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NESFA Press

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Ingathering contains all seventeen stories of the People, including four which have never been collected and one, "Michal Without", which has never before been printed. Dust jacket by Elizabeth Finney. ISBN 0-915368-58-7, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2", xiv+572 pages, hardbound.

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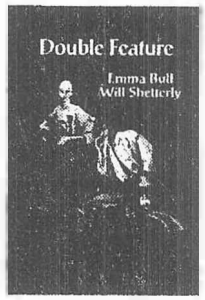
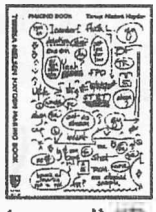
Trade $17.95 Boxed $30.00



The 1994 Boskone Book. 280 pages, hardbound. Introduction (Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden), Visionary (poem), Why I Write Fantasy (essay), Captured Moments (original to this volume), Rending Dark, Bound Things, Badu's Luck, A Happy Birthday, The Well-Made Plan, Six Days Outside the Year, A Bird That Whistles (prequel to *War for the Oaks*), Time Travel, the Artifact, and a Famous Historical Personage, Danceland Blood (Borderlands story, originally titled "Danceland"), Wonders of the Invisible World (essay on *War for the Oaks*), Emma Bull biography and bibliography), Will Shetterly biography and bibliography. The book is 5-1/2" x 8-1/2", there are 815 numbered copies of the trade edition; 185 signed and numbered or lettered copies of the boxed edition. Dust jacket by Nicholas Jainschigg. ISBN 0-915368-99-4 (trade); 0-915368-54-4 (boxed).

Making Book by **Teresa Nielsen Hayden, (edited by Patrick Nielsen Hayden)** **$9.95**



This trade paperback of Teresa's fanwriting (for which she has been nominated for the Hugo) is our second Boskone Book for 1994. Contents: "God and I," "Of Desks and Robots," "Apocalypse Now and Then," "Black Top Hat and Mustache," "Major Arcana," "Bei mir dist du Scohenherr," "High Twee," "The Big Z," "Hell, 12 Feet," "Tits and Cockroaches," "Over Rough Terrain," "Workingman's Fred," "On Copyediting," "Review of *American Psycho,*" "The Pastafazool Cycle." 160 pp., 5-1/2"x8-1/2". Cover art by Teresa Nielsen Hayden. ISBN 0-915368-55-2.

Proper Boskonian 34

June 1995

Proper Boskonian is the semi-annual genzine of the New England Science Fiction Association. Send all contributions (writing, art, LoCs) to: *Proper Boskonian*, c/o NESFA, Post Office Box 809, Framingham, MA 01701-0203.

Editor: Kenneth Knabbe
Proofreader: George Flynn FN

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Artists

Official Notices

This zine is available as part of NESFA membership ($16 a year for subscribing members); or for a contribution of writing, art, and/or LoC; $3.00 per issue; trade and/or editorial whim.

The next regular issue of *PB* is scheduled to be out in late November/early December. Reports on Intersection, material on Henry Kuttner for the author highlight, and art are most wanted, but as always, other material is welcome. In the meantime expect a surprise bonus issue to arrive at the end of August.

Editorial Ramblings by Kenneth Knabbe

Just before an issue is ready to be run off, I generate a list of names and addresses of people who'll be receiving the current issue and are not on the regular NESFA mailing list. These are people who have either sent material, whether I used it or not, or a zine in trade, or people I believe might be convinced to contribute in the future. While I occasionally drop someone who does not indicate an interest after receiving an issue, the list is slowly growing. There are 27 addresses on the list for this issue.

Last February I received a letter from Jenny Glover over in Great Britain. She had read *PB* 33, which had been sent in trade for *Cybrer Bunny*. In it she asked several questions that got me thinking. While I wrote her back a private letter, I thought others might be wondering some of the same things.

Why are there so few letters in *PB?* There are about 350 members on the NESFA roster. If you don't count the honorary and affiliate members, the number is about 250. Of those 250, I see about 60 at least once every month. In addition, over the course of a year I see or correspond with about another 30. Added to that number are about another 60 I will see at some convention during the year. These are the active members and the ones most likely to write if we never met. How many fans that you see regularly do you write to?

Another factor is that *PB* is a genzine. I try to make it interesting to the entire membership. NESFA has a newsletter, *Instant Message,* and an apa. That means that, unlike most other fanzines, *PB* tends to be impersonal. The writing is mostly about club activities and sf. This doesn't mean I don't receive letters from people that fill me in on what is happening in their lives. I do, and am pleased that they feel interested enough to write. I generally leave that part of the letter out if I publish it, and reply in private.

Apa:NESFA is collated every month. I manage to contribute about four times a year. Much of the personal writing is done there. It is open to all members, and several that don't make meetings contribute regularly.

Due to these factors, most of the mail I receive as editor of *PB* is from nonmembers. This issue only lists four in the ToC. My file actually has letters from eleven different people. Some were answered privately. A few people asked specific things about Joe Mayhew's cartoon piece or the contents of *His Share of Glory,* and their letters were forwarded to Joe or Tim. Without their reply, it makes no sense to print the questions asked.

One of the things I have noticed is that many fanzines received in trade list some of the same contributors. The active membership of NESFA is composed mostly of con runners or people interested in book publishing. While a number of members are involved in fanzines, a few of those have told me they only contribute to fanzines they would not get otherwise.

PB is being noticed more and more by fanzine fans. This is something I hope will continue. As it does, I expect the number of letters and contributors to increase.

Another question asked was: If Boskone is run by NESFA, why does the club publish a report on its own convention? Most of the active members in the club are involved in con running. When you are busy putting on the convention, you are usually too busy to see any of it. In addition, Boskone, like most conventions, has at least three program items happening at once. Even if you just went, and didn't help put on the con, you would be only seeing about one third of the program. Another reason is that it is nice to have a record of what went on. When you go on vacation, don't you take pictures or buy a souvenir book? A convention report is the same thing.

Jenny was also concerned about the way one issue seems a lot like the next. She felt I might be getting in a rut and turning off potential contributors. Before my term as editor, 1976 was the last year that contained more than one regular-size *PB.* Most of the response I received when I suggested I change what I'm doing was outrage. The response was: you are doing a good job, don't mess it up. By adding author and artist highlights, I have kept my creativity and interest going. In addition, I have managed to encourage more members of NESFA to try their hand and contribute.

This issue Bob Devney makes his first contribution. Next issue there will be two pieces by Tom Endrey. Proof of my success is the bonus issue that will be out in only ten weeks. People now have confidence in my ability to continue giving them what they have come to expect.

While I have been successful in convincing new people to write for *PB,* I have failed to attract new artists. In fact, three of my regulars will not be submitting much new art in the future.

Merle Insinga is now a full-time professional. In 1993 she found time to do eight new pieces. Six of them were in *PB* 31. The other two will be in the next issue. The hoped-for retrospective in this issue is on hold. Merle has been so successful that she has had to turn down paying work from NESFA. I have gathered some of the art she did for NESFA and MCFI, and sometime in the future she hopes to be able to go through her files for some of her other fan art. While her presence will be missed, I am sure all the artists reading this are a bit envious.

Halliday Piel has returned to graduate school and doubts she will have the time to do more fan art. I have one piece by her left. It will appear next issue.

Alice Lewis has also gone away to school, high school. While she hopes to sneak in time for a piece every once in a while, I hope she concentrates on staying on the dean's list.

Sheryl Birkhead and Diana Harlan Stein continue to send me some very nice pieces, but since they are such good artists, you can find their art in at least six other fanzines. I am happy for what they send me.

Joe Mayhew seems to have no limit to his creativity. He just seems to pump them out. My only complaint is that I would like to be able to have more variety and not be so dependent on him.

Any fan artists out there looking for a new place to be seen? If you know any artists and you like the way I have tried to have the art flow with the rest of the issue, please encourage them to send me material.

Did you miss the fact that the next issue will be in only ten weeks? Yes, the August issue was approved. What I am planning on doing is including all the ideas that are a little bit different. So far I have been doing issues with about five pieces in them. For the August issue I am planning on having many small pieces by a lot of people. As I write this, there are six in various stages of completion. None run longer than six pages. I have ideas for three more, and expect to receive replies to my requests to reprint some material I liked and doubt you have seen. I already have some art put aside that fits in perfectly.

One of the things I am putting together is on local clubs and conventions. By "local" I mean within 200 miles of Boston. My last count had ten fan-run conventions. In addition I am aware of eight fan clubs. If you are connected with a local group or convention, please write me. Do not assume it is one I am aware of. I hope to have a short paragraph or quarter-page ad (3½" wide by 4½" high) for as many as possible. I want this to be as inclusive as possible.

I am going to try to have the issue done in time so that some can be brought to the Worldcon. If you see the August issue there, read it but please leave it for someone else. Yours will be waiting for you at home.

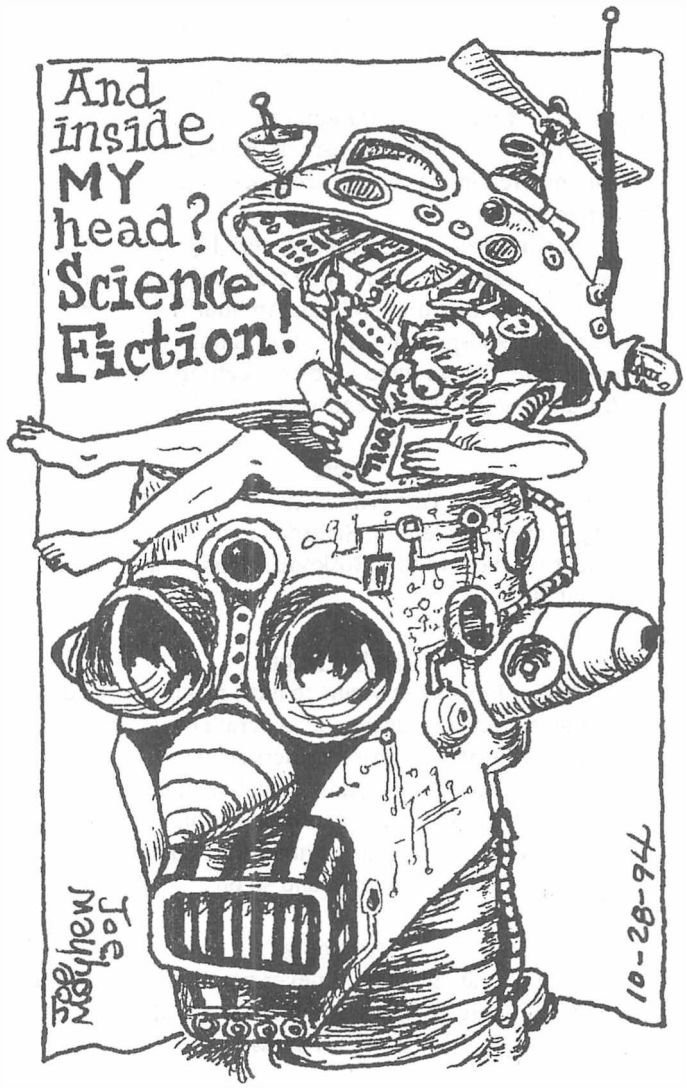
For the next regular issue in December, I would like to highlight Henry Kuttner. I will be putting together a bibliography and hope to include some reviews. Three people have expressed an interest in contributing, and I hope more of you readers will take the time to reread his work and send me your comments.

Joe Mayhew is doing a new cover for the issue, and I also have a piece by Tom Endrey on collecting sf art.

