending billions of dollars every year in economic and military aid to Israel. By allowing Israel to move to New Mexico, the United States stands to gain financially, and consequently will be better able to deal with its enormous budget deficit. Furthermore the economy of both the United States, and particularly the state of New Mexico, can only benefit enormously from this project. On the whole the United States has everything to gain and nothing to lose. In terms of foreign policy the United States will cease to present itself as a bitter enemy of the Arabic world, and will probably experience improved political relations in the Middle East in spite of the fact that it will no longer have Israel available as a convenient military base. Israel as a convenient military base has proven to be more of a liability than an asset anyway. If not for the influence of Jewish voters in the United States, the United States would never have committed itself to Israel to the extent that it has. I do not say this, by the way, as any kind of criticism of the Jewish population of the United States. I myself have always supported the policies of the United States with regard to Israel. I am myself Jewish and I definitely am concerned for the welfare of Israelis and Jews everywhere. That is precisely why I am trying to propose a solution which will actually deal with the problems of the Middle East in a more far reaching way than present solutions are likely to do.

There are social consequences of this relocation. If Israel has not gotten along with its neighbors in the Middle East, will it get along with its neighbors in New Mexico? I think that it will. Although there is some degree of anti-Semitism in the United States, it is not that grave a problem. I think that the present inhabitants of the state of New Mexico will all benefit from the economic stimulus provided by this proposed relocation, and I think that they will not give way to a sudden attack of anti-Semitism. The United States has always been Israel's best friend, and I think it will remain a friend of Israel even if Israel happened to be closer at home.

Let us examine the religious aspects of this relocation. In some respects these are the most troublesome because there is no real way to transfer the religious significance of the territory of Israel to New Mexico. However, there is a way of partially compensating for this. By far the most sacred and revered object in Israel is the Wailing Wall. This wall is believed to be the last remnant of the original temple built thousands of years ago by King Solomon. Whether it actually is a remnant of the original temple is not entirely certain but it may well be true and in any event it is believed to be true by religious Jews. In terms of engineering it is obviously feasible to transport this wall to a new location. Even London Bridge has been moved from England to Arizona, and this would be a much less trying engineering task. The wall I would like to see moved to Albuquerque. I believe that it could be the centerpiece of a beautiful plaza which would be known as "The Plaza of the Wall." Because the wailing wall is the central focus of religious feelings in Israel, the relocation of the wall to Albuquerque would make it quite easy for New Mexico to become the new center of the Jewish faith. The previous attachment to the territory of Israel, in spite of its many-thousand-year history, can be superseded by the new attachment to New Mexico.

I believe that Israelis would feel at home in New Mexico, which has a climate rather similar to that of Israel. New Mexico has abundant real estate available unlike the Middle East, it is not crowded by its present occupants, and absolutely no difficulties are foreseen in the arrival of several million immigrants, even though this would be rather startling. Israeli farming techniques are well suited to the present real estate of New Mexico, and New Mexico would bloom as never before under the administrations of Israeli agriculturalists.

We must also consider the logistics of this move. Certainly the sudden relocation of the entire Israeli population from the Middle East to North America, would be seen by the bitter enemies of Israel as the perfect opportunity to launch a final attack and to get revenge. Therefore this operation would require U.N. supervision and a massive military presence to discourage any such last minute attack. However, the U.N. has been struggling in the Middle East for many decades, and I think it would be more than happy to make this final effort in order to actually bring an end to this conflict. In fact this would probably go down in history as the most useful thing ever done by the U.N.

The entire region that Israel presently occupies—both its territory and its annexed regions—could become a Palistinian state. This does not guarantee that peace would arrive in the Middle East because there are still a variety of Arabic factions that are engaging in conflicts in Lebanon, and we have the continuing war between Iran and Iraq. However the removal of the conflict between Israel and its Arabic neighbors would be an extremely promising beginning which I think would make possible the resolution of other con-

See TORONTO, page 57

Of Robots and Worms

Linkages
by Pat Mathews

Isaac Asimov's *Robots And Empire* ties together two of his best-selling series, each with its own universe and setting, as Frank Herbert's *Chapterhouse: Dune* and its predecessor *Heretics of Dune* tied together the world of Muad'dib with the world of Jorj McKie of the Bureau of Sabotage. In each case, space-going humanity has been boxed into a set of worlds it considered to be the whole of human space, and has stayed there for centuries; now it is time to move on.

In *Chapterhouse: Dune*, the move has taken place sometime before; now various peoples from the Scatterings are making their way back into the Old Empire for one reason or another—largely for loot. The move is led by the gangster empire of the Honored Matres, formed from a twisted union of fugitive Imperial soldiers, the Fish Speakers, and Bene Gesserit Reverend Mothers with their backs to the wall. The sole weapons of the Honored Matres are a highly intensified form of sexual bonding, and the hysterical, random violence of street thugs. The original Bene Gesserit, who have held the post-Imperial culture together ever since the fall of the God Emperor, are under the heaviest attack.

On Chapterhouse, headquarters of the beleagured order, are the free people who will battle once the fighting is over: Duncan Idaho; the captive, Honored Matre Murbella; and the former desert waif Sheeana, now a reserved and solitary Reverend Mother in charge of overseeing the desertification of Chapterhouse and the breeding of the worms. Also on Chapterhouse is the Bene Tleilax's Scytale, but he is powerless for all his plotting. Overseeing Duncan's fate in some mysterious way are two old people, apparently benevolent elderly farmers—even as Papa and Mama Plver were on Trantor when Arkady Darrell was fleeing the Second Foundation. How Herbert resolves this (to the extent that he does) is what forms the book. It would be interesting, far in the future, to watch the Bureau of Sabotage and the Bene Gesserit take on each other.

Isaac Asimov's *Robots and Empire* works on a much shorter time scale, but the theme is the same. Here the Scatterings has just begun, with Earth's colonization of several planets their predecessors, the Spacers, have done nothing but complain and worry about it. The Settlers, as they are called, have rejected Spacer longevity and robots as counterproductive, though they are as automated as they can afford to be. Meanwhile the citizens of Solaria have suddenly vanished, leaving behind only robots who, contrary to the First Law, are mounting a no-quarter defense of the abandoned world. And an Auroran roboticist, once humiliated by an earthman, is planning a massive act of sabotage that will make Old Earth uninhabitable. Asimov fans will remember *Pebble in the Sky*, one of the earliest Galactic Empire novels, in which Earth is an empoverished fringe planet under draconian laws and regulations, despised by the Empire and considered contaminated. Spacer sabotage, *Robots and Empire* suggests; but another factor is added—a robot who thinks like a human, and another wired for empathy. Can they stop the clock, and the ensuing war, in time? To be able to stop any plot, or even to function as detectives at all, which they do admirably, R. Daneel and R. Giskard must tackle an ethical question robots are not supposed to be capable of considering without severe brain damage: what, if anything, overrides the First Law? And does a First Law override imply that old collectivist slogans that the good of many outweighs the good of the one? If so, are human lives to be weighed mathematically, by sheer numbers? Difficult questions for born humans! And one of the best parts of the book.

David Heath, Jr.

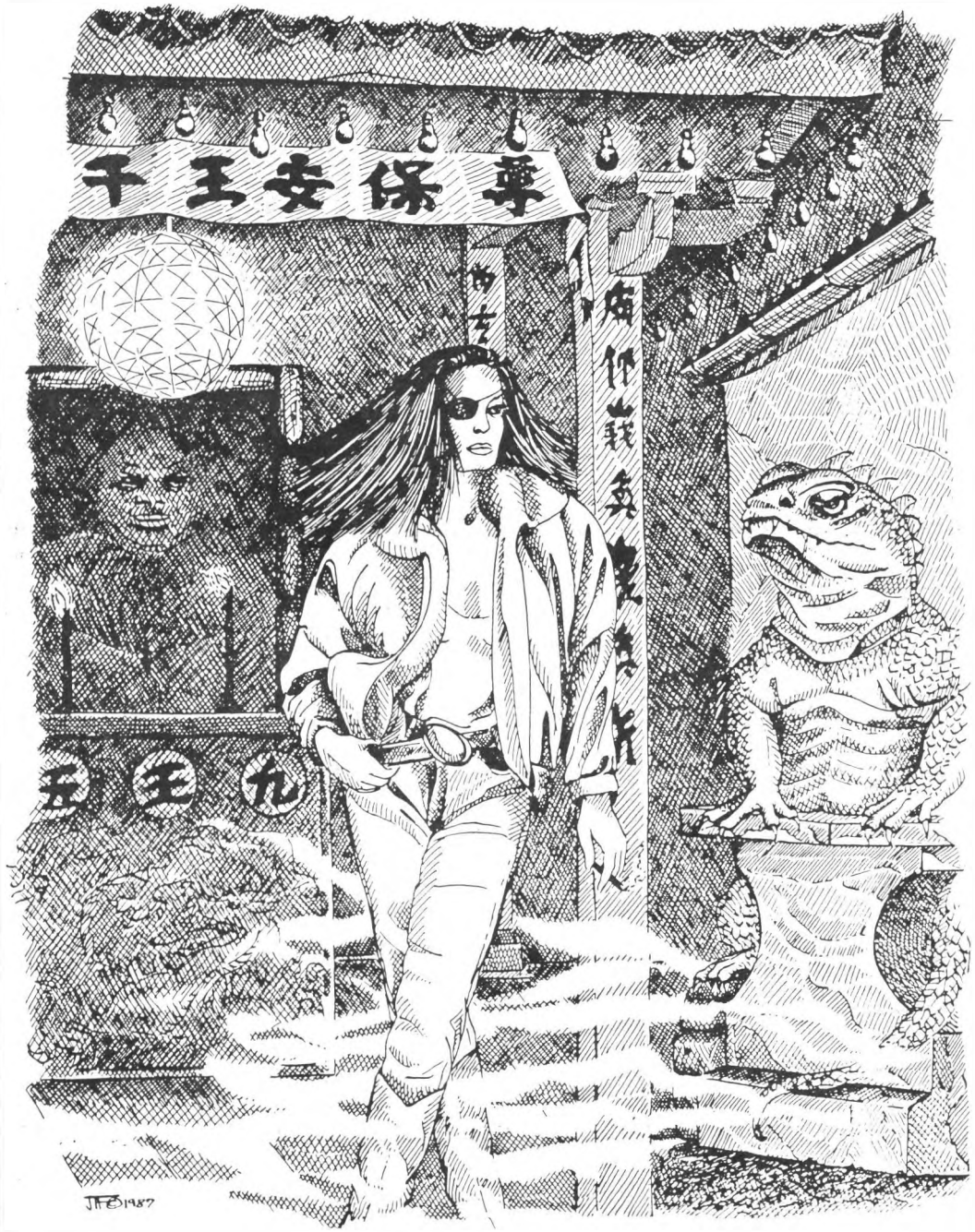
The second best part is Gladia's story; a surprise, since Asimov often seems as much at home with the opposite gender as his own Dr. Calvin was. He still has trouble handling powerful women; Basilia, one of the villains, sounds like the Spider Queen in a B movie. But Gladia is a living, admirable human being in this story, and not only that, but a familiar one. Living a comfortable, mildly interesting, and basically pointless existence on Aurora, Gladia is urged, as the only Solarian left, to see what has happened. Her patriotic duty is not quite enough to move her from the hammock—ties of friendship and kinship are; in the course of the novel she discovers the danger to her worlds from war, her own effectiveness as a peace advocate, and the pleasure of doing something about it. Hers is a story familiar to those who remember the Mothers for Peace many years ago; perhaps that's why Asimov did such a good job with the characterization. The ending is a surprise, and as with Herbert's novel, leaves the way open for as many sequels as either author or their fans care to write.

Now, after the disappointments of *Foundation's Edge* and *Robots of Dawn*, and above all, *God Emperor of Dune*, it's a pleasure to see these two ongoing sagas pick up again.

Or is it that humanity's breaking out of a box is simply a story it's a pleasure to read—and to write?✹

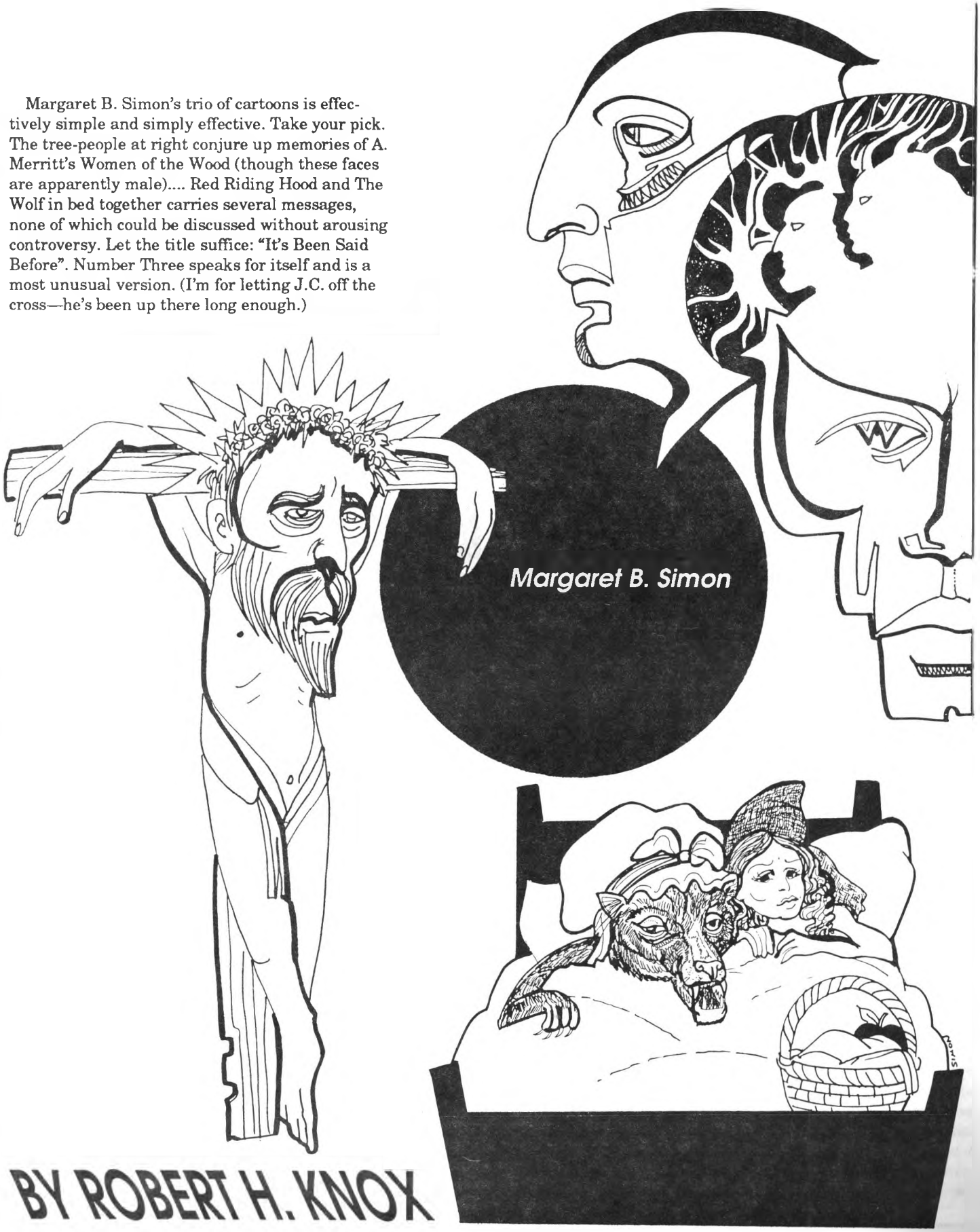
JESTAH 3...

It's perhaps worth re-noting that one can often tell by examining a piece of artwork whether the artist is male or female. While the male artist generally emphasizes the gosh-wow adventure of it all, the female artist's work is often of an ethereal or even mystical quality in both technique and subject matter. Judith A. Holman's offering (below) could well serve as an illo for a pulpish tale of Oriental opium dens and the like, and has an atmospheric ambiguity: both the dragon and the staring background figure could be either organism or artifact. The distinction is probably best left unknown to the admirer. We don't *need* to know everything, do we?



Judith A. Holman

Margaret B. Simon's trio of cartoons is effectively simple and simply effective. Take your pick. The tree-people at right conjure up memories of A. Merritt's Women of the Wood (though these faces are apparently male).... Red Riding Hood and The Wolf in bed together carries several messages, none of which could be discussed without arousing controversy. Let the title suffice: "It's Been Said Before". Number Three speaks for itself and is a most unusual version. (I'm for letting J.C. off the cross—he's been up there long enough.)



BY ROBERT H. KNOX

WORDLY GOODS

by Piers Anthony

Sylvia Hunnewell

Earlier this year a correspondent asked me to participate in a letter-writing appeal sponsored by Amnesty International, to try to prevail upon despotic regimes in Africa, Latin America, and Europe to free specific prisoners of conscience. I declined, and I believe my acquaintance with that correspondent suffered as a result. She cared about the injustice in the world, and sought to remedy it, while it appeared that I did not.

I believe this matter is worth exploring. Am I truly indifferent to the evils of the world, so that I will not stir myself to write even one letter of appeal? After all, I answer a hundred fan letters a month, twelve hundred a year; it isn't as though I don't know how! I do it because I care for the feelings of my readership. Do I not care for the feelings of those wrongfully imprisoned? No, I have an abiding concern for just such evils; my father was once in a similar prison in Spain, and only the immediate effort of my mother, and the Friends' Service Committee got him free, on condition that he leave the country. This is one reason I am in America, for it was here that my family came when this occurred in 1940.

Do I distrust Amnesty International? Hardly; I am on its mailing list, and have high regard for its efforts. It is represented in one of my science fiction novels as *Amnesty Interplanetary*. I was raised as a Quaker (The Religious Society of Friends), so have been well exposed to the philosophy of pacifism and good works. My family was in Spain as part of the Quaker effort to feed the children who were the victims of the Spanish Civil War. I am now neither a Quaker nor a pacifist, but my philosophy of life is strongly influenced by both. I call myself a liberal, in the sense that I do care about the welfare of people, both individually and collectively. Indeed, I care about all life on Earth, and life elsewhere in the universe.

Thus it seems a mystery why I should turn down such a request. I mean, if a committed liberal won't write a letter in support of decency, who else will? Let me explain. I said I am not a pacifist. This is in part because of my experience in childhood as the smallest boy of my age, thrust into a series of badly managed schools. I learned about bullies the hard way. In the absence or inattention of adults, it is the bully who runs the schoolyard, and he is merciless. The only way to get along with him is to stay on his good side; never oppose him. I wasn't as smart then as I am now, so I got my knocks in the process of my education about life. I survived, but marked by what some might call a pathological hatred of bullies.

Despotic regimes are nothing but bullies in bigger yards. They don't merely hit those who oppose them; they imprison them, torture them, and kill them. And I'll be damned if I'll suck up to a despot in the faint hope that he will then release a prisoner he should never have arrested in the first place. Chances are he will never see my letter, and if he does it won't change his mind, and if it does affect him, it may well be for the worse. I mean, if this hemorrhoid arrests a man merely for speaking out in defense of liberty, why the hell should he be moved by my plea for the same? The bully does not respect those who cater to him; he thrives on their support. As long as he receives that support, he will never change. Only superior force will move him: this is the lesson of the schoolyard. If I need to take effective action against a despot, I feel more inclined to hire an assassin to take him out. He wouldn't ignore that!

Of course I would not do that; my conscience, ironically, prevents me. We can not eliminate brutality by becoming brutal ourselves. Many of those despots came to power on waves of revolution, promising to ameliorate the evils of the past. But they had to use such brutality in winning that they became as bad as those they replaced. The poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge said it well, as he considered the French Revolution:

The Sensual and the Dark rebel in vain,
Slaves by their own compulsion! In mad game
They burst their manacles and wear the name
Of freedom, graven on a heavier chain!

I take warning from that. The good we try to do does not always turn out as we anticipate. I am not an expert on this subject, so may be in error, but the only revolution I know of that actually made things better for the people it served was the American Revolution—and that seems to have been a fairly near thing. Our present culture is rife with corruption and insensitivity; we seem to be dedicated less to achievement, enlightenment, and understanding than to power, money, and immediate pleasure. Advertising is ubiquitous, appealing not to the improvement of character but to the instant gratification of bodily urges. Our greatest preoccupations are sex and obesity, while there is over-population and starvation in Africa. Highly addictive and destructive drugs are more popular than good mental and physical health; crime, racism, and the abuse of women and children are rampant, while few seem to have any prop-er concept of honor. Weapons are plentiful, and the killing rate is horrendous, while the very term *love* has become a mere euphemism for sex. When I think of writing a letter to address one wrong, I find myself overwhelmed by the magnitude of the wrongness that needs addressing, and I hesitate even to start. Yet we do seem to be one of the more enlightened societies of the world, and there is much good that can be counted. Perhaps the ugly excesses are the price we must pay for the freedom and awareness we have been granted.

I think also of the illusion of freedom. We may have less than we suppose. I remember Auden's comment: "And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom." I sometimes wonder whether we in the ghetto of our genre are almost convinced of our freedom, its name graven on a heavier chain. Yet it has also been said that imagined experience is real experience, so perhaps we do have it. I do not disparage imagination!

Let me get down to the basics. Let me remind you of the power of the Word.

You may think I am going to quote from the Bible. Yes, from the Gospel according to John. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I believe it. I believe in the power of the Word. For the Word made man in the beginning, and the Word makes man now. For the Word is the basic unit of Language, and Language is the tool that lifted the ape-like species of hominid into the modern species of man. It is the Word that caused man's brain to balloon into one of the more remarkable and powerful instruments of our universe. The Word may not

fully define man, or fully distinguish him from the animals, but it is the basic unit of verbal symbolism. I believe it is man's use of symbolism, called Art, in its many major expressions and its infinite varieties, that does that. But the Word is the device that brought man power. If man is made in the likeness of God, and God is all-powerful, then the Word is indeed God.

Words fascinate me. I have a little list of words that dictionaries find difficult, such as *neoteny* or *ouroboros*—that's the great serpent who circles the world with its tail in its mouth; it's amazing that dictionaries should miss such a significant word! —or *googolplex*—my new Random House Dictionary lists that one, but with the wrong definition.

A single Word has evocative power. Take the word *Xanadu*—who here does not thrill to the memory of Coleridge's great unfinished poem, and share my distress that the nefarious "person from Porlock" prevented its conclusion? I was introduced to Xanadu through a story in a cheap science fiction magazine, and it led me to a minor study of Coleridge and his work, and another study of Kublai Khan and the Mongols, culminating in my novel *Steppe*. Today I am perhaps best known for my Xanth fantasy series, and I suspect my affinity for the name Xanth derives from the similarity to Xanadu. The power of a word—Coleridge reached across generations and touched me with his word, and my life responded.

There are other evocative words. *Nineveh*—remember Rudyard Kipling's "Recessional"?

Far-called, our navies melt away;
On dune and headland sinks the fire:
Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

And the refrain:

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

I long for Nineveh, by which I mean the magic of the faraway, and my own writing reflects this. But here in our genre we have champions too. *Dorsai*—who here has not felt the literary hand of Gordon Dickson close about his heart and squeeze a bit of blood from it? *Hobbit*—what an era that word of Tolkien's ushered in! *The Dying Earth*—with those three little words Jack Vance transported my fancy, and he never let it go. Today it is *Lyonesse*, and the master has not lost his touch. With five words Theodore Sturgeon did magic for me, and they weren't even his words; they were quoted from the wailing of a wronged girl, and he used them for the title of a story: "And My Fear Is Great". And one that may have more meaning for me than for others: *Equalizer*. No, I am not referring to a television show! With the title of his story "The Equalizer", Jack Williamson brought me into the realm of modern science fiction, and he held me there with his novel *...And Searching Mind*. Oh, the power of those words! If there is one thing I am glad of, it is that I have this chance to thank him in person today for bringing my searching mind into this realm of wonder. My gratitude to you, Jack Williamson.

But that is only a tiny part of the story of the Word. I believe that the Word has truly shaped modern man. Picture man after his discovery of the use of fire. Fire is a phenomenal physical tool, and control of it magnified man's competitive position. It made him a superior hunter, for he could set fire to a field and herd the animals of that field into his ambush, and he could use it to cook and cure the flesh of those animals. It protected him at night, for other animals feared it, and it kept him warm. It gave him light in the darkness. But he was still only an animal with a marvelous tool.

Picture man in the cold winter, using a central fire to make himself more comfortable. He might assemble in some sheltered place, seated around the blaze, feeding it wood to maintain it through the night, joying in its wonderful heat. Men, women, and children, in that great bright circle, watching the flames leap up, listening to the faggots pop. Sitting there for hours, staring into the bright embers, fascinated. We retain that fascination today. We love bonfires, and we build fireplaces into our houses though we have far more efficient ways to heat them. We remain in love with fire and all its works; we set off fireworks for celebrations, we cleave to firearms, we drink firewater. No pun there; I believe that burning drink reminds us of the heat of the fire. Fire is structured into our genes; no one has to teach us this fascination. Children play with fire despite the objections of their parents.

But think again of that circle. The body is safe and comfortable, but what of the mind? Even as an animal, man was pretty smart. He had to be, to manage fire effectively. Man is a hunter, and an explorer; the unknown both frightens and intrigues him, and he seeks it constantly. How could he sit virtually motionless for prolonged periods, doing nothing, without becoming impatient?

Man may have developed the Word as an aid to hunting. "Mog go north; Mig go south. Close on herd. When me cry 'Now!' jump at herd. Drive it to ambush." That sort of thing would have made a big difference. It made coordinated action possible, without direct contact. Improved vocabulary and syntax would have led to improved success. The Word was like the fire, an aid to survival.

But in the long dull sieges by the fire, the Word became an end it itself. A new application was discovered: entertainment. Thus began the era of the story, and that was to become perhaps the major instrument of man's further advancement. For the story opened up in controlled fashion the magnificent realm of imagination. Of fiction. The Tale became the thing, and over the generations it was embellished, becoming ever more intricate. The language advanced to accommodate it, for it requires more sophisticated techniques of communication to describe what might have been, instead of merely what is. Superior syntax was developed, and tenses, and pronouns, facilitating the marvel of the Tale. The imagination was stimulated to ever farther reaches, peopling the very stars with human identities. Thus the mythologies of the constellations.

We share that fascination of the Tale today, as with the fire. Was there ever a greater rapture than a truly evocative story? Technology has changed its mode of presentation, so that now we sit around a lighted box—television—instead of a fire, but the essence is the same. We are creatures of imagination, and we cannot get enough of it. We are creatures of the Word, despite the picture tube; we can enjoy the radio more easily than the TV with the sound turned off. I understand that those who have experienced both blindness and deafness say that the loss of hearing is worse than the loss of sight. We still do need the Word, for it remains the major avenue to our mind.

Let me diverge for a moment to touch on the light side of this. Even a single word can have enormous impact, even when undesired. I use a broad definition of Word;

it is any meaningful sound, not confined to the dictionary. For example, the bell on a bicycle is a Word: it says "Look out, I'm coming up behind you!" I read of the experience of a bicyclist who bought a new freon horn, which I understand is a gas-powered horn, very loud. He wanted to test it, so he tooled his bike up behind a patrol car that was just coming to a stop at a red light, and he pushed the button. That honk goosed that police car right through the red light and across the intersection. I don't think he used the horn much after that, but that episode had always struck me as very funny, for no proper reason. Yet it does illustrate the power of the Word in a particular situation.

Another example is similarly mischievous, in a different way. This is a dirty joke, so I will modify the key word slightly for the sake of propriety, trusting that the point remains clear to those who have no knowledge of the original word. An ugly, burly trucker entered a roadside café and sat at a table. The young and pretty waitress approached and inquired what he would like. The trucker replied "Gimme a cuppa coffee and a fudging donut." The waitress, shocked, fled to the manager, and the manager called the police, and the trucker in due course found himself before the judge. The judge inquired sternly what he had to say for himself before sentencing, and the trucker replied as follows: "Your honor, it was a fudging bad day right from the start. The fudging alarm didn't go off, so I was late getting started, and I didn't have any fudging time to eat breakfast, and the fudging rig was balky. I was hardly out on the fudging road before pow! I got a fudging flat tire. I got all messed up changing the fudging thing and had to change my fudging shirt. On top of that the fudging traffic was slow, and my fudging schedule was down the fudging drain. So I sez to myself, what the fudging heck, and I decide to take a fudging break. Then I see this nice fudging little café, so I pull the fudging rig over and park in the fudging lot and haul my fudging posterior out and I walk in the fudging door and take a fudging table. This real cute fudging waitress sashays over and asks what'll I fudging have, and I say 'Gimme a cuppa coffee and a donut.'" Well, at that point the waitress jumped up and yelled "That's a fudging lie!" and there was an uproar. The judge banged his gavel and shouted "Quiet! Quiet, or I'll clear the fudging courtroom!"

Ah, the power of a word, even a bad word! Every word is an individual, and has its own authenticity. When I was researching on the Gypsies, I encountered this commentary on words: "Words, like people, struggle and fight before they are eliminated. Each word of a language has its own life, which it defends to the utmost. No foreign word is accepted willingly into the body of any language. It either forces itself into a place that has been left vacant, or it has to fight its way through and destroy another word in the language it attempts to invade. Two languages, opposed to one another, are like two inimical armies . . ." Indeed, when I researched the world of the Arabian Nights I learned that people cling more tenaciously to their language than they do to their religion or their culture. In fact Jack Vance's novel *The Languages of Pao* presented the thesis that the very nature of a culture is defined by its language. A warlike language makes a warlike culture, and a language of peace makes a peaceful one. I often wonder to what extent that is true. Certainly language reflects the nature of a culture. In the old days there were many words describing the things relating to horses; now there are many relating to cars. But language is mainly an organized system of words. If we are defined by our language, then we are defined by the Word.

There can also be power in a word not spoken. When I was in my early teens I was invited to go on a several-day camping trip with the family of a friend. Part of the activity was swimming. When I changed to my bathing trunks I discovered to my chagrin that a moth had made a little hole in the front. I had no other trunks along, so had to wear these anyway. It was okay. At one point I had to pass through a gate where several girls were standing. I didn't want that hole to embarrass me, so I sidled through more or less facing away, so that the hole did not show. Later that day my friend approached me and lent me an extra pair of his trunks. That was all that was said about the matter. But when I got home and unpacked my own trunks I discovered that while there was one small hole in the front, I had overlooked several large holes in the rear. I remembered sidling through that gate before those girls, unwittingly displaying my backside. Oh, my! One word, in time, could have spared me a rather literal embarrassment.