I will also be having a back-issue sale. I am trying to locate a copy of all of the issues prior to issue 25. (I have all the more recent ones.) I will try to make readable photocopies available. So if you have joined recently or just want a complete set, I expect to come up with at least most of them.

Since the gap between the June and August issues is so small, I also expect to have many letters from you.

One last item that I am sure is on the minds of a lot of you: What is the status of *His Share of Glory,* the book of C. M. Kornbluth stories being edited by Tim Szczesuil? Work is progressing. Early this year NESFA purchased a scanner to help speed the work, and Tim has been tracking down the stories he was missing. Now that Tim's term as NESFA treasurer has ended, he expects work on the book to accelerate. The plans are for a January 1996 publication. While Tim expects the book to be ready before then, in order to be reviewed by the library journals a bound galley needs to be ready several months ahead of the publication date. Several people sent in questions about the contents. Tim told me they will all be answered in the introduction.



Boskone 32

Con report by Evelyn C. Leeper

As usual, the schedule for this Boskone was available on-line before the convention, so we could plan out our weekend ahead of time. Of course, my planning *before* that was somewhat suspect, since I had said I could be on a 9 PM panel Friday, forgetting that the absolute best time to do the 255 miles was five hours. Luckily, we encountered *no* traffic jams (a minor miracle) and made it there by 8:15 or so.

Registration

Four years ago, panelists registered in the regular registration area and were given their panelist information there. Three years ago, we had to go to the Green Room to get our panelist information, and it was in the other hotel, so this was a trifle inconvenient. Two years ago, they returned to handing out the panelist information at the regular registration desk. Last year panelists had to go to the Green Room. This year... yes, you've got it: panelists registered at regular registration. I think I have figured out the pattern: odd-numbered years in the Green Room, even-numbered in the regular area. See you next year in the Green Room!

For some reason, there was a very high proportion of at-the-door registrations, and one friend who registered at the door said it took him an hour. An hour?! An hour to register for a 900-person convention is totally unreasonable. [There were problems getting open on Friday and Saturday. This caused lines to happen. KK]

Hotel

The Sheraton Tara remains quite nice (albeit with a water pressure problem on Saturday morning), and sufficient for the size that Boskone seems to have settled in to (about 900).

Dealers Room

The Dealers Room seems to have reached a steady state, with a couple of dealers in general new science fiction, a few used paperback dealers (many of whom seem to have something against alphabetizing their stock), a few small press and specialty dealers, a half dozen dealers in used and antiquarian hardbacks, and the remainder in buttons, T-shirts, and so on.

Art Show

There was an art show. I never got to it. (I guess I am just a panel junkie.) Mark saw a bit of it, but then again, his origami demo was in the art show.

Programming

I attended twelve panels and one performance in the forty-two hours this year, the same as last year.

Old Friends with Tattered Corners: On Rereading Books

Friday, 9 PM
Evelyn C. Leeper (mod), Constance Hirsch, Teresa Nielsen Hayden

[Thanks to Mark for taking notes for this.]

The panelists started by listing their most reread books. Nielsen Hayden's was *Anything Can Happen* by George Papashvily, which has been in print fifty years. It is the story of a Georgian immigrant who comes to the United States (that is the European Georgia, not the Southern one), and what happens. Nielsen Hayden said there was nothing else quite like it, and that people who read it reread it over and over.

I said that one thing I plan on rereading every New Year's Eve is "A History of the Twentieth Century, with Illustrations" by Kim Stanley Robinson, because of the sense of transition it contains. Another book I reread a lot is Stephen Jay Gould's *Wonderful Life*, which has a fantastic feeling of strangeness. It is about the Burgess Shale and the discovery of pre-Cambrian creatures in it. These creatures were shoehorned into the known species structure of the early 1900s, but now we are coming to understand how this is entirely the wrong approach, and how much more varied life was at that time. Most of them died out and left no heirs, so maybe it is my interest in alternate history that makes this fascinating. As Hirsch noted, "You are getting as much sense of wonder as from any science fiction book."

Hirsch said that last year she had kept a database of what she read, and what she has reread the most is J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (ever since as a teenager she discovered that there was a sequel to *The Hobbit*, as she related). This was also Nielsen Hayden's most reread book (but not mine, which is probably Jules Verne's *Mysterious Island* as a teenager or Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Men* now). (I noted that I also kept such a list, indicating that the requirement for being on this panel is that you are anal-retentive – and yes, it has a hyphen.)

Regarding *The Hobbit*, Hirsch got it out on books on tape from the library, and it "soaked up a marvelous part of the day." She said that she found it a new way of "listening" to the text. By literally listening to someone else's interpretation of the text, the reader gets a different way of understanding the text. For example, one actor did all the voices and the orcs started to sound like Cockney dock workers. What strikes her most strongly, besides the "voice" (or voices) that Tolkien is writing in, is how sad the characters are, in that even if they win they lose. Also, while people run down Tolkien's prose, it is associated with a class and style of people, and is right for them.

Regarding "listening with the inner ear," I commented that I have set myself the task of reading all of Shakespeare's plays and, to use Mark's comment about some of what he has reread, they have really punched them up since school. Because I have seen a lot of Shakespeare

plays performed, I now *see* the plays in my mind and *hear* the voices in my mind, and the humor (in particular) comes through much better. Nielsen Hayden said this was because the people who create the textbook editions of the plays suck out the jokes – literally, when they feel that the jokes make the plays too long or too bawdy for young audiences. My belief is that rather than dumbing down the plays, they should *show* the plays to students, preferably performed in some informal outdoor theater. The best performances of Shakespeare's comedies I have seen were at the Renaissance Festival in Tuxedo, New York, and in a park in downtown San Jose, California. In fact, when I read the comedies now, I am sitting in that park, I am seeing that stage and those players, I am feeling the breeze, and I am seeing and hearing the play the way it was intended. Seeing a faithful production of *Twelfth Night* in which one of the characters moons the audience as part of the plot is more likely to get the *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective* crowd interested in Shakespeare than a dry reading of *Julius Caesar* in a classroom. (And *Titus Andronicus* would make a great splatterfilm.) Even a movie like Kenneth Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* can make Shakespeare come alive for students. Nielsen Hayden said that in that film, the funny parts were funny, the shocking parts were shocking, and you get into it and don't notice that everyone is "talking funny," the way they are in the usual sing-song "quality of mercy" renditions one gets in school.

One reason students don't appreciate what they are reading in school (and hence get something different or better when they reread a work) is that not only do they never read the words aloud, they are never told to read *slower*. In fact, the reading loads students are given force them to read *faster*, which makes the works less enjoyable. Speed-reading may be fine for non-fiction (at least some non-fiction), but doesn't work for George Eliot's *Middlemarch*. And there is no way to speed-read Shakespeare, which in any case shouldn't take more than two or three hours to read (per play), and if you don't have that much time to read great literature, then you have bigger problems than how to speed-read. Of course, the real problem is that when you have learned to speed-read, it's hard not to. When people learn to read slower and go back and reread a book, it's no wonder it seems totally different. Nielsen Hayden points out that speed-reading has its uses: for example, in reading the Net, how fast can you kill the articles? But Nielsen Hayden also says that she needs to read slow for her job (as an editor), so she needs to keep both skills honed.

Now part of what drives people to speed-read is things like shelves of books waiting to be read, lists of books, etc., all screaming, "Faster! Faster!" It really does take running as fast as you can to stay in one place, and even that doesn't work.

Another reason students don't appreciate books in school is that the knowledge that there is a test at the end means they are concentrating on what they think they will be tested on, not on what they can get out of the work on a personal level.

Another reason why rereading gives a different or better experience is that the reader has gone through more life experiences, or can relate this book to other books read in the interim, or just has a different perspective in general. A story about aging will mean something very different to a fifty-year-old than to a fifteen-year-old.

Not everything is worth rereading. The first science fiction novel Hirsch read was *Trial by Terror* by Jack Williamson, and when she mentioned this to him, he flinched. She has never reread it, and does not feel she has missed anything. We talked a bit more about what things we had read that were worse the second time through. Nielsen Hayden said that the style of *Dune* bothered her a lot more the second time through. Learning in school to be more demanding of books made some "beloved books get bad." The only example I could think of was Stephen Donaldson's *Lord Foul's Bane*, which I didn't like the first time either. But I am sure that, like *Trial by Terror*, much of the science fiction I read and enjoyed in junior high school would be pretty bad if I reread it now.

However, I said that one of the earliest science fiction books that I read and reread was Franz Werfel's *Star of the Unborn*, which I think would bear rereading. Nielsen Hayden thought this odd, as this is a book usually read only by graduate students, and I was a thirteen-year-old. But I was reading it as a science fiction novel set ten thousand years in the future (or was it a hundred thousand?) instead of a philosophical work, although I suspect I got more philosophy out of it than out of most of the science fiction I read then. But it was science fiction, and in the house, so whenever I ran out of library books between my weekly trips to the library, it was that, or *Mysterious Island*, or one of a small set of books in the house. (My parents were great believers in libraries, perhaps because being in the military meant we moved a lot and that made accumulating books inconvenient.) Bantam actually issued this in paperback a few years ago, where I suspect it sank with nary a ripple on the sales charts, alas.

Nielsen Hayden told of her husband's experience as a young reader. He had heard of this book called *The Hobbit* and went looking for it, but ended up with Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt* instead, and all the while he was reading it, he kept waiting for it to become the fantasy book everyone seemed to be talking about. Nielsen Hayden thought this might be the best possible reading of *Babbitt*.

Hirsch said her "reading error" story was of a friend who read Ray Bradbury's short story collection *R Is for Rocket*, but since she knew only about novels, she kept waiting for all the stories (chapters to her) to get tied together. Nielsen Hayden said when her students read Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," one was really surprised by the ending – she thought the winner would get a refrigerator or something. Hirsch said that when that story came out, there was a real uproar over it, and someone else

said that some people took it as fact, and wanted to know where it took place. I commented that there seemed to be a lot of echoes of "The Lottery" in some of Stephen King's stories, and that loads more people had read King than Jackson, and probably thought all these ideas were original with him. None of this had much to do with rereading, of course, but then a lot of this hour diverged from the topic.

Nielsen Hayden asked if when we reread a book it was ever a very different book than we remembered. This led us to a discussion of the fact that it sometimes *was* a different book, now that many books are being re-issued in their "original, uncut" versions. This is particularly true of Heinlein's works. Hirsch said that when she reread *Red Planet* the hero was more trigger-happy, because the editor had toned that down in the earlier version. I commented that I had read *The Puppet Masters* recently, and had a similar experience. On the whole, the panelists seemed to feel that the re-issuance of Heinlein's earlier novels as they existed before his editor imposed changes on them serves a very useful purpose: it shows how valuable editors are. Heinlein hated his editor, as his memoirs show, but she may have been a major factor in his popularity, since his later novels, written when Heinlein was powerful enough to resist editing, were not his best work (even before his health problems). Another author who seems (in my opinion) to be going through this cycle is Stephen King, although Hirsch said if you liked the characters in *The Stand*, you will like the "expanded" version. My gut reaction to this was that while I liked *The Stand* the first time around, if I want to reread a 1400-page book, *Les Miserables* would probably be more rewarding. The longer the book, the more I have to love it to reread it.

This in some sense got us back to the heart of the panel. As Nielsen Hayden said, "We know our mortality when we realize we will not ever have time to read all we want." Someone suggested that one reason to reread a book is that it's a form of memory: you remember where you were and what you were all the other times you read the book. And if they were happy times, you are in a sense returning to them.