That can be our way in life, too. We are sometimes so concerned with public image that we lose sight of private values. We think that it's what's up front that counts, though others may have quite a different impression when viewing us from another angle. Communication—if we could just be warned of what we are missing, in time to handle it, how much better our lives might be! We do have that power, in the Word, if we choose to exercise it appropriately.

I have another example, more serious. My daughter is dyslexic; this is a condition in which the brain tends to confuse what the eye sees, perhaps reversing images, so that a word like *bad* may be read as *dab* and words get transposed in written sentences. It can be a real problem for a beginning reader; indeed, when I saw what my daughter went through, I wondered whether this was the key to the reason I spent three years in first grade myself, trying to learn to read. This is a case where verbal communication is necessary to make up for a problem in written communication. Here is the story I read about one man's experience in this regard.

The father came in to see the doctor about his under-achieving son. The doctor had ascertained that the boy was dyslexic, but he had trouble getting through to the father, who thought the boy was merely perverse. Finally the doctor tried another approach: he asked the man to copy a simple picture in a box which reversed the apparent motions of his hand. The man started with a line, but in a moment went in the wrong direction. "Not that way, stupid," the doctor said. The man tried again, and again went wrong, his reflexes fouled up by the reversal. "Didn't you listen?" the doctor snapped, standing over him. "It goes right, not left! Any idiot can see that!" The man, growing heated, tried again—and once again went wrong. "What the hell is the matter with you?" the doctor demanded. "I give you a simple task, and you are deliberately messing it up!" At this point the man had had enough. He leaped to his feet, ready to punch out the doctor. But the doctor stood his ground. "That's what you are doing to your son," he said. And the man, understanding at last, sat down again and wept.

There is an even more serious example of the interaction of a concept with education, that strikes at one of the roots of our nature. This was an experiment in one class in one school. The teacher explained that those children who had blue eyes were Favored, while those who had brown eyes were Unfavored. Within fifteen minutes the Favored were doing better, and the Unfavored were doing worse. This showed up in their actions and in written tests; attitudes were radically changed. Next day the teacher reversed it, and the brown-eyes were Favored. Now the pattern repeated, with the good students of the prior day messing up, and the bad ones excelling. It was dramatic and even awesome, the effect of this single designation.

But more significant was what followed. The experiment had lasted only two days, but thereafter those children were subtly different from others. They had no truck with racism or sexism or any superficial basis for discrimination. New teachers would be struck by the oddness of particular students—until advised that they had been in that class. Even years later, this difference remained; it appears that a lifelong change had been made in the attitude of those particular students.

The experiment was repeated, becoming a regular thing in that one class each year, exposing new students to the revelation of blue eyes/brown eyes. And how did the parents react? A number of them phoned the Principal, angrily demanding that he keep their children out of "that nigger-loving class".

What an indictment—not of the class, but of those bigoted parents. Yet our society is rife with this. What an indictment of our society! Just a few innocent-seeming words show the way of it: blue eyes good, brown eyes bad. Remember Orwell's novel *Animal Farm*? Four legs good, two legs baaad! White skin good, brown skin bad. Male good, female bad. This kind of thinking is everywhere, to our abiding shame.

And here perhaps is an answer to the question of whether to write to despots in an effort to free prisoners. For those who choose to do that, I agree that it is a worthy pursuit. But political prisoners are only one symptom of a deeper human malaise, and charity can begin much closer to home. We have beams to get out of our own eyes before we see to the splinters on other eyes. We have prisoners of conscience in our own society; they are just not necessarily behind bars. We, as guardians of the Word, have words to speak to ourselves.

So I try to use the talent that I have with the Word to address in my fashion the causes of the evils of our times, rather than the symptoms. Rather than splash my cup of water on the fringe of the forest fire, I choose to put my effort toward the abolition of the thoughtlessness that leads to such fires. Rather than deal with the dyslexic son, I choose to deal with the ignorance of the father. Prevention is less dramatic than the freeing of a prisoner, but far more effective in the long term than spot appeals. I hope for a day when there will be no more prisoners of conscience, not because they have all been freed, but because they have never been imprisoned.

It is education we need—of the kind shown by the blue-eyes/brown-eyes syndrome. I believe that this can be accomplished more readily through fiction than through fact. The reader of fiction is more receptive; he is turned on, enjoying himself, suspending his prejudices along with his disbelief, rapt in the realm of wonder. To an extent he assimilates the values of the Tale—and I try to make these values wholesome. Honor, integrity, compassion, respect for nature, open-mindedness—critics evidently find such elements in my fiction simplistic, but I believe in them, and my fan mail tells me that an impact is being made on young minds. I may never know what good such concepts accomplish; any long-term effort they may have is intangible. But this is my small way of trying to improve my world. To break the chains—lest we forget.

Which brings me to the abuse of the Word: censorship. Censorship of any kind is the work of Satan. It is the suppression of the Word, for the agents of Satan well appreciate the power of the Word. The first thing we see in despotic regimes is suppression of the press, of free speech, and free thought. They fear the power of the true Word more than anything else, and indeed the truth would often overwhelm them. Satan loves secrecy, for in that darkness the infernal flowers of ignorance and corruption flourish.

But even in our own relatively open society, the forces of censorship are at work. Literary classics are being taken off library shelves; textbooks are being banned. Even low-level entertainment is subject to attack; there may be open crime in the streets, but the police are intent on raiding the stores that sell pornography. As far as I know, there is no credible evidence that sexual literature is harmful to anyone, though a case might be made against violent literature. Yet what is censored can be instructive: violence in the media is widely tolerated, so that a child may see thousands of realistic killings on television before reaching school age. But sex is not, despite our fascination with it; it is largely forbidden on public airways. This suggests that it is all right to watch a man killing a woman, but not all right to watch him making love with her. What message is that for our children? That women are inherently evil? If *love* is a euphemism for *sex*, and sex is condemned, what then of love? If what we see influences how we act, no wonder there is so much abuse!

The poet Sidney Lanier commented savagely on the double standard pertaining to sex and women in "The Symphony":

Shall woman scorch for a single sin
That her betrayer may revel in,
And she be burnt, and he but grin
When that the flames begin
Fair Lady?

I think the root of this attitude is the question of ends and means. Righteous folk assume that the ends justify the means. This is an insidious and flawed concept, and it is one of the recurring themes of my fiction: that the ends do not justify the means. This was expressed most effectively by my collaborator in the Jason Stryker martial arts series of novels, Roberto Fuentes. He had been an anti-Castro guerrilla, fighting for what he believed to be a good cause. For example, he bombed buildings, trying to catch Castro in one so that he would be killed; he felt that the destruction and bloodshed wrought by this was justified in the effort to rid his nation of a Communist dictator. He discovered that it was fun bombing buildings; in fact the sight of a blast going off gave him an almost sexual thrill. Thus he found himself setting off explosions for less noble reasons. The means, he explained, had become the ends. That's worth thinking about: the means become the ends. Thus the end of upgrading our social standards becomes the forging of chains, and the burning of women. I wonder whether literary critics who set out to make way for new and superior fiction by blasting the old fiction are not corrupted by a similar process. Can it be that they are in effect bombing buildings—because they like setting off bombs? That they have forgotten the ends, in the sinister delight of the means?

As a purveyor of fantasy, let me offer my own rationale for its success. You see, I do a wide range of types of writing within the genre, from quite serious to quite frivolous. The same writing skill goes into everything I do. Why, then, is my least consequential work my most successful? Why the inverse ratio between quality and sales? I submit that it is not that my readers are boors, but that this is a symptom of the bell-shaped curve of intelli-

gence. That is, the scores of intelligence tests when charted suggest the shape of a double bell: one rising from the central line, the other descending from it, upside down, the mirror image of the first. The great majority of human beings are in the central range; the farther we go from that center in either direction, the fewer people there are. Thus it stands to reason that that fiction will be most successful which appeals to the center, where the people are. My fantasy appeals to that center, while my science fiction appeals to the more rarefied region above the center, and so my fantasy sells better. The key is not in the merit of the fiction, however that may be defined, but in the market.

The Word is actually a symbol, and it may have been the magic of symbolism that brought about another remarkable breakthrough. Man's brain seems to have more capacity than man actually needs for his operations; some believe that it is about ten times as powerful as required. Why should this be? Nature does not seem to work that way; she developed the brain to be adequate to the tasks to which it was set. Early man had to process enormous amounts of information, and this required a great amount of gray matter, properly organized. Then this brain reached the threshold at which the conscious manipulation of symbols became feasible—and the inherent versatility of symbolism made ten times as much possible. Thus the brain was abruptly overstrength, and man is benefiting from this. A word stands for a person or a thing or a notion; proper integration of words as language does not add to the brain's ability, it multiplies it. Take for example the relation of addition to multiplication in mathematics: what is an unwieldy problem in addition can be a simple one in multiplication.

Another example is the written word. All of man's accumulating knowledge and understanding had to be retained in man's brain and passed along verbally, and as that knowledge accumulated, the brain had to expand to accommodate it. That required quite a brain! But when the Word was reduced to the written symbol, and the entire language translated to that permanent form, man's capacity increased again. Now all the wisdom of the ages could be stored; it was no longer necessary to remember or rediscover it each generation. A person merely had to learn the science of reading, and everything was available to him. This brought about a phenomenal revolution of information, and the development of what we call civilization. Some primitive human societies still exist today; the major thing that distinguishes the advanced ones from them seems to be literacy. An advanced society is virtually by definition literate. An illiterate society cannot build nuclear power plants or space ships. Thus, again, the power of symbolism enhanced the power of the brain: the symbol of the Word assuming written form.

There is a story I like that relates to the power of the written word. Back during one of the wars there was a big gun, and it was necessary that the gunsight be operated properly, or the shell would miss the target. But nobody could figure out how to operate the thing. The manufacturer understood it, of course, but the problem was with the servicemen who actually used it. There was a complex manual that stymied them. So the service hired a professional writer, for a huge fee, to make the instructions intelligible. The writer came and puttered around a bit, talked to a few servicemen, looked at the manual, had a fling with the local girls, then wrote a single sentence and posted it on the gun. He collected his fee and went home.

Now there may be those who feel the writer was overpaid, considering that he made a great deal of money for a very simple service that any other writer of his caliber could have done as readily. But consider this also: he wrote that sentence thirty years ago. From that day to this, not one serviceman has had any trouble with that gunsight.

There is another potential of the Word that profoundly affects our activities. Because the Word is a representation of something, rather than the actuality, it is possible for it to be true or false. The True Word has immense potential for benefit, as we have seen, while the False Word has similar potential for mischief. Thus we consider the True Word to be good, and the False Word to be evil. There are God and Satan: the Ultimate Truth and the Ultimate Falsity. We came into the possession of both aspects, and all the shades between, when we achieved the Word. Indeed, man's good and man's evil on Earth have been magnified since he learned to use the power of the Word. Deeply seated aspects of man's nature have been illuminated by this dichotomy: the truth is admirable, while the lie is an abomination. A written truth is a great thing, while a written lie may be libel, and actionable in court.

One thing I have noticed about accuracy in writing. Theoretically it is the journalist who deals in facts, while the fiction writer deals in imagination. But, speaking as one who has been misrepresented many times in print, I conclude that the most direct distinction between the journalist and the fictionist is that the fiction writer gets his facts straight.

But there is an anomaly that particularly concerns us. The True Word may not necessarily do good, and the False Word may not necessarily do evil. The True Word may be misleading or incomprehensible, while the False Word can be fair indeed. Thus we return to fiction, for this is the False Word extended to assume the likeness of fact. How can we justify the telling or writing of words we know to be false? What good can come of this?

A good deal of good! How truly it has been said that man does not live by bread alone. Man's mind needs food as well as his body, and the most tasty mental food is that crafted to appeal to his desires. Consider the Arabian Nights: a king was so disenchanted by the duplicity of women that he arranged to marry a woman and spend only a single night with her; in the morning she was executed, so that she would have no chance to be unfaithful to him. Next night, a new wife—and a new execution. This continued until he encountered one remarkable woman who, having granted him his sexual desire, then proceeded to tell him a Tale. It was a fascinating story of adventure and magic, but she was unable to complete it that night, so the King, knowing that if he had her killed he would never hear the conclusion, spared her for a day. The following night she again satisfied his physical interest, then again appealed to his mental interest by continuing with the story. This went on for a thousand nights and a night, one story following another without pause, so that the king was never able to dispatch her. By that time she had borne him more than one child, and was forgiven; there were no more killings of women. Now this is itself a story, but it documents the compelling nature of fiction. Fiction can be more intelligible and appealing than fact. Sex is great, but it can be satisfied briefly; a good story, in contrast, can hold us in thrall indefinitely. Can we call this evil? Shall Scheherazade burn for that?

What we do is accept the fact that the story is not true; then we pretend that we

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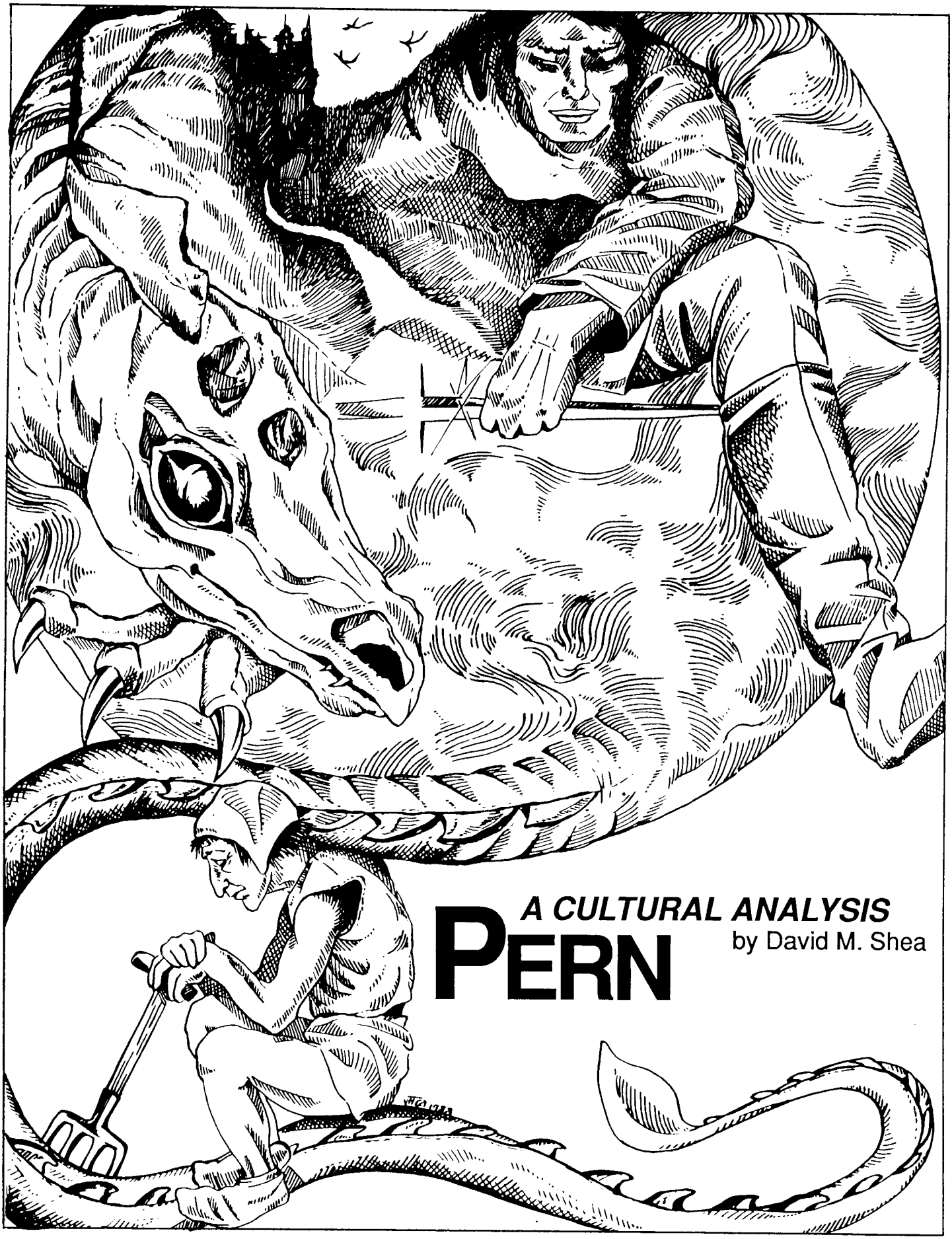


PERN

A CULTURAL ANALYSIS

by David M. Shea

Judith A. Holman

There's an anecdote, probably apocryphal, to the effect that Anne McCaffrey was once asked why the people of Pern seem to have no religion, and she responded that she couldn't see burdening them with something they didn't need. It is true that they don't have a religion in the modern Judeo-Christian sense, with a Supreme Being, personal immortality, and so forth. This is not to say, however, that they don't have something at least analogous. One suspects that religion, or at least mysticism, is an unavoidable human vice.

Filling the part of tutelary beings—guardian angels, if you will, greater than human if less than supernatural (a sharp delineation between the divine and the mundane is a recent and monotheistic invention; see the Greek gods' many fruitful affairs with mortals)—are the dragons. And conspicuous in the role of teachers, arbiters of morality, propagators of social rectitude, defenders of the faith—in short, the place occupied in European history by the Christian church—we find the Harpers' Guild. In this respect, a study of Pernese culture may prove interesting.

Some limited speculation on the origins of the Pern colony may be made from the available evidence, though this is only speculative. The colonists are clearly a Caucasian people, though not of any immediately identifiable homogeneous ethnic stock; if there are any non-whites in the original group, their contributions to the genetic pool has been diluted to the point of being unnoticeable. The only direct clue to their linguistic origin is a plaque found by F'lar in the lost corridors—though from the fact that any part of it is recognizable, we may deduce that the colonists' original common language has not mutated too far. The only specific clues are the Greek words *eureka* ("I have found it", the remark attributed to Archimedes on discovering a reliable method of determining the purity of gold); and *mycorrhiza* (from words meaning "fungus" and "root", denoting a parasitical fungal growth seen on the roots of certain plants—presumably in reference to the nature of Thread). All this actually tells us is that the colonists were educated people, but it does hint strongly to a Western European/North American origin—which of course is hardly surprising.

Of course, they may have been Soviets for all we know, though it does not seem probable. Whatever form of government may have been attempted in the original southern colony, it probably collapsed rather quickly in the face of disaster. The destruction of the southern continent colony may also account for some of the odd gaps in the imported ecology, as well: horses ("runner beasts") and cattle ("herd beasts") survived, but our oldest and dearest domestic animals, dogs and cats, are inexplicably absent; hence the obsessive desire for fire lizards as pets. (The evidence of imported plants is sketchy; a clue like "breadfruit" really doesn't give one much to work with.) In the confusion of the move to the north, threatened by volcanism and Threadfall, the colonists of Pern seem to have evolved rather quickly the basis of their present culture.

It is a dangerous oversimplification to say that Pern is a feudal society. The closest we can say is that Pern shares certain elements that we would call, historically, a feudal culture. Power is divided into three major blocks, in an uneasy balance.

The first center of power is with the Lord Holders. The Lord of each Hold (city-state, barony) seems to have pretty much absolute authority within his own territory. He has at least the low justice, and probably the high as well. Our own societies recognize that in a time of emergency, a decisive central authority is desirable: when the house is burning down, you don't hold an election to choose a fire chief. The policy on Pern explicitly derives from the need for one competent person to organize the resources of the hold and prevent panic during Threadfall. Unfortunately, as long experience has shown, the chief flaw of an absolutist form of government is its potential for abuse of power. Within each Hold, there are none of the checks and balances found in a society with a specific social contract. Whether you wind up working for a power-crazed sadist like Fax, or a reasonable fellow like Lord Asgenar, is just the luck of the draw.

Among the Lord Holders, descent is reckoned in the male line, and the role of women depends on the whim of the individual Lord. However, fosterage is a common policy, and a strict primogeniture is not practiced: a Lord Holder may nominate as his heir any one relative in the direct blood line, subject (at least in theory) to the approval of the other Lord Holders in Conclave. The Conclave is an interesting phenomenon, though it would be farfetched to call it a Parliament. From all indications it has, strictly, no power as a collective body. Whatever power it possesses derives solely from tradition, and appears restricted to the nominal right to approve new Lord Holders. As seen from the case of Fax, this was sometimes disregarded. (It probably also functions as a marriage brokerage.) Prior to the point at which F'lar made fast transportation available to the Lords, transportation difficulties were such that the Conclave met infrequently. It is perhaps best compared to one of our multinational bodies like the United Nations, and suffers from the same ineffectuality; but the conclave at least serves as a forum for the more or less peaceful exchange of views, and that's a point in its favor.

The second major power block on Pern is the Weyrs. Though it would be misleading to call the dragonriders either religious or military, the nearest analogue which comes to mind is one of the religio-military orders of the middle ages—the Knights Templars, for instance. The Weyrs are supported by the Holds, but are independent, and their function is basically altruistic. Not surprisingly, the dragonriders are rewarded for their high personal risk by certain privileges—notably a certain degree of sexual license.

The internal structure of the Weyr is like that of the Hold, stratified and sexist—even more so than the Hold. The Weyrwoman is chosen by the queen dragon (when there several queens in one Weyr, a strict seniority system applies), and the Weyrleader is selected by dragon mating ritual—a theoretically clear case of natural selection, though as usual when humans are involved, there are variations in actual practice. With the exception of the queen riders, all dragon riders are male (Mirrim seems to be the most exceptional if not entirely unprecedented case), and they are organized into wings and squadrons on a quasi-military model. There is a strict hierarchy of rank based on dragon color. To be even a green dragon rider is pretty impressive outside the Weyr, but it's small pickings within the Weyr. It again appears that the Weyrleader has autocratic powers, though most have their senior wing leaders organized into a sort of general staff. The role of the Weyrwoman, the only position of independent available to women on Pern, is somewhat ambivalent. Probably the best which can be said is that only a foolish Weyrleader would disregard the opinions of his Weyrwoman. Apparently the Weyrwoman is expected to be sexually accessible to the Weyrleader, whatever their personal feelings, but is free to arrange external liaisons if she wishes.

This degree of sexual license extends even to the underclass of the Weyr society, the Lower Caverns. Marriage, as such, is not practiced within the Weyrs. (The long-term relationship of Lessa and F'lar must be viewed as unusual.) The inhabitants of

the Lower Caverns are chiefly women, children, and servants. Descent is reckoned in both the male and female lines. Fosterage is again common, though cross-fostering is not. (In other words Weyr children are not fostered in Holds and vice versa, at least until F'lar and Robinton changed the policy.) The head woman of the lower caverns functions as a sort of domestic manager for the Weyr, a position of much responsibility but little real authority. It is probably fair to say, however, that on the whole the people of the Lower Caverns are better off both in practice and prospect than most of the commonry of Pern. The boys can expect to grow up to be dragon riders, and the girls and women as ground support (flight crews, if you will) for the dragon riders; they can feel they have some legitimate role to play in the defense of Pern.

The third concentration of power on Pern lies in the hands of the guilds. A hasty comparison to the guilds of medieval Europe might be misleading; the guilds of Pern, like the Weyrs, are independent of local authority, internally autonomous, and serve as training and technical resource centers for the entire planet. They are chiefly concerned with such practical pursuits as agriculture, metalcrafting, animal husbandry, and the like. With the exception of the harpers' guild, there is little direct evidence on internal policies: promotions, and so forth. The evidence is equally sketchy with regards to the status of women within the guilds, even those concerned with what we might think of as traditionally female occupations, such as weaving. The women of the smithcrafters' hall, for example, wear the traditional smith's leather clothing, but if they actually work as smiths remains to be seen. (Curiously, the effective medical techniques are widely practiced, there is no healers' guild, and one suspects that formal medical training—dissection of cadavers as training in practical anatomy, for instance—is problematical.)

The position of the Harpers' Guild is unique, dealing as it does not in the mundane problems of everyday life, but in abstractions. The most obvious function of the harper, i.e. as entertainers, is clearly superficial. In the absence of any educational system, the harpers operate as teachers. Learning is mainly oral (our notion of universal literacy as a desirable goal seems to have gone by the boards), by the rote system, based chiefly on endless repetition of obligatory Teaching Ballads. These songs emphasize such virtues as respect for constituted authority, and deference to Weyrs and dragonriders. This shows us another major function of the harpers (and another comparison to the Christian priesthood of the middle ages), but the maintenance of status quo. Harpers, like priests, are courtesy noble, and have an obvious vested interest in preserving their privileged position. It is apparent that the master harper wields political influence all out of proportion to his actual temporal authority; the resemblance to the politically active Popes and Archbishops in various eras is clear.

We should also consider, however, another and perhaps less invidious purpose pursued by the Harpers' Guild: cultural uniformity. Despite being spread over an extensive continent, with no postal system for fast communications beyond that offered by the occasional dragon rider visit, the culture of Pern has remained relatively homogeneous, the language has not babelized. This is due chiefly to the influence of the Harpers' Guild. Wherever one goes on Pern there is a harper, trained in the same institution, and responsible to the same authority, dedicated to the same ideals. One cannot help being reminded of the Society of Jesus.

Part of the reason for the harpers' effectiveness in this role is clear. Harper Hall is literally the only institution on the planet which offers an advanced education in anything other than a purely vocational sense. As, in effect, the only university—and lacking the Church's substantial recruiting handicap of a celibacy requirement—the Harper Hall inevitably attracts the best and brightest minds on Pern, the ambitious as well as the musical. It is evident from the example of Sebell that young harpers are trained in more than music. It should also be pointed out that with the exceptional case of Menolly, the Harpers' Guild has been another exclusively male bastion.

No study of Pern would be complete without considering the majority of its citizens—largely invisible in the book—the commonry. As has been the case in most human societies (ours is, historically speaking, unusual), the vast majority of the people of Pern live in a state of greater or lesser oppression, involved chiefly in agriculture. The practice of farming on Pern is not quite what we would call primitive, but in our technological sense it's probably, in the main, hard physical labor. Neither chattel slavery nor indentured servitude, within strict definitions, are practiced on Pern, but the distinction would probably seem subtle to the average man. Neither are the people franklins, or free land-owners. The land and its produce are the property of the Hold, which is to say of the Lord. The arrangement could not be called share-cropping—the exigency of Threadfall have imposed a form of communitarianism—but it's certainly far removed from either the Marxist or Jeffersonian ideals.

People on Pern seem to be guaranteed food, shelter, protection from Thread, and that's about it. (To be fair, care for the elderly seems also to be usual.) The social contract is implicit rather than explicit (like the United States Constitution); and with few specific rights, no consistent educational system, and no independent judiciary, few commoners are likely to escape lives of stolid drudgery. The only real prospect of upward mobility for the average person on Pern would appear to be one of the guilds. There's evidence that the guilds do accept at least some candidates from outside their own ranks, as witness the case of Lytol, but this may be rare. Certainly an ex-dragon rider would be likely to receive preferential treatment. Odds are that unless you happen to be born into a Lord Holder's family, a Weyr, had exceptional musical talent, or were just plain dead lucky, you would probably wind up (if a man) carrying a hod full of ox shit, or (if a woman) barefoot and pregnant. I never cease to be amazed at the fascination among woman writers in particular for medievalist stories, considering the actual conditions under which women lived in such societies. We're all princes and princesses in our own fairy tales, aren't we? (But someone still has got to grow the turnips and shovel out the stable.)

Pern is a fascinating place, and I have derived vast enjoyment from the stories; but I really don't think I'd care to live there.

Now if you're arranging vacation tours, that's another subject....✹

Informal Bibliography

Dragonflight, 1968, Del Rey
Dragonquest, 1971, Del Rey
Dragonsong, 1977, Bantam
Dragonsinger, 1978, Bantam
Dragondrums, 1979, Bantam
Books 3-5 appear as *Harper Hall of Pern*, SF Book Club
The White Dragon, 1979, Del Rey
1, 2, and 6 appear as *Dragonriders of Pern*, SF Book Club
Moreta, Dragon Lady of Pern, 1983, Del Rey
Nerilka's Story, 1986, Del Rey
Dragonsdawn, November 1988, Del Rey

StarScam!

Thomas M. Egan

During the last months of 1986 I heard commercials on the radio urging folk, "for a mere $35," to name a star in the heavens after whoever they wished. "Name your own star and have it officially registered for eternity." As a Tolkien fan I was entranced. I hoped I could name a distant planet in our galaxy after Middle-earth. Wouldn't that be great!

Alas, I wrote my U.S. Senator, Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan of New York, on the feasibility of copyrighting new names for stars in our galaxy. "No way," was the answer, "it sounds like a sales scam."

Here is the official response of our government. No private citizen can register a private name for a planet. The International Star Registry can only put your name and your title for a planet/star in its own books with no public recognition of the same. This was not the impression created by radio commercials.

September 29, 1986

Dear Mr. Egan,

In order that I might provide you with the complete factual response to your inquiry I forwarded your letter to the Library of Congress. Enclosed is their response which I hope is helpful. Thank you again for your letter and please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,
Daniel Patrick Moynihan

Dear Senator Moynihan,

This is in response to your request on behalf of a constituent, Thomas M. Egan, about naming a star after someone and having it registered in the copyright office of the Library of Congress.

Stars are identified by an international committee of astronomers, and the names attached by private firms have no validity. When the Library of Congress asked one firm to cease using the Library's name in advertising and promotion, the firm's attorney replied that everyone knew that the scheme was a joke like the Pet Rock idea. The purchaser receives a certificate but there is no record kept by the Library of Congress. If a company compiles a volume of names it has assigned to stars it may apply for copyright of that volume. There is no guarantee that it will receive copyright protection and it is very unlikely that such a volume would be selected for permanent retention in the Library's collections. Enclosed is a Library of Congress press release on the topic. I hope this information is helpful to you.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CAUTIONS PUBLIC ON STAR REGISTRATION SCHEMES

The copyright office of the Library of Congress has returned a reel of microfilm submitted for copyright by the International Star Registry of Northfield, Illinois and closed the file on granting the firm's application. The microfilm contained a list of names of individuals who paid a fee to the company to register a star in their name. Since the company was founded in June 1979 an estimated 100,000 people have paid $25 to $35 each with the understanding that a star in their name will be listed in a book which will be copyrighted at a later date in the Library of Congress of the United States of America, according to the firm's recent promotional literature and correspondence.