Being able to discuss books with people is another reason. Teachers say they often need to reread a book before assigning it. Usually teachers will have read the book at some point, but not always. I told the story of what happened when Mark's high school class had a substitute teacher who admitted she hadn't read *Darkness at Noon*, the book under discussion. So the class spun an elaborate plot, very downbeat, which had nothing whatsoever to do with the book. This was passed from class to class during the day and embroidered upon as it went. By the end of the day, the teacher was saying, "This sounds really interesting; I'll have to read it some day if I want to get really depressed." The class agreed that she would get depressed, all right.

People in book discussion groups also have a reason to reread books. (There's an idea for a panel at a future Boskone: how to organize a book discussion group, with an emphasis on science fiction. I volunteer to be on this, and I know NESFA runs a discussion group, so they must have someone.) For those of you who are not working a standard shift, National Public Radio has a book discussion on "Talk of the Nation" Monday through Thursday from 2 to 3 PM, where people can call in and talk about the book.

Parties

For some people, parties are the main point of a convention. I, however, am not one of them, and my taste in parties runs more towards the sort where one discusses whether the relationship of the Japanese of *Tale of Genji* to modern Japanese is more like that of the English of *Beowulf* or of the English of Chaucer to modern English. Given that, you are probably just as happy that I am not going to review the parties. I will ask why, if Boskone sized down because of non-fans coming for the booze, they decided to allow a whiskey company to have a hospitality suite open basically all day Saturday serving free whiskey. [This happened because "Tully" gave the hotel a large amount of money to hold a "closed" party for all Boskone members. KK]

"I Remember Babylon": Missed Predictions in SF

Saturday, 11 AM
Hal Clement (mod), Jeff Hecht, Terry Kepner,
Tony Lewis, Mark Olson

This was held in one of the small rooms, and was quite crowded. In fact, many of the items in this room seemed to be "over-attended," while the couple I went to in the larger room were half empty. Unfortunately, there is no room size in between. There were also no microphones, except in the Ballroom, which made hearing the more soft-spoken panelists a problem.

Hal Clement explained the origin of the panel's title for the benefit of the audience members who did not recognize it: an Arthur C. Clarke story in which the Chinese launch a communications satellite and attempt to destroy Western civilization by broadcasting pornography, bull-fighting, snuff films, etc., direct to people's televisions. This story was written in 1960, so the title of the panel implied that Clarke was wrong in his predictions, but as Clement pointed out, we now do have direct broadcast television, and as someone else pointed out, we have these broadcasts, only they are going in the opposite direction, and the Third World accuses us of destroying *their* societies with *our* pornography. (When I was a student at the University of Massachusetts around 1970, Clarke came to speak there, and members of the Science Fiction Society were invited to join him at dinner beforehand. The Chinese had just launched their first communications satellite, and I remember one of our members asking Clarke when "they were going to start broadcasting the good stuff.")

The focus of the panel, though, was what science fiction overlooked. Some people suggested the usual sorts

of scientific bloopers in the category of, "If we knew then what we know now": Mercury's not having a light side and a dark side, Venus's not having oceans, and so on. But strictly speaking, this is not what the panel's title seems to be referring to. It appears more aimed at addressing what trends in technology, sociology, or other "developing" areas science fiction missed, rather than where science fiction used incorrect assumptions based on the current knowledge of the period in which the story was written. Stories written in 1950 and set in 1970 might seem a gold mine for this sort of thing, but the question is not whether the story got the name of the President in 1970 right, but whether the trends predicted came about, or were displaced by totally unexpected ones. Having a big anti-war movement would be an accurate prediction, even if the war were the Tanganyikan War instead of the Vietnam War.

Tony Lewis said that one reason science fiction is often "accused" of having predicted the wrong things and missed what did happen is that science fiction is "not predictive, but preventative." George Orwell did not necessarily believe that *1984* was an accurate prediction of what might happen, but it was a warning about the *sort* of thing that could happen if people did not do something about it.

One of the major developments that one might expect science fiction would have predicted, the panelists said, was the widespread use of the personal computer. Yet no authors seemed to have latched on to this. The example given was that in the "Foundation" series Hari Seldon had some sort of hand-held computer (what we might call a palmtop), but this was described as being the latest leap forward in his time, tens of thousands of years in the future. As I type this on *my* palmtop, I would have to say that Asimov got the time factor a bit wrong. But then, he always pooh-poohed the predictive ability of science fiction writers, noting that he wrote a book on how to use the slide rule right before the advent of calculators.

In regards to the personal computer *et al.*, Robert Lucky of Bell Labs once said that the industry is a very poor predictor of what would catch on. It thought the Picturephone of the 1960s would be a big hit, and missed out on predicting the enormous popularity of the fax machine, the cellular phone, and the personal computer.

Asimov also did not extrapolate on the positronic brain, which he saw solely as a way to control a rather large, human-shaped robot, instead of as something that could control machinery or whatever in any form. In fact, one of the major problems with the predictiveness of the "Foundation" series – at least the earlier stories – is that there appears to have been very little technological change between our time and Seldon's, but then suddenly the Foundation starts developing/discovering major advances. And of course John W. Campbell's "Blindness" shows another variation on this: a character spends so much time trying to achieve cheap atomic energy that he fails to realize that the photoelectric power he has developed along the way is really the answer to cheap power that people need and that will catch on. We cannot always see which development is really the important one.

One thing that makes science fiction "guess wrong," according to the panelists, is that people are interested in things beyond the scope of technology, and conversely, have no interest in what is possible. This tendency to "write for the market" instead of doing serious extrapolation means that we get stories in which we have matter transmission, but no other aspect of the world has changed – the author has not bothered to think out the consequences of his assumptions.

As another example of where science fiction missed a prediction, one panelist said that no science fiction author predicted the rise of suburbia. Someone disputed this, claiming that Clifford Simak did that in *City*, but other people felt that the description in *City* was more of a rural landscape than of suburbia. It was also claimed that science fiction missed out on malls, though at Chicon V Laurie Mann noted that malls, shopping concourses, etc., are just a variation of the "domed cities" which were indeed a staple of much early science fiction.

Another missed prediction of sorts that I can certainly understand is that computers will need to be backed up.

The panelists observed that science fiction writers generally take the science that we think we know and extrapolate it rather than try to predict new science. So even with the most "radical" developments in science fiction, there is an attempt to base them in current science. Most faster-than-light travel is based on some variation of Einsteinian physics, rather than some radical new discovery. (The panelists even gave an example: oil diffraction microscopes apparently dip their samples in oil to change the speed of light around them to improve performance. The panelists wanted to extrapolate this for faster-than-light travel although, as one panelist noted, it would mean that you arrived covered in oil, and another said this might lead alien races to think you were some sort of food.) Bob Shaw's "Light of Other Days" extrapolates from then-current science to the "slow glass" and all its implications.

One problem is that the effects of technological or sociological changes take time. When Robert Heinlein wrote *Starman Jones*, computers existed, but Heinlein totally missed out on predicting the changes over time that computers would have had in navigation and space travel. Heinlein's *Door Into Summer*, another panelist noted, had the beginnings of CAD/CAM (Computer-Aided Design/Computer-Aided Manufacturing), except it was implemented with "cut pieces of metal."

Clement says that he extrapolates on science, but not on history or sociology. But technology drives society and society (along with science) drives technology. What is more, we may be too close to the situation to know what is going on. For example, by some measurements, the rise in personal computers has not resulted in a rise in

productivity. I think most people looking at the bigger picture would say this is incorrect (although a couple of the panelists commented on the large number of people playing solitaire and minesweeper). Classic examples of technology driving society in unpredicted ways are the automobile creating a sexual revolution, and the VCR bringing about the breakdown of communal gatherings begun by television. (One could claim, of course, that Isaac Asimov in *The Naked Sun*, or Ray Bradbury in "The Pedestrian," did predict the latter.)

Writers have been known to deviate intentionally from extrapolation. Sometimes it is because they need a particular plot device (they are, after all, writing a story, not a predictive essay). Other times it is just a failure of imagination. The example given was *Star Trek*. In the original series the communicators were hand-held. In the second series they were much smaller and put in badges. But the likely situation, at least according to one panelist, would be that they would be implanted in people's earlobes (assuming they had earlobes, as another noted) rather than still in a separate unit that could be lost, misplaced, etc.

Sometimes the mistakes in predictions that authors make are amusing because of their self-contradictory nature. Self-lighting cigarettes fall into this category – a high-tech version of something that science/technology has discovered is bad for us. Videophones with dials (from the old movies) are another example; even non-videophones rarely have dials these days.

Sometimes the mistakes are precisely because people extrapolate from their current knowledge. Olson gave the example of a writer from a couple of hundred years ago needing a method to have his hero travel great distances very quickly. Such a writer would give his hero seven-league boots rather than an airplane, since airplanes were not part of his knowledge base.

Of course, with any predictions there will always be those who have reasons why these predictions are wrong, and why technology X will never catch on. The panelists cited an essay written shortly after automobiles were first developed, which explained that they would never catch on for long-distance travel, because if you went far enough, you would need to refuel them, and this would involve an entire network of fuel depots that obviously would not be possible.

Also, advances do not happen in isolation, and an author concentrating on one change will miss the synergy that occurs when it collides with another change. Herman Kahn's *The Year 2000* and the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* both suffer from this – while they extrapolate some trends, they ignore (or perhaps more accurately, do not predict) others that move things in different directions. It is like looking at a particle equidistant from three asteroids of comparable size, and calculating its movement based on the gravitational pull of only one of them. (Now there is a science fiction analogy for you!)

Bloopers and Bad Science on TV
Saturday, 12 N
Jeff Hecht (mod), Jeffrey A. Carver, Hal Clement, Don Sakers, Melissa Scott, Earl Wajenberg

The panelists started out by giving a prime example of what the panel was about: the introduction to *Battlestar Galactica* in which the characters are described as "looking for a star called Earth." They said they did *not* want to discuss sound in space, which is necessary for dramatic effect, and should be considered almost as part of the music soundtrack.

One way of looking at this is to follow the approach that George MacDonald Fraser used in his *Hollywood History of the World*: determine if the telling is true to the spirit of the times rather than to the "objective" truth. As he says (page xv), "Provided [the screenwriter] does not break faith with the spirit of history by willful misrepresentation or hatchet job, he may take liberties with the letter – but he should take as few as possible." (This, by the way, is a book I highly recommend to fans of movies – or of history.)

Of course, people are less forgiving of shock waves in space – or at least feel that if there are shock waves, all those spaceships should have seat belts. Regarding all those little sparkles you see when you see a shot of a spaceship traveling in space, someone opined that these are really the "missing matter" in the universe. And when asked, "What is subspace?" Wajenberg replied, "Subspace is a convenient plot device."

Scott said what really annoyed her was the depiction of scientists (and how science is done) in films. As she said, "You know someone is a scientist because they stare at something for a while." But Scott also said that you have to ask yourself if the story is about science, or about people in a future society, and allow more leeway in the latter. Later in the panel, some good movies (not television) about science were mentioned: *The Man in the White Suit*, *The Dam Busters*, and *No Highway in the Sky*.

Much of the panel was about *Star Trek*, in part because when you talk about science fiction on television, the one program that serves as a *lingua franca* for fans is *Star Trek*. The panelists' primary objection to science on *Star Trek* (a.k.a. Treknobabble) was that it had no consistency. This week the transporter could be used to cure disease; next week that is completely forgotten. (As someone expressed it, "*Star Trek* resets its science every week.") And the show has fallen into what is referred to as the "particle-of-the-week" syndrome. But the writers' knowledge of even basic science is faulty. Sakers said that someone should explain DNA to the *Star Trek* writers, who talk about "the DNA of his molecules" and even have humans "regressing down the evolutionary chain" to become spiders! The recent description of an event horizon as "a force field that surrounds a star" also came under attack. Scott said that when she worked on a "Deep Space 9" novel, she found that the producers, apparently taking

Emerson's comment about a foolish consistency to heart, describe the power conduits as extremely reliable on one page of the series "Bible" and extremely unreliable on another.