The Library has received numerous inquiries during the Christmas season regarding the authenticity of the firm's claims to register the names of stars. The Library has repeatedly emphasized that it has no connection whatsoever with any star registry. The science and technology division of the Library has stated that the only official organization that gives designations to planetary features is the International Astronomical Union.

According to John Kominsky, general counsel for the Library of Congress, many organizations have sought to trade on a certain authenticity falsely associated with copyright in the Library of Congress. Among those firms are the Sheon Star Educational Trust of Houston, Texas, Star Registration Systems International, also of Houston, Star Tracing and Registration Systems of Hinsdale, Illinois, Byarose Cosmic Tombstone of San Rafael, California, and an organization calling itself the Bureau of Deceased Americans. It should be pointed that a copyright registration does not guarantee the authenticity of the information contained in those works.

The International Star Registry application file has been closed due to the company's failure to respond to a request for clarification of authorship of the list of names it submitted for copyright. As a compilation the list is eligible for copyright, much like any phone book, mailing list, or any other extensive list of names. It is important to note, however, that such copyright protection extends only to the authorship of the compilation and not to the association of any proper name with any star or planetary feature. Theoretically the same star could be sold to two different individuals by two different star registration systems without any copyright violation.

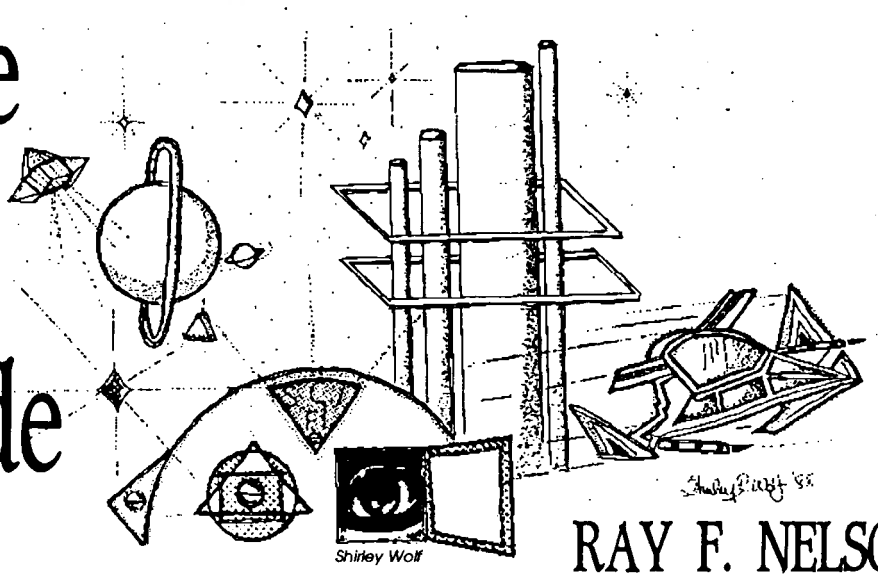
By regulation the Library of Congress has restricted the use of its name to official representation of its programs, projects, functions, activities, or elements thereof, except when authorized by the Library. Any other use is prohibited.

I knew it was too good to be true.

This says something about the gullibility of sf/fantasy fen. I almost sent in $35 for a vanity press name in a book copyrighted by a private company.

Alas, we are all fools for a good cause!✹

Science Fiction Attitude



RAY F. NELSON

Question: How many years have you been alive? Write down the number. Label it Figure A.

Question: Before that, how many years were you not alive? Write down the number. Label it Figure B.

Look at those numbers for a while. Think about them. Maybe subtract A from B. See how much B changes. Or subtract B from A. See how much A changes. You're looking at what I would call the *Cosmic Ratio*. It gives you a measure of how much your individual life matters when we look at it in perspective—when we take, as it were, *The Long View*. It gives you a measure of how much my life matters, how much anyone's life matters. I think about the Cosmic Ratio often, particularly when I'm writing science fiction, because that Cosmic Ratio is what science fiction is all about, what SF's basic message is.

Literary critics constantly criticize science fiction for its lack of characterization. Writers of science fiction constantly promise to do better, but they almost never do. The genre has never produced memorable, three-dimensional characters. It never will. It never should. From the standpoint of the Cosmic Ratio, the life of one individual human being is not worth that much attention.

We science fictionists may write funny stories, adventurous stories, even romantic or sentimental stories. We may write about literally anything that has ever been or might ever be, or about things that never were and never could be; but always we write in the shadow of the Cosmic Ratio, always we are aware to some degree of the infinite past behind us and the infinite future ahead of us. We know that only a little while ago people believed with certainty things we now don't believe at all, and we draw the conclusion that everything we now believe will some day be equally obsolete. Our one and only prophecy that is certain to come true is that our descendants will laugh at us. (Some of them have already started.)

This is, in a nutshell, the *science fiction attitude*.

To write "sci-fi," you need know nothing at all about science. Ray Bradbury knows nothing about science, yet when NASA launches a spaceship on a more-than-usually-noteworthy mission, they never fail to invite him to watch, nor do the media neglect to interview him. Isaac Asimov knows a great deal about science, but when writing sci-fi, he forgets all about it and sails off into a universe where spaceships fly faster than light and telepathic robots control the human race. Neither gentleman trusts airplanes, and Bradbury thinks bicycles are much better.

To write sci-fi, you can even be actively opposed to science. Marion Zimmer Bradley is. She thinks magic is much better. Even though she has written a whole series of stories that are on a distant planet she made up called Darkover, even though she has taken to renting out her planet to other less inspired writers, she is a relentless foe of space travel. I remember at a science fiction convention that I once attended, I was baby-sitting a table full of handouts for the L-5 Society (a group whose members favor building whole cities in outer space orbit) when Marion advanced upon me from across the room, loomed over me like an angry God (or should I say Goddess), leveled a shaky finger at me and cried, "You traitor to Mother Earth!"

Moreover, to write sci-fi you need to know next to nothing about fiction. I was on a panel at a convention with another science fiction writer whom I'd better not name—he's famous for his temper—when the discussion wandered into comparisons between SF authors and so-called "Mainstream" authors. We talked about Alan Ginzberg, about Stein, about Hemingway, about Sartre and Camus. My friend, after a long silence, drew himself up and announced proudly, "I never read mainstream."

You don't need science. You don't need fiction.

What do you need?

You need *The Attitude*. You need to have looked the Cosmic Ratio right in the eyeball and really grasped its meaning. Then, even when you write autobiography, sticking strictly to the facts, the result will have the flavor, the color, the perspective of science fiction. Read Robert Anton Wilson's *The Cosmic Trigger*. You could swear it was a sequel to a sci-fi classic, "The Illuminatus Trilogy," but I knew him during the period he covers in that book, and I swear to you everything he says in there is absolutely true.

I mean, some of us don't watch THE TWILIGHT ZONE—we live there. Will The Attitude help you sell? Let me give you an example.

In 1962, as an experiment, I created a character who had as few traits as possible. Not only did he have no wife, no kids, no job, no biography... he didn't even have a mother or father. He didn't even have a physical description. He had a name, that's all, and that name, just to show I was doing it on purpose, was Nada, which is Spanish for *nothing*. I mean, this character was not made out of cardboard—he was made out of plasticwrap.

Then I wrote a sci-fi short story around him entitled "Eight O'Clock in the Morning." Without reading it, let alone revising it, I stuck it in an envelope and sent it to FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION magazine. The acceptance came by return mail.

"Eight O'Clock in the Morning" appeared for the first time in F&SF for November, 1963. At year's end it was anthologized in both *Best From F&SF* and Judith Merrill's *The Year's Best SF*. In 1968 Terry Carr anthologized it in *The Others*. In 1969 it appeared in translation in Holland, Belgium, Italy, and Japan. In 1972 it was featured in the British anthology, *Tales of Terror From Outer Space*. In 1981 it surfaced in another anthology, *Tomorrow's TV*. Then it was actually included in a high school textbook, *Studies in Graded English*. In April, 1986, I did a comic book version of it for Eclipse Comics. It appeared in the sixth issue of their comic book, ALIEN ENCOUNTERS, under a new title, "Nada."

Instantly, as soon as the comic book hit the stands, Hollywood placed a frenzied phone call to Eclipse editor, Cat Yronwode. Now, under the title "They Live" it is in production as a feature film. Roddy Piper plays the male lead ("Mr. Nada" in person), Meg Vallee plays the female. John HALLOWEEN Carpenter directs, Larry BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA Franco produces, Universal Pictures distributes, MCA Home Video does the cassette, and I am planning the novelization of the film and a comic book series.

Now if I can just sell the rights to the Mr. Nada game, the Mr. Nada sweatshirt, the Mr. Nada doll!

I go around singing every day, "Money for Nothing"! It's The Attitude, brothers and sisters. It's the Science Fiction attitude.

OK, if characterization is not in the foreground in science fiction, what is? Why, the background is in the foreground! And the foreground is in the background! The order of priorities is exactly the opposite of what mainstream critics advise, which is the reason why mainstream critics have, until recently, not been able to understand SF at all. Post modernist critics, particularly the French ones, have finally been able to come to grips with sci-fi, mainly because so many post modernist novelists have started borrowing things out of the sci-fi prop closet.

You might well ask, "How is this all-important background created?" An ad appears regularly in LOCUS, "The Newspaper of the Science Fiction Field." It reads as follows:

Planets designed for science fiction writers by pro astrophysicist. Contact Sheridan Simon, Physics Dept., Guilford College, Greensboro NC 27410.

If you want an alien planet that is built scientifically, with the right shape and size and mass, the right number of suns at the right distances, exactly the right moon or moons, exactly the right atmosphere, Dr. Simon can fix you up. Or maybe you can rip off a slightly-used planet from some old master of the genre. If you can't afford a planet all your own, maybe you can get together with some other writers and go shares on it. I mean, even old Mars could be good for another few billion miles, given some retreads and a lot of lead in the gas.

Science Fiction writers should like you to believe that their planets are built the way Dr. Simon builds them. Hey, that's all on the old floppy disk, right?

Wrong.

Actual practicing science fiction writers almost never build planets that way. Even the hardest of the hard science specialists almost never do any computation at all as they cobble together their alien star-systems. If they do, (and Poul Anderson, for one, does) the physical characteristics of the invented planet are only a small part of the all-important background. Actual practicing science fiction writers build planets by analogy. Not for nothing is one of the leading magazines in the field called ANALOG. Dune is like a desert. Venus used to be like a jungle. And sometimes "the word for a world is forest." When Ray Bradbury wrote *The Martian Chronicles*, everyone knew no human being could survive on Mars without a spacesuit. Ol' Ray totally ignored all those boring facts and gave us a Mars that was nothing like the real Mars but a whole lot like central America before the coming of the white men.

Analogy!

That's the tool actual SF authors use. And what about that other important part of the background, the technology, the gadgets. I'm talking about the three R's of sci-fi: Rockets, Robots, and Rayguns.

Once upon a time, Writers' Connection fixed me up with a job working with a computer programmer to develop a space-war game. This game was supposed to be completely authentic, to make the video game player experience the reality of commanding a fighting starship in the twenty-fifth century. I went to work and turned in my totally authentic version of the future. The computer wizard was appalled.

"What would starships sound like in space?" he demanded. "I gotta know how starships would sound."

"They wouldn't sound at all," I told him. "To have sound you need air. There's no air in outer space."

"Well, how about a full-scale nuclear blast?"

"It would make a flash, but no sound."

"Well, how come you have only one graphic for all the different suns? I know they are all different colors. Red dwarfs. Yellow giants. Black holes."

"Sure, but the human eye has the ability to shift its color perception, as anyone knows who's been wearing sunglasses for a while and then takes them off. No matter what color the suns were, if you could see them at all, they'd look white."

"But they are different sizes at least."

"Compared to what? Their apparent size would be determined by your distance away from them."

"But what about the spaceships? What would they look like?"

"It doesn't matter. In a space war you'd never get close enough to want to see more than a moving dot of light, if that."

Needless to say, the computer programmer and I soon came to a parting of the ways. I can still remember his sad eyes as

See ATTITUDE, Page 58

A TALE OF TWO CROCS

by Tamar Lindsay

CROCODILE DUNDEE deserves to be popular. The heroes, all things considered, are genuinely likable. The film gave a whole lot of good character actors some work, too. The actor has a very strong Australian accent—I went to the movie with a non-fan friend, and I had to keep translating for him. I have had the advantage of talking with Aussie fen at cons and reading about their accent, so it wasn't too hard for me.

Although it seems to be an entirely mundane movie, I am reviewing it for you because I see a possible fantasy interpretation.

Crocodile Dundee...

The story is as follows (blow by blow): the heroine, a competent reporter who also is the spoiled daughter of the man who owns the newspaper, is in Australia getting local-color stories. She hears a story of a man who, after having a leg bitten off by a crocodile, killed the crocodile and crawled to town—Michael "Crocodile" Dundee. Investigating, she flies in by helicopter to a small airfield in the outback. She is met by Dundee's partner, Wally, who drives her into town. In the town bar, Wally is beginning to repeat the story when the sole local female in town, the barmaid, reveals that the story is greatly exaggerated. Mick Dundee makes a flashy entrance with a small stuffed crocodile and invites the heroine to dance.

There is some horseplay with the town roughnecks, and he shows her the scar on his leg where he was actually bitten by a crocodile. (The original attack was not entirely a rock, but it certainly was a leg-pull!) She hires Dundee and Wally, in their capacity as the proprietors of Never-Never Tours, to show her the place where the attack occurred. [For those who aren't into British culture, buying things on the installment plan is called "buying on the Never-Never"; it is a general term for fantasy.]

The first part of the journey is by car, a huge vehicle that resembles a Landrover crossed with a few trucks and has a flapping canvas top. The reporter asks questions during the trip which bring us the information that Mick has a very undefined sense of time; he had a girlfriend once, but he went walkabout for a few months ("Try eighteen," says Wally) and she didn't wait for him. Like the aborigines, he lives in the Dreamtime. When Wally drops them off for the walking tour, he makes arrangements to meet them at the end of the planned route. Mick pulls an "impress the tourist" routine, checking the time on Wally's digital watch and then pretending he knows by the angle of the sun, and they go off into the bush. In the course of the trek, we see the Australian scenery, which is the kind that doesn't come off as well on a TV as on a movie screen. We also see the local roughnecks shooting up the kangaroos, and Mick's poetic-justice revenge in which he shoots back from behind a dead kangaroo, making it seem as though the kangaroo is shooting back. Later, an aborigine provides a little excitement by sneaking up to say hello, but he turns out to be a city boy, going out to the corroborree to please his father, who is a tribal elder. Mick participates in the males-only corroborree, but our heroine does the liberated thing and secretly photographs it.

Eventually they have the obligatory fight and she goes off to prove she can walk on her own, and of course he rescues her from a twenty-foot crocodile. (There is an interesting subtle touch here, although it is not made clear in the movie. She bends down to the waterhole to fill her canteen with the strap still around her neck, and the crocodile bites the canteen and starts yanking on it, trying to pull her underwater. She has the city girl's purse-snatcher reaction and hangs on, instead of slipping the strap off over her head. She is *not* just being stupid.)

At the waterhole where Mick did his recuperating from the original injury, he pulls another old camp counselor trick, getting her to try some vile-tasting local food before admitting he too prefers the canned hash he brought along. Just as things are getting romantic and they exchange kisses, Wally arrives to take them back to town. She invites Mick to try her city on for size, and he accepts.

Here the movie switches from City Girl in the Country to Country Boy in the City. There are a lot of sight gags. Most of them are fairly simple—the Australian hero has somehow managed never to have been on an escalator, elevator, or airplane. Since he's being macho, he won't admit any nervousness out loud, so it's expressed in facial expressions and gestures. (The airplane is something of an in-joke, because the actor actually has made a name for himself doing commercials for the Australian airline, Qantas.) Once in New York, the heroine gets back at him by pulling the same sort of incomplete-information tricks that he did. She even gives him a New York street vendor's hot dog with everything, as her verson of the "local food" trick. Mick is naively puzzled because the black chauffeur won't tell him what tribe he comes from.

When Mick gets lost in the crowded streets, a mounted policeman gives him a

ride home on his horse and even gives him back his eighteen-inch Bowie knife (two bits of pure fantasy here!). He makes friends with a couple of tarts of the heart-of-gold type and goes out drinking with a cab-driver, meeting his first transvestite and learning a variation of the "gimme-five" handslap greeting in a "local rough jokes" bar scene that vaguely parallels the one in Australia. Eventually he is present when the heroine's mundane co-worker boyfriend proposes marriage during a formal dinner, and she accepts. Mick heads for the subway to go walkabout in America. In the nick of time, she realizes that she isn't sure she'll marry Mick but she definitely isn't going to marry the boyfriend, and chases after Mick to the subway. Since it is rush hour, he is now jammed into the rear of the station and she is on the steps, yelling across the crowd. Someone in the crowd comments about being packed in like sheep, and a tall black man and a tall white construction worker pass conversation along for the two, getting a great deal of mileage out of the "I love you's". Mick tries to swing along the girders to reach her, but ends up walking along over the crowd's heads and shoulders as they pass him along in aid of romance.

One touch that is probably more significant to Australian audiences than to Americans is the comment about being packed in like sheep in the subway. The sheep-ranching industry in Australia is omnipresent enough to ensure that an Australian audience will immediately have an image of and the feelings associated with the escape of a sheep from the slaughterhouse.

...As a Sequel to Peter Pan

At the end of *Peter Pan*, Wendy has taken all the Lost Boys home to grow up and Peter is to come back for her every year. He forgets for a few years (possibly eighteen) and is astounded when he finds that she is grown-up and has a daughter the age he expected Wendy to be. He has taken over the pirate ship with its flapping canvas sails and the remaining pirates have sworn allegiance to him. He still has skirmishes with the Indians despite his friendship with the Indian princess, and there is a large and somewhat overrated crocodile around. The only other female is Tinker Bell, who in the original book was very definitely a lower-class fairy, if not actually a barmaid, and in the book there is a scene in which several drunken fairies are crawling home, being too drunk to fly. Wendy's daughter has heard all the stories and is willing to go off with Peter to visit Never-Never Land.

The parallels should be fairly obvious: the truck is a large, canvas-topped vehicle that takes you into another world—the pirate ship. The crowd of male roughnecks are the pirates; the slightly larcenous tale-telling partner is Smee, who ended his days saying that he was the only man feared by Captain Hook. The cheerful barmaid (who gets everybody flying on booze instead of fairy dust!) is Tinker Bell, and the girl who didn't wait for him when he lost track of time was Wendy. The aborigines are the Indians, and the son of the aborigine chieftain is equivalent to the Indian princess. There is a large but somewhat overrated crocodile around.

The main difference between the two stories is that in CROCODILE DUNDEE, *she* teaches *him* to fly. He begins by flying in the airplane, then learning about escalators and elevators, climbing a street lamp, then observing people high on drugs, then "flying" over the heads of people in the subway station, impelled by and held up for love. It should be clear from this that, although the female story is of the girl who finally caught Peter, the male story is the role reversal of *Peter Pan.*

Like Wendy, Mick has only heard vague stories, if any, about the "other" world. She flies in, they meet, she kisses him and invites him to come with her. The kiss by the lake which begins his adventure in her world is parallel to the scene in which Wendy gives Peter a thimble and he gives her an acorn. The thimble and acorn are symbols of infantile sexuality and an immature relationship; they are called "kisses," but Wendy knows what a real child's kiss is and Peter doesn't.

She teaches Mick to "fly"—airplane to get to her world, escalator upon arrival and elevator to get to living quarters (up the hotel instead of down the tree trunk). (Although in the New York Party Drug Scene, one person had a powder that got him "high," it doesn't really qualify as fairydust. There *are* people of assorted lifestyle preferences attending the party, but they're sticking to alcohol—like the drunken fairies in the original book.) She has a companion of opposite sex (her boyfriend) who is jealous and who drinks too much (Tinker Bell equivalent).

In the party scene, Mick tries to give home-medicine to someone (drug-user, in fact), equivalent behavior to Wendy's giving "medicine" to the Lost Boys. In her world, there are friendly locals but also a truly vicious enemy, the pimp, who has henchmen (pirate equivalents). Mick is attacked finally and must be rescued (as Wendy was captured and Peter had to rescue her, though Mick is rescued by the chauffeur instead of by her personally). She is apparently uncaring despite her flirtation, then when he starts to leave she comes after him. However, she does not necessarily intend a permanent relationship.

Pop Psychology Level

The modern view of a *Peter Pan* relationship is that it is an unhealthy one, in which a woman takes on the role of mothering an infantile male who plays at being grown up without taking any real responsibility. The heroine in this movie still expressing misgivings at the end, but she has learned that her original boyfriend is the infantile type and has rejected him. She is not necessarily going off with Mick permanently, but is quite willing to go off with him for a while, perhaps as a part of learning to give up the *Peter Pan* type. In the book, Wendy's daughter (Jane) goes off with Peter full knowledge of his level of behavior and fully expecting to come back and grow up, eventually passing him on to her future daughters as a sort of heirloom toy. J.M. Barrie seems to have seen such a relationship as a developmental level girls go through as part of maturing. Whether or not he felt that boys ever truly grew up is uncertain; Wendy's father doesn't seem to have, but the Lost Boys all had careers and stopped believing in their past adventures, which may represent maturity in Barrie's view.

On the other hand, Mick is the one who tries to form real human friendships with everyone he meets; like Wendy, he tries to be nurturing (trying to give home medical aid to the junkie) and play the adult role correctly. Even "going walkabout" is one of the aboriginal cultural behaviors which are part of the process of becoming an adult. Although the original Peter Pan is the sort who must be given up, Mick Dundee has the potential to grow up.

Although this story uses the *Peter Pan* model, it is not *merely* a redress of *Peter Pan*. Instead, it shows a developing relationship in which both characters grow. Both main characters are playing the Wendy\Wendy's daughter role, learning to be responsible and to value responsibility in others at the same time. Both characters leave their own cozy worlds at the end of the movie; she has left her secure job in her father's business, and Mick is staying in America, at least for a time. There is a good chance that they will grow up emotionally and stay together.✹

Jim Reynolds

NEANDERTHALERS

Brian Earl Brown

John Boardman's review of these two series of neolithic novels was a great joy. Informative and entertaining.

I remember fondly one of those "Og, Son of Ug" books Boardman mentions. I think it was called *Firestarter*, a Scholastic Book Club release. I didn't take the inventions seriously but I enjoyed the prehistoric adventures. They always had short names in those stories, yet the impression I've gotten is that the older the language the more formal and convoluted it is, so that one would expect cave dwellers to have really long, not short, names.

Poul Anderson

John Boardman's interesting review of those "caveman books" appeared just when new evidence has turned up suggesting that Neanderthal man is not in our line of ancestry after all. Modern human types have been found in the Near East dateable to about the middle of his period. This is not yet conclusive—material that paleoanthropology has to work with is always slight and incomplete—and I, for one, hope it will turn out that there is at least some degree of relationship. I'd be proud of descent from the little guy whom the ice and the cave bear could not defeat.

L. Sprague de Camp

I suspect that the mutant gene causing the semi-albinistic Nordic coloring (pale skin, blond hair, and blue eyes) originated among the Neanderthalers of Europe's last glacial advance. They dwelt in the world's cloudiest climate, so the gene gave an advantage in survival. It was passed on by intermateage to the post-glacial Europeans when they overran the land. Being technically more advanced, the latter formed larger, denser populations and swamped the Neanderthalers, whose distinctive features—low foreheads, large eyebrow ridges, massive build, large teeth, &c.—occur sporadically in modern human populations.

Only rarely do all these features appear in one person, albeit many Australoids came close. I also once had the doubtful pleasure of meeting the late Tony Galento, the only prizefighter to knock down Joe Louis. If Two-Ton Tony had let his whiskers grow and wrapped himself in a bearskin, he could have stepped into any Neanderthal camp without causing the least surprise.

Margaret Ballif Simon

Before Adam by Jack London also had the premise of the Neanderthaler who discovers fire, weaponry, and just about anything imaginable in one lifetime. However, it was done in such a way that I believe this hero was a genius, and that many of his discoveries were lost after his time. Some of his progeny had some of his brains and thus the race of man carried on. There was little dialogue other than in terms of grunts or from within the character's narration. The reader realized that that comprehension was mainly from within the skull of the chief character.

A pet theory of mine is, to the best of my knowledge, unfounded and my own. Witnessing da Vinci and and many others, Socrates, etc., men who came to the fore within a small population, I would risk a guess that genetically we could have had one or two geniuses in the Neanderthal era. This is not to say that the singular genius would have been sharp enough to make waves, to establish a new civilization, or to invent something like a computer in those times. It just stands to reason that the genius may have appeared in various centuries and that his descendants utilized some of his aptitude in developing skills, etc.

Yes, I agree that the best work to describe the possible existence of a linkage between Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon would be from one who had done several nonfiction works. Today we need the imagination to fill in the gaps, and it's more enjoyable reading as well.

Laura D. Todd

I read avidly Auel's *Clan of the Cave Bear*. While this was a best seller, Björn Kurtén's *Dance of the Tiger* was so obscure that I didn't think anyone else in the world had read it. After reading both, the inevitable comparisons come to mind.

The contrast between these authors' portrayals of the Neanderthals fascinated me. Kurtén contended that since they were living in northern lands longer, they were fair-skinned—while the Cro-Magnons, who migrated from warmer climates, were the dark skinned "blacks." I thought this was not only reasonable, but a wonderful reversal of the usual racist Nordic preconceptions (dark skinned equals primitive; blond and fair equals superior).

I was also enchanted by Kurtén's unique portrayal of the Neanderthals as a polite, pacifistic, and gentle race who named people after flowers and referred to everyone by honorifics (Mr., Miss). Kurtén explained in his foreword how he arrived at this notion: the Neanderthals' prominent brow ridges gave them a fierce expression; they were also physically powerful. Therefore they took pains to avoid any aggression by developing a complex code of social etiquette.

Auel's Neanderthals also have their rigid code of social conventions, but by contrast their society is a repellent one as it is based on total subordination of women. Auel never tries to justify this trait or tell us how it came about. In reality, anthropologists tell us that women were very important in the hunter-gatherer societies, as they provided well over half the food. In addition, if prehistoric humans knew nothing of biological fatherhood, women would be considered the sole creators of life. We've all seen the prehistoric "Venus" fertility figures which suggest that the female principle may have been venerated as a goddess by ancient peoples. All this makes Auel's version of sexist Neanderthals highly unlikely to me. I suspect that the concept was there more to fill the author's plot needs than for any scientific speculation on the subject.

However, there is one point where *Dance of the Tiger* completely diverged from the credible. This was at the end, where the evil Cro-Magnon warlord has captured a mob of Neanderthals and set them to work building great earthwork projects to divert rivers—thus inventing both engineering and slavery. Talk about one "caveman" inventing civilization single handed!

M.R. Hildebrand

I enjoyed Mr. Boardman's article very much and agreed with many of his points, especially with the complaint about one person "inventing" so many advances. That aspect spoiled the second book of the "Earth's Children" series for me.

I do not agree, however, with his statement that "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."

Let me start with "stooped over." On page 11 of *Clan of the Cave Bear* she states of Iza that she was "...stocky, and bowlegged, *but walked upright* on strong muscular legs...." After that introduction of a female she introduces a male, mentioning differences in dress, size, tools, hairiness, etc. Further descriptions merely mark differences of individual characteristics.

Inarticulate? Not that I noticed. The conversation between Brun and Creb on whether or not to keep this alien child (pp 52-53 in the hardcover copy) is succinct, but fairly sophisticated. It even includes a nice bit of sophistry. Hardly inarticulate, except in a literal sense, since signs are proposed to have made up a large part of the Neanderthal's language. I believe that both Auel and Kurtén based their Neanderthal language largely on sign because of the physical evidence that the portion of the brain held responsible for verbal speech control was far less developed in the Neanderthal.

Brutish and crude? This is a matter of viewpoint, perhaps, but I doubt it. The people portrayed (and I saw them through Ms. Auel's eyes as people) were a fairly well-balanced mixture. There were kindly people, selfish people, and followers without strong motivations of their own. Creb, Iza, and Brun are shown as very strong and kindly people. Broud, the most brutish of the Neanderthals, is carefully shown to be a self-centered, egotistical person who is continually upstaged by Ayla. Homo sapiens of the same temperament, in the same situation, have been known to be "brutish." The rest of the clan are shown as rather normal individuals with normal reactions and prejudices. The workmanship on objects is usually shown as simple, but in both books Ms. Auel makes a point of mentioning that some of it is extremely well done.

Less intelligent than our kind of people? Referring to Ayla and the Neanderthal girl of similar age, Ms. Auel writes: "Sprung from the same ancient seed, the progeny of their common ancestor took alternate routes, both leading to a richly developed, if dissimilar, intelligence." Ms. Auel makes a point of the fact that in her opinion a lack of frontal lobe development need not equate with stupidity. She attributes a racial memory to the Neanderthals which compensates for their slow ability to learn and make decisions.

Believe this theory or not, and I don't particularly, I found the Neanderthals themselves quite believable and interesting. Much more so than her Cro-Magnon men. Cro-Magnon people were shown as being extremely sophisticated in their spirituality and their understanding of their world.

The Cro-Magnons believed in a single, strong central deity—a concept which has dominated western thought for less than two thousand years. They had few, if any, minor gods, taboos, etc. Their view of what the world is and why it operates as it does was almost scientific. They had none of the belief in things being in the hands of conflicting gods who must be influenced by ritual that is present in myths and anthro studies.

Since these attitudes are directly descended from the people Auel is writing about, the lack of them grates. I feel as if her Cro-Magnon characters are actors who, when I'm not watching, are strolling out to the theater and a good restaurant.

I enjoyed her first book, about the Neanderthals, *Clan of the Cave Bear*, a lot, but have been disappointed so consistently in the later books I have ceased to buy even the paperbacks. I enjoyed Kurtén's book, *Dance of the Tiger*, and bought it in paperback. I am planning to read his second novel although it has not yet crossed my path.