Carver said we should not be too hard on the bloopers in science in *Star Trek*, because the producers and writers "have no better understanding of, say, religion than they have of science." When it comes to violating scientific principles, it is not just science fiction that does it. Roadrunner cartoons did it all the time, and action movies and television shows do it as well, with cars bursting into flame every time they crash into something, except when driven by the hero, in which case no matter how violent the crash, they can still be driven away, and so forth.

Speaking of bursting into flames, Wajenberg said, "Someone has decided that the technology of the 24th century depends on the magnesium transistor."

Basically, the panelists felt that an author should be allowed to break one (scientific) rule, but that the story should be *about* breaking the rule. In other words, if you postulate instantaneous matter transmission, your story should be about the consequences of that, not about your main character's angst over whether to go to Harvard or Yale.

The panelists seemed quite critical of small slips, such as *Space: 1999*'s reference to "the dark side of the moon." Yet I noted that when Larry Niven had the Earth rotating backwards in the first chapter of the first edition of *Ringworld*, fans may have found it amusing, but did not anathematize him for it. (And the fact that MIT students with Cray computers eventually proved that Ringworld as described was unstable passed with nary a flicker.)

I asked about other television shows. *Lost in Space* was considered one of the major contributors to the "Blooper Hall of Fame," consistently confusing solar systems with galaxies and so forth. Of *Time Tunnel* Sakers said, "The good thing about *Time Tunnel* was that its scientific inaccuracies were more than overwhelmed by its historical inaccuracies." *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *Land of the Giants* were equally laughable. No one had anything critical to say about the science in *Babylon 5*, although Scott (who has purple and yellow layered hair) said that the producers seemed to like to define their aliens by their funny hair. (I do not think this statement was intended ironically.) The anthology series (*Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*) were dismissed as "not really science fiction," as was *Quantum Leap*.

Wajenberg reminded the audience that while we scoff at them, "Producers have their artistic pride, but it is a different art." They are trying to make something that works dramatically, and it is difficult to transmit information in a drama.

Essential Films for the SF Fan

Saturday, 1 PM

Mark R. Leeper (mod), Craig Shaw Gardner, Daniel Kimmel, Jim Mann

As usual, Leeper produced a hand-out for this, and therefore much of the hour was spent adding films to (and deleting films from) that list. It is included with comments following this report, but the films were (in chronological order):

A Trip to the Moon
Metropolis
The Bride of Frankenstein
King Kong
Island of Lost Souls
*Things to Come**
Destination Moon
The Thing From Another World
The Day the Earth Stood Still
The Man in the White Suit
*The War of the Worlds**
Gojira
This Island Earth
The Invasion of the Body Snatchers
Forbidden Planet
*Unearthly Stranger**
Quatermass and the Pit (*Five Million Years to Earth*)*
2001: A Space Odyssey
The Andromeda Strain
Colossus (*The Forbin Project*)
*Phase IV**
*Star Wars**
*Brainstorm**
*Bladerunner**

(*Asterisked films are the ten "basic" ones.)

Kimmel and Mann had seen all the films except for *Unearthly Stranger*, which is a very difficult film to find.

Kimmel had a whole list of films that he said he would add (without saying what he would drop):

Invaders from Mars (1953)
Them!
The Incredible Shrinking Man
The Time Machine
Seconds
Fahrenheit 451
Planet of the Apes
Soylent Green
Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978)
E.T.
Brazil
The Fly (1986), and
Total Recall.

Kimmel later mentioned a certain fondness for *Fantastic Voyage* and also the rather obscure *Yeux sans Visage*.

Gardner said that one omission from both lists seemed to be Japanese animation, and suggested *Akira*. But Kimmel did not think that Japanese animation has broken out of its ghetto, and he is still waiting for that "breakthrough" film. For an animated science fiction film, the French *Fantastic Planet* was suggested.

Mann said that when he drew up his list, he took "SF" to include fantasy, so he would add such films as *The Mummy* (1932) and *Seven Faces of Dr. Lao*, and he has a personal preference for *The Empire Strikes Back* over *Star Wars*.

Gardner pointed out that there were no Ray Harryhausen films mentioned, and that *Earth vs. The Flying Saucers* would be a reasonable addition from a science fiction point of view.

Mann felt that perhaps either *Alien* or *Aliens* should be included. The panelists seemed to agree that films such as *Alien* and *Outland* did change the depiction of space from clean and glorious to just another place to work.

The panelists all agreed that *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* was *not* on their lists, that *Jurassic Park* was too recent to judge, and that whatever *Rocky Horror Picture Show* was, it was not something they wanted to discuss.

From the audience, Kate Pott asked about foreign films, of which she mentioned *Solaris* and *Alphaville*, to which Kimmel added *La Jetée*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Orpheus*, as well as the Czech animated films *The Fabulous Adventures of Baron Munchausen* and *The Fabulous World of Jules Verne*.

Gardner added *Road Warrior*, *Stalker*, and some Hong Kong fantasy film (*A Chinese Ghost Story*, *Zu From the Magic Mountain*, or *Wicked City*, which he described as being like "Philip K. Dick directed by David Lynch").

In the made-for-television arena, Mann mentioned the PBS version of *Lathe of Heaven* and the BBC version of *The Day of the Triffids*. Leeper recommended *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* and *Dark Intruder* (the latter of which was made for television).

Kimmel's suggestion of *Wild in the Streets* led Leeper to mention *Privilege* and *The War Game*. I would add to those *The Manchurian Candidate*, and the mention that the panelists should include at least one of the post-holocaust films such as *Testament* and *The Day After* leads me to pick *Threads* as the best of that group.

Someone in the audience asked for a list of the worst films, which prompted Leeper to say this was like asking for the hottest cold day, in that this would be a list of really bad films that were still good enough to be released. Someone said that if nothing else, "Mystery Science Theater 3000" has proven that *Plan 9 From Outer Space* is far from the worst film ever made. (Leeper's choice of worst film he has ever seen is *The Creeping Terror*.)

Is Research Necessary for SF&F?

Saturday, 2 PM

Hal Clement (mod), Ellen Kushner, James D. Macdonald, Delia Sherman, Joan D. Vinge

Clement started this panel by reminding us that the title was, "Is research necessary for science fiction and fantasy?" then saying, "Yes, and thank you for coming." This did not appear to satisfy the audience, so Clement said he could elaborate: "Yes for science fiction, and who cares for fantasy?"

However, this did not go over well with the fantasists (as Clement had predicted), and the panel decided they had to answer the question at greater length.

Kushner said she had been thinking about the topic and had come to the conclusion that "those who do, and who do believe in, research should do less and those who don't should do more." Macdonald asked, "How do you research faster-than-light travel in a distant galaxy?" Clement extended this to the general question of "What constitutes research?" and how much should one do. Sherman says the only way she can answer that is by saying that the author needs to match the research to the task at hand: one should not do as much research for a five-thousand-word short story as for a four-hundred-page novel. Clement later noted that the real problem was often that "you don't know what you don't know."

Kushner said that before researching something, the author needs to ask who s/he is trying to satisfy. If one is writing for a hard science audience, one needs to do more research for a matter transmitter than if it is just a small part of a novel where the main plot is about social transitions under a hierarchical government.

In this regard, Clement said that members of the MIT Science Fiction Society analyzed the planet in *Mission off Gravity* and proved Clement got the shape all wrong. Clement said that he eventually decided that the best approach was just to say to himself, "Well, I did write the book to give people pleasure."

Sherman said that the problem with doing too much research is that there comes a point when "you find that the details are taking over the tapestry."

In any case, the panelists agreed that even if you do not do a lot of research, you should at least avoid internal inconsistencies. (Sounds like good advice for the *Star Trek* producers as discussed in the panels on "Bloopers and Bad Science on TV.") Macdonald asked, "How many copy editors does it take to change a light bulb?" and then answered, "You said 27 on page 4 and 35 on page 60; which did you mean?"

Kushner said that we might be taking too narrow a view of research, and said, "Your entire life is and should be research." (This is more applicable to social science fiction than to the sort of thing that Clement writes, of course.) But Kushner also was in favor of traditional research, which she said made life easier. "If you look it up, you don't have to make it up."

Clement asked what the panelists do when they discover halfway through the story that one of their basic assumptions is discovered to be wrong. Sherman says since her assumptions are generally historical, she just makes it alternate history. The other panelists did not have any real answers, probably because their styles of writing do not require the rigorous physical assumptions that Clement's does. Clement said that his approach was to come up with a way to make his assumptions true by changing some of the variables that would not affect his story.

Neglected Authors: Murray Leinster
Saturday, 4 PM
Mark Olson (mod), Hal Clement, Joe Rico

Let's start with the basics: Murray Leinster's real name was William Fitzgerald Jenkins, and he pronounced his pseudonym "lenster" (in the Irish fashion). Born in 1896, he sold his first story, "The Runaway Skyscraper," in 1919, and wrote up until the time of his death in 1975. Much of what he wrote was what has been called "gaslight science fiction" (although that term conjures up images of the 1890s rather than the 1920s). Many of his stories deal with worldwide catastrophes (e.g., "Mad Planet"). While he wrote some novels, they are generally conceded to be inferior to his short fiction, where he broke ground with stories such as "Sidewise in Time" (the first parallel worlds story, written in 1935), "A Logic Named Joe" (the first Net story, written in 1949), and "First Contact" (the first first-contact story, written in 1945).

The panelists said that though at times Leinster tended toward "unnecessary narration" (Olson added that he relied too much on the omniscient narrator), he was not an unsophisticated author. In "A Logic Named Joe," for example, he examines the sociological impact of his premises. And he does not resort to cardboard villainous aliens. Even when the aliens are villainous, they are villainous for a reason (e.g., "Proxima Centauri"). But the panelists agreed that Leinster should be read for his ideas, not his style.

Much of his short fiction was published in book form in now-out-of-print collections such as *Operation: Outer Space* and *The Best of Murray Leinster*. In fact, there were two different books with this latter title, one British and one American. It was also mentioned that much of his science fiction was published in England under his real name, which sounded more English than the Irish-inspired Leinster. *The Planet Explorer* (a.k.a. *Colonial Survey*) was described as a collection of his "Colonial Survey" and "Med" series stories, though an audience member said that Nicholls and Clute list it as a novel. (Peter Nicholls and John Clute included only authors who had written novels in their encyclopedia, so there may be an unconscious prejudice here.) It was for one of the "Colonial Survey" stories, "Exploration Team," that Leinster won his only Hugo (Best Novelette, 1956).

Other sources for Leinster stories are the retrospective "Year's Best" series edited by Isaac Asimov and Martin Greenberg. Someone added that those books make a very good overview of the science fiction of the period, with the only major omissions being Bradbury and Heinlein. He did not explain why Bradbury was missing, but apparently Heinlein demanded such a high percentage of the royalties that there would have been hardly anything left for the rest of the authors. This gave me an image of a future in which the only knowledge of the science fiction of this period was a set of these books, and as a result Heinlein was totally forgotten. In any case, Leinster's best work was from 1945 to 1950, so people should look for those particular volumes in their used bookstores.

Clement, who had met Leinster, described him as "just a nice guy, easy to talk to on just about any subject."

Leinster's bibliography in Donald H. Tuck's *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* runs two and a half double-column pages and only goes up to 1968; it is not included here.

Like Death and Taxes, the Hugos Are Coming
Saturday, 5 PM
Evelyn C. Leeper (mod), Claire Anderson, Mark Olson, Darrell Schweitzer

And like death and taxes, the panel recommending Hugos is also coming. [Thanks to Mark for taking notes for this.] Olson brought copies of the NESFA recommended list.

One reason for this panel, of course, is to let readers know about books that have been "published with great stealth" (as Schweitzer put it). (This applies to the other categories as well, though the situation there is somewhat different.)

I started by saying that we were not going to do what the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences does during the Oscars: we were not going to start with the "minor" categories, but rather dive right in to the Best Novel.

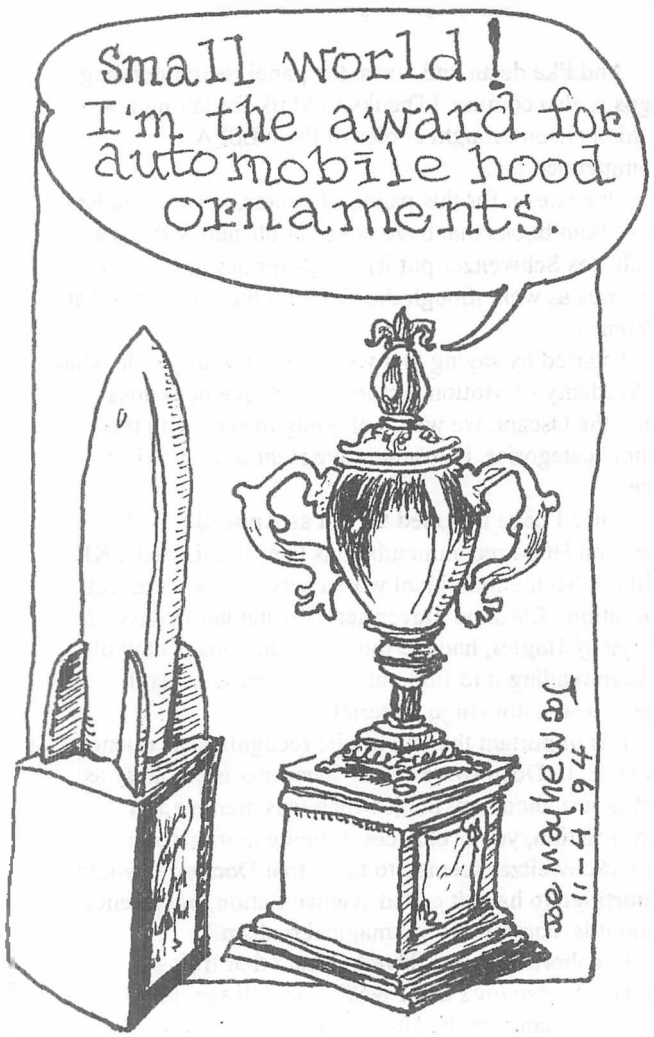
Since I have included the list as Appendix 2 [There is a piece on Hugo recommendations later in this issue. KK], I will not list the individual works here unless there was elaboration. Caroline Stevermer's Ruritanian fantasy, *A College of Magics*, had the most nominations. But while I did keep reading it to find out what happened, I still thought it was not Hugo material.

It is important that a work be recognized as science fiction. E. L. Doctorow's *The Waterworks* is certainly as good as just about any book which was marketed as science fiction, yet its chances of being nominated are very small. (Schweitzer seemed to think that Doctorow would be mortified to have it called science fiction, but science fiction it is, combined with magical realism.)

For short fiction, Schweitzer said that if you subscribe to *Asimov's* and *F&SF*, you will see most of what has a chance at the Hugo, since exposure is more

important than absolute quality. There may be a story or two from *Analog*, and one from *Omni*, and lately there have been some from original anthologies, but that about covers it. (With the Worldcon in Glasgow, it is remotely possible that something from *Interzone* may make the ballot.) Olson said that the list of recommended short fiction in *Locus* was as good a predictor as any.

We moved on to non-fiction, which I said tended to be a category determined by the wealthier fans, simply because most of the eligible books are expensive. (Last year's winner, Nicholls and Clute's *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* cost $75. *The Art of Michael Whelan* cost $60.) Olson said we should start with the winner, *I, Asimov*, which he described as 166 very entertaining short essays that were quite true to Asimov himself. It is *not* a sequel to Asimov's two other autobiographical works, *In Memory Yet Green* and *In Joy Still Felt*. Olson felt that Heinlein's wife did him a great disservice by publishing his *Grumbles From the Grave*, which left readers with the picture of Heinlein as a bitter old man, while *I, Asimov* was very much written to be how Asimov wanted to be remembered.



I enjoyed Teresa Nielsen Hayden's *Making Book*, published by NESFA Press. (This year's *A Bookman's Fantasy* by Fred Lerner looks to be equally good.) Anderson liked Cathy Burnett and Arnie Fenner's *Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art*, which she described as a "sort of year's best of art." Schweitzer thought Michael Andre-Driussi's *Lexicon Urthus: A Dictionary for the Urth Cycle*, a reference book for Gene Wolfe's *Book of the New Sun*, was worth nominating. (This was the book Schweitzer said was "published with great stealth.") But Schweitzer agreed that Asimov would win, because everyone reads Asimov. (I suppose I should be embarrassed to admit it, but I have not read it yet.) [Neither have I. KK] Anderson liked Edward James's *Science Fiction in the 20th Century*. One book I forgot to mention was Christopher Priest's *Book on the Edge of Forever*, about the (non)making of *Last Dangerous Visions*. It's published by Fantagraphics, which may mean you're more likely to find it in comics stores. Of what is listed in *Locus*, I would love to see Robert Crossley's *Olaf Stapledon: Speaking for the Future*. And I have a certain fondness for Jerry Hewett and Daryl F. Mallett's *The Work of Jack Vance: An Annotated Bibliography & Guide*, since I helped provide some of the information for it.

While the non-fiction books are usually too high-priced to get a broad voting base, the dramatic presentations often garner more votes than the novels. Unfortunately, what appeared on NESFA's list was the same old "Hollywood films with big budgets." I personally would vastly prefer *Ed Wood* to any of them. I also reminded the audience that while television series cannot be nominated, individual episodes can, and that various groups on the Net were deciding which episodes of the series to throw their support behind to avoid scattering them too widely to get any of them on the ballot. (Olson said there was a move afoot to amend the WSFS Constitution to allow a series to be nominated.) I noted that what I thought was the best of the big-budget films, *Interview With the Vampire*, was not even on NESFA's list. Schweitzer seemed to think *Stargate* would win. Again, the problem of perceptions arose, when an audience member cited a *Northern Exposure* episode which was magical realism, but would never make the ballot. Olson noted that there was one time when an episode of a non-science-fiction series made the ballot: "L.A. 2014," which was part of the series *The Name of the Game*. Again, the Glaswegian location might mean something British would make it to the ballot.

For the Campbell Award, I said I really wished that the people preparing the ballot would provide a bibliography for the nominees. (Since it would cover at most two years, it should not require a lot of space.) I asked what happened to a recent winner, Ted Chiang, and Schweitzer said that the problem with winning the Campbell Award is that you have to live up to your reputation, and that authors who had won thought the best

thing that could happen to a new writer was that s/he *not* win.

There were a couple of suggestions for Best Original Artwork, but I said it seemed as if that category was not very successful, except for maybe last year, when a concentrated effort to remind people of them got the "Space Fantasy" stamps on the ballot. They eventually won. (Interestingly, they placed next to last in a poll of stamp collectors.) I hear there is a proposal to eliminate this category because what people are voting on are covers as seen by the public, which are often different from the artwork submitted by the artist.

This year's special category is "Best Music." (Each year, the Worldcon can designate a special category to be voted on.) Olson said that the filkers wanted a "Best Filksong" category, but the Business Meeting rejected that, and instead made a recommendation to Intersection that they "try out" a Music Hugo. What I, and just about everyone else, is predicting is that what will appear on the ballot will be soundtracks for the Dramatic Presentations. Again, what gets nominated is what is accessible.

On the other, pushing things on the Net does have an effect, if only to remind people they are eligible. The "Space Fantasy" stamps last year are one example; Mike Resnick in the Best Professional Editor category is another. Without various postings reminding people that the best editor did *not* have to be a magazine editor, I believe it would have been the same list of magazine editors it had been for years. So if you have something you think people will overlook, speak up!

Is SF Mainstream? Can We Still Tell the Difference?
Saturday, 6 PM
Gregory Feeley (mod), Ellen Asher,
Don D'Ammassa, Peter Johnson, Don Keller

Going into this panel, I thought about the title and concluded that some of the answer might be in recognizing two distinct definitions of science fiction. On one hand, science fiction could be fiction based in science, with all that includes. On the other hand, it could be fiction that is written with science fiction sensibilities. The latter is unclear, I realize, and boils down to "science fiction is what feels like science fiction." But vague as it is, this is a valid distinction: as was mentioned earlier, E. L. Doctorow's *The Waterworks* is science fiction in the first sense, but not in the second.

But even science fiction of the second, more narrow, sort is becoming "mainstream," with authors such as Robert Jordan, Terry Brooks, and Anne McCaffrey appearing on the best-seller lists. (*Star Trek* novels are a special case that will not be dealt with here.) Asher refers to this as "appeal outside the confines of the science fiction audience."

One reality in asking about whether SF is mainstream is that markets fragment, so from a marketing standpoint, there is not a single category of "science fiction," and there is not a single category of "mainstream." The former are science fiction, fantasy, horror, techno-thriller, etc., and the latter are thriller, literary, adventure, etc. About the only way to define contemporary mainstream fiction is to say that it is whatever is not anything else.

Regarding whether SF was becoming more mainstream, Johnson said, "We're not getting closer to them, but they're getting closer to us." Someone agreed, citing Erica Jong's latest, *Serenissima,* which was described as an alternate history on Shakespeare. (Other mainstream alternate histories included Len Deighton's *SS-GB* and Robert Harris's *Fatherland.*) The appearance of such works as *The Witches of Eastwick* by John Updike indicates that there is an acceptance of SF works in the mainstream -- as long as they are not labeled as such.

The Tempest
Saturday, 9:30 PM
Bruce Coville, Ellen Kushner, Joe Mayhew, Jane Yolen

Maybe I am in the minority, but I much prefer something like this (a serious retelling of a play by Shakespeare) to the sort of thing that has been common in the past, humorous fannish plays. At the end, after the applause, Kushner announced, "Next year, *King Lear*!" I for one am looking forward to this. (Someone is bound to tell me this was intended as a joke. All I can say is that I hope it isn't.) [The Boskone 33 committee is still forming, and discussion on what to have is just beginning. KK]

Shakespearean Influences in SF&F
Sunday, 10 AM
Gregory Feeley (mod), Bruce Coville,
Laurie Marks, Delia Sherman

Since I have just started a project of reading all of Shakespeare's plays, I could not miss this panel. (And I did recently review Katharine Kerr and Martin Greenberg's *Weird Tales From Shakespeare,* which had Feeley's excellent story, "Aweary of the Sun.")