Ed Meskys

There was an interesting review in the June 1987 SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN not only of the Auel and Kurtén books, but also of Elizabeth Marshall Thomas's *Reindeer Moon*. The review, by Brian M. Fagin, appeared on page 132.

Anne Braude

According to a PBS special I saw recently, the process of human evolution included an upwards migration of the larynx, which in apes and prehominids is positioned low enough to make simultaneous breathing and swallowing possible but not vocal speech. Neanderthalers may have been physically incapable of speech; I don't recall exactly at what stage in the evolutionary process the larynx reached the position that permitted it. This program stated that babies are born with the larynx in the breathing/swallowing position but that it migrates upwards as the infant develops; a glitch in this process may be a cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (crib death).

RELIGION VS. STF

Brian Earl Brown

Anne Braude put her foot in a gopher hole early on in her essay on anti- Semitism and alien contact. She sweepingly characterized the people of Germany as neat, obedient to authority, and peculiarly vulnerable to ideas of genocide. This is the

same sort of broad oversimplified generalization that Hitler used to blame the Jews when he ordered their execution. I would have thought Ms. Braude would be a little more sensitive to such reckless generalities.

Actually, Anne, I don't exempt non-fundamentalist religions from my charge of being the greatest evil today. All religion has done too much screwing up of people's lives and peace, more than can be made up by Catholic Relief, the Salvation Army, etc. If the various intractable feuds in the world aren't essentially religious in nature, why do we speak of these as Arab-Jew, Sikh-Hindu, Protestant-Catholic conflicts? You can't separate race from religion, in some cases you can't properly speak of these people belonging to separate races. Fundamentalists are opposed to all women's rights movements, thus are no woman's friends. *[Who said they were? AJB]*

Jane Yolen

[See the last paragraph of her letter in Laiskai; while it belonged here, it referred back to other paragraphs in the letter and had to be left there. ERM]

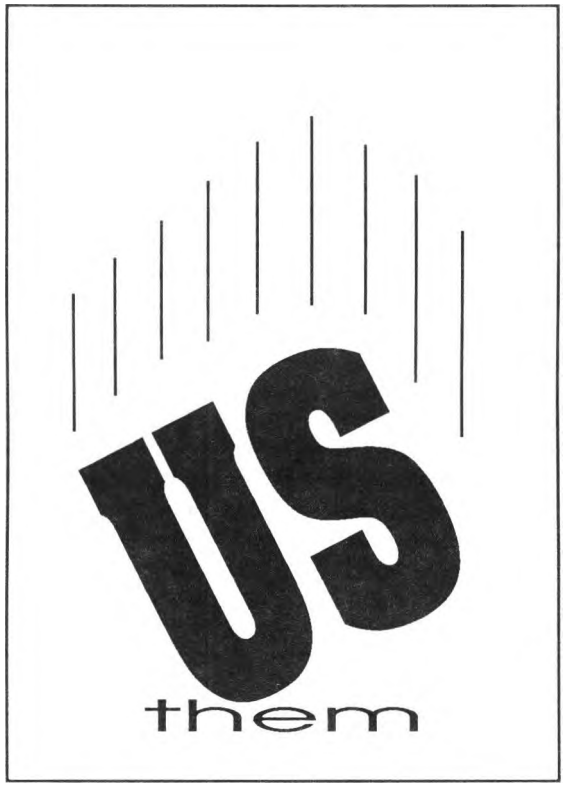
Poul Anderson

I see where some of your contributors, like many other intellectuals, are afraid of the big bad religious right. Not to worry. Those few people in disagreement with Jerry Falwell who take the trouble actually to read his own words will find that he explicitly does not want to censor the libraries or bug the bedrooms. The pornography industry would be no loss, even to the principle of free speech; in the old days when it was underground, Mark Twain *et al.* managed to express themselves quite well regardless. As for creation "science," it has fared poorly in the courts, and would have vanished from the schools by now if boards of education and textbook publishers were less chicken. Moreover, lately the faith has been saddled with the likes of Bakker and Swaggart. To the extent that it will continue to have a noticeable influence, well, a little old-fashioned patriotism, family fidelity, and work ethic would do this country a world of good.

None of the intellectuals seem to notice that the religious forces nowadays are overwhelmingly arrayed on the left. To name just a few, the National Council of Churches, the American Friends Service Committee, the Episcopal Church, most Catholic bishops, and the Reverend Jesse Jackson all call for collectivism at home and appeasement abroad. Don't our deep thinkers want liberty to survive? Most of them, probably not.

E.B. Frohvet

If Anne J. Braude wishes to find racist, sexist, or imperialist tendencies in the human race in general, or in the science fiction community in particular, I agree that she will have no difficulty in finding them. However, if she interprets the title of



The Stars Are Ours (the exclamation point in Ms. Braude's article does not appear in the original) as reflective of such tendencies on the part of Miss Andre Norton, I suggest that Ms. Braude has not read the book, and ought to do so. *[I was specifically referring to the phrasing of titles and not to the contents of the books. As far as I know, none of them were full of Manifest Destiny rhetoric; but the attitude did tend to prevail in SF of that period. I got the exclamation point from a list of Norton titles in one of her books; it may be a publisher's addition. AJB]*

Donald J. Roy, Jr.

A thought to add to the discussion of the Self/Other conflict is that part of its roots could be from the common background of western religions, including Islam, in that they started out as minority and slave religions and needed the Self/Other conflict to gain strength and converts. *[A good point, perhaps even more applicable to Judaism. But Christianity did not make a big point of defining non-Christian as Other, in its early years; Christians rather had Otherness imposed on them. Christianity is an inclusive and universalist religion which didn't get into the business of defining others as Others in a big way until its conquest phase (the Crusades). AJB]*

Margaret Ballif Simon

I liked the way you paired the Salmonson article in the same issue with "Mathoms" by Anne Braude. I watch PBS if I watch TV at all. SHOAH was fantastic and Braude ties in the comments from this documentary superbly to fit with the C.S. Lewis quotations and her summary. What an article! I'd like to nominate it for some award. Let me know what and when. *[How about "best fan writer" in the 1989 Hugos? ERM] [Long overdue. Let's get the word out, folks. MB]*

Joseph T. Major

Now that it looks as if there might be a resolution to the Afghan war (this is being written in late Spring, 1988) people are popping up and pointing out that some of the Mujaddein are Islamic "fundamentalists." Some even are pointing out that some of the Muj started by protesting a decree of the Communist puppet government which gave women the right to vote for the government.

In short, what we are now seeing is a reprise of some of the comments from 1979 about how the Russians were really helping to spread Progressive Thought into a backwards part of the world, and asking whether we really should be supporting these Not Progressive Thinkers simply out of cold war paranoia. All of this is but to say that poison gas and mines are but a means of public enlightenment. And then there are these Progressive Thinkers who still pride themselves on their support of those folks who discovered a radical solution to the population problem of Cambodia.

Anne Braude

No, Brian, I didn't step into a gopher-hole; I laid a land mine which you stepped on. In the first place, you misinterpreted my comments: I characterized not "the people of Germany" but "the German na-

tional character"—i.e. a cultural tendency which tends to appear in mass movements and trends but not necessarily (she said quantum mechanically) in any particular individual. Similarly, one could say that there is in the American national character a tendency to assume that simple solutions must exist for even the most complex questions and problems; the proposition could be adequately illustrated from the history of our political discourse from Shays' Rebellion to Pat Robertson's candidacy, but American politics and thought are full of examples of those not so easily misled. Furthermore, I stated in the next paragraph that non-Germans aren't immune to these flaws. But most importantly, the characterization is not a "broad oversimplified generalization" by Braude but a paraphrase from several carefully argued essays by George Steiner on the relationship between German language and culture and the Holocaust (in *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature, and the Inhuman*) which I was taping for Ed at the time. It is his thesis that corruption—lack of clarity and precision—in the language made possible the expression of the ideas of Nazism, which in turn vitiated the language so that, despite the valiant efforts of exiles like Brecht and Thomas Mann, it became a language in which it was no longer possible to speak meaningfully of the true and the real (until exorcised and redeemed by the practices of ruthlessly honest postwar writers like Günter Grass). Steiner has probably put in more cogent and exhaustive work on this subject than any other living scholar. I deliberately omitted my usual practice of crediting everything I consciously borrow in order to see if anyone would say "Aha! A reckless generality!" without considering whether it might be an accurate generality—indeed, without adducing evidence to disprove it. (Supporting evidence can be found in Steiner's book, particularly in its third section, "Language Out of Darkness." Support for the generalizations I paraphrased will be found there *passim*.) The moral: before you dismiss a generalization out of hand, examine it to see if it is probably inaccurate ("All blacks have rhythm") or so phrased as to have a high probability of being valid ("Most American blacks sooner or later encounter racial bigotry"). I admit I didn't play fair by representing as my own personal opinion what was actually a distinguished scholar's expert opinion. Would have reacted differently, Brian, if I had?

[For more on opinions and their values, see Mathoms, page 4.]

SAM AND THE IRONCLADS

David Palter

Sam Moskowitz has certainly supported his arguments against Algis Budrys with a very impressive array of backup and details. Unless Algis Budrys can come up with a very convincing rebuttal, I'm going to be forced to conclude that Sam Moskowitz has proven his point. It would appear that Algis Budrys, in criticizing the accuracy of Sam Moskowitz, was being quite inappropriate. Moskowitz is, in fact, more accurate than Budrys himself.

Brian Earl Brown

I've become convinced that Moskowitz has been frequently and unjustifiably ill served by various fans like Algis Budrys and the late Terry Carr. His labors as a historian have been dismissed out of hand as full of errors. Yet rarely are these errors ever listed or the authorities for calling them errors ever cited. Sam, I'm sure, has made some mistakes. What scholar doesn't? But the generally dismissive tone his critics take is totally unjustified. Of course it doesn't help Sam's case to try to invoke a statute of limitations in his discussion of Wells's "The Land Ironclads." There is no expiration period for commentary. It may change with time as new information is discovered or ideas mature, but it doesn't become obsolete just because it's old. Sam quoted two lines from Wells's story to support his theory, but neither seems particularly convincing to me that Wells was describing a tracked vehicle like our modern tanks. For one thing, tracks would have been more clearly described if that's what he meant, because a tracked vehicle is fairly obvious in appearance. Secondly, the second quote that the Land Ironclads were leaving a trail like the dotted tracings sea things leave in sand is more suggestive of a walking vehicle than of one running on a continuous belt of treads.

This question so intrigued me that I dug out my copy of H.G. Wells's complete short stories. Wells is naturally vague or coy about describing his Land Ironclads for most of the story. His few descriptions compare it to an insect, a centipede, and a sea thing. He describes its motion as scuttling, all of which characterize a walking motion. The one detailed description outlined eight pair of large wheels from which are hung feet. Now feet attached to the rim of a wheel would not be called "hung." This description sounds much like a common children's pull-toy where feet are riveted to its rollers so when it is pulled the feet flash up and down as if it were walking. Extend the feet past the wheel and power the wheels and you'd have a gizmo that would thrust a foot into the ground, heave up the carriage, and push it forward. Compared to a tracked vehicle this is highly inefficient, but apparently Wells didn't think of a track-laying caterpillar tank. Still, this is a minor point compared to Wells's clear vision that trench warfare was obsolete because of modern technology, i.e. the tank however it was propelled. If this was Moskowitz's greatest error as a researcher, I don't consider it much at all. Certainly his other points on ASTOUNDING, Campbell, and Campbell's death seem wholly and carefully researched.

John Brunner

I feel that someone ought to set the record straight about the mode of propulsion of Wells's Land Ironclads.

Mr. Diplock's "pedrails" were factual. I found a description of them in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in my prep school library. I have no idea which edition, but I must have read about them in the late 1940's. They were indeed invented well before today's caterpillar tracks, since the story dates from 1903, while according to *The Shell Book of Firsts* a commercially practical crawler tractor was not demonstrated until 1904 and petrol-driven versions were not on sale until 1908. However, they can scarcely be called a "precursor" of the caterpillar track, since the mode of operation was radically different as can be seen from the story. One suspects they were too complicated for general use, for the nearest thing to them that I recall, in news films of WWI and the period immediately before, would have been the large flat swiveling plates attached to the wheels of, e.g., heavy field guns, and these definitely did not work on Mr. Diplock's rather elaborate principles. Crawler tractors, on the other hand, were being widely built in Britain before the war, and were used to haul artillery long before anyone thought of arming and armoring them to create the first tanks—thanks, perhaps, to Wells?

Richard Brandt

Sam Moskowitz was fun to read this issue, as usual. SaM can be amusing, as when he ran an in-depth interview with one of Gernsback's old editors in the last FANTASY COMMENTATOR, and then in a separate piece took issue with all of his subject's first-hand recollections. Never-

theless, the kind of painstaking, meticulous research he puts into his refutation does not cast his naysayers in a favorable light.

Fred Stone

I just bought the current NIEKAS at a con fanzine lounge and am not surprised by Sam's latest tirade. A box of old fanzines had an issue of SCIENCE FICTION TIMES in which Sam Moskowitz jumped all over Harry Warner, including implying that he was a Communist, just because Harry decided to write a history of fandom, a field Sam considered as his personal territory.

Anyhow I agree that Sam probably knows more about science fiction than any other living person and he has been unjustly dismissed as an authority. However the errors Sam finds in Budrys's articles are trivial. Budrys has an excellent overview of the field as a whole. What trucking company Campbell worked for is a trivial error compared to his general insight and Sam is nitpicking over points like this and the heart-attack/aorta.

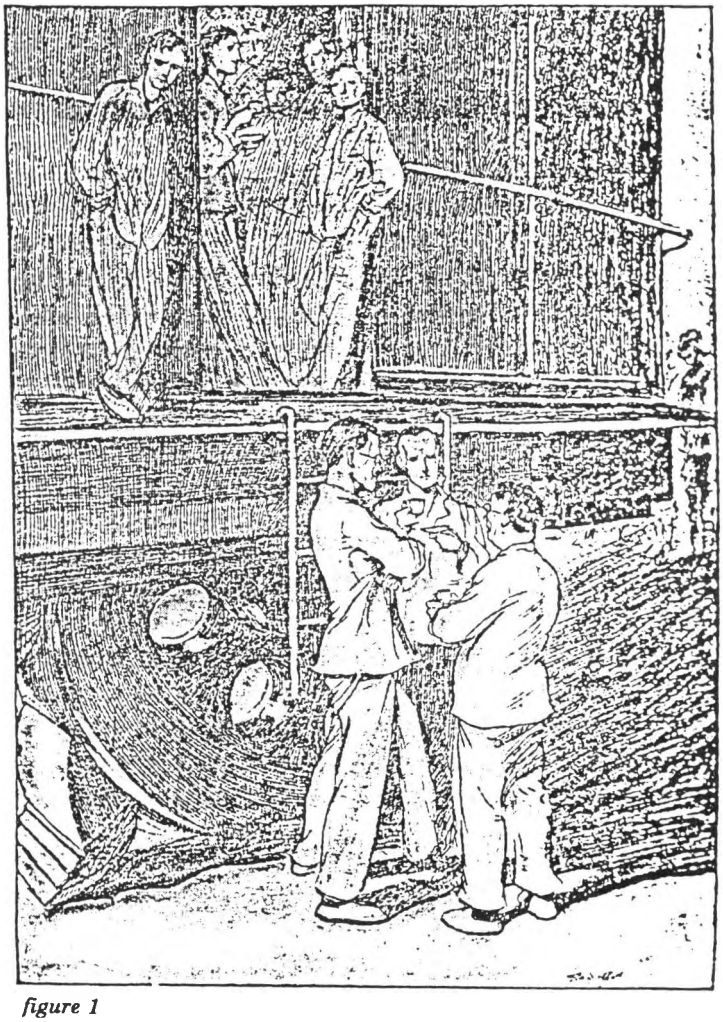


figure 1

A. Langley Searles

As a fan whose interest and experience goes back to 1930, I'd like to say a few words in support of Sam Moskowitz's article in NIEKAS 36. Sam's statements concerning "The Land Ironclads" are clearly correct, and it is sad to see would-be critics like Algis Budrys dredge up twenty-year-old subjects for polemicizing in an attempt not only to denigrate *A. Merritt—Reflections in the Moon Pool* but to downgrade work of a man like Moskowitz, whose scholarship he himself has never approached.

What we need is not casual, petty reviewing of this nature, but more of the thoughtful insights that have marked Sam's own contributions to the SF field over the years. These have stood the test of time, and have been found sound, reliable, and accurate.

Everybody makes mistakes, but I have found that Sam's slips are of the minor kind that do not detract from the larger, more important parts of the picture. On all seminal planes he has proved reliable. Knowledgeable people in the field will probably not be influenced by Budrys's off-the-top-of-the-shall-we-say-mind sort of writing; but unfortunately, as Sam says, there are many people who read well but not too wisely. That is the real tragedy of the situation. I can speak, furthermore, not only as a reader and critic, but as a publisher. From 1945 to 1952 I published Sam's Immortal Storm serially in my FANTASY COMMENTATOR magazine. During that seven-year period I received numerous letters about the work, and I can state dogmatically that none of these unearthed a single major error in it. And I know, from the inside so to speak, how careful he was in formulating the concepts he inferred and in stating the facts on which they were based. It is too bad, also, that Budrys's level of reviewing makes it necessary for Sam to spend his time defending himself against small fry that infest SF criticism today when he could, instead, be devoting his efforts to more creative ends. He can comfort himself, however, by reflecting on the ancient Arab saying: "The dogs howl, but the caravan moves on."

Sam Moskowitz

Here is an illustration *[figure 1]* from "The Land Ironclads" by H.G. Wells from the December, 1903, issue of THE STRAND magazine where it was first published. It shows a close-up of one of the wheels of the "ironclad" and there's no question at all that the wheel is inside a thick continuous tread and there is nothing whatever that one might call "feet" in sight. There are plainly visible what we today would call "treads" or "pads." There are two other long distance shots, one enclosed *[figure 2]*, of the "ironclads" illustrating the story and the wheels are plainly evident but nothing whatsoever that we might call "feet." It shows the "land ironclad" with a faint line below the wheels that looks very much like endless treads. I am also enclosing copies of the original patent for endless tracks *[figure 3]*, identical in every detail with those in use on tanks today, from the issue of FARMER AND MECHANIC dated December 19, 1850, along with the text describing the patent. As I mentioned in my article in NIEKAS 36, Budrys confused feet with legs. *Webster's New Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* (1962) defines "foot" as the "lower extremity of the leg; the part of the leg on which a person stands or moves." As a second definition it has "a thing like a foot in some ways; specifically, in (a) the part that a thing stands on; base; (b) the lowest part; bottom." Perhaps, as I previously stated, when the story was published in 1903 the word "tread" was not commonly applied to the surface of a substance that made contact with the ground on a moving vehicle. Similar "pads" were certainly not in common use for the surface of wheeled vehicles which came in contact with the ground, so Wells used "feet" (plural) for multiple raised surfaces. Therefore, in an effort to describe the locomotion of his tanks he tends to confuse modern readers, but evidently not the artist of his day. The artist, Claude A. Shepperson, was very prominent and for most of the illustrations of the story he utilized a grease pencil for black-and-white drawings. "The

Land Ironclads" first appeared in hardcover in the anthology *The Blinded Soldiers and Sailors Gift Book*, edited by George Goodchild, from Jarrold & Sons, London, 1915. Evidently Wells had donated the story so that money could be raised to assist those who lost their sight in various armed services.

In a BBC radio talk on February 15, 1940, Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton claimed that he had conceived of and invented the World War I tank after watching a tractor with a caterpillar tread operating in a field. In 1916 the tanks were introduced by the British on the battlefields of France, largely due to the pressure of Winston Churchill. The old-guard military fought the notion and delayed the introduction of the new weapon in sufficient numbers until later in the war, missing a chance to turn the tide earlier. But the public was electrified at the news and the editor of THE STRAND magazine, H. Greenhough Smith, rushed back into print in the November, 1916, issue "The Land Ironclads" with all the original illustrations except the one I have forwarded for reproduction. The reason for its deletion was technical. In the original printing it had filled out the last page of the story. In the reprinting, because of war paper shortages, smaller type was used and to run the picture would have required an extra page, instead of neatly ending it at the bottom of the page without it. It should be noted that Wells did not challenge the artist's depiction of his "ironclads."

In introducing the story editor Smith blurbed: "A prophecy fulfilled. The story first made its appearance in our pages nearly thirteen years ago. We have decided to reprint it here—not only for the sake of new readers but of many old ones—as the most startling case of record in which the vision of a fiction writer had 'come true' in actual fact. The landship of imagination is the 'tank' in being—this description of its doings might have been written at the front today. The chief point of difference is a matter for our pride. The landship was the invention of an enemy (in Wells's story), while the men who conceived, built, and driven our new monster through the firing line, one and all are British born."

Years later when Wells heard Swinton claim the invention of the tank on BBC he responded with an article in THE LISTENER in which he cited his prior claim to the idea and spoke so unflatteringly of Swinton that the latter sued for libel and lost!

Of course we know that Wells was scarcely the first author to predict the tank. The concept goes as far back as Leonardo da Vinci and the 19th Century Lou Senarens of FRANK READE fame and Albert Robida and his book *Twentieth Century* went into elaborate detail on such weapons, but should it be agreed that Wells's "ironclad" was indeed with endless treads or what could be called "feet" for purchase, he might well be the first to predict that type of vehicle.

The notion may be that my published research was riddled with "errors" results from a review by P. Schuyler Miller of my book *Explorers of the Infinite* in October, 1963, ANALOG. By a coincidence it also involves H.G. Wells. When I wrote the chapter on Wells, I thought that it was of particular importance that I point out that there were a great number of versions and components of his story *The Time Machine*, and he recast it a number of times before he got it right. My reason for doing this was because of the high quality and historical importance to science fiction of that story. At the time I presented my material I did not think there was anything remotely questionable about it and probably almost anyone with a scholarly interest in Wells (which number included Miller) must be aware of the information. To my complete and honest astonishment, most were not! When the article originally appeared as "The Wonders of H.G. Wells" in SATELLITE SCIENCE FICTION for April, 1958, Miller wrote me "correcting" information in the article. His corrections were mistaken.

When the book appeared without his "corrections" in it he was miffed that his kindness had been ignored and began to point these out as serious "errors" in the book. Among them was my listing of "The Rediscovery of the Unique," an essay by H.G. Wells, as an early component of *The Time Machine*. Miller managed to locate a copy of the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW for July, 1891, in which it appeared, read it, and stated that it had nothing on earth to do with *The Time Machine*. The trouble with that was that H.G. Wells disagreed with him. In his introduction to a boxed, deluxe edition of *The Time Machine* published by Random House in 1931, in listing some of the early bits and pieces that formed the foundation of *The Time Machine*, H.G. Wells said: "And there was also an account of the idea, set up to be printed for the FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW in 1891 and never used. It was there called "The Universe Rigid." That too is lost beyond rediscovery, though a less unorthodox predecessor, "The Rediscovery of the Unique," insisting on the individuality of

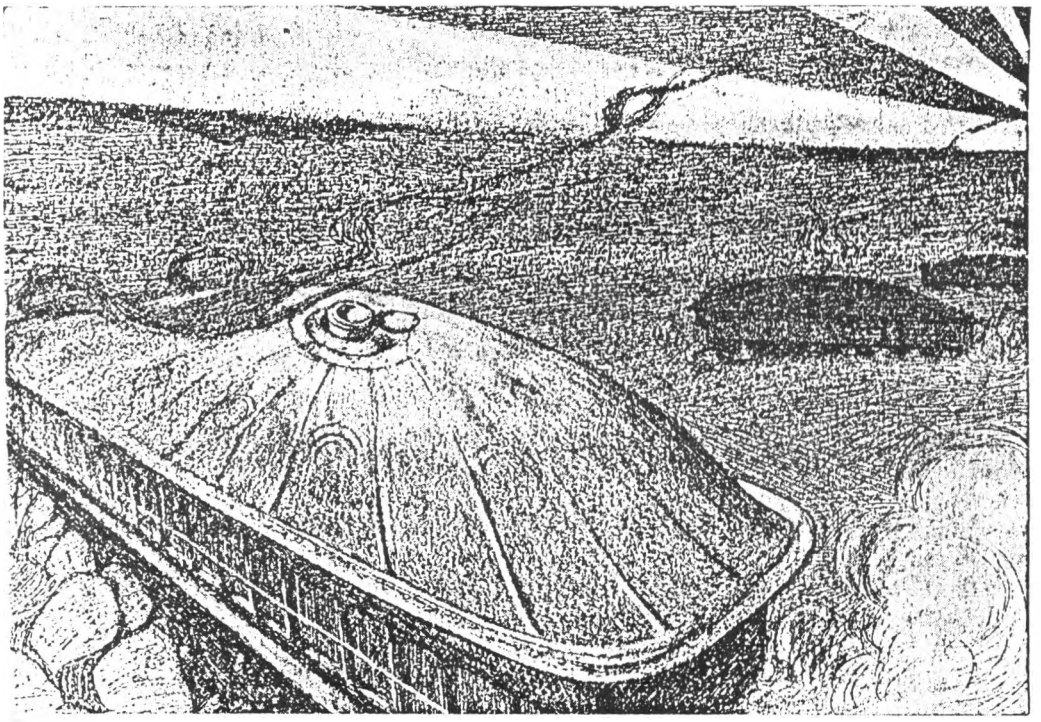
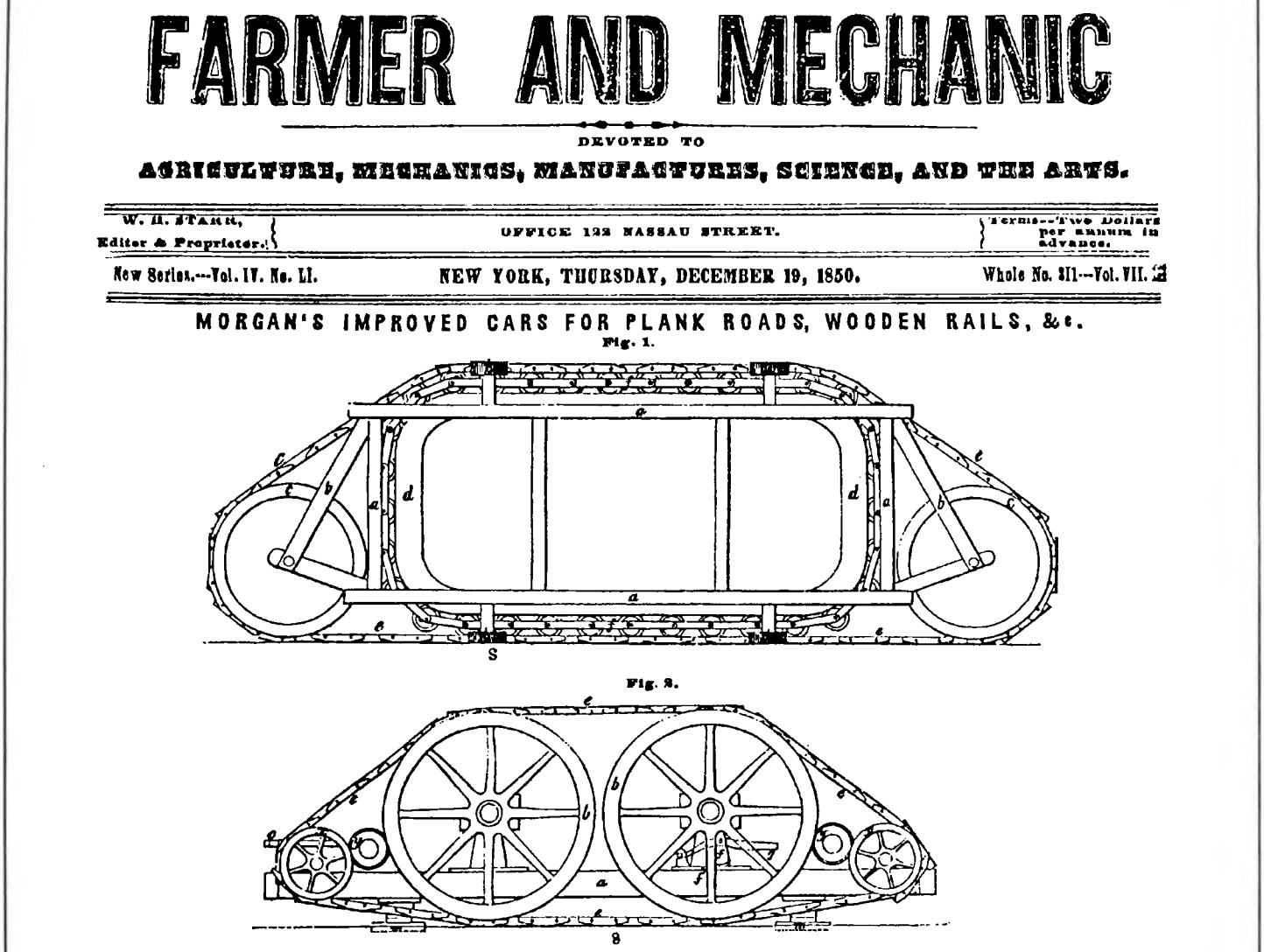


figure 2



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MORGAN'S IMPROVED CARS FOR PLANK ROADS, WOODEN RAILS, &c.

Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.

figure 3

atoms, saw the light in the July issue of that year."

To me it was inconceivable that any "scholar" of H.G. Wells would not be familiar with a 1931 introduction on how he came to write *The Time Machine*, but Miller wasn't and neither, apparently, was anyone else, at least not anyone willing to write a note and say: "Just a minute! Miller was wrong. Wells says that the concepts in that piece went into the writing of The Time Machine and let me tell you where." Miller then, incredibly, went on to say: "I also doubt the statement that sections of *The Time Machine* appeared as a series of articles in THE NATIONAL OBSERVER in 1894, if only because the story was serialized in 1894-95 in THE NEW REVIEW, and it is unlikely that two contemporary literary magazines would have run the same story at essentially the same time, or that Wells would have sent it to both. However, THE NATIONAL OBSERVER is not in the Pittsburgh libraries, so I could not check."

Well, he was wrong and vindication comes in the form of a book titled *The Definitive Time Machine, a Critical Edition of H.G. Wells's Scientific Romance With Introduction and Notes by Harry M. Geduld*, published by Indiana University Press in 1987, which explains how it happened. Seven installments of *The Time Machine* were run in THE NATIONAL OBSERVER and it collapsed. The editor, W.E. Henley, got a job with THE NEW REVIEW and asked Wells to expand on his material and run the story with him, which is what Wells did. This new volume also runs segments from both versions, since they differ.