Feeley began by saying that every century has its own Shakespeare. In the seventeenth century he was a hack who violated the classical unities in drama. The eighteenth century saw the pendulum swing the other way, into what Feeley called "Bardolatry." In the nineteenth century Shakespeare was a great story-teller and a "read-out of wisdom." In the twentieth century there is less of an emphasis on his stories and more on the poetry of the words, although later someone else claimed we read the plays for the characters in them (but again, not the plots). Harold Bloom, for example, focused almost entirely on characters, especially Falstaff. And Russell Nyeeven wrote a novel titled *Falstaff,* in which Falstaff tells his side of the story. Of course, there was at least some historic basis for Falstaff in Sir John Oldcastle.

Marks said that the primary influences on fantasy (more than on science fiction) were the obvious ones which showed up in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*: the overlap of Faery and reality.

Many authors have taken Shakespeare's stories and retold them, especially for younger audiences. (Charles and Mary Lamb did this almost two hundred years ago.) This makes sense if you think the stories are more important (or at least as important) as the language.

But there are some slightly less direct re-uses. Coville said that his first exposure to Shakespearean influences was the film *Forbidden Planet*; his second was *The Collector*. You need to know your Shakespeare to understand, or even to recognize, the references.

Someone mentioned that another obvious descendant of Shakespeare's work was Poul Anderson's *Midsummer Tempest*, which is written entirely in blank verse.

The panelists never distinguished between what I would think to be the two classes of Shakespearean-influenced works: those that are science fictional retellings of Shakespeare's stories, and those that are extensions of or contain references to Shakespeare's own works. For an example, *Forbidden Planet* theoretically falls into the former category, while Feeley's story or a sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew* would be in the latter.

Feeley read some of Terri Windling's introduction to *Black Thorn, White Rose*, in which Windling claimed that Shakespeare "mined the ore of old tales." Well, I do not think anyone disputes this in general, though Feeley claims that in particular *Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and *The Tempest* are original with Shakespeare. Feeley also read a passage in which he claims that Windling is implying that Shakespeare is using "simple language to get to the heart of the matter," but I think what she was saying was that Shakespeare drew upon older stories that used "simple language to get to the heart of the matter," and then tried to use more elaborate language while still "getting to the heart of the matter."

One panelist claimed we use Shakespeare to give fantasy respectability, and also to justify stealing and re-using old plots.

People discussed the tendency of putting actors like Mel Gibson and John Travolta in Shakespearean productions. As one person pointed out, this does serve to bring people to Shakespeare who would never see his plays otherwise, and who come to it fresh, without carrying a whole lot of baggage and expectations going into it. Sherman said this was really in keeping with the origins of the plays and that "effectively, Shakespeare was writing television scripts." His early narrative poems may have been an attempt to write serious lasting work, but he soon switched to the more immediately lucrative play-writing, supporting what Sherman said: "You write for the people around you. If you try to write for the ages, you'll write crap."

Also, people generally agreed that Shakespeare was meant to be seen, not read, although the plays were published in their own time as well as performed.

Someone summed up the hour (which did not touch much on Shakespearean influences in SF&F) by describing Shakespeare as "a hack whose characters are dense and whose language is rich."

The Forgotten Anthologists of the 40's and 50's

Sunday, 11 AM

Jim Mann (mod), Darrell Schweitzer, Ben Yalow

This would have been better titled "The Forgotten Anthologists of the 40's and 50's," since it was about the entire set of people doing anthologies rather than just Groff Conklin (who was certainly the person *I* thought of when I heard the title).

The panelists began by announcing that Ballantine/Del Rey had decided to reprint several of its "Best of Author X" series, including the one for Henry Kuttner. (This means that NESFA will be dropping their plans for a Kuttner collection, since their goal is to bring back into print stories and authors that are not available elsewhere.) [I am still highlighting Henry Kuttner in the December issue of *PB*. KK] The panelists also drifted into discussing posthumous stories, and a discussion of L. Ron Hubbard. The panelists all said he could write fast enough to have written all the books published over his name, and Schweitzer said the real proof that they were written by Hubbard is that they stopped (unlike the V. C. Andrews books).

But they eventually did get back to the topic – more or less. They talked a bit about the "Instant Remainder Anthology Boom" that we are going through: the whole series of "100 {adjective} Little {noun meaning stories}" available from Barnes & Noble. There is also the "Greenberg Phenomenon," which bears a superficial resemblance to the "Conklin Phenomenon" of the 1950s, but is quite different. Conklin was both the creative force and the businessman behind his anthologies, while Martin H. Greenberg serves only the latter function, selling the idea to a publisher and making all the rights and royalties arrangements. His co-editor(s) provide the creative work and editorial direction.

After Conklin in the 1950s, there was Robert Silverberg, who was described as "the Groff Conklin of the 1960s."

In the early days, however, there were three distinct anthology forms being developed. The first was the "year's best" which covered either a single magazine (*F&SF*, *Galaxy*, and so on) or the field in general (such as those edited by Everett Franklin Bleiler and T. E. Dikty, or by Judith Merril). There was the general anthology (such as was done by Raymond J. Healy and J. Francis McComas with *Adventures in Time and Space* (1946), or, most notably, by Groff Conklin). And then there were the anthologies of new works (such as those done by Damon

Knight [*Orbit*], Terry Carr [*Universe*], and Robert Silverberg [*Alpha*]).

Several of the early anthologies which are now classics were listed: Orson Welles's *Invasion from Mars*, Philip Van Doren Stern's *Midnight Traveler* (should this be *The Midnight Reader* or *The Moonlight Traveler* instead?), Phil Stong's *25 Modern Stories of Mystery and Imagination* [*The Other Worlds*] (1941), Donald A. Wollheim's *Pocket Book of Science Fiction* (1943), Herbert A. Wise and Phyllis Fraser's *Great Tales of Terror and the Supernatural* (1944), Anthony Boucher's *Treasury of Great Science Fiction* (1959), and John W. Campbell's *The Best of Astounding*. Most of these are out of print, though some are not difficult to find in used book stores, as they were very widely distributed in their time. For anthologies covering an even earlier period, Schweitzer recommended Christine Campbell Thompson's *Not at Night* series, which covers the 1920s horror field. Schweitzer suggested that people who were going to Britain for the Worldcon might have better luck there, though he warned that while the stories are historically important, they are not very readable.

There was also discussion of contemporary versus retrospective anthologies. Until David Hartwell and Kathryn Cramer's *The Ascent of Wonder*, no one had done a really substantial retrospective anthology since Boucher in 1959, and before that, Healy and McComas in 1946, almost fifty years ago! There is some feeling that Hartwell and Cramer are trying to rewrite the history of the field, and certainly their definition of what is hard science fiction has aroused much debate, but their achievement is certainly indisputable.

The panelists also explained the difference between the "Bad Martin Greenberg" and the "Good Martin Greenberg." The "Good Martin Greenberg" goes by the names "Martin Harry Greenberg" and "Martin H. Greenberg" to distinguish himself from the "Bad Martin Greenberg," an anthologist and editor of the 1950s who had a tendency not to pay authors for their work. In fact, when the "Good Martin Greenberg" started putting together anthologies, he got no response to the letters he sent to authors asking for stories, and was quite puzzled by this until someone explained that his name was like a giant warning flag. He has apparently cleared up the confusion since then.

Other anthologies of note include Ben Bova's and Robert Silverberg's *Hall of Fame* anthologies, Sam Moskowitz's *Science Fiction by Gaslight*, and James Gunn's *Road to Wonder* series.

Interview with Fred Lerner
Sunday, 12 N
Tony Lewis (mod), Fred Lerner

Lewis introduced Lerner as "a gentleman and a scholar," and said that Lerner was one of the founders of the Science Fiction Research Association, which Lerner said was not conceived as an academic organization, but as a "sercon" (serious and constructive) organization to bring together academics and fans to learn about each other's work and techniques. For example, Tony Lewis pointed out that there are a lot of amateur bibliographers among science fiction fans.

When Lerner was in library school, every term paper he wrote had something in it about science fiction. And science fiction tied in to a lot – he cites the case of the class on ancient bookbinding techniques which talked about an eighteenth-century French binding technique called "deux-a-deux" in which two books were bound together, back to back. Sound familiar?

Lerner's doctoral dissertation (of which his book *Modern Science Fiction and the American Literary Community* is a "retelling in English") led to some interesting situations. First, he requested and got Lester Del Rey as the fifth examiner, and said that when everyone arrived it was probably the first time that half the examining board was asking another member for his autograph. Then later when the board was questioning Lerner about the sources for his claim that all the good science fiction written in the 1950s found a market, Del Rey said, "Fred's right," and Lerner immediately asked him if he could cite Del Rey as a reference – which he did.

Lerner reminisced about his early introduction to science fiction (*Miss Pickerell Goes to Mars*, Tom Corbett books, and science fiction on television). When he first read Robert Heinlein at age eleven he hated it, but when he returned to Heinlein at age fourteen, he discovered he liked Heinlein's books after all.

Rudyard Kipling is a particularly favorite author of Lerner's (who has written articles for a special Kipling issue of *Niekas*), but when he first started reading Kipling books from the library and found them very different from each other, he was "confused by the fact that so many different writers had the same name."

Most recently, Lerner has been reviewing science fiction in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* and also in the *Voice of Youth Advocates*, in a column aimed at "young adult librarians" (those are librarians who purchase books for young adults, not librarians just out of school). "YA librarians," observed Lerner, "have an obligation to be knowledgeable about science fiction even if they have no personal interest in the subject." However, though he reviews science fiction and fantasy for the *Wilson Library Bulletin*, he does not review horror, because he has no interest and (more importantly) no expertise in the field.

As a tip for authors, Lerner says that when a reviewer needs to do six books a month and the deadline is looming, s/he will opt for a shorter book rather than a long one. So shorter books are more likely to be reviewed.

In addition to his interest in Kipling, Lerner has written articles for *Niekas* on Austin Tappan Wright's *Islandia* for the Wright Centennial and on John Myers Myers's *Silverlock*. The latter article was a set of annotations on the literary references in *Silverlock*, and

Lerner said he was happy that the issue came out before Myers's death, although he said he did not ask Myers for help on it, "because that would have taken some of the fun out of it." (I suggested that if *Silverlock* was not in print, perhaps NESFA could reprint it – with Lerner's annotations.) [If people are interested in this project, please write and it may be considered. KK]

Regarding *Silverlock*, Lerner said he once found a copy inscribed, "To Jim Putnam: You already have your own keys to the Commonwealth [of Letters]; these are mine." (The phrase "Commonwealth of Letters" comes from Moliere.)

Lerner is currently working on a history of libraries through the ages. For example, the earliest known use of a library was a Babylonian king who kept track of everyone that he had cursed and what effects his curses had. There was also discovered a Babylonian database of fossilized sheep livers, presumably as a teaching aid for augurs. And Lerner promises to reveal who *really* burned the Library at Alexandria.

Someone asked about famous librarians of history, and Lerner said that the best-known were probably Leibnitz, Casanova, and Jorge Luis Borges.

Currently Lerner is working with the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, doing a bibliographic database of all material on the subject. Someone asked if he had read *Achilles in Vietnam*, to which he replied "I haven't actually read it, but I've indexed it." (The Center is located in rural Vermont because when it was formed, it was decided that Matt Freedman should be the head, and so it was placed near where he lived.)

Lerner expressed distress that the American Library Association is spending too much time on politically correct stufff and not enough on its basic business. He also talked about such issues as the homeless in the libraries, and said that the problems of the homeless in the United States are serious, but should be solved by agencies designed to do that, not by the libraries.