Now I had obtained my information from the major biography entitled *H.G. Wells* by Geoffrey West (Gerald Howe, 1930). West, in the introduction, says he got the information from H.G. Wells. I had given precise dates of everything; all one had to do was locate a copy to confirm.

I wrote John W. Campbell September 15, 1963: "The space P. Schuyler Miller has devoted to my new book on the history of science fiction from the World Publishing Co., *Explorers of the Infinite*, in the October, 1963, issue, while generous, is negated by a list of his own misconceptions, incorrect surmises, and research shortcomings which are ungraciously offered as

my errors. I refuse to accept them." I then went on to, point by point, refute and counter them. Campbell called me up and said he couldn't print my piece as written because it would "tend to humiliate Miller" but he would run something that would permit Miller to "save face."

I had always been on a friendly basis with Miller and I expected that letters would come from the Wells "scholars" vindicating me, so I drafted a watered-down polite refutation; but I also tried to educate him. Since "The Discovery of the Unique" was difficult to relate if one read it out of chronologicy with other models of *The Time Machine*, I said: Its theory stems from the first version of *The Time Machine* entitled *The Chronic Argonauts*, THE SCIENCE SCHOOLS JOURNAL, 1888. Therein Wells has Nebogipfel, his "first" time traveler, in dialogue present the premise that no theory, idea, atom, or moment in time is precisely alike nor can it ever be exactly duplicated. This idea, termed "nominalism," was expanded and clarified in "The Rediscovery of the Unique" and forms one of the foundations of *The Time Machine*. In doing so, Wells anticipated Alfred Korzybski's "General Semantics" by 42 years. The "now" Wells said in introducing the Random House 1931 edition of *The Time Machine*, "therefore is not instantaneous, it is a shorter or longer measure of time, a point that has still to find its proper appreciation in contemporary thought." Both *The Chronic Argonauts* and a very precise pinpointing of the origin of "The Rediscovery of the Unique" may be found in Bernard Bergonzi's *The Early H.G. Wells* (Manchester University Press, 1961) in *The Chronic Argonauts* in *The Definitive Time Machine*.

Needless to say, no Wells scholars wrote in, or if they did Campbell never printed their letters. Since that time I have had an ample demonstration that the most outrageous errors and some deliberate falsehoods appear and remain unchallenged unless I personally do so. These falsehoods find their way into encyclopedias and their authors receive awards for their "discoveries" in "scholarship." Miller's review was picked up by James Blish and several others as a basis for their argument that my books are full of errors. Even those who all but copy my work verbatim add a disclaimer. They sometimes list a book that has copied the material from me as their "source."

If one were to check back on the substantial amount of material printed in a variety of books on science fiction, they would find that no mention of it can be found before I published it. That is because on every subject I have done a considerable amount of research. I have interviewed in person and by mail most of those living that I have written about, I have obtained birth certificates, wills, church records, questioned relatives and friends, obtained photocopies of letters of the individuals owned by others, purchased all available reference materials. Beyond that my personal reference sources are immense. Some fifty four-drawer file cabinets with clippings, excerpts, fan magazines relating to everything in the field. Some 55 years of correspondence, now filling a third four-drawer filing cabinet, including in addition every postcard and circular I ever received, every catalog and bill for books. I have of course every magazine published in English, some 7000 hard-cover books (nothing of importance missing). Almost every book about science fiction published. One of the largest fan magazine collections in existence, all filed in perfect order. Several thousand foreign science fiction magazines. Some 1500 with fantasy or fantasy related materials, some 3000 British magazines containing fantasy or fantasy related materials dating back to 1850, a similar number of American non-fantasy magazines of the general type in addition to thousands of pulps dating from the first ARGOSY including a massive group of mystery, detective, adventure, air, etc. I have an untotaled number of paperbacks from the first *Lost Horizon* by James Hilton up to the present, over a thousand books on publishing, literary biography, editorial memos. I keep running files of non-duplicated materials on hundreds of prominent and thousands of subjects related to science fiction. I have filed thousands of fantasy excerpts from non-fantasy publications not duplicating what I have in complete magazines, there are runs of magazine office files bound with notes about the procurement, payment, and disposition of material. Through the past fifty years I have been on a first-name basis with the historically important names in the field like Hugo Gernsback, Farnsworth Wright, John W. Campbell, F. Orlin Tremaine, Harry Bates, Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Clifford Simak, Fritz Leiber, Theodore Sturgeon, and Arthur C. Clarke. To simplify, I had a 14,000 word article on my collection, giving a general overview for SPECIAL COLLECTIONS magazine, Vol.2 No.1/2 (1983). The collection fills four rooms. All I am trying to say is that "critics" like Algis Budrys, with minute reference sources and failing memories, are deliberately attempting to steer seekers after information away from the best documented references that exist to a fairyland of their own invention. They are rewriting history and already a lot of fictitious history is going into reference books and there seem to be very few out there capable of distinguishing between fact and fiction. A graphic example, one of many, was the repeated assertion, predominantly by the academics, that the first college-level class in science fiction was conducted by Mark Hillegas in 1962. Despite my personally writing to the authors of these statements, the claim was repeatedly made in print and at conventions. In 1976 Colin Lester, who was working with Peter Nichols on *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, wrote me saying that he had heard that I had an earlier science fiction course, could I document that claim? On August 31, 1976, I wrote him an 1800-word letter giving him full data including the fact that everything I said could be confirmed by my guest lecturers which included Robert A. Heinlein, John W. Campbell, Isaac Asimov, Lester del Rey, L. Sprague de Camp, Murray Leinster, Algis Budrys, Chester Whitehorn, and Robert Sheckley. I had the college catalog listing the course and and myself as a member of the faculty. I was paid for the sessions, it ran for years from 1952 on and later was taken over by Hans Stefan Santesson. But the stories our class produced were run with printed acknowledgment to the class in FANTASTIC UNIVERSE magazine. What is more, I had conducted two major guest lectures in 1950 and 1952 at Columbia and New York University on science fiction (by major, I mean three hours in length), with published proof at the time. *The Science Fiction Encyclopedia* appeared with the information that Mark Hillegas had conducted the first such class in 1963!

In 1979 Isaac Asimov in his memoirs *In Memory Yet Green* and Lester del Rey in *The World of Science Fiction* specifically mentioned that they had guest lectured at the class in 1953 and I wrote an 1800-word article titled "Realizing the Impossible Dream" in FANTASY COMMENTATOR for Winter, 1983, on the class, even giving the names of the students! But the earlier erroneous listing of the Mark Hillegas course (and there were at least three others following me and before his) as the first remains in references and undoubtedly will be picked up and perpetuated as will Budrys's statement that "gifted" Lee Hawkins Garby rewrote *The Skylark of Space* for E.E. Smith.✹

REVIEWS & COMMENT

THE DARK LADY, Mike Resnick, TOR, 1987.

This is a riveting tale of mystery and discovery. Who—or what—is the Dark Lady? How has she inspired portraits of herself across 80,000 years of human history? How did she show up in a 20th Century photograph—and yet still live in the days of the Oligarchy, when Man rules the Galaxy? Why are some men, who have never pursued any artistic endeavor before, compelled to make portraits of her? Why is she sad? Of such questions, and others, is the adventure made.

Yet, although the story is about her, it is nonetheless not her story. It is Leonardo's story, and on that distinction is built the real power and interest of this "Romance of the Far Future"—a parable, really. The plot doesn't concern us with just Leonardo's entanglement with, the quest of, the Dark Lady; for that alone, a human character would have sufficed. But Leonardo isn't human, and therein is the underpinning of a subtle and moving tragedy—a more compelling one, perhaps, than anything the Greeks ever did; for Leonardo's fatal flaw isn't *hubris*, it's innocence.

Leonardo is a Bjornn from Denitarus II, an art critic in the employ of a human-run art gallery. Because of his unique abilities he's hired privately to locate portraits of the mysterious "Dark Lady." Soon he becomes enmeshed, by slow and inexorable steps, in disaster.

Leonardo's misfortune lies in the fact that human beings are corrupt, and he isn't. All humans are corrupt to one degree or another, aren't we? Some of us may transgress the bounds of law and ethics only in minor ways: but there is an ascending scale of wrongdoing, and you'll find people who fit into any given place on it. Yet even the most wicked are often successful in rationalizing, and believing that what they're doing isn't all *that* wrong, or isn't wrong at all.

Imagine, then, a member of the non-human race, whose very genes are ethical, bred from the womb to honor each commitment and to commit no dishonor. Those two goals would be compatible in his own society— but would they be in the Oligarchy of Man? If all Men are corrupt to some degree, and all act out of selfish motives, wouldn't it be true that honoring a commitment to Human A often would lead, inevitably, to doing something which Human B would perceive as dishonorable? How long would it be before the innocent is thereby corrupt?—and yet, strangely, no less innocent for all that.

Thus the Dark Lady tempts Leonardo the Bjornn to an Odyssey among Humanity—which, in the end, leads to his complete Fall. If this is a romance, it's one that ends in individual, and yet cosmic, tragedy. Is that a sad ending? Perhaps; but do we have here a Fall such as that of Lucifer, or that of Prometheus? If Leonardo's fall is complete, he nonetheless will bring with him a fire, and in the end you will see it burning.

Rod Walker

STALKING THE UNICORN, Mike Resnick, TOR, 1987.

Mike Resnick's books are always crackling good stories ("fables," he calls them). I've yet to find one I could put down once I started it. Happily, his characters are always believable. They aren't super people and they don't save the universe (or *whatever* needs saving) by becoming super people. They are, instead, *real* people. They may grow and develop in the course of the story (which is what makes a good story), but they never become unreal. No *deus ex machina* here; just good solid plots and characterizations. Yes, and something better, besides. These are fables, parables, after all; not merely action yarns.

John Justin Mallory, the protagonist of *Stalking*, is an ordinary guy. He's an OK private eye—Sherlock Holmes he isn't, but maybe a cousin to Sam Spade. Life seems to be turning against him, so he accepts a job that sounds a tad impossible. He has to recover a lost unicorn. Oh-oh, does this sound like fantasy instead of SF? Yep—and soon Mallory's venturing into a different New York, one that exists in a space parallel with our own Big Apple. It's tenanted by gnomes, goblins, and pixies, and all such beasties, as well as regular people—and the awful Grundy. This Apple is just as rotten and worm-eaten as our own. It's full of some very dangerous characters and some very dangerous magic—and the awful Grundy.

Stalking is a very funny novel. It's also a very sad one. I was quite moved by this book—for it does what fables do best: it holds a mirror to the face of humanity. Like most of Mike's books, this is entertaining and deeply profound at the same time.

Does Mallory find the unicorn? There is no simple answer to that one. Does he get a chance to save the universe? Yes, he does. Does he actually save it? Ah, again no simple answer; no such thing in this re-

markable book—but it's a great reading experience. The action is fast-paced, lasting less than eleven hours. In the same time John Justin Mallory learns about compassion; he learns about it from a miniature horse, from a talking mirror, from a retired unicorn hunter, from a completely egocentric cat-woman, and (most surprisingly) from the terrible Grundy himself (or itself).

Who (or what) is the Grundy? Ah, surely you must have guessed by now.

That is part of the wonder of this fable, as it is about all of Mike's fables. It's not about some different, superior, better, or alien *them*. It's about *us*.

Rod Walker

THE TIME OF THE DARK, Barbara Hambley, Ballantine-del Rey, 1982, 263 pp., $2.50.

Combining a standard medievalism with a southern California culture, the author spins a yarn of swords and sorcery involving wizards and demons, an alternate earth, and two young Americans who seek to aid the survival of a medieval human society in this other world. The enemy is the race of demonic beings, the wizard Inglorian. The strange epic is strung out in a trilogy whose other titles are *The Walls of Air* and *The Armies of Daylight*. This is Mrs. Hambley's first professional published work, and it contains some serious weaknesses. As an adventure tale it isn't half bad— the characters are well sketched; society's structure in Darwath is allowed to be flexible within its feudal model; the plot incidents are well prepared; and finally, there is a sense of sympathy for the world that catches the reader. The initial arrogance of the Americans, Rudy (a drifter back home) and Jill (a doctoral student in Medieval history at UCLA), turns into an increasing fascination with the psychological security provided by Darwath and defended with vigor by a native queen, Minalde. Yet the fantasy never rises to greatness and too often stagnates into mediocrity.

The author brings too many modern interests into her tale, and they clash with the medieval culture in which she enmeshes her characters. The dialogue of all characters tends to fall into the basic American pattern of slang and colloquialisms. The logic of "The Void," wherein Inglorian originally flees to our earth with the endangered baby Prince of Dar is weakened by the talkiness of the wizard in certain parts of the novel, and by the attempt to combine scientific rationalism with occult magic. The appearance of Christianity in this alien world is never explained—nor the author's descriptive coldness to it. There are some fascinating creatures and cultures appearing but the authors brusque approach weakens their impact on our sense of wonder. The constant comparison by Jill and Rudy of elements of their world to Darwath irritates after a while—and the sexual escapade of Rudy with the queen is maudlin to the point of sentimental nonsense. The author celebrates human courage in its battle to survive the metaphysical threat of "The Dark." The latter menace gives much promise for a sense of suspense and tragic conflict within the world but, again, the style of the book prevents this.

The Walls of Air and *The Armies of Daylight* give us some good scenes of action drama as cities are torn apart, armies of ghouls rise up, ecclesiastical intrigues seek to curb Rudy and Jill (a female priesthood this time!), and the romance boils on to its expected end. But the climactic struggle of our three protagonists with "The Dark" is a disappointment. The nature of the evil is frittered away into "social Darwinism" of survival of the fittest. Theme. Jill turns into a clerical bureaucrat for this world and we are left with our imagination tensed but unsatisfied.

Thomas M. Egan

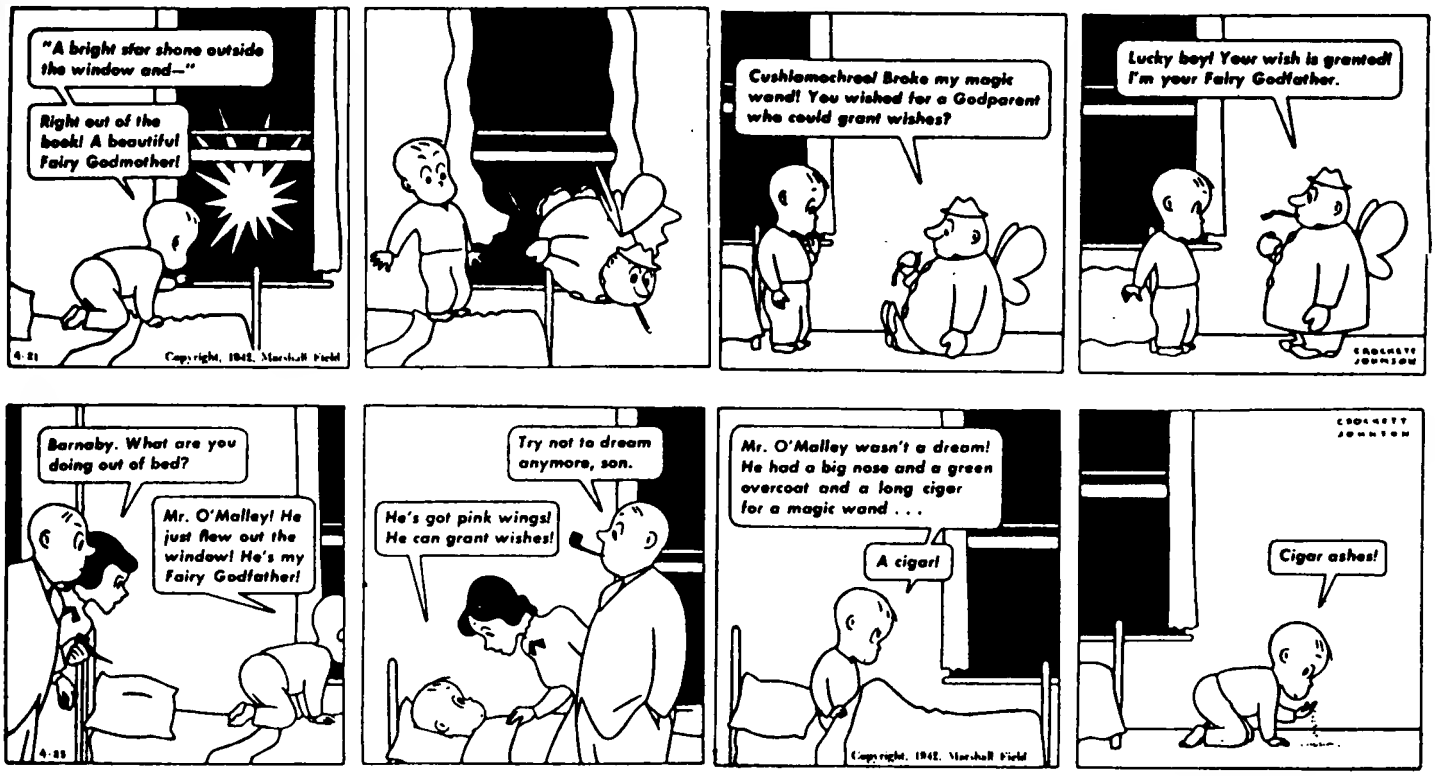
BARNABY #1, 2, & 3, Crockett Johnson, Ballantine-del Rey, 1985,6, pp. 213, 218, 218, $2.95 each.

The comic strip is an American tradition going back to the 1890's and the Hearst newspapers. The early comics were a rowdy and raucous lot, even racist and violent at times (of "The Yellow Kid" variety). The variety grew and a surprising quality appeared at times. One of the best in its gentle whimsey and deft satire was the strip that appeared in early 1942 and lasted for ten years. This was "Barnaby", telling of the adventures of a New York City suburban preschooler who had wished for a fairy god-parent and gotten his wish. The fairy in question is a child-sized pixie with a weight problem by name of Mr. O'Malley.

The strip was created by a native New Yorker, David Johnson Leisk who took the name "Crockett Johnson." For the 1940's "Barnaby" seemed very conservative in his values but the strip appeared first in the left radical New York tabloid PM. Before 1942, Johnson was art director for McGraw Hill and a free-lance cartoonist whose work regularly appeared in COLLIERS. An impressive list of intellectuals in America praised it to the skies including Dorothy Parker, Robert Nathan, Rockwell Kent, Louis Untermeyer, and Norman Corwin among others.

The style of Crockett Johnson is simple but effective—outline of figures and scenery and flat backs. Shading and intense detail is avoided. Figures and background items are flat, dimensionless, achieving a quiet quality that still takes our attention. There is no chaos anywhere, yet the satire is everywhere.

The characters all come through. The author used an enormous amount of dialogue in his balloons-of-speech—and it seems perfectly appropriate to his world of outline of white and black figures and scenery. Mr. O'Malley is the key to the humor of the strip. He takes himself very seriously as do all of Crockett's "Barnaby" characters. With a cigar for his magic wand he comes through the window one fine night to surprise Barnaby. Of course, adults are *never* allowed to see Mr. O'Malley. So, Barnaby finds himself at odds with his concerned parents who won't believe him. And of course there's the question of the *other* beings in the local woods—leprechauns, elfs, ogres, and folk who are *very* strange. Even Barnaby's dog, Gorgon, is unusual when he wants to be—he talks when in the mood and even likes to make puns. The adventures of Barnaby go from the local haunted house where he meets the timid resident ghost named Gus (who wears glasses and stages Shakespearean plays) to the halls of Congress. Mr. O'Malley connects with the local corrupt ward boss and gets elected to Congress himself! Yet no one sees him—or minds. A typical politician? Barnaby foils a Nazi spy, foils crooks, and foils his parents too—all by accident in some delightful spoofs at "real life." The piece with the child psychiatrist is great and Barnaby clambers into our hearts in the process. The ventures are all during the period of America's entrance into World War II. Ration cards, civil defense, war service boards all enter into the simple adventures of Barnaby and his fairy guardian. The latter is a member of the Elves, Leprechauns, Gnomes, and Little Men's Chowder and Marching Society but he also likes to frequent the local establishment of Paddy's Bar & Grill. He makes lots of mistakes and quarrels with his fellow spirits but his pudgy figure is a delight to savor



for its low-key humor. And Barnaby Baxter learns a little of the delights and pitfalls of growing up with his personal fairy. Adults and kids alike will enjoy these books though on different levels. Nostalgia and whimsey are mixed in an agreeable reading style.

Thomas M. Egan

[BARNABY was as popular in its day as "Pogo", "Peanuts" and "Doonsbury" were to successive generations. When San Francisco Bay Area fen started a new club in the 40's they called it the "Elves, Gnomes, & Little Men's Science Fiction, Chowder & Marching Society." When I lived in the Bay Area in the early 60's they held an annual picnic to live up to at least part of the name, and Karen Anderson cooked up a wonderful vat of excellent clam chowder. I do not know whether the tradition continues. ERM]

SLIPPED by Alan Dean Foster, Berkley SF, NY, 1984. ***...WHO NEEDS ENEMIES?*** by Alan Dean Foster, Ballantine Books, NY, 1984.

The recent "garbage epic" of one very unfortunate Long Island town is echoed throughout the world as the problem of pollution continues for every modern government. Solutions are difficult and expensive, full of dangerous miscalculations, but our future depends on some solutions. Or else? Take a look at what science fiction can conjure up to tease our minds with. Alan Dean Foster is known for his popular novelizations of movies for Berkley (e.g. *Alien*) and Ballantine Books—and for many science fiction adventure tales of the far future. These include the five volumes of the adventures of Flinx of the Commonwealth, *Cachalot*, *Icerigger*, and *With Friends Like These*, all from Ballantine Books. *Slipped* gives us a tale of the near future in America when a commercial dump emits its waste and one old man, poor as a church mouse, finds himself its victim. Old Jake Picket finds himself changed with vast new mental powers. He can will physical matter, no matter how large or strong, to change radically. He can turn bullets to dust or make great skyscrapers collapse. His "magic" can allow him to talk telepathically with Amanda, his crippled grand-niece and to entertain the poor children who live at the edge of the chemical dump. He can even change the entire country of America if he really "wills" it.

The great combine that owns the property of the dump decides the scandal of its pollution is too dangerous to allow any who have been affected by the waste chemicals to survive. Too much money is at stake. Old Jake has to die. Ah, but he won't! The duel that follows is a strange battle of power and destruction. The fight is great and final. An act of compassion is there to teach us how gifts of nature ought to be used. Even death is worth the price.

...Who Needs Enemies? gives us Alan Dean Foster as a short story writer. There are a round dozen tales here, all decently written, and some are very good indeed. The time ranges from the 19th century old west where dragons still roam to the distant future when earth explores to the far reaches of distant stars. Each tale is introduced by the author for its theme and there is a pleasing variety of styles and characters and, of course, of plots. There is terror, courage, and innocence in these tales. "Swamp Planet Christmas" gives us the tropical planet Myra II, some very troublesome aborigines, a threatened earth colony, and a little girl who tries to get some Christmas gifts the wrong way. The computer's responses are a delight in reading and all too reminiscent of trouble computers give us today. "Wu-Ling's Folly" presents us with the antics of a thriving dragon and a beleaguered stage line, a Chinese sorcerer, and one mad mountain man. A delight to read. Even better is the ironic humor of "What Do the Simple Folk Do?" when the interpersonal television is a reality and you can really decide whether to have the heroine tortured to death or not!

"The Dark Light Girl" is a sombre strange tale of an isolated village in the

American southwest and what a stranded motorist can find there. Girls that "glow" can have many meanings and should be treated with care. "Gift of an Useless Man" is another tale of waste and what is valuable in nature and for us all. "Bystander" tells us how we can be blind to the realities staring us in the face—even when it saves our lives. Then there's the further adventures of Flinx, the adventurer of Flash Gordon type planetary "space opera", and his entrancing flying thing, Pip in "Snakeyes." And while you're at it, check out the Flinx novels starting with *The Tar Aym Krang*.

Thomas M. Egan

MAGIC LANTERN REVIEWS

TAMAR LINDSAY

BEETLEJUICE (PG-13)

Characters

DEAD:
Adam and Barbara Maitland, good ghosts
Juno, their social worker ghost
Beetlejuice, a bad ghost

LIVING:
Jane Butterfield—real estate agent
Charles Deetz—jerk, businessman whose nerves went bad
Delia Deetz—flaky artist
Lydia Deetz—teen, revises her suicide notes
Otho—interior decorator who dabbles in the occult
Maxie Dean—businessman who does developments

Adam Maitland—Alec Baldwin
Barbara Maitland— Geena Davis
Charles Deetz—Jeffrey Jones
Delia Deetz—Catherine O'Hara
Lydia Deetz—Winona Ryder
Beetlejuice/Betelgeuse—Michael Keaton
Juno, the caseworker— Sylvia Sidney
Maxie Dean—Robert Goulet
Bernard, Delia's agent—Dick Cavett
Otho—Glenn Shadix
Jane Butterfield—Annie McEnroe

Michael McDowell and Larry Wilson wrote the story; McDowell and Warren Skaaren wrote the screenplay. Tim Burton directed. Robert Short did the effects.

After seeing it, I thought that this movie was designed with redeeming social value in mind, but the interview with Tim Burton and Michael Keaton in Rolling Stone magazine indicates otherwise. Tim Burton, who once worked in animation at Disney studios, has a background in comedy and says he likes to work with surreal juxtapositions of the odd and the mundane; he finds them especially interesting if they almost don't work. He likes to blur distinctions. In this film, for instance, the line is blurred between the real village and the model village in the opening credits, and between life and the afterlife in the course of the story.

The original character of Beetlejuice (Betelgeuse) was "slightly oriental and more evil"—but the actor, Michael Keaton, was encouraged to revise it, and he says he began with a hairdo that made him laugh, and derived a character who "creates his own reality." In the movie, the character says "I don't have any rules." (By the way, Rule 2 for ghosts, quoted twice, is different the second time.)

I found the acting convincing enough. Michael Keaton's portrayal of Beetlejuice stands out; the cheap hustler characterization is similar to the part he played in GUNG-HO, but it is also good typecasting; Beetlejuice is supposed to be sleazy. Jeffrey Jones makes Charles Deetz an appealing jerk coping with a flaky wife.

The language would have been shocking in the fifties, because Beetlejuice and Maxie Dean each swear once. Today the language is nothing much; besides, the characters who swear the worst are the villains.

Reviewers complain that the movie is uneven. It starts with an appealing couple trapped in an emotionally painful and frustrating situation and changes to a riproaring comedy shortly after Beetlejuice enters. Tim Burton admits to the unevenness, but points out that most of the great film comedies are uneven and it doesn't hurt them. Some complain that the jokes seem to be thrown in almost at random; I didn't think so. The jokes vary from low comedy to sophisticated, topical and deadpan humor, providing something for everyone in the audience. The serious theme of Lydia's suicidal depression continues under the comedy. There is also a sort of understated "bug" theme to this movie—a "beetle" in the character's name, spiders in the house, the insects he eats and mimics, the proposed insect exhibit by D-Con.

The situation is fairly simple:

A nice young country couple, the Maitlands, die in an accident and are arbitrarily required to haunt their old Connecticut home for 125 years. They continue their hobby in life, building a scale model of the town on a platform in the attic. The New Yorkers who buy the house, the Deetzes, redecorate it in their own atrocious style with the help of the stepmother's tame decorator. The Maitlands, horrified at seeing their home trashed, want to get rid of them. The secondary problem is that Mr. Deetz can't look at a small town without wanting to turn it into a suburb, with an amusement park in which the natural history exhibit of insects is paid for by D-Con. That is, not only is the peace of two ghosts at stake, so is the way of life of the small town. There is also a subplot: Lydia Deetz, the young-teen daughter, is suicidally depressed and neither parent is aware.

The Maitlands want to stay in their house. In order to establish sympathy for them, the writers make any method of leaving, voluntarily or by exorcism, very unpleasant. Leaving by the door puts them in a weird desert inhabited by frightening eel-like creatures called sandworms, which attack wandering ghosts. Going through the Door Into Limbo puts them in Limbo, from which they are sent back to the house. Exorcism would send them to the room for lost souls in Limbo, a fate even ghosts fear. Yet staying in the house is painful, as they watch the Deetzes destroy the decorating style they worked so hard to achieve.

They try to scare the Deetzes away, but the only one who sees them is Lydia, who is thrilled to meet real ghosts. On impulse, they call up Beetlejuice, a suicide who went freelance as a haunt for hire, and "got into trouble." They regret it, because he is well on his way to being a minor demon, having no morals, no manners, and a strong desire to get back into the living world by means of marrying someone. Because he nearly kills Mr. Deetz, the Maitlands temporarily trap him in their model town in the attic. When Juno brings them to Limbo again for advice, Beetlejuice tries to get Lydia to release him; she, though suicidal, is wary, recognizing

him as the dangerous ghost that injured her father. Returning, the Maitlands warn Lydia that death doesn't make things any easier.

They continue haunting on their own, but their best effort is a dinner party with the possessed guests dancing calypso to Harry Belafonte's "Banana Boat Song," which only makes the Deetzes see the money-making potential of a real haunted house.

Mr. Deetz gets his old partner, Maxie Dean, to visit, but Maxie wants the ghosts to appear on demand. When Lydia can't produce them, the live-in decorator tries a seance and accidentally begins an exorcism. As the Maitlands visibly decay, the Deetzes find they can't stop the process. Lydia asks Beetlejuice to save the Maitlands. He insists that she marry him; she agrees and lets him loose. He gets rid of Maxie and the decorator with a haunting which parodies what the developers would have done to the town. He keeps his word to Lydia by saving the Deetzes (with one of the better puns, "I think they've had enough exorcise for tonight") and then begins to force her through the wedding ceremony. The again youthful Maitlands try to get rid of him by saying his name three times (third time's the charm). Their attempts interrupt the ceremony, and at the last moment Barbara Maitland brings in a sandworm to carry him into Limbo.

The Deetzes gratefully decide that they can share the house without going public, and redecorate back to country style. They settle into small-town life. The Maitlands have the second floor of the house and help Lydia with her homework from the local prep school.

To me, the movie quite clearly contains an anti-suicide message for the junior-teen horror fans, without pounding it into the ground. Although our main characters are pleasant, the Other Side is shown to be thoroughly unappealing. We don't see any ghosts who died of natural causes; we see only Limbo, an enormous waiting room filled with ghosts who died violently, waiting for their papers to be processed—and the civil servants are the suicides. If you commit suicide, you are on the job and overworked eternally. One of them says, "If I had known then what I know now, I wouldn't have had my accident." There is no sympathy for anyone. The Maitlands tell Lydia in so many words that "Death doesn't make things any easier." Even Beetlejuice is surprised that Lydia would want to die.

Another anti-suicide element is in the special effects: the ghosts look the way their bodies did as a result of how they died. For instance, Juno, the Maitlands' assigned social worker, exhales smoke out of her slit throat. (The only other ghostly smoker I remember apparently smoked in bed and is grotesquely charred.) The wounds on the suicides detract from their appearance—the wrist-slitter has the marks, the one who stepped in front of a truck is smashed flat and has tire marks, the one who used a rope is still dangling, and so on. The message: suicide does not leave a pretty corpse.

The special effects by Robert Short are well done without being too disquieting. I like the fact that they don't spring the gruesome bits on you—there is always some split second's warning, so that the susceptible (like me) can raise their defenses. Although I would not take a child under 13 to see this, anything that doesn't even bother ME will certainly not upset a modern 13 year old. One of the Maitlands' attempts at monster shapes reminded me of the Mad Magazine cartoon, Spy Versus Spy.

It's quite a trick to make an entertaining horror comedy that may actually be good for the people who see it. It's even more unusual to do it in a way that is financially successful, and this movie is already making serious profits. The kids are talking it up to each other, and the underthirteens are scheming to get permission to see it. My compliments to all concerned.

THE PRINCESS BRIDE (Rated PG)

A fantasy movie, screenplay by William Goldman, based on his 1973 book, *The Princess Bride*. Highly recommended for general audiences. (Diabetics take note: the schmaltz level is very high.)

Characters

Grandfather—Peter Falk
Grandson—Fred Savage
Buttercup the Princess Bride—Robin Wright
Westley the Farmboy—Cary Elwes
Fezzik the Giant—Andre the Giant
Inigo Montoya the Spanish swordsman—Mandy Patinkin
Vincent Vizzini the Sicilian—Wallace Shawn
Prince Humperdinck—Chris Sarandon
Count Tyrone Rugin—Christopher Guest
The Impressive Clergyman—Peter Cook
The Albino Henchman—Mel Smith (who is not albino)
Miracle Max—Billy Crystal
Valerie, Max's wife—Carol Kane
The Man in Black/Dread Pirate Roberts—himself

There were no songs during the movie. During the end credits there was a nice ballad by Willy de Ville:

"Storybook Love." Soundtrack album available from Warner. The book has been reissued in paperback.

This is another candidate for "Best Kid's Movie You Have To Be An Adult To Appreciate."

The costuming is generally excellent fifteenth century Italian Renaissance. The Princess does not quite have a different dress in every scene, and each change is a reasonable one. The pirate and the adventurer are not dressed in period style, being more Zorro-ish. The settings are more or less correct, allowing for the presence of post and beam construction, more usually associated with the sixteenth century. Some scenes were shot in Ireland.

The language style is good modern fantasy, as might believably have been done by a grandfather translating into English for his young grandson who is ill. It is also almost squeaky clean—the grandson says "Jesus" once, and the Spaniard calls the villain an S.O.B. at an extreme moment. There is one very mild reference to sex when the Man in Black tells the sleeping giant, "Dream of large women." There is a torture scene (mild except for a lot of yelling). I believe it is rated PG for violence; there are some wounds and a couple of deaths.

There are also modern-seeming jokes which I did not think detracted from the film in the slightest, especially since the original book was equally modern and amusing. No one else in the audience seemed to have any problems with it either.

I think the acting and production elements in general are good, in that they are appropriate to the subject matter. The frame story, an old storybook read to a child, requires that the villains be the way a child would picture a villain from a nineteenth century storybook. Even a modern child does not naturally think up villains as ugly as the ones in modern horror movies, and a child the age of the grandson (about 12) would not, in a well-regulated family, have seen that kind of movie. Therefore it is correct for the villains to resemble those seen in old films edited for television.

The hero's name is Westley, with all the

implications of a western field (west lea) and other nuances of country-ness and west-ness, for example: "gone west" (meaning both `gone to adventure' and `dead'). Her name is Buttercup, a wildflower, a rather tenacious weed, in fact. He is addressed as farmboy and would naturally cultivate a common little flower.

At the beginning, the two peasants are in love; he goes off to make his fortune, and she hears he has died. Five years later, the local ruling prince (regent for his senile father) decides to marry her, which local law allows; he makes her a princess so she will be of equal rank when he announces the engagement. However, politics is afoot, and someone wants to start a war with the neighboring kingdom. She is kidnapped as part of a plan to start the war, leading to the chase in which most of the various characters meet each other. There are enough scenes of action and implied horrific violence to satisfy the modern grandchild, and there is a happy ending, which satisfies me.

There is homage paid to Errol Flynn's ROBIN HOOD, both in the fencing and in the order to double the guard, and I probably failed to catch allusions to many other great movies. There is a classic and totally unexpected mad scientist. There is at least one example of a Mother Goose rhyme. Near the end, there is a visual allusion to the final scene of Cocteau's BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. We will carefully ignore the fact that he is a pirate leader and her name is Buttercup.

I knew I'd like this movie, because the reviewer who always pans my favorites gave it a terrible review. Friday's slightly sparse opening-night audience at the small shopping center outside Trenton also liked it; they laughed at the jokes, applauded the defeat of the villains, and applauded at the end. A few of them even stayed to watch most of the credits and listen to the words of the song. Most of the audience were younger teens, some accompanied by mothers. On my second viewing, an older audience also liked it.

On the way home in the car I had another "first" reaction, as in "I never did that before": I became overcome by family feeling and started weeping from pure sentiment.

I do have one minor complaint, which is entirely personal and doesn't lessen my opinion of the movie. Billy Crystal's performance is excellent, but I'm getting very tired of funny old Jewish crackpots. I want to see a movie that has a funny old WASP crackpot, or a funny old Lithuanian or Italian crackpot, just for a change from Middle-European Jewish ethnic jokes and Yiddish accents.

Even Hammer Films had a funny old Jewish crackpot magician in one of their vampire movies. I think his name was Melchisedek, and he was only available by appointment; when the hero looked back into the hut after having officially left, he saw only a cobweb-draped skeleton.

By contrast, Monty Python and the Holy Grail had two funny old Anglo-Saxon magicians: one with ram's horns and one guarding the bridge. Open question: Is this the only occurrence? Can anyone think of another example?

WILLOW (rated PG)

Characters

Willow Ufgood—Warwick Davis
Madmartigan—Val Kilmer
Sorsha—Joanne Whalley
Queen Bavmorda—Jean Marsh
Fin Raziel—Patricia Hayes
The High Aldwin—Billy Barty
Airk Thaughbauer—Gavin O'Herlihy
General Kael—Patrick Roach
Elora Danan—lots of babies and puppets
78 stuntmen

Story by George Lucas, direction by Ron Howard, effects by Industrial Light and Magic.

WILLOW is a genuinely PG movie, and a good one—no bad language, minimal gore, and no sex, and still exciting and involving enough for an adult fantasy fan to enjoy.

The language is good clear English, except for the peculiar accent of the Brownies. There is no swearing that I can remember. Most of the violence is offscreen or nearly so, and the rest is the clean kind you saw before people started using handfuls of liver for shock effect. The special effects work is done to create believable fantasy creatures without letting the seams show. I think it would be possible to take a fairly young child to this movie, perhaps even one as young as six.

The story includes many strong women. The nameless midwife eludes the queen's best soldiers. Willow's wife, Kiaya, takes in the baby against his orders. Both sorceresses are powerful, far more than the High Aldwin. The fairy godmother (or whatever) is also powerful, though she can't intercede directly. The queen's daughter, Sorsha, is as good a warrior in her own way as Madmartigan. A nameless woman at the tavern is shown acting independently and coping with her boorish husband. Incidentally, this is the only scene with obvious sexual implications, and it is as clean as anything made in the fifties.

The opening screen has the written history of the prophecy, telling us quickly what would take several scenes to show, and following the tradition of fairy tale films by beginning with the written story. The credits roll over the first major scenes of the movie. Latecomers won't understand how the queen knew the baby was going to cause trouble for her.

The story, in case you didn't go or have forgotten:

Unlike Herod, evil Queen Bavmorda knew what mark would be on the child born to destroy her, so she required all mothers to give birth in her dungeons to make it easier to find the baby who was to be Empress Elora Danan. The queen wants the baby alive, for a ceremony. A midwife escapes with the newborn girl into the wilds for three months. The queen's mutated-rat hunting beasts finally catch up, and she just has time to float the infant out onto the river before the beasts attack.

The baby is found by the Nelwyn, a race of dwarves who live apart from humans and avoid any contact. They call humans Daikini; humans use the insulting term Peck for the Nelwyn. Willow wants to avoid trouble, but his wife decides to keep the child. Not much later the village finds out and the kindly local wizard, The High Aldwin (played by Billy Barty) sends Willow and friends to take the baby to the crossroads and give her to the first Daikini they see. The first non-soldier they see is Madmartigan, a warrior turned thief, locked in a hanging cage to die of exposure. They release him and give him the baby, along with changing rags and a milk flask. This is one of the few non-comedies I have ever seen that mention the necessity to diaper an infant as well as feed it, a nice touch of reality.

The Nelwyn have hardly turned toward home when they see the baby in the hands of the Brownies. They are captured in a scene straight out of Gulliver's Travels. The Brownies are the comic relief; they are as arrogant as a nine-inch high savage can be, and they carry a flask of fairy love dust which spills at inconvenient moments. An ethereal being tells Willow that baby Elora has chosen him to take her to the powerful human sorceress Fin Raziel, who is on an island in a lake. Willow sends his friend home with a message for his wife and goes off with two Brownie guides.

At the only sign of human habitation, they encounter Madmartigan again and escape more soldiers together. Willow finds the sorceress, but she has been transformed. The soldiers return and capture everyone. Escaping, they find some help, but in a battle the evil General Kael grabs the baby and takes her to the queen's castle. Elaborate preparations begin for the ceremony.

Fin Raziel regains her human form in time for the final confrontation with Bavmorda. The match is uneven, since Raziel needs a wand even to have a chance. Weakening and desperate, she tries physical force and gives Bavmorda a right to the jaw. Willow tries to snatch the baby, but Bavmorda knocks Raziel and Sorsha unconscious and Willow is trapped. With a display of unusual confidence he startles Bavmorda into stumbling into her own spell. As she turns into red smoke and blows away, Madmartigan finishes killing the general and gets into the tower. He and Sorsha adopt the baby and take over the kingdom, and Willow rides a white pony home to his loving family.

Some reviewers have applauded this film, while others have made a variety of complaints, mostly unjustified.

There is one legitimate complaint, which is the sheer number of times there is an inserted reaction shot of the baby. The theme is that love for a child can stimulate ordinary people to unselfishness and heroism, and the story is that this particular child is actively choosing her protectors. Therefore the infant really has a major non-speaking role. However, since she can't speak lines, and since you can't do complex fight scenes and stunt scenes with a real baby, all of her reactions had to be facial expression closeups, even the minor ones that an adult actor could take care of with a throwaway line. There are times when a closeup breaks the flow of the action, and the cumulative effect is noticeable.

The final battle between the sorceresses has been called disappointing because it isn't a contest of special effects magic. I feel that a special effects display would have been wrong for the characters. Bavmorda is capable of powerful results with little preparation, but in this case she is not attacking an undefended person. She must use all her energy, even dropping her youthfulness spell. Raziel, on the other hand, is unable to work magic on the same scale; with the wand she can undo Bavmorda's spells, but only one by one. She is weaker in magic and must fight with everything she has, including fists.

Reviewers have objected to the fact that the dwarves live in their own village, calling it either cutesy or demeaning when in fact there is a functioning society with a seed monopoly, some political oppression, competent warriors who are needed to protect the village, and some indications of a fun-loving group of drinkers. The Nelwyn culture is a positive image which is approved of by Billy Barty, the founder of Little People Of America. Perhaps the reviewers missed the point that in this universe dwarves are a different species. Just as we don't go around saying, "Dogs are a separate species and that's why we don't treat them as human beings," the Daikini don't go around saying the Nelwyn are a separate race. I would have thought it was fairly obvious, considering that there are also Brownies, Fairies and trolls. Reviewers have even objected to having to learn the names of the races, Nelwyn and Daikini, not something I would have thought took a major intellectual effort.

Reviewers have objected to the Moses imagery of the floating infant; no one seems to have thought of THE UNSINKABLE MOLLY BROWN as a possible antecedent for a floating *female* infant.

Val Kilmer has been criticized for not being Harrison Ford—the role of Madmartigan is similar to the role of Han Solo, but the criticism is truly absurd. Kilmer is a good actor and incidentally has a smile that is remarkably similar to Ford's. I hope to see more of his work.

Even the worst critics can't complain about the acting and special effects. I can't either—except perhaps for the gross-out level of one magical transformation, which produces the ugliest dragon I ever saw, and even that can be explained as verisimilitude—a biologically feasible transformation probably would take the form of a blastula. I think the problem is that the reviewers are hooked on adrenalin rushes, and there are relatively few in this movie; it just isn't intense enough for them. WILLOW is a family film, with primary emphasis on love, family feeling, and protecting a baby, and it is made with the younger audience in mind. Both George Lucas and Ron Howard have young children, and they wanted the movie to be suitable for everyone from six to sixty. The youngest children may identify with the baby, who through facial expressions is made to do quite a job of acting. Most kids will identify with the hero, Willow, since he is three feet four inches tall, "unusually short even for a Nelwyn," and young-looking even though he is an adult. (Willow Ufgood is played by Warwick Davis, who is now eighteen; at eleven he played Wicket the Ewok in RETURN OF THE JEDI.) Young adults can identify with Madmartigan and Sorsha, and we old folks can cheer for the High Aldwin and Fin Raziel.

THE GOLDEN CHILD

Characters

Chandler Jarrell—Eddie Murphy
Kee Nang—Charlotte Lewis
The Golden Child—J. L. Reate
The Old Man (lama)—Victor Wong
Kala the Dragon Lady—Shakti
Doctor Hong—James Hong
The Demon, Sado Numspa—Charles Dance
Khan—Tiger Chung Lee
Fu—Pons Maar (deformed fighter, "monkeyface")
Ti— Randall "Tex" Cobb (retarded henchman)
Yu—Tau Logo

and

BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA

Characters

Jack Burton, hero—Kurt Russell
Gracie Law, active heroine—Kim Cattrall (also played the dummy that comes to life in MANNEQUIN)
Egg Chen, the good magician—Victor Wong

THE GOLDEN CHILD is considered a fantasy because it is made in the West in the 20th century. The story could be a perfectly good oriental religious statement, and may actually be one. There is a scene with a demon in a fiery netherworld which may indicate a Christian influence, but I don't know enough about oriental religions to know whether they include similar concepts.

The basic story is that every three thousand generations a perfect child is born. Each perfect child brings one good quality into the universe. The demons don't like this, so they try to kill the child. The last one was supposed to bring Justice; he was killed. The one that has just been identified is supposed to bring Compassion into the universe. We see him in Tibet, successfully completing the tests of identity—choosing the correct necklace, bringing a dead bird back to life, and so on. We see the kidnapping. We also see Chandler Jarrell

(played by Eddie Murphy) walking the streets of Los Angeles, putting up posters about a missing girl. His chosen occupation is to search for missing children. He takes individual cases—presumably he gets rewards. Something pays for that nice apartment.

The prophecy, the nice Tibetan lady ninja tells Chandler, is that "the Perfect Child will be kidnapped and taken to the city of the angels, to be rescued by one who is no angel." Chandler is the Chosen One. He, of course, doesn't believe it. He is the scoffer, a Trickster type. He covers his love for children with a facade of jive. He has no special talents aside from being streetwise, fairly tough, and persistent. Chandler refuses the case until he learns that the girl he is currently searching for was murdered by the kidnappers of the perfect child.

We see a lot of serious magic in this movie. As part of the search, he travels to Tibet to obtain the sacred knife, and must pass a ninja-type test to acquire it. Back in Los Angeles, he rescues the child by a combination of his own efforts, the child's spiritual powers, the magic of the knife, and the self-sacrifice of the lady ninja he loves. The child brings her back to life, and at the end, despite his experiences, Chandler Jarrell is still irreverent. This is correct —after enlightenment, the monk still cuts wood and carries water, and the Trickster does not change much.

I have heard that someone objected to the revival of the lady, since the original condition was "As long as sunlight shines on her body, the child can revive her." The demon slows them long enough so that the sun moves past the window and her body is in shadow even though it is still daylight. The child raises her foot so that the toe is in sunlight again, and brings her back to life. This is not cheating. Earlier, in the testing the hero went through to obtain the knife, it was made clear that rules in this story are made to be interpreted, and even broken when the time is right.

I like this movie very much. It hangs together well and there is a feeling of completion at the end.

I find it interesting that this movie is like a superior version of BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA, briefly reviewed in Niekas 35. In both movies, an average-American hero gets involved with saving the world from a magical oriental villain. Neither American character has any oriental fight training. Both the Golden Child and the pair of girlfriends try to do things to help themselves, but they also need the help of their rescuers. The child or child-like person is shielded from evil for a time while awaiting rescue, and there is a time limit.

In both films the hero has a jive or macho facade. These are defenses against expressing emotions. However, jive and macho fast-talking experience are useful when used properly; they are bravado (perfect courage without true strength) and are helpful in defending against the villains in minor skirmishes.

In each, the hero must enter a world of magic he doesn't believe in at first, go through a dangerous maze, and find someone whose location keeps changing. A strong woman gets him started, but is not entirely sure that he is the man for her. The opposition has magical powers and the hero has magical help.

Also in both films the hero has a personal weapon which happens to be a knife; in CHILD the knife is sacred and magical, and in TROUBLE the knife is affected temporarily by a magic potion so that it is uncannily accurate.

The same actor, Victor Wong, plays the Good Oriental Magician in both movies. Incidentally, another actor, James Hong, plays a small part in both movies.

However, there are some major differences, in style, in characterization, and in cleanness of writing.

THE GOLDEN CHILD is a less cluttered movie. There are two children to be saved, reduced by the death of the first (the girl, in the beginning) to one child to be saved, one ninja, two henchmen working under one demon, and no need for any other monsters. In TROUBLE, there are two women (eventually multiplied to dozens) to be saved, dozens of ninjas, three minor magicians working under a major magician, and a somewhat gratuitous monster.

In CHILD there is a relative minimum of ninja fighting, whereas in TROUBLE there is some of the kind that constitutes the "obligatory fight scene." During the first fight scene, our hero Jack is sitting in the truck cab holding his bootknife like a protective icon while crowds of martial arts students use machine guns on each other. The only times Jack actually uses the knife are when he cuts the ropes off Gracie, when he makes a useless stab at the tunnel-monster and when he kills the villain, Lo Pan.

In CHILD, there is considerably less gore and grue on-screen, despite the slaughter of a temple-full of Tibetan monks, a teenage girl, a chain-swinging henchman and an effective but disappointingly standard demon.

And despite the amount of humor from the Trickster hero, THE GOLDEN CHILD is a more serious movie.

In CHILD, the result if the villain wins is that the child dies and Compassion disappears from the universe. The enemy is utterly nonhuman. In TROUBLE, the result if the villain won is that he would continue being an evil magician running the oriental crime syndicate in San Francisco, one woman would die, and one woman would be his bride. The villain is essentially human; he is very old and wants to be rejuvenated.

The heroes have significantly different motivations. At the beginning of CHILD, the hero gets into the situation first because he is trying to rescue a runaway teenager, then to avenge her death, and then because he begins to love the woman and believe her story that there is another child who needs his help. At the beginning of TROUBLE, the hero gets into the situation first because he wants to collect a gambling debt and then because he wants to help his buddy and rescue the woman he just met. The social conscience is displaced entirely into the heroine.

At the end of CHILD, the hero is set to marry the woman he loves, and they are caring for the perfect child, at least until they can arrange transport back to Tibet. Meanwhile, as a disguise they have gotten him out of his Tibetan robes and into modern American children's clothing. There is a feeling of completion.

By contrast, at the end of TROUBLE, the hero heads off into the night because he can't accept a modern woman who wants to be a full partner instead of settling into the housewife mold he demands. The good magician is trying to explain things to his lawyer. There is a disaster-movie end, with the tunnel monster hiding in his truck. The movie ends but the story isn't finished.

I liked both movies, but for different reasons. BIG TROUBLE IN LITTLE CHINA is sheer fun. The viewer gets to feel smarter than the hero even while cheering him on. The anger I felt toward the conceited numbskull for walking out on the girl made me glad when I saw that he had a monster riding his truck (which of course represents the unfinished emotional business that makes him that way). THE GOLDEN CHILD has laughs along the way too, but it involves the viewer more powerfully. The villain is more frightening with fewer special effects. There is more tension in the final confrontation, and joy and triumph at the end instead of anger and contempt.✹

Laiskai

FIRST A LATE LOC ON 35 **LOX ON 36**

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The covers for NIEKAS 35 were excellent. The front cover by Larry Dickison was positively Entish in its suggestive front profile of that strange creature facing the spacecraft. What a world of stories it suggests. Charles Lang captures the eerie melancholia of a robot in icy winter facing...what? Its own destruction amid nature's beauty? Who may tell! I liked Bob Eggleton's interior bacover of space as our astronauts explore a moon of a planet. The loneliness and grandeur together unite as we view earth in the far distance. The same quality, with the loneliness more muted, can be seen in the spatial art of Kelly Freas on the bacover. Kudos all round to a grand crew.

As regards to the debate on Dungeons & Dragons, there is always an element of fanaticism in the fantasy and SF arena. It is so easy to get wrapped up in a role-playing game that your mind gets totally absorbed. We have so few real values practiced in our American culture that substitutes abound. We have the Synanon cult, the Dianetics movement, the Trekkie fanaticism of the early 70's, the Elvis Presley death devotion by so many millions, etc. D&D as a game isn't evil but it needs to be reformed, to be reshaped as a community fun game instead of a fraternity ritual of sword and sorcery fanatics. A sense of perspective is needed to avoid the suicides that have taken place among the game's devotees.

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NIEKAS 36 is a beautiful issue, perhaps the most beautiful ever published.

The production values are superb. I love the new type setting which is New Century Schoolbook. Beautifully legible. The only flaw in the typesetting is that there are places where the words are pushed a little too close together. This is, I realize, a constant hazard of the use of computerized typesetting because the computer tries to juggle things for the purpose of right justification and it will at times push the words too close together. This is not a severe problem and on the whole NIEKAS is magnificently legible.

It's quite true, as Fred Lerner points out in his column on "Water," that this is a subject which could lead to practically anything since water is involved in all aspects of human life. This does not necessarily mean that water is therefore a promising topic for a series of movies. I think that it is necessary, in making a movie, to have a fairly specific subject. If you are able to make a movie about practically anything then you still don't know what the movie is really about, do you? I think you might just as well say, "Let us make a movie on the subject of 'reality,'" which is an even broader subject.

I sympathize with Harry Andruschak on the loss of his job and the ills of the US space program, and I certainly agree with him that NASA has been mismanaged. He is quite correct in pointing out that basic to this problem is the fact that NASA has been managed by managers rather than by scientists.

Hal Clement's article, "Hollow but Hard," is the jewel of this issue, which is suggested by the fact that it is the subject of the cover illustration as well. Hal Clement, as expected, writes quite well and although I have not read the book he is discussing, *Still River*, I do believe that I will read it.

I also enjoyed the illustration section, "Jest Ahht," and I was particularly impressed by the drawings of Judith Holman which are quite excellent. Her illustration of the Swine Things is quite fascinating.

The article on Jewish fantasy by Jessica Amanda Salmonson is a good overview of the subject. I have read some Jewish fantasy myself and it is interesting. Certainly it's quite true that the body of Jewish folklore as well as Jewish theology can give rise to an interesting type of fantasy that has its own distinctive viewpoint. There is a greater quantity of fantasy that is written from a Christian or pagan viewpoint, and there are many fantasies that are not really written from any pre-existing viewpoint. All of these are interesting and add to the diversity of the available literature.

The interview with Philip K. Dick is quite good as well. It's interesting to me that I have always regarded Philip K. Dick as a rather unusual and off-beat science fiction writer whose science fiction is not in any sense typical of science fiction as a genre. Nonetheless, when Philip K. Dick *defines* science fiction his insight into the true nature of the subject is absolutely accurate. Philip K. Dick knew exactly what science fiction is and the fact that he chose to write it in his own weird way does not alter that fact. He discusses science fiction as insightfully as anyone I have read.

I am forced to agree that you are right in cutting off further debate on the subject of Kent State. I believe that everyone has pretty much made his/her case and further discussion would degenerate into an unpleasant shouting match. Susan Shwartz is quite incorrect in saying that since I am out of things I should not presume to comment. I was not safely out of things but was a student at the State University of NY at Stony Brook when the Kent State massacre occurred. I too was subject to the draft although as it happens I was not drafted. It is not my comment on the stupidity of the students that is cruel but it is the real world that is being cruel.

The comments of Joseph Major and Leland Shapiro on the "Blind Panthers" are quite breathtaking in their insensitiv-

ity. I was tempted to make a lengthy reply to them. However, your own reply and those of Kenneth Jernigan and Anne Braude are so effective and so well put that I really think any further comments by myself would be superfluous.

I have read a number of shared world anthologies. Most of the fiction is quite good and worth reading but I do agree that on the whole this format is not one of the better ideas in fantasy publishing today. It encourages writers to imitate other writers; it encourages fantasy fiction to follow the format of the TV series in which, although events are occurring, nothing basically ever changes. It has also been marred by some poorly conceived shared universes. In particular the "Heroes in Hell" series of Janet Morris & Co. seems to have a very vaguely defined premise. All these people are in a place that is generally referred to as "Hell" although it is clearly not exactly the same place that is usually thought of by Christians as being hell. Nobody really knows what it really is, what is going on there, why they are there, what any of their experiences actually mean, or whether they are actually accomplishing anything by their struggles in that location. Certainly I have no idea what the answers to those questions are and quite honestly I expect that the writers of the series also have no answer. I don't believe that there is any answer and consequently we are dealing with an exercise in vagueness which is very unsatisfactory as a form of fiction. *[I have a feeling that it is merely an excuse to bring historical characters together, which was better realized by Farmer in Riverworld. ERM]*

Until I read "Firestorms And Invasions" I had never realized that it would have been possible to force a surrender of Japan in World War II not only in the absence of a nuclear bombing but even in the absence of a conventional assault, but merely through the use of a military blockade. In retrospect this certainly would have been the humane thing to do. At the same time I'm not without sympathy for the decision of the United States to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. When you consider the acts of Japan, from the attack on Pearl Harbor to the many atrocities committed in China and the Philippines, in Indo-China and throughout the Pacific zone, I think one could make a fairly good case that Japan, by its own acts, had placed itself outside the normal constraints of human morality. Certainly they did not see any such constraints operating on their own actions.

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The cover layout was particularly striking though I preferred the bacover illo to the front. Interior artwork was rather variable, but the folio work was terrific and deserves a private Hugo.

Anent your comments on con registration fees, these have already gone beyond what my limited resources can support. Upcoming cons here range from our 1989 Eastercon at £15 (approximately $30) to the 1988 World Fantasy Con in London at a whacking £45 (nearly $85!!!) If Val and I want to attend even the Eastercon, that works out at £30 registration, plus around £60 in train fares, plus around £140+ hotel bill and we're up to £230 before we eat, drink, or visit the hucksters' room. As pensioners, that sort of lolly would buy us a packaged fortnight elsewhere, so for three days it just isn't on. *[Things are a little easier for me as a single person, though I would like to bring my son to more cons. Right now Boskone is the only one I take him to. I usually save money by stacking up in a room, usually a total of five fen, which cuts down the per capita cost. But there is still transportation, registration and at-con expenses. ERM]*

As for hotels not wanting cons, there comes a point when the amount of hassle exceeds the profitability. Things like ridiculous "elevator parties" which both make life difficult for others and lead to costly repairs, false fire alarms, damage, vandalism, and so on do not endear us to hoteliers.

I enjoyed Bastraw's piece, likewise Hal Clement (aka Stubbs), but my favorite was the Sam Moskowitz musing. Varlak the Wizard was from dullsville.

Lettercol excellent. Must take issue with Buck Coulson over his comments on the RAF's bombing prowess, however. He cites too many half-truths and omits too many relevant facts from his capsule evaluation.

The RAF entered the war with bombers designed on the theory that they would be operating out of France into Germany, shortish distances and therefore with fighter cover, so they aimed for HEAVY bomb loads and light gunnery gear. Thus even the doddering old two-engine Whitley could take 7,000 pounds to its target. The Sterling handled 14,000 pounds, the Halifax 13,000, and the incomparable Lancaster was toting 22,000 by the end of the war. Against these, the more heavily armed B-17 only managed 4,000 pounds.

Then France fell, the "phony" war ended, and our bombers had to operate beyond the range of current fighter escorts. Heavy losses brought the change to night bombing, and even the heavily armed Forts which were supposed to be invulnerable to fighters ran into heavy daytime losses.

Bomb-aiming admittedly was a problem, and it was greatly improved by the American Norden bombsight—but even without it, Mosquitos regularly took on pinpoint targets, a Gestapo HQ in a crowded city, a prison wall to allow inmates out, and the Lancasters did a superlative job on the Mohne and Eder dams—none of these was a "five-mile wide target."

As for Buck's "By mid-1942, the British could stage thousand-bomber raids," it is not what it sounds like either. These were mainly propaganda exercises and, to make up the thousand, employed virtually any aircraft which could get as far as Germany and back with a bomb—this included Anson liaison aircraft, the near-obsolete, single-engined Fairey "Battles," and suchlike. To say that "Thousands of RAF bombers were put up in mothballs" in 1941 is also an error. We didn't even have anywhere near that number in 1941. Certainly those we had were not mothballed in 1941. Heck, even by war's end, only 700 Lancs and 1400 Halifaxes had been built. I've run on a bit but as an ex-RAF man I don't like misleading comments about the Service.