Asked about Project Gutenberg (digitizing all public domain literature), Lerner said that the obsolescence of digital material worried him: the classic examples of this are Beta-format videotapes and 8-track cartridges. Given that in computer backups, the conclusion is that the best medium for ~~long~~term storage (more than twenty years) is high-quality punched paper tape (because it will last and the equipment to read it is easy to reconstruct), it may be that high-quality paper is the best preservation medium for books. But I still think that digitizing books is better for widespread distribution and usage.

With All of These Books, Is There Any Room for Short Fiction?
Sunday, 1 PM
David A. Smith (mod), Gregory Feeley, Tony Lewis, Darrell Schweitzer

While the panelists started out by saying that it is easier for a new writer to sell short fiction than a novel (short fiction appears in a magazine with other works and doesn't have to stand or fall on its own, so editors are more willing to take a chance on it), there is also a negative trend in the current glut of theme anthologies.

Although the peak of the science fiction magazine (at least in terms of volume) came in October 1952 when there were fifty magazines on the newsstand, we are currently in a mini-boom, and the number of pieces of short fiction published last year is probably close to, and may even exceed, the number of novels.

But a lot of the market for these is in things like shared-worlds anthologies, mosaic novels, and theme anthologies, of which the ultimate will apparently be *Alternate Vampires*, according to Schweitzer. Theme anthologies are seen as acting as kudzu, eating up space and budget that could be spent on "good" anthologies. (This argument would be more convincing to me if I actually thought that there *would* be more "good" anthologies if there weren't these theme anthologies. But I didn't see any trend in that direction before these came along.)

The panelists also felt that the current theme anthologies degrade the concept of the original anthology, which used to be more general (such as Damon Knight's *Orbit* series). By contrast, the current crop has very specific focuses (e.g., fantastic amphibians), which mean that authors are writing much more to specification and much less what they want to write, and that stories authors do write that don't fit these themes have much less chance of getting published.

Also, anthologies used to carry a certain guarantee of quality for the stories included – you got a dozen stories, all of high quality. Now you get thirty stories, but the quality is much more variable – because the stories are written for a specific market and by invitation, the editors have more tendency to accept a story of lower quality because they know the author, who wrote it at their request, will have difficulty selling it elsewhere.

The panelists also objected to many editors' attitudes towards the stories in these anthologies, treating the stories more as commodities than art. For example, Feeley said he had resistance to his "Aweary of the Sun" in *Weird Tales From Shakespeare* (the best story in the book, in my opinion), because it was so much longer than the rest of the stories. Short stories seem in general to be getting shorter, while novels are getting longer.

(As for numbered anthologies, one of the panelists said they usually falter around number four.)

Speaking of shortness, or lack thereof, in novels, this was also discussed. Novels used to be a lot shorter, but once a couple of long novels were successful, editors were more willing to accept longer manuscripts. It was compared to breaking the sound barrier, with the barrier being 200 pages, then 300 pages, and so on. (Now the barrier seems to be somewhere around 800 pages.)

Another factor is ego inflation: when an author becomes popular enough, editors cannot or will not suggest that they should cut some of the excess verbiage. (Stephen King is the classic example of this, which proves this is true in the mainstream as well.)

I noted that there are also shorter books being published, books that are novellas rather than novel. Feeley said the mainstream examples are people like Robert James Waller and Jonathan Bach, whose books are what Feeley referred to as "nouvelle cuisine" books. However, while we may see thin science fiction books, the panelists thought there are far fewer thin fantasy books. (I'm not sure. I get a lot of relatively thin fantasy books as review copies, but maybe they're not making it into the stores.)

And before you complain about the current trend of bloated novels, just remember that the old novel *Varney the Vampire* is about 900,000 words long, or about four times the length of *Dune*.

The panelists closed by exhorting the audience to write more short fiction and send it to magazines.

Miscellaneous

The newsletter came out on time, but the fourth issue was on legal-sized paper instead of the letter-sized paper used for the others, making life difficult for those of us who save these sorts of things.

Next year for Boskone 33 (February 16-18, 1995) the Guest of Honor is Lois McMaster Bujold. (This is a welcome return to science fiction after a couple of years emphasizing fantasy, at least as far as I am concerned. Give me rivets or give me death!)

The Fifth Northeast Science Fiction Folk Music Festival

ConCertino 1995
June 9-11, 1995
Comfort Inn, Rte. 9, Westboro, MA

Guests of Honor: Barry and Sally Childs-Helton
Toastmistress: Judith Hayman
Listener Guest: Bob Laurent
Interfilk Guest: Jordin Kare

Concerts. Workshops. Contests. All-night filking.
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Hotel rate: $55.00+tax per night single/double/triple/quad. For reservations call: 508-366-0202. Be sure to mention ConCertino.

For more information contact: Ellen Kranzer, M.A.S.S. F.I.L.C., 18 Riverdale Street, Allston, MA 01234, ccrazy@world.std.com.

Selected Upcoming Conventions

June 9-11, 1995
Comfort Inn, Westboro MA
Barry and Sally Childs-Helton
ConCertino 1995
c/o Ellen Kranzer
18 Riverdale Street
Allston, MA 02134

August 18-20, 1995
Sheraton Tara Hotel & Resort, Danvers MA
Ramsey Campbell and L. Sprague de Camp
NecronomiCon: 2nd Edition
P.O. Box 1320, Back Bay Annex
Boston, MA 02117-1320

October 20-22, 1995
U. Mass., Amherst MA
Judith Tarr and Cortney Skinner
NotJustAnother!! Con
Science Fiction Conventioneers of UMASS
RSO#16
University of Massachusetts
Amherst, MA 01003

November 3-5, 1995
Springfield Sheraton Monarch Hotel & Towers
Springfield, MA
Robert Beltran and Louise Jameson
Wishcon V
500 Monroe Turnpike
Monroe, CT 06468

November 17-19, 1995
Adam's Mark Hotel, Philadelphia PA
Jack Williamson and Bob Eggleton
Philcon '95
P.O. Box 8303
Philadelphia, PA 19101

January 12-14, 1996
Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers, Boston MA
Emma Bull, Will Shetterly and Lissanne Lake
Arisia '96
Arisia, Inc.
Suite 322
1 Kendall Sq.
Cambridge, MA 02139

February 16-18, 1996
Sheraton Tara, Framingham MA
Lois McMaster Bujold
Boskone 33
P.O. Box 809
Framingham, MA 01701-0203

25 Important Science Fiction Films

by Mark R. Leeper (mark.leeper@att.com)

The Boskone Science Fiction Convention has asked me to moderate a panel on the essential science fiction films – whatever that means. This is my list of the 25 and 10 and 1 most important science fiction films. Some are here because I consider them to be great, but may not be well known. Others may not be of what I consider the highest quality, but are here because they have been highly influential. My top 10 are prefaced by asterisks. The film I consider #1 is *Quatermass and the Pit.* In each case I have given a phrase or two to explain why it made this list. I don't promise that I wouldn't come up with a different list if asked again. I have limited myself to films over 10 years old, but frankly I don't think that made any difference.

I. Silent

A. *A Trip to the Moon* – Birth of SF film

B. *Metropolis* – Visual impact

II. 30s

A. *The Bride of Frankenstein* – Creative thoroughly fringe SF

B. * *King Kong* – Big step forward in SPFX

C. *Island of Lost Souls* – Literate interpretation of Wells straddling Gothic and Realistic approaches

D. * *Things to Come* – Vision of future, spectacle

III. 40s – nothing major

IV. 50s

A. *Destination Moon* – Birth of the 50s cycle

B. *The Thing From Another World* – Solid thriller, good acting

C. *The Day the Earth Stood Still* – Message that people responded to

D. *The Man in the White Suit* – Serious social comment wrapped in amusing comedy

E. * *The War of the Worlds* – Great SPFX, real shocker

F. *Gojira* – Spawned Japanese SF market and series, exploration of post-nuclear trauma

G. *This Island Earth* – First real presentation of interstellar warfare, somewhat mechanical but still has real sense of wonder

H. *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers* – Great piece of political paranoia, powerful allegory (though it is not clear if anti-McCarthy or anti-Communist)

I. ♦ *Forbidden Planet* – Highly influential (inspiration for *Star Trek*), powerful images, first film set totally off Earth (?)

V. 60s

A. * *Unearthly Stranger* – Powerful, dramatic use of cinema, good SF without SPFX

B. * *Quatermass and the Pit* (U.S. title *Five Million Years to Earth*) – Finest idea SF film I can name

C. *2001 A Space Odyssey* – Highly influential (though story-value is overrated)

VI. 70s

A. *The Andromeda Strain* – Well researched and current technology worked into the plot of a film

B. *Colossus* (a.k.a. *The Forbin Project*) – Technological age updating of Frankenstein

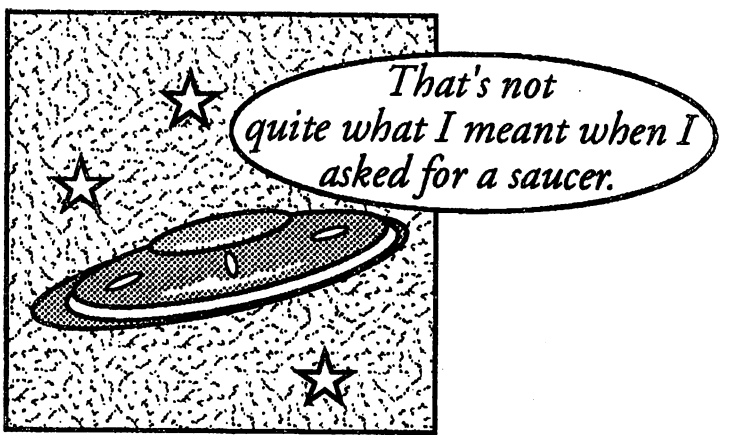
C. * *Phase IV* – Strong tale of two totally alien intelligences warring, humans and ants. Extremely intelligent use of science fiction

D. * *Star Wars* – A huge leap in representation of imaginative images on the screen. One of the most influential films ever made, it changed how the film industry sees its business

VII. 80s

A. * *Brainstorm* – Very believable view of the research, very believable view of how the right tool can really transform a society. It breaks down in the last half-hour, probably because of notorious difficulties in production, but this is a film that really could have dozens of fascinating sequels.

B. * *Bladerunner* – Terrific set design (though story is over-rated)



Orbita Dicta

collected by Bob Devney

Heard in the panels, halls, stalls, and boudoirs of Boskone 32, Sheraton Tara Hotel, Framingham, MA, February 17-19, 1995

How accurate are these citations?

To quote that useful Italian scholar, Ben Trovato: "A great quotation should be characteristic or appropriate. Sometimes even true."

[A well-meaning ad agency colleague wishing me luck at the con but not quite grasping the spirit of Boskone]

Well, anyway, nanoo-nanoo.

⁂ ♠ ♠

[My brother-in-law and major fantasy buff Bob Kuhn, at dinner the first night of the con, getting into the spirit of his first Boskone since 1980 with an appropriate toast]

Your elf.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

[Film Reviewer Dan Kimmel, on the voracity of Programming Co-Heads these days]

I guess the moral here is never to speak to Deb Geisler. Because if you say "Good morning" to her, you're going to find yourself on a panel titled "The Imagery of Dawn in Modern Science Fiction."

⁂ ♠ ⁂

[Author Melissa Scott discussing how skimpy makeup effects can adversely impact the believability of supposedly inhuman Star Trek *characters]*

An alien defined by his ears is less hard for me to take, somehow, than an alien defined by his hair.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

[Your humble narrator, touching slivery hair and spectacles to illustrate how he and the rest of fandom are all turning into]

Gray Lensmen.