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Perhaps I can add a little light to the Panshin-Moskowitz-*Heinlein in Dimension*. I also have one of Panshin's little postcards stating that he was writing a book on Heinlein for Advent and that I should send him everything I had on Heinlein. The word "please" seemed to be absent from Panshin's vocabulary. I was not pleased. After a quick call to Earl Kemp who was the head honcho at Advent at the time, Earl did manage to get me back into a rational frame of mind.

So that the readers can understand my biases, I must say that I believe Heinlein is the greatest writer to come out of the first 40 years of magazine science fiction. His later work is, in my opinion, lacking in that excellence. Panshin is both an excellent fiction writer and science fiction critic. I regret that his fictional output has been so small in recent years. I do not always agree with his critical ideas but he does a fair job. His *Heinlein in Dimension* has been in

print at Advent for 20 years and still enjoys a modest sale ($10 hardcover, $6 paperback). When I suggested his *Science Fiction in Dimension* was not as good a book, I got a reply from him stating that I didn't want his book to sell! Since I store much of the Advent stock in my home, I can assure one and all that I wish all Advent books would sell out so I can have room to shelve my own books, many of which are still in boxes these many years. No book and/or magazine collector has enough room.

Surely the surrender of Japan was never in doubt? Without the Emperor's order to the Japanese military, I believe we would still be fighting—digging out pockets of Japanese soldiers, etc. The price, even at that, was very high. Few Americans today realize what a horrible mauling the US Navy received at Okinawa—10,000 sailors dead, wounded, missing, and a thousand naval planes lost, 300 ships sunk or damaged, etc. Every repair depot we had in the Pacific was filled with ships from Okinawa. And the Japanese were reserving about 8,000 planes for the invasion of the big home islands. In spite of the bomb, the Russians declaring war on them, shortages of oil and other necessities of war, there were still those who wanted to fight on. The warrior code pushed to the ultimate foolishness.

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In your reply to Buck Coulson in Gincas in "Shared World Dept.," you refer to the "Ken Bulmer series 'Searching for Earth' which has run over 30 volumes!" You must be thinking of the Dumarest series by E.C. Tubb, who, hard as it may be to believe, is not another of Kenneth Bulmer's pseudonyms. For shame, Ed—what would SaM say? *[I never read any of the books but knew of them only from fanzine references, and I misremembered the author. ERM]*

Just what does that "GOTO page 9" at the end of Bumbejimas signify? *[It directs the reader to Mike Bastraw's column which continued some discussions from Bumbejimas. ERM] [GOTO is a common command in most forms of Basic programming languages. It tells the program where to Go To next. What would HAL 9000 say? MB]*

Sherna Comerford criticizes Tom Baker's "Doctor" for being relatively cold and inaccessible—but who says this makes him less wonderful a character? If true, this would add a hard edge that would make him more interesting as a character. Sherna sounds like the kind of fan who doesn't care about interesting characters as much as attainable fantasy figures.

Piers Anthony remarks on round-robin stories by fans in the 1960's. Pros have done the same thing back as early as the 1930's, when a fanzine sponsored a hefty round-robin project involving Lovecraft, Keller, C.L. Moore, and God knows how many other writers.

Seems I mostly have nits to pick this issue, but I actually enjoyed much of NIEKAS 36; the articles tended to teach me more than I really knew, so there isn't much room for erudite comments on my part.

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The first thing to impress me about the new NIEKAS was its superior print job. Mike Bastraw's page on how he did it answered most of my questions. I'm surprised by how many different programs were involved. Somehow I had thought these word processing programs would do a lot more, considering how much they cost. I have to question Mike when he says that the difference between the large print size and the small is only one point. A point is a very small amount. The difference in the packing of text seems so large. *[Psychologists speak of a "just noticeable difference" which is 10% of the original size, exactly the difference between the two type sizes. SP][I think the larger type had more leading too. ERM]* I'd ditch the computeroid font used to title each article *[column]*. It really was quite hard to read. *[Consider it done. MB]*

Just as some teachers fear that calculators will hurt some people's ability to learn math, I worry that word processors are going to worsen the level of literacy in America. I'm seeing a lot of word processed fanzines with their fancy spell checker and they're still typo ridden, though now it's typos of a subtle nature. My favorite example comes from a recent fanzine's colophon where it talked about the test being entered on suchandsuch a machine, etc. The spell check obviously didn't save them from that flub because the typo produced a real word, just the wrong one. I've noticed in many recent paperbacks the same problem. Stories littered with wrong word typos because the ms is only being proofread by a spelling checker. It still takes a human eye to spot when something doesn't make sense. *[You are absolutely right. Electronic proofreading is just one more comb that we can pass through the text—some person has to take the final responsibility. As to the old Calculator controversy: I'll refer to Wally Wood's Rules for Drawing—Don't draw what you can trace, Don't trace what you can cut out and paste down, don't do any of the above if you can get someone else to do it. At this stage in the game I don't have to prove to anyone that I can still do long division or use pencil and paper to count my toe-bones. Though, I suppose that it is somewhat comforting to know that the next time I become stranded on a desert island without a calculator I will still be able to cope. MB]*

FanCy I and *II* were both single editor projects which is probably why they got done and *FanCyclopedia III*, which is committee edited, languishes. The explosive growth of fandom since *FanCy II* might also have something to do with the delay, too. There are a number of fannish projects that are incomplete for one reason or another. Mostly it's things like Bruce Pelz's fanzine index or a really reliable index to SF stories, or making all the SF pulps available on microfiche or on tape; all of these seem excellent projects to be funded out of worldcon profits. It would

probably take a full time librarian a year or so to straighten out and finish indexing Pelz's fanzine collection. For $30,000 I suspect an index could be prepared and brought to publication that otherwise sat around never getting done. Thirty K sounds like a lot but it's something LACon II could easily afford with their profits, or ConFederation. If worldcons are going to make obscene levels of profits they ought to at least consider some large scale fannish projects to work those profits off. *[Since you wrote, ConFederation has issued a request for proposals for grants, and I requested one for an ongoing taping project. I also got a letter from Mike Glyer indicating work on* FanCy III *is progressing. ERM]*

I never lived in the "good old days" of fandom but I still feel like I miss them. There is a lot of sense to the notion that fandom has gotten too damn big, losing for us the peculiar satisfactions of small group dynamics. This is also caused by science fiction being too trendy and popular. Before one had to be pretty hard core to get into fandom. Today everybody reads SF, everybody is a fan. Something else I hadn't thought about before but during the same time that STAR TREK was bringing in hordes of new fans society was changing. The "Summer of Love" in '67 marked a sea of change in the American culture, a change away from a work ethic towards one more hedonistic. Our society works hard to party nowadays. It parties harder than in earlier days and doesn't have the responsible attitude towards what happens at a party as during earlier days. So maybe younger fans are more trouble for hotels than the Shriners.

I find it interesting that Ed implies that Boskone got kicked out of their hotel because of a pillow fight. The torn pillow would have been no big deal if feathers from it hadn't remained trapped within the air conditioned building and frequently set off the automatic fire alarms. Those false alarms cost the hotel a lot of trouble and money. Hence the hotel's desire not to repeat their business. Yet the problem was not the convention's doing but the hotel's overly sophisticated but ineptly designed equipment. Boskone is a victim of high technology. How ironic.

Diana Paxson urges the better care and feeding of pros. While I don't recommend churlishness at conventions, I have reservations about Ms. Paxson's plea. You give every published writer free memberships, a private writers' suite, a green room, etc., and pretty soon there won't be much to distinguish the Guest of Honor from the hoi polloi.

It bothers me to see convention flyers with lists of attending authors taking up the sheet, and in smallish type too. Conventions used to be places where fans got together. Some of those fans also wrote SF but they were there because they were fans.

The notion presented in the films that ALF, ET, and Madison from SPLASH have to hide out from government scientists, read vivisectionists, is both an insult and a great lie. It imputes a destructive stupidity to scientists that is, in fact, the opposite of their training. Scientists examine things, learning from them because they know how to learn from them. That scientists would want to immediately cut up a living talking alien is a fantasy of a technophobic anti-intellectual. It is not how scientists think. *[It may not be how scientists think, but it's how the world thinks of scientists. Hollywood perpetuates the myth because people want to see what they "know" is real. SP][This portrayal may be in part derived from real-life abuses in the taking of specimens of endangered species (committed more by unenlightened zoo keepers and commercial hunters than by scientists) and in the treatment of laboratory animals. AJB]*

I enjoyed Hal Clement's background article for his new book. This is something I'd like to see more often, particularly for hard SF. The story behind the background is in fact more interesting than the story itself. Niven's *Ringworld* and *Smoke Ring* come to mind as examples. I do have one question. Having successfully this hollow world, won't there be a lack of gravity inside the hollow? And with the lack of gravity, what inside the hollow will be worth exploring? Short of some kind of wind from outside, the air inside would be rather stagnant and incapable of supporting a biosphere. To rationalize a Pellucidar is going to take more than just explaining how a shell could form. You need heat and moisture and something to keep things stirred up. Life is like a vortex in a river.

Anthony's response to my comment last issue sort of proves what I was saying about him being cantankerous. I concede to him that he is right that

Koontz must have brought up the issue of money first, not because I've read those issues of OUTWORLDS—I haven't and won't—but because thinking back on it, I remember Anthony going around demanding to know if Koontz's ten times larger advances meant he was ten times a better writer than Anthony. This is a specious argument unbecoming to Anthony, of which both Bob Tucker and I wrongly remember Anthony as the instigator.

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Anne Braude complained that de Camp and I have "no assumption... that possession of a lethal weapon imposes an obligation of restraint in the use of same." Let's get into the real world for a while. Handing someone a gun doesn't make her any more restrained than she was already; restraint is formed by intensive training, or by fostering of that human thought process known as "common sense." I was pointing out that being provocative to someone that is pointing a gun at you is not an intelligent action. The assumption has been made that the police are taught restraint, because they're supposed to be. If the same students had been confronted by a man with a gun in a dark alley, very few of them would have been provocative. Assumptions made about groups, without any knowledge of the background, training, or personal habits of those particular individuals, can also be dangerous. Sure, we all make assumptions about strangers every day. People get killed every day, too, most of them because they made the wrong assumption about someone at the wheel of a car.

Anne also said, about guns, "You can't even own one without a license, and only the military and police are entitled routinely to carry guns." Dead wrong on all counts. There's a federal law against owning fully automatic weapons without a license, and some cities have laws against buying a *handgun* without a license. As far as I know, anybody in the country can walk into any firearms store in her own state, buy a rifle or shotgun, and carry it home, with no restrictions except the much-abused common sense. In 90% of the country you can also buy the handgun without a license, though you probably can't plunk down your money and walk out with it; most states have a waiting period before delivery, and allow the local and/or state police to check you out; anyone with a record of felonies or insanity will, theoretically, have their money returned instead of being given the gun. Theoretically.... As for carrying, it sometimes seems that every third pickup truck I see has a rifle rack in the back window. (There are probably still laws against carrying guns, women, and liquor across state lines; those I don't know too much about.)

She also mentions that "A book review

doesn't become valueless when no longer fresh." I certainly hope she's right; a Swedish fan just wrote me for permission to use a long review I wrote for a different Swedish fan in 1965, which as yet hasn't been published. An extreme example, but I just got the request a couple of days ago and I'm still chuckling.

David Palter indulged in a sweeping statement: "If you like Leslie Fish, you will certainly like Phil Ochs as well." I like Leslie Fish's music and am totally indifferent to Phil Ochs.

I encountered god in a dirty bathrobe elsewhere than in Seattle. Memory fails, but at two successive worldcons, Heinlein arrived dramatically at the last minute to accept his Hugo, and at one of them (perhaps both, but I only visited him at one) he held court in his room the next day. Since I've never been to Seattle, it had to be somewhere else. Juanita and I had been somewhere with Marion Bradley, and she wanted to go up to see Heinlein, so we tagged along. The L. Ron Hubbard line occurred to both of us immediately, but we managed to avoid laughing about it until later. It would certainly have been *lese majesty* to laugh at the time; and at that time I felt just that way about it. (Ah, the good old days before Heinlein went downhill....)

I expect Diana Paxson is generally quite correct in her convention article, but we mustn't forget that there are always exceptions. There are certainly conventions with no program at all. Juanita and I have received free hotel rooms at conventions where we weren't even listed in the prepublicity. Of course we're as much fans as pros, so we're quite willing to trade off our time on panels for perks. We even show up on panels when we aren't given any perks, even though we are indifferent to being up there, because some conventions are run by friends, and helping out a friend is a necessity of civilized behavior. I even researched the subject matter on my most recent panels, though mostly I don't bother. Old age and fading memories may require this more often in the future. Fully agreed on the necessity of informing panelists of their panels, and the concom of their celebrities. One convention which contacted a noted British pro for GoH, and then forgot to confirm with him, ended up with having to hastily select someone else at very nearly the last minute. Another one failed to confirm the advertised date with the hotel, and then changed the date without notifying the guest. This sort of activity is frowned upon in the best of circles. One convention committee cancelled the convention without notifying the GoH; he flew from California to the midwest to find the convention had evaporated and was not happy. (That was the last time most of the concom was ever seen in fandom.) Mistakes happen; at a recent convention I couldn't locate the room my panel was in, so I went to the green room, where I was assigned a gopher. Who also couldn't find the room the panel was in.... I was once put on two panels at the same time. Juanita was once informed, five minutes before the start, that "Your discussion group is waiting"; at the time she was still in bed, since nobody had informed her that she had a discussion group. (She arrived only three minutes late.) That sort of thing you laugh about—afterwards—but Diana's article covers more

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I find your column on *The Handmaid's Tale* instructive, especially the sentence, "I can see why it was on the Nebula ballot even though the author is an outsider." I am always appalled at the reading habits of fans, making in- and out-siders of authors. A good book is a good book, whether it is within genre or without. We—who are the great compulsive readers of America—should be reading history, biography, poetry, novels, natural science, technical materials, etc. (And children's books, she adds, not without an agenda!) *[Many fen do read widely but usually a fanzine is a place to talk about books related to the SF field, or related technology, history, etc. As for outsiders, see Bumbejimas thish. ERM]*

As to the Boskone problems, here is an interesting sidenote. I asked one of the young security force whether this con was a real problem and he laughed. "You people are lambs," he said. "Now the police convention and the Lions...." He laughed again. "They throw chairs out of the windows and there are pros running through the halls." (No, he didn't mean science fiction pro writers either.) My gut feeling is that science fiction conventions don't bring in enough tipping and big eaters/spenders in the hotel function areas. But to tell the truth, I am really uncomfortable at large messy conventions. I prefer serious conventions like World Fantasy where we really do talk about literature. I don't think I am alone in this.

And thank you Diana Paxson for the piece on pros and cons. I must admit that at the first science fiction convention I attended, I was on several panels and all of them were a shock to the system. I was used to children's literature and academic panels where all the panelists are well prepared ahead of time, with notes at the least and full talks at the most. The questions were sent to the panelists before the convention. So I did that as a moderator only to discover that of the five panelists I had contacted ahead of time, only two were actually there for the panel. Three others were shoved on at the last minute. And no one in the audience was really interested in the topic, they just wanted to hear us bash someone. (That was the Barry Malzberg bash year.) Most of us who are pros have some real information to pass on, and a lot of ideas/opinions/tidbits. Just being cute and silly and Robin Williams imitators is not enough. I am certainly capable of one-liners, but I would prefer to be on a panel that explores rather than exploits. I am not in favor of bashing, whoever is this year's prime target. (As SFWA outgoing president, I may be the target myself.) *[A panel that sticks to its topic appears to be an uncommon courtesy. MB]*

Finally, thanks to Anne Braude for a short, pithy piece. I have just immersed myself in the holocaust for a young adult time-travel novel I am writing (*The Devil's Arithmetic*, Viking, October, 1988) in which a modern Jewish girl opens the door for Elijah at the family seder and finds herself back in 1941 in the shtetl on the Polish-German border. She—and all the villagers—are rounded up and taken to a death camp and...never mind the plot. Braude's fine piece made me think again of the choices I made in the novel, about the setting up our commitments do between Us and Them. Kind of brings it all around to ERM's sentence that began this letter of mine: "...though the author is an outsider...." Think about it.

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Welcome to the Year of the Dragon. In regards pg. 3:

My farewell to science fiction proved premature. For one thing, I got into historical swashbucklers just as that genre was starting down from its peak of popularity in the 50's. Hence, although critics were very kind to my five historical novels, each sold less well than its predecessor. After *The Golden Wind* I gave up.

Pg 41: It is unrealistic to expect most men in battle to follow detailed regulations

for treating the enemy. When they are being attacked, whether with bricks or with bullets, the basic emotions of fear and rage take over, and they follow the urge summed up by the title character in Wescott's 1899 novel *David Harum*: "Do unto others as they would like to do unto you and do it fust!"

As Tolstoy points out in *War and Peace*, when the fighting starts, men soon get out of control; and the less-well trained they are the sooner this happens. Historical examples of of the My Lai type are too numerous to list there. *[All too true, and when the military are engaged with an armed and angry civilian mob, it is a no-win situation for them, as current events on Israel's West Bank illustrate. The answer is to use police trained in crowd control against civilians (she said with 20/20 hindsight). AJB]*

Pg 44: I and, I think, other Conan pastichers try to keep the stories and the characters consistent with Howard's concepts; but since our backgrounds, outlooks, and styles vary, the stories diverge. Hence my Conan is probably too intellectual, Offutt's too diplomatic, Wagner's too politically conscious, &c. I don't think any of the pastichers is as good as Howard's best, one reason being that we don't suffer from the fears, hatreds, and obsessions that REH did. I don't intend to go around to the friendly neighborhood shrink and say: "Hey, Doc, will you please unbalance me just a little, so I can write as vividly as Howard?"

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If you have gotten the chance to read it, what did you think of *To Sail Beyond the Sunset*? I think that while it did expand greatly on Heinlein's future history, it was a weak book to stand on its own. It was not as weak as *Time Enough for Love*, but it was not as strong as *Job, Friday* and *Cat Who Walks Through Walls* in that order of strength. [I have yet to find a recorded copy of *Sunset* but expect to find it soon. ERM]

I agreed with your comments on Boskone and the problem of size and more people interested in parties than a con. I think the problem of getting new blood is not as important as some people think. This is because science fiction is not as out of the mainstream as it once was. With SF being a common element of the mass media, the function of the cons and clubs to provide new blood with its first exposure to serious SF and a knowledge of fandom is no longer so important.

Re: "On the Shoulders of Vanguard" by Harry Andruschak; Thank you for your description of the present problems of NASA. I think that what you described is a part of a larger problem. Another part of the larger problem is the response you get when you ask a group of fans who are griping about the lack of space development to increase it themselves. At the very least you would expect them to belong to one of the nationwide organizations and know whether their elected officials are pro, anti, or case-by-case space development. But 90% of the time people griping have not made this minimum investment of their time and money. When asked about their not backing their mouths with any action they mumble about it being somebody else's responsibility. When reminded that they live in a representative democracy and they can make it their responsibility, they start yelling about how this is a con and they came here for fun and not all this shit. I think to a large degree this problem exists all across our culture. A good example is low voter turnout.

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Joe R. Christopher's "Sylvie's Song of Young Adulthood" is a very funny parody. I hear that an interesting new "musical" has come out—David Dell Tredici, the composer who has spent so much time composing music about Lewis Carroll and settings of Carroll's poems, has combined some of his music with text, mostly drawn from Carroll's diary, and letters, about Carroll and Alice. There are two performers who do Alice, an actress who portrays her as a child, Jamie Mills, and a singer, Noemi Nadelmann, who represents the adult (?). Carroll was played by Tom Hulce, who was Mozart in the movie of AMADEUS. It was put on in New York and called *Haddock's Eyes*, and the reviews John Boardman sent me didn't seem to like the show overall, but thought it fascinating. It certainly sounds that.

Your comments on "fanspeak"—I think "stf" has faded out because science fiction was a more convenient term, and "stf" was useful only as the objectionable "stfnal," which was easier to sound (as stefmal) than sfal (es ef nal)?), and in more and more contexts now people are using "science fiction" as both the adjective and the noun, so that a phrase that before would have been awkward if abbreviated to SF—such as "science fictional poetry"—now comes out "science fiction poetry" (however unlikely it sounds if you try to think of it word by word), abbreviated "SF poetry."

In the comments on shared worlds—Joseph T. Major complains that the Darkover series has been harmed because Marion Zimmer Bradley gave way to the fans' desire to have books about feminism, and he thinks that feminist Darkover books are poorer than the earlier ones. I disagree with the judgment as to the quality of the books—but in any case it seems unlikely that Bradley was "got to" by the fans in making the change. She's not that malleable. What got to her to produce the change is more likely to be changes in society generally rather than requests from fans.

Brian E. Brown comments that the shared world anthologies he's seen have been lackluster, and he doubts that they are useful as a training ground for novice writers. Considering that most of the contributors usually seem to be novice writers, it's maybe to be expected that the results will be lackluster. It'll be interesting to see if the future careers of the writers now participating in such anthologies bear out the claim that it's good training. (Or to compare the work of the more experienced writers involved to their unshared works to see if the quality of their works is approximately the same in both, or if the unshared works, being "original," are better.)

In a sense, the old systems of myths were a "shared world"—writers as distant and as different as Homer, Virgil, Chaucer, Shakespeare could all write masterpieces on the Trojan War. Or Malory, the Gawain poet, Tennyson, and T.H. White, say, on King Arthur. Of course, that's a very different set-up from trying to combine the works of different authors in the same book. Also, the myths typically had some kind of an ending—everyone went somewhere else after the end of the war and got there or didn't get there, and King Arthur died—so that the new authors were fitting their works into gaps in the shape of an existing, ending story, while the shared worlds usually aim at a non-ending story which can be extended indefinitely. Still, the two set-ups have some similarities. *[A note of caution to those who would make*

distinctions of style among shared-world writers: until the 18th century, Robert Henryson's Testament of Cresseid, *a sequel to Chaucer's* Troilus and Criseyde, *was thought actually to be by Chaucer, even though Chaucer wrote in Middle English and Henryson in Middle Scots, which is close to Northern Middle English but not much like Chaucer's Midlands dialect. There must have been an awful lot of tin ears among poetry readers. AJB]*

In your comment on the review of Farmer's *A Barnstormer in Oz*—it isn't really correct to say that the Oz fans in the BAUM BUGLE were very upset by Farmer's book. There were two reviews of it in the BUGLE, one by Hal Lynch, who disliked it and thought it had "all the rollicking jollity and elfin charm of the 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre,'" and one of Michael Korolenko and Katherine Neville, who liked it and thought that "though Farmer's version of Oz is definitely not ours, *A Barnstormer in Oz* is a very good science fiction novel." I think *Barnstormer* and *Number of the Beast* came out too close together for either to have influenced the other. Both Farmer and Heinlein have long been fascinated by Oz. *[I first visited Oz as a pre-reader, courtesy of my mother and grandmother. Later I saw the MGM movie and thought that was pretty fine too—though, why didn't the characters look just the way they did in the Neill illustrations?* Barnstormer *is an interesting book by an interesting writer about an interesting place. "What's not to like?" he asked with a shrug. MB]*

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I was overwhelmed with what Michael did in arranging the artwork I submitted to fit so neatly with the articles.

On "Butting Budrys's Butt": I had no idea that all this fussing was going on. Reading this article reminded me of the poem I wrote on arriving home after the World Fantasy Con about what actually happened in the elevator. I did push Algis out of the elevator and didn't know who I was pushing. I did it gently but firmly. This event goes well to illustrate what a semi-pro fan would do, I suppose, which is also in accord with "Pros and Cons" by Diana L. Paxson. She got away with saying some of the things that would irritate many of the fen. Two of my illos that you used for her article worked perfectly. I'm still grinning ear to tentacle.

The first con I attended had all the qualifications of the fan con, Tropicon II, and I was a bit forlorn and disgusted with my experience. Two years later, a bit better known, I arrived at the WFC where I met many good friends in the small press genre whom I'd been corresponding with during that time. It made a lot of difference. Besides this, it was a con that was well executed and had few problems and excellent panels. I found socializing was easier but still found my type of artists, poets, and writers to converse with away from the parties. Had one heck of a great time. Was exhibiting artist as well.

Edmund, you filled me in on what was happening while I was growing up, getting away from reading up on SF & F during the late 60's and 70's. I never stopped reading but my art, poetry, and writing didn't get off until early 80's after my third marriage. It was as easy to slip into as if I walked from my teens to the present without any time passage. I'm only surprised that some folks get carried away. THRUST had a similar report on the Worldcon in England, authors dumping drinks on each other, etc. I always find that writing down a reply to an offense gets 99% of the anger out of my system If I'm upset with a commentary, personal or otherwise. Reading articles like Moskowitz's sustain the belief that sometimes it's just not enough to write it out. You have to have it published. Otherwise SF would become a rather blasé enterprise in itself.

There was another poem that I wrote after arriving home after the WFC, "Jack Williamson." I sent it to AMAZING and yes, they took it. My second sale there. Jack also wrote me a short note after I shared the news. A very friendly fellow.

"World Fantasy Con Elevator Blues"

He wouldn't fit. Not one of us.
My friends were in. The buzzer buzzed.
Unknowing, I must confess,
I denied access to Algis Budrys.

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Your reply to my comment on the NFB is interesting. Do you really want equal treatment? Then are you willing to go without your dog where animals are forbidden? It would seem that you only want "equal" treatment when it is advantageous and with as much government (other people's) money as you can get. *[The dog is as much a part of me as a pair of glasses or a hearing aid would be for someone else. If I had a pet dog or a dog guide who was too old to work and so not being used for mobility, I would not expect to bring it into a market or restaurant or theater. Our organization opposes such things as traffic lights that go "pee pee" and "kaw kaw" to indicate traffic flow, and beepers on train doors, and tactile edges on train platforms because they are a waste of tax money and foster the image of helplessness and make it more difficult for blind persons to be accepted by employers. We oppose reduced fares on public transit. We discourage our members from using handicapped parking spaces for we are not mobility impaired. ERM]*

As for Anne Braude's comments on shared worlds and losing agriculture: 1, climatic change. The world of ElfQuest is in the ebbing stage of an ice age. More to the point, in the "contemporary" period, the setting is a deciduous forest— hardly one in which food crops would fail. 2, being driven away. Remember, it was the humans, who were in the same place, who "lost" agriculture. More powerful humans might have driven out the the original humans. However this is unlikely as it is indicated that the humans throughout kept kept to the same \purpose and with the same god. But the new inhabitants would hardly have found agriculture impossible. Besides, cave dwellers driving out village dwellers? 3, soil exhaustion and/or drought. See under "1" above under the condition of the woods.

So it would seem to me that the authors simply did not care enough about the physical background to notice. Which is why I did not bother to get the latest book about Morgaine.

I think the best advice to those who want to get into shared worlds and fan fiction came from someone who met it first hand. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle received a Sherlock Holmes story from a fan of his. He sent the author £25 and a note of recommendation: "Write about your own characters."

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The Asimov Future History timeline appeared in the Winter, 1955, issue of THRILLING WONDER STORIES. It looks like the Foundation stories and the Robot stories were not in the same universe as of 1955.

Fanspeak certainly isn't what it once

was. It's in the nature of things that slang changes frequently. Just about every new group of fans wants to invent some new terms and doesn't like some of the existing terms. For instance, when I was a young fan I thought the phrase "pubbing an ish" was just too cutesy-poo, so I didn't use it. For less specific reasons, the term "zine" doesn't appeal to me. "Smof" is an example of a new fan term which has come into use since Fancyclopedia II. In general, I think fans use less slang than they once did. I suspect slang usage has declined because fandom has become less of an in-group. What was once a small group of hobbyists has now generated a much larger group of hobby consumers. The awareness that you won't be understood certainly suppresses slang usage. Since there is still dark muttering from the group that intends to publish *Fancyclopedia III*, I think the project is still in the works. The publication of *Fancyclopedia III* still seems to be in the possible range. The project which really seems impossible would be the updating of the *Tuck Handbook*. Collecting all the data on the last twenty years of science fiction is more than any one human can do. Doing it by committee seems even less likely. I suppose future reference works will have to be more limited in scope.

Like Fred Lerner, I have an idea for a TV series. However, my idea isn't as limited as the story of water. What I have in mind is "Isaac Asimov and the Muppets Explain Everything."

While it's nice that Hal Clement has figured out how to justify a hollow planet, the planet itself isn't what bothers me about the idea. What bothers me is how you get the little star to hang in the middle. That looks like the hard part of the operation.

Anne Braude
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Mole End
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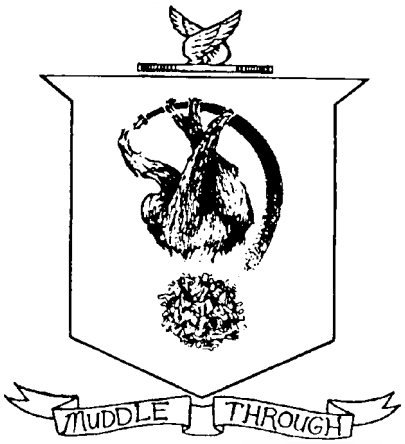
The new format is gorgeous—NIEKAS looks almost real. I loved the new Review & Comment illo on p. 49—but where is my Mathoms sloth? After all, it represents my personal crest: a sloth pendant over a basket of dirty laundry, with the motto "Muddle Through"; without it, how can my legions rally to me in battle? *[Braude's Legionnaires: memorize the standard, this page. It may be the last time you see it. MB]*

Despite Mike's claims, your spelling checker still has gremlins. In the next-to-last paragraph of p. 45, col. 3, "conbotierit" should be "condottieri" (mercenary troops), and "creditors" should be predators." (The latter error I attribute to a left-wing conspiracy among the New Hampshire Mafia that publishes this learned journal.) *[I made those typoes without benefit of electronic aid. MB]*

In case anyone wondered, I belong to Werewolves Anonymous because Were-



Kurt Reichel/John B. Geisel

moles Anonymous doesn't have a Salt River Valley chapter. I have finally seen the Dr. Who episodes featuring the First Doctor (William Hartnell) and find him the most obnoxious yet. I was particularly amused by an episode based on the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral—all those gunfighters with English accents, and the quaint premise that Tombstone had only one saloon. (It was more like 127.) In "The War Machine," I noticed that several people referred to the Doctor as "Doctor Who" rather than "The Doctor," though he does not so introduce himself.

About Anthony, pigs, and Anthony or Tantony pigs, Piers Anthony did indeed raise the subject first (NIEKAS 33:13, first paragraph, when he referred to "Anthony pig" as the designation for the runt of the litter). Since Sandra's remarks were from a conversation taped at a con, I assume they represent no special anti-Anthony research; the research for my own comments was limited to a quick check of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.* As for the Author vs. Critic aspect of the Anthony-Miesel debate, I don't think it will get settled short of a *holmgang*. I really don't see how Anthony interprets her comments in #35 as an argument against him; it seems pretty academic and impersonal to me. And if you compare her remarks (32:65) on him with his comments about her (36:57), you will find a lot more foam on Piers' muzzle than on Sandra's (consider the choice of adjectives alone).

Diana L. Paxson
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Berkeley, CA 94705

I'd like to remind everyone that my essay on Kabbalah was of necessity a very superficial look at a very complex set of concepts, and brevity required me to assume that readers understood my terms in the same way I was using them (by the way, the reference to the the waterbed breaking while we were studying Yesod was intended to be funny—I have no idea whether or not there was a causal relationship between the two events, but it was an example of synchronicity of a type which happens with suspicious regularity when one starts working along these lines— or maybe it's just because one becomes sensitized to certain areas, as when you fall in love and see romance everywhere. . . . Regarding the objection to the use of material from the Jewish tradition by a non-Jew, see my column this ish.

After reading Buck Coulson and Alexei Panshin's refutations of their critics, I realize that Joseph Major's characterization of my fiction as "gooey", is minor league. However, it did puzzle me. I don't let adverse criticism devastate me (no writer could keep on writing who did), but I do try to learn from it. Clearly, something I am doing is making Mr. Major very uncomfortable. It is always possible that the quality he dislikes is precisely the thing that the people who do like my work enjoy, so I don't promise to change my ways. *De gustibus non est disputandum*, and all that. I notice that he thinks that Anne McCaffrey's *Moreta* is gooey as well— if I can err as well as Anne does, I'll cry all the way to the bank. It would interest me to know what other writers he would describe in this way-- he may have been paying me a compliment! I'm glad he likes my columns, anyway (which is certainly the bottom line as far as NIEKAS is concerned!). In the meantime, I think I'll go console myself with a hot butterscotch sundae. . . .

WAHF

Donald Franson (who plugs the annual N3F short story contest with several cash prizes; write him at 6543 Babcock Ave., N. Hollywood, CA 91606), Robert Bloch, Jacqueline Lichtenberg, Nola Frame Gray, Nick Shears, Jorge Quiñonez, Ben Indick, Brad Foster, Paul Demzioquoi, Leo M. Gallagher, Janice Murray, and Kenneth Jernigan.✹

***RIVER**, continued from page 8*

cock-a-leekie and haggis at Ambrose's Tavern—washed down with a dram of *The* Glenlivet? When I came out of the Pit I was feeling more than a bit queasy. All I wanted was toast and tea at the Night and Day Joint.

After lunch is a good time to relax and let our stomachs settle a bit. Take in a show, perhaps. Let's see. There's Hermione's wedding at the Chapel Perilous; that's always a fine spectacle. (And how *do* they manage that transformation scene?) Another treat for those who like special effects is Captain Face's Alchemical Demonstration. You won't believe what it takes to make one lousy Philosopher's Stone.

Or we could settle a few personal affairs. A visit to the Oracle might be rewarding, though it's much more likely to prove totally mystifying. The rules say that Deiphobe has to answer your question. But there's nothing that says that you have to be able to make sense of her answer.

For the ambitious self-improver, there's Piscator's Philosophical Academy and School of Fly Fishing, or the riding lessons at the Horse Farm. Too strenuous? Well, you can get through an afternoon's wine tasting at Ambrose's without straining anything but the elbow muscles.

A bit of shopping at the Parouart bazaar, and it's supper time. There are plenty of choices, but I always return to the same spot. The food and drink at Heorot are varied and substantial. Your fellows at table are always a hearty lot. And you can't beat the floor show.

I enjoy a lively sing-along as much as any man, and when the tables are cleared and the musicians appear, I trip a reel with the best of them. But the high point comes at the end of the evening. Returning to our seats for coffee, dessert, and brandy, we are serenaded by the finest bards of the Commonwealth. It's strictly individual performance, applause being the only audience participation. But I guarantee you'll be whistling a new tune for weeks afterward.

Then it's back to Ilium for the fireworks, and time to leave. Good luck finding your car! You're no doubt weary of the whole business. Your kids, if they're still awake, want to come back again tomorrow. "Maybe next year," you tell them, not meaning a word of it. But when next summer rolls around, a repeat visit seems much more appealing. Some of the rides and attractions that left you cold last time make a lot more sense now. And you never know whom you'll meet there. . .✹

***LIBRARY**, continued from page 9*

The Dead Zone, Mary Stewart's *Touch Not the Cat,* and similar novels being obvious examples. But lately we have seen Dean Koontz return to science fiction, and such obvious and superior science fiction works as *Phantoms* and *Strangers* have been marketed as horror novels, and even though the distinction is blurred in the first case, and in the second, there is no question at all that the novel is science fiction. As a matter of fact, Koontz's latest, *Lightning* which is about a time-traveler who attempts to protect a woman from his past who is pivotal in a struggle to alter the course of time, has also been marketed as a horror novel.

On the other hand, horror writers are turning to science fiction themes as well. Stephen King's *The Tommyknockers* is about as science fictional as you can get—a formula science fiction story of alien invasion, as a matter of fact. And Robert McCammon's *Swansong* and his newest, *Stinger,* are science fiction as well.

The truth is, the borders among the fields of fantastic literature have never been all that sharply delineated. The rise of horror fiction as a genre will benefit science fiction fans as well, because anything that produces new, good quality fiction is a benefit to anyone who reads. Each of us has his own personal predilections for the type of fiction we want to read. It would be a shame, therefore, if science fiction fans, who used to be kidded about reading that "Buck Rogers stuff," should use the same attitudes towards horror fiction fans.✹

***SHACK**, continued from page 10*

unable to find a copy of Moriarty's paper in the 1980's. We don't need Isaac Asimov's mad-scientist ravings. We can assume that the paper, like many others of the time, was written on acid-containing paper and most copies rotted away from neglect. That neglect was due to Albert Einstein who came up with the correct solution for the problem of the perihelion of Mercury using the General Theory of Relativity. Moriarty's paper was now of only limited value as history; and in any case two world wars saw a lot of libraries being burned.

Still, maybe in some obscure corner of a library in France, a copy of the paper still exists. It would be a major historical find for some fanzine publisher to print.✹

***HUMANUM**, continued from page 12*

old, and funny, MAD more than 30 years ago, when, with Will Elder and Jack Davis, he was one of the three regulars of that comic book. (The little boy pulling a wagon, which appeared in just about everything he did for MAD, later became virtually his trademark in everything he did for other zines as well. The little boy appears in the Immi village in "The King of the World.")

Goulart observes that in his later years Wood became increasingly bitter, and regrets that he did his last work for a "pornographic" comic. These were the three issues of GANG BANG that appeared in 1980 and 1981. Wood started with a character he had already used for an Army publication, Sally Forth, a blonde and not very bright WAC in the fine military tradition of Jane and Miss Lace. Previously, Sally Forth had gotten involved with just heavy innuendo, but in GANG BANG explicit sexual adventures are shown. (The kid who used to pull the wagon is now a baby-faced lieutenant.) There are also, in GANG BANG, sexual parodies with such titles as "Flasher Gordon," "Prince Violate," and "Malice in Wonderland." The art is the sort Wood's always was, but the cynical streak that Goulart mentions is clearly evident, just as it was in the last works of Vaughn Bodé. Ill health and increasing depression led Wood to take his own life in November, 1981.

Incidentally, Wood's Sally Forth should not be confused with a much more conventional comic strip running in the Sunday editions of the NEW YORK DAILY NEWS. This Sally Forth is a crag-faced brunette woman who is managing a husband, a daughter, and a career, rather more competently than Kathy would, but not as well as, of all people, Mrs. Andrews is doing in the venerable Archie strip.

Andy Porter's SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE recently reported the death of "underground" comic artist Roger Brand, at the age of 42. Complications connected with alcoholism seems to have been the cause. Brand appeared in WITZEND several times, obviously experimenting with various ways of drawing. His best item, "Homesick" in #5, is not well drawn or laid out but has a twist to the plot that is very ingenious.

Mention of Bodé, Wood, and Brand together makes it appear that there might have been a self-destructive streak in many "underground" artists—as there was also in other talented persons who made themselves reputations in the late 1960's and early 1970's, such as Phil Ochs,

Janis Joplin, and Cas Elliot. Apparently the dashing of the high hopes of that era hit a lot of people hard.✹

TORONTO, continued from page 14

flicts in the area as well. In any event even if the Middle East remains in turmoil at least this particular turmoil would be ended. That is worth accomplishing.

There is one not entirely solved aspect to this solution. That is the marketing aspect. In other words, how am I going to persuade the population of Israel to accept this solution? I do believe that if Israel wanted to do it, then the United States and other interested parties would be willing to go along or could be persuaded to do so. Israel however is not going to go for the idea. Obviously they have struggled so hard and so long and believe so deeply in the state of Israel, that they would be most reluctant to suddenly capitulate and give it back to the Palistinians. However, because they would not be facing any economic loss, and because even political needs are met by my proposed solution, they may be able to see that it is a way out of an otherwise deadly trap. It is impossible at this point in time to envision a happy future for Israel. It is just not going to happen. The solution I am proposing is a daring move to escape from this trap. If I were to seriously pursue it, I would set up an organization designed to lobby for and publicize this proposal, I would seek perhaps a new political party in Israel that would forward this goal or I would seek the endorsement of an existing political party, and we would simply work to persuade enough people to eventually pass a resolution in the Knesset that would endorse this proposal. Once Israel had adopted this plan, it would then become a matter of international diplomacy to persuade the United States to do its part, it would then be fairly simple to persuade the United Nations to do its part, and to persuade Saudi Arabia to do its part, and at that point the plan would be in place and could be carried forward. In fact although I am proposing this as an interesting idea, I'm not so dedicated to it that I am going to begin an active political campaign. Naturally I would be very pleased if someone else was inspired by my idea to do so. But for now I'm merely proposing it as an idea which may be of interest to the readers of NIEKAS. If there are any other intransigent political problems in the world that you would like to have solved please direct a request to "Tape from Toronto" c/o of NIEKAS and I will produce solutions for them too. The only thing I have yet to solve as I have noted is getting enough people to agree to my proposed solutions. If only I had a way of doing that, I actually do believe that there is no problem in world politics today for which I could not come up with an appropriate remedy.

The foregoing is my attempt to solve the most pressing problem faced by the state of Israel. It would also be an interesting exercise to invent solutions for the pressing problems currently faced by the United States of America. The most pressing problem faced by America would seem to be one way or another coping with the Soviet Union. Sometimes the problem seems to be coping with our fears of the Soviet Union, not necessarily the reality of the Soviet Union. But certainly the reality is dangerous enough. But unlike Israel the United States is not totally dominated by one single problem and has a fairly wide range of problems.

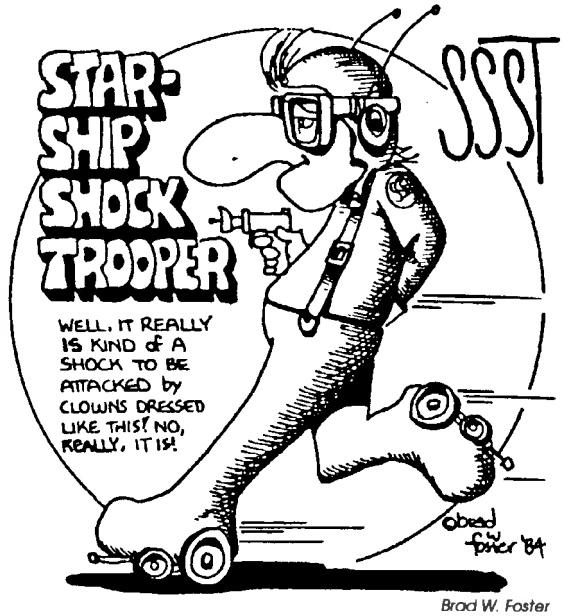
There is an interesting effort in the field of science fiction to come up with a package of solutions for the problems of America. This package is found in the recently published novel *The General's President* by John Dalmas (Baen Books, $4.95 in paperback). The general's president is a very successful businessman and inventor named Arne Haugen who becomes president not by election but by appointment under very unusual conditions. He brings to the presidency a sense of practicality and innovation that is quite startling and is in a science fictional tradition of the sort that John W. Campbell would have enjoyed a great deal if he were still around to read it.

Personally, I think that John Dalmas's solutions for America are on the whole very good solutions. There are some modifications that I would make but then, no doubt, John Dalmas would also make modifications in the course of implementing them. I have always enjoyed John Dalmas as a writer, from his earliest appearance in ANALOG with the novel *The Yngling* and he has never failed to entertain me at any point in his career. This latest novel of his has all the characteristics which have endeared John Dalmas's fiction to me in the past. It has an exciting plot, characters that I am truly interested in, and interesting ideas. The title suggests a sort of dystopian novel in which the United States falls into the hands of a military dictatorship but in fact this is a utopian novel in which the United States falls into the hands of a man who is in effect a benevolent dictator and who has the opportunity to implement the more daring remedies for the ills of America that John Dalmas has thought up.

I know that some of you will find the political concepts of this novel to be very much to your liking while others will find them quite disagreeable but I think that all of you would be interested by the novel as a work of science fiction. I highly recommend it to all readers of NIEKAS. I might have done something similar myself, by writing a work of fiction in which my visionary solution for the problems of Israel is depicted as actually taking place, instead of discussing it in an essay format. Instead I have chosen this route, probably because I'm not as gifted a novelist as John Dalmas is. What I will do is to send John a copy of this column after it is published, and suggest that perhaps he should continue his present trend of utopian novels and incorporate my own concept into his next novel. Of course I know perfectly well that authors constantly suffer from a surfeit of suggestions.

However, John does like some of my suggestions so I will risk it.✹

[The above was submitted February 27, 1988, to place it in context with the rapidly changing situation in the Middle East. The story on NPR about the existence of hidden Spanish Jews from the 16th century in New Mexico ran about a month later. ERM]



Brad W. Foster

ATTITUDE, continued from page 29

he said to me at the end, "I never dreamed outer space could be so boring."

Way back in 1873, when Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* was published, the author of a science fiction novel (or scientific romance, as they were called in those days) felt a need to describe a new futuristic device in great detail. Indeed, the atomic submarine *Nautilus* from that book was described in such detail one could, given the financing, build the damned thing—body by Fisher, interior decoration by Oscar Wilde. In 1954 Walt Disney decided to film *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*. His army set to work drawing the sub exactly as Jules Verne had described it. They thought it would be easy.

However, no matter how they scribbled, Walt wasn't satisfied. At the last the head of the art department cried out, "What do you want, for God's sake?"

"Make it look like a shark," said Uncle Walt.

And so they did. The movie won Oscars for Art Direction and Special Effects. But we were talking spaceships, weren't we?

OK, when George Lucas was planning STAR WARS, did he call in Dr. Sheridan Simon from the Physics Department of Guilford College in Greensboro, NC, to feed all the authentic figures into his billion-K number cruncher and come up with an image of the starship of the future? Of course he didn't. Mr. Lucas sat in his private screening room and watched hours and hours of World War II combat film. Those spaceships that dart around so grandly making such a wonderful noise in airless space don't look (and certainly don't sound) like any space ships that ever existed or ever will exist. But dang if they don't look and sound a lot like Mustangs, Spitfires, Hellcats, and Jap Zero's. How many Oscars did STAR WARS win for technical achievement? Seven.

Analogy.

Analogy makes things easier for the writer. More importantly, analogy makes things easier for the viewer, or the reader. When I write for you, I have to draw my images out of the store of things you already know about or you won't understand a word I say. I may have a pretty good guess about what a starship of the future will look like, but as long as I'm working in the print media I have to tell you about it in terms you already know. That is, I have to use analogy.

In one of my novels, *The Prometheus Man*, a lot of the action takes place on a huge sort-of geodesic balloon that I lifted from a design by Bucky Fuller. I have to confess I sweated blood trying to get my readers to see that damned balloon. You see, the people live inside the balloon and... but I'm not going to try again to do here in a few lines what I failed to do in a whole book. Unless you are already familiar with Bucky Fuller's design, I can't really tell you what that damned balloon looks like, let alone how it works. (And I think that, given funding, it would work.) I've often thought I should have taken the easy way out and said it was a "Flying City" supported by "Anti-gravity beams." Then you would have understood me perfectly. That's the way STAR TREK did it. That's the way AMAZING STORIES did it on a back cover back in the '20's. That's the way Mickey Mouse did it. Yeah, I should have taken the easy way out. Only, in that particular story I have made a rule for myself: nothing contrary to current science. And frankly I don't think all the funding in the world is ever going to get things to fly by anti-gravity.

If you don't like explaining things, you'll be happy to learn that the trend is away from explaining. Jules Verne felt he had to explain absolutely everything, and it all had to be scientifically sound. Thus he can get awfully verbose at times, but he can also make predictions that are so close it gives me goose bumps. For example, using strictly scientific reasoning, he predicted that the moon shot would lift off from Florida, near Cape Canaveral, and so it did. He predicted, in 1865, something that happened in 1969, and he got even details like the launch location right.

Later on, H.G. Wells felt he only had to explain things so they sounded scientific. The scientific explanation of the time machine, for example, is a triumph of gobbledygook. Still, he had his share of predictions. The tank, in "The Land Ironclads," 1903. The bomber, in "The War in the Air," 1908. More surprisingly, the atomic bomb, in "The World Set Free," 1914.

With Ray Bradbury we entered the era of saying things that we knew were wrong and never explaining anything. We have a lot of freedom these days. Like Richard Brautigan in "Watermelon Sugar," we can say that the sun has a different color for each day of the week, and never try to explain it. Like, hey man, that's just the way it is. Like, chill out, man. I'm not waiting with breathless expectation for the sun to start coming up red on Mondays, gold on Tuesdays, gray on Wednesdays, etc. My practice is to decide, at the beginning of each story, just how far I'm going to allow myself to stray from the path of current science. Sometimes, as in *The Prometheus Man*, I don't allow anything that could not be built today, given the funding. Sometimes, as in *The Ecolog*, I allow myself certain things that are accepted as given in the genre which I personally think are impossible, like faster-than-light travel. And sometimes, as in *Timequest*, I abandon all restraints and joyously run amok. It is this desire to be able to set a certain level of unreality at the beginning of each story that has prevented me from writing a series or even a sequel. I don't want to get stuck forever in one universe, like Heinlein and Asimov, continuing in my old age stories I began in my youth, writing worse and worse books for better and better money until I finally drop dead. Not me! *[This article was submitted about a month before Heinlein died. ERM]*

What am I telling you?

I'm telling you that science fiction stories don't really take place in the future. That's just a literary convention. Science Fiction stories take place in the present—only the present as seen in a fun-house mirror. George Orwell wanted to call his novel *1948*. It was his publishers who insisted on the title *1984*. Two movies have been made from *1984*, neither of which reflected an understanding of that, neither of which reflected The Attitude. The Eurythmics did a musical score for the film that did reflect The Attitude, but the director of the film rejected it. I don't remember his name. I don't want to remember his name.

I'm telling you science fiction is an analogy to real life. That's why it means something to people, particularly young people. The hippie generation was the last generation that really believed in things. The hippie generation was the last generation that seriously thought that it could save the world. Their children can't afford the luxury of that kind of slower-child idealism. Maybe no one will ever again be able to afford that kind of thing. Today we have The Attitude instead, and that's why science fiction is the literary voice of youth in the '80's, virtually the only literary voice young people can listen to with a straight face.

So if you want to write sci-fi, don't worry about science, don't worry about fiction as defined by literature professors; just think about where you fit in eternity, where you fit in relative to the distance between galaxies, how you shape up in the Cosmic Equation. Then look around you. And write.✹

GOODS, continued from page 23

believe it. We call this *suspension of disbelief*. Within this framework we are entitled to all the pleasure we can get from it. The story as an instrument for pleasure is well recognized, and also as a device to make a point. Sometimes a truth that is hard to grasp straight becomes clear in a story. Jesus Christ used parables, which are little stories, to excellent effect; some say he owes his fame to the power of the parable. There are Aesop's Fables. Often what we learn subtly from fiction has a greater impact on us than what we learn directly as fact.

Practical people may see little point in the telling of tales. They believe that the important things are tangible: making shoes, growing crops, building houses, flying airplanes, or running for political office. But what do we remember of the ancient Greeks? Their shoes? Their ruins? Our ruins dwarf theirs! No, what we find most significant about them is their literature. In fact, their written philosophy—and their fantasy. The same is true of other ancient cultures; we care much more about what they thought than about what they did on a daily basis. I suspect our own culture will be similarly judged.

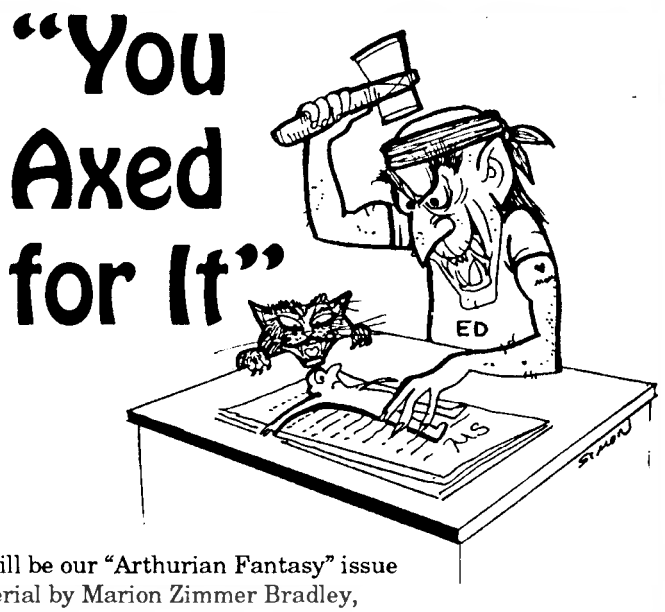
Now at last we come to the place of Fantasy in our time. Most fiction makes at least some pretense of reality; it is couched so that it could have happened. Some fiction is even published as nonfiction, to lend verisimilitude. Much of what is today considered fantasy was not regarded as such in the old days; people really believed in magic, in demons, in gods, and the many supernatural events we call mythology. But modern fantasy is perhaps unique in that it makes no claim to believability. It leans on nothing except the fascination of sheer imagination. This I suspect is the purest form of writing. Nonfiction has a subject that holds the reader regardless of the quality of the writer; this may be why some texts are dull. General fiction has the suggestion of realism, so that the reader can readily believe that the story really happened, or could happen. But fantasy has no such leg to stand on. If it is not compelling solely by the force of the writing itself, it fails. The interest of a story can not be forced or faked; it is directly between the writer and the reader, more personal in certain respects than the most intimate of physical contacts. The story is a lie —that may be more honest than any other communication. A writer must really know how to write, to be good at fantasy. It has been said that bad writing indicates obscure thinking; does this suggest that clear and compelling fantasy is good thinking?

Well, not perhaps entirely. It may be that fantasy taps into another wellspring of man's nature: his dreams. Thus it may be that fantasy expresses the truest nature of man. Man looks beyond his immediate situation; he plans ahead, he tries to shape his environment to his aspirations. But when he gets beyond the things that relate to his comfort and security, what then? Then he may leap on into what he knows is impossible, yet would be nice if it somehow could be possible. What does man wish for, when no longer chained by practical constraints? That may most readily be found in his wildest dreams: in fantasy.

Lest we forget: the Word has shaped us, and its power is awesome. We are creatures of the Word. But we here are in a sense also keepers of the Word; we use it to stir emotions and illuminate ideas. But more specifically, we, as supporters of fantasy, have a responsibility to use our vision well. We may indeed be the caretakers of man's truest heritage: his dreams. As Gustave Flaubert put it: "Human language is like a cracked kettle on which we beat out tunes for bears to dance to, when all the time we are longing to move the stars to pity." We are still trying, in fantasy. May we always try!

When we mastered the Word, we developed extremely potent applications for it. Through it we were able to describe the world as it was, and that we call History. We came to describe the world as it is, and that is Reality. We came to describe the world as it should be, and that is Philosophy. We came to describe the world as it could be, and that is Science Fiction. Finally we came to describe the world as it can never be. That, I submit, is the most significant exploit of all. We are heirs to the greatness that is the unfettered human imagination—and its name is Fantasy.✹

[Originally presented as GoH speech at the 1987 World Fantasy Convention.]



NIEKAS 38 will be our "Arthurian Fantasy" issue featuring material by Marion Zimmer Bradley, Vera Chapman, Esther Freisner, Poul Anderson, Ruth Berman, Jonathan Singer, Ned Brooks, Alexei Kondratiev, Anne Braude, Susan Shwartz, Andrea Norton, and Diana L. Paxson.

NIEKAS 39 will present an interview with genre film director John Sayles along with all sorts of other neat and interesting stuff that you just won't want to miss.

Goodbye Father Heinlein

Bastraw's Bastion

by Michael Bastraw

I have several fathers. We all do.

There's my biological father, Leo Gallagher; the man who raised me, Bill Bastraw; and the person who not only introduced me to modern science fiction but also pointed out some of the many ways that the "world wags."

Robert A. Heinlein.

News of his death came to me over CompuServe's Science Fiction Forum. (This is an electronic meeting area that can be accessed by anyone with a computer, a telephone, and the interface device called a modem.) Along with others in the forum, I expressed my sympathies on his passing—sort of an electronic wake.

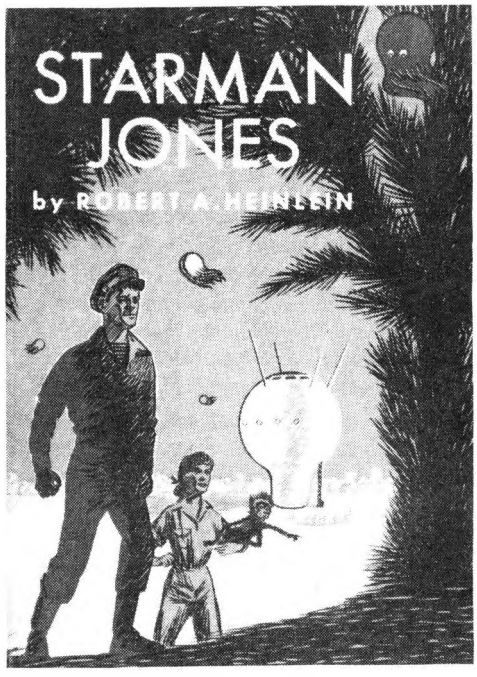
I commented on the obvious loss to the field and pointed out that the first modern SF novel I ever read was a Heinlein juvenile: *Starman Jones*. I consumed it from stern to stem in one evening. This was the book that started my wholehearted interest in the genre.

Several weeks later I was surprised to find a response to my off-the-cuff rememberance. Wilma Meier, the Sysop (administrator of the forum), had passed our condolences on to Virginia Heinlein.

This is her reply:

"It's funny about those juveniles. His editor hated them and probably hated Robert, because those juveniles supported the "Books for Younger Readers" at Scribners for years. With each contract there was an option, and that's why the series continued to be presented to her annually as they were written. Until *Starship Troopers*. Miss D. (and I won't give her any more name than that) told Robert to put it on the shelf for a year and then rewrite it. Instead, the agency took it over to Putnam. Walter Minton later told us that he told his editor, "If it's a Heinlein, grab it."

Robert never liked doing those juveniles. But their library sales were very good and that was our bread and butter in those days. Robert felt very strongly that each story should be different from any he'd ever written before, and he strove to do that. In this he had Tiffany Thayer as his



mentor. But I haven't seen any of *his* books around for ages, except in ourprivate library.

He dwelt in the realm of ideas, and those were his daily fare.

I did my very best to free his time for his studying and writing. If he didn't appear at many conventions it was because he was busy studying something new. He took off two years from his writing of fiction in order to study some innovations in basic sciences, producing only two articles for the Compton Yearbook, "Dirac, Antimatter and You" and "Are You a Rare Blood?" which stimulated his interest in blood, athough he had had five units of his own rare type back in 1970. That caused the start of the blood drives, in 1976."

There are many reasons why Robert Heinlein's death should be mourned. One of the more selfish reasons (and, consequently, most wide-spread) is that none of us will ever know The Thrill, to anticipate the next new Heinlein story to be released. There are some who have said that his later output has not been up to snuff—he just wasn't writing like he used to. Well, I would submit that mediocre Heinlein is still better than no Heinlein.

Which is what we now have to look forward to.

What is the Heinlein legacy? A body of literary work of amazing quality, 50 years of Science Fiction—a genre he helped define. Much ado is made of how Robert Heinlein (and SF writers in general) have predicted future events and technological developments in their writings. While this is true, I don't believe that is the major part of Heinlein's gifts to us. Along with his science baggage and his fiction baggage he offered us a peek into the workings of something even more fundamental: the human heart.

Let's look at my first Heinlein read, *Starman Jones*.

Max Jones, the young protagonist, wants to go out into Space. This is not surprising as there is precious little to hold his interest on Earth of this future. His one chance is to enter the exclusive Astrogator's Guild by way of an assumed sponsorship by his deceased uncle who had served on many starships.

When this turns out not to be a viable alternative, he deceives his way on board the starship *Asgard* with the help of that ubiquitous Heinlein character, The Competent Man—in this case scalliwag Sam Richards/Anderson/Roberts.

Now, of course, this sets the stage for many exciting adventures and concepts: FTL travel, Max's advancement into the controlroom crew, new planets, new creatures, new cultures. But I think we have to go back to the basic theme of the book to find what separates this tale from another story containing new planets, new creatures, etc.

That theme is *growing up*.

We see Max's transition from a boy off the farm who is fixated on only one personal dream: he wants to Space. Over the course of the story he learns the necessity of loyalty to higher ideals such as responsibility and honesty.

These are ideals well-worth writing about, well-worth emulating.✹