♠ ⁂ ⁂

[Reviewer Joe Mayhew refutes the old advice "Write what you know"]

I sold my first pornography at 18. Mind you, I was a virgin at the time.

[Mayhew again]

A critic is someone who tries to make you feel bad about something you've read....A reviewer is someone who gets readers together with books they might like.

[Almost Endlessly Quotable Mayhew]

R. A. Lafferty is our James Joyce.

[All Right, That's About Enough of Mayhew]

"Oeuvre" is when you stick your fingers down your throat.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

[Incredible Reading Machine Don D'Ammassa of Science Fiction Chronicle*]*

The vast majority of books I review with a paragraph, I could have reviewed with one word: "OK."

[D'Ammassa disclosing the secret of how to read and review, say, 33 titles plus 4 graphic novels plus 8 anthologies every single eye-straining brain-draining month]

The trick is always to have a book with you.

⁂ ⁂ ♠

[Wide-eyed new author who's just been told by Jane Yolen how some fundamentalists view people who write fantasy]

Hello. I'm a tool of Satan.

⁂ ♠ ⁂

[Superb short form talent Martha Soukup, unerringly winning hearts at her reading]

You're all people who read, aren't you? I like people who do that.

[Soukup about to read "The Story So Far"]

I was told it was the best story I've ever written by Gregory Feeley, who is God.

[Soukup on whether repeatedly failing to sell in certain markets was discouraging]

Every writer I know is discouraged most of the time.

[Soukup quoting Playboy *fiction editor Alice Turner in a rejection letter for a story with a feminist element]*

"I don't think our boys are ready for this yet."

♠ ⁂ ♠

[Noted NESFAn Suford Lewis to a new acquaintance, on why "Suford"]

Too many Sues.

[Lewis, on being told her beautiful Regency gown looked "very Bath"]

Thanks. London.

* * *
* * *

[A dealer named Craig on David Zindell's The Broken God*]*

This is the best science fiction novel I have ever read.

* * *
* * *

[Tor Editor Patrick Nielsen Hayden on why the price of books has gone up]

Direct marketing has a lot to answer for. All those catalogs directly compete for the same type of pulp that most books use....Not that our crazy distribution system doesn't contribute. Basically, we pulp three copies to sell one....

But it's a tough business. If auto manufacturing was like publishing, every year Ford would have to premiere 250 new models. With no models left over from last year.

[Nielsen Hayden on electronic publishing]

Publishers are beside themselves trying to figure this out....Three SF publishers are on-line now. Us, Warner Aspect, and Del Rey. You can get sample chapters [for booksellers only?]....But it's not like most authors are too eager to blaze trails either. Nobody wants their book to be the one that is experimented upon.

[Nielsen Hayden on putting teeth into your marketing effort]

Certain books have great interest for specialized audiences, if you can reach them.

For instance, I think I can say that Piers Anthony's *Prostho Plus* is the best SF novel about dentists in space ever published. And I believe it got PR in dental magazines....

When my dentist found out what I do, he was so excited. "You work for Tor Books? Why, they published *Prostho Plus*, the greatest novel I have ever read."

* * *
* * *

[Grand Old Author Hal Clement, dispelling an assumption he feared younger fans might make regarding the title of his Missed Predictions panel, "I Remember Babylon"]

I don't.

* * *
* * *

[NESFAn amateur oracle Tony Lewis on how not to end up under discussion at future "missed predictions" panels]

It does not pay a prophet to be too specific....

Science fiction is not so much predictive as preventive.

* * *

[Martha Soukup at her kaffeeklatsch, on the predicament that the plaintiff – a professional diver – found himself in after an underwater industrial accident which led to the civil lawsuit for which Martha recently served as jury foreperson]

The wound on his foot was open to the sea right through his boot and several layers of sockliners. But he had to avoid the bends, which forced him to spend several hours coming up. So he slowly ascended hundreds of feet to the surface. Right through the waters – laden with what the lawyers kept calling "feculent matter" – of the effluent plume from the main sewage outfall tunnel of the city of San Diego....

When they were preparing for the job, neither he nor the diving supervisor seemed to realize the danger of working in that stuff. He had once done a job diving into water with dioxins in it. You want something poisonous in an open wound? Shit makes dioxin seem like child's play....

When he got to the hospital a couple hours after the accident, he still wasn't in great pain. More embarrassed than anything else. After all, the damage didn't look like much. It was just some swelling, and this little smile-shaped cut on the top of his foot....

At first, the doctors were pretty sure he was dead. Then they thought he'd at least lose the leg....

[Note re above: to find out what happened next, and what the jury did, see Martha's postings on GEnie. Or corral her sometime yourself. It's a long story, but I promise you it will hold your attention. Our kaffeeklatsch went a tad overtime.]

* * *

[Guest of Honor Diana Wynne Jones on the pernicious effects of enshrined literary Rules]

In horror, the Rule is, Be As Terrifying As Possible. Reasonable enough....

But then there's the new Ecology Rule. It basically would say that Hansel and Gretel's father – a poor woodcutter – is busily destroying the rainforest....And there's a Rule developing that gloom is scientific.

[Jones eschewing Rules, upholding her Principles]

You can be funny and serious at the same time....

You can say anything in words....

A private principle: hatred of long descriptions that don't add to the narrative....

I hate dialect. You can get around it by using the rhythms of the speech, and ignoring all the silly spellings....

You have to be **responsible.** Someone is going to read that book at an impressionable time in their lives. And it's going to stay with them for a long time.

[Jones debunking the hunker mentality]

Genre is a notion that developed in the '20s....It's been disastrous. Each genre is hunkered down beside what it believes to be its own boundaries.

[Jones pointing out the fallacy of "dumbing down" YA lit]

Less than 5 years ago, it was a truth universally acknowledged that anyone who could follow the plot of Dr. Who could follow anything.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

[One-Man-Controversialist Tom Easton in a discussion of debated theories]

World food production rates are heading toward 800 calories per capita per day.

[Easton raining on several parades]

The important question about global warming is, exactly **where** is it going to rain? One theory says that all that precipitation is going to come down in Greenland....

Defoliation of the rainforest? That's a trivial problem. So it dries up downwind of the Amazon. There's not much there in the first place.

♠ ⁂ ♠

[NESFA President and Attentive Reader Mark Olson in panel on Neglected Author Murray Leinster, reacting to a revelation from Hal Clement]

He said it "Len-ster," not "Leen-ster"? I've been pronouncing it wrong for 30 years!

[Olson on the Leinstermeister's groundbreaking contributions to the field]

His short story "Sideways in Time," from 1934, originated the idea of parallel worlds.

[Panelist Joe Rico adding more firsts]

Leinster did the first story of the Net. In 1946. In a story called "A Logic Named Joe." And unusually for the pulp writers, he even thought about the social implications of his computer network....

And his story "First Contact." It gave a name to its genre....

He made money as quite a successful inventor, too. Invented a new film technique – back projection. It was used in the movie *2001*....

Yes, it's true. This panel is a shameless plug for an upcoming Leinster collection we hope to do.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

[Editor Nancy C. Hanger in the panel on freelance editing]

Freelance editors are a corporation's dream employees. No pension, no benefits, no sick days, no overtime....

And of course there's even more burnout, if that's possible. We had a freelance copyeditor recently – dis-ap-peared. Completely. The person is gone. The manuscript is gone. The apartment is empty.

[And in a possibly related opinion]

Hospice counseling is not significantly different from editing.

♠ ⁂ ♠

[Editor Madeleine Robins suggests editing is not for just the dead, but the quick]

The amount of FedEx money we spend to get out one comic book is **amazing.**

⁂ ⁂ ♠

[Copyediting Queen Teresa Nielsen Hayden notes there are some light moments on the job, though not without risk]

You get so sick of working on a project that you give it a funny house name. Some version of the title, but as twisted as possible.

However, be absolutely certain the working name doesn't end up getting into the production stream. If that fantasy book comes out with the title **printed** as *Snow White Nose Red*, God help you.

[Nielsen Hayden on the Death Spiral of the Commakazes]

It's almost unheard-of now to have in-house copyeditors. So all the tricks and fine points of the craft that they shared with one another when they worked side-by-side – that's all gone.

[Nielsen Hayden on how to interview people who – despite all the above – want to be copyeditors, but have no publishing experience]

Start by asking them to spell "accommodating." If they can, maybe there's some hope.

♠ ⁂ ♠

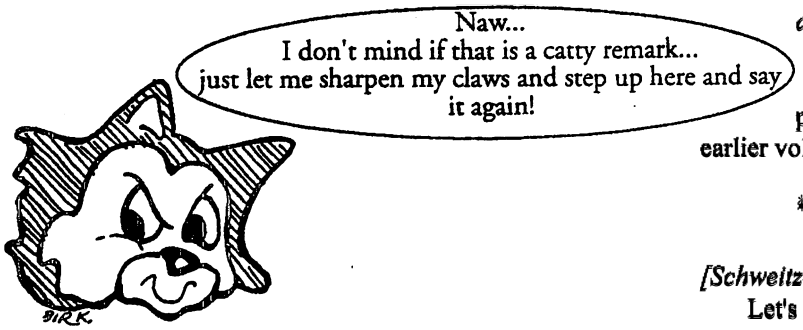
[Fan Jeff Rogers, whose cool demeanor cannot mask his essentially tragic fate as another victim of chronic collector's completism]

This weekend I managed to fill in the last gaps. I've now got every single last one of the '70s Ballantine "Best of" single-author collections.

* * *

[Satanic Salesmanshipmaster Darrell Schweitzer discusses rumors that L. Ron Hubbard's late and posthumously issued SF books were actually written by captive Scientology flacks]

You can be positive that Hubbard himself wrote them, for two reasons. First, because of how bad they were. Second, because after a while they stopped.



[Panelist Ben Yalow on Hubbard's legendary speed of composition]

It's all true. John Campbell himself told me the best story on this.

He called Hubbard one afternoon and said that he, Campbell, had a big problem. The magazine was due to go to press Friday. It was now Tuesday. But the lead novelette promised by another writer wasn't here. And in fact didn't exist.

Campbell had the cover art done. The title set. And the exact number of words the story had to be to fill the hole. He discussed these with Hubbard. Could Hubbard possibly pull off a miracle and get him out of this?

Hubbard said sure, OK.

That was at 2:00 p.m. At 5:00 Hubbard called back and told Campbell not to leave the office.

At 7:00 p.m. was delivered a not great but decent, readable, 24,000-word novelette to the specifications needed....

Someone once clocked Hubbard's speed on the typewriter – not typing, composing – at 150 words per minute.

* * *

[Schweitzer on anthologies and -gists]

In 1946, literate science fiction was less than 10 years old. Anthologists had a virgin field....

The "Year's Best" format was invented by Bleiler and Dikty in 1949....

Yes, both Martin Greenberg and Martin Harry Greenberg are important in the field. For different reasons. They're distinguished professionally as Bad Greenberg and Good Greenberg....

Hartwell's anthologies are trying to write the history of the field from the vantage point of our day. He's replacing Healy & McComas, who did the same for theirs.

* * *

[Audience member in anthologists panel on the hooraw about soft definitions in Hartwell and Cramer's anthology Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard Science Fiction*]*

Hartwell says he didn't do that subtitle. The publishers put that in because of the success of an earlier volume that said "hard SF."

* * *

[Schweitzer on tastes acquired in early life]

Let's face it, if you give Doc Smith to an adult reader with no background in science fiction, you'll have a lot of explaining to do.

[Schweitzer on the Estate That's Selling "The Man Who Sold the Moon"]

To get one Heinlein story for your anthology, you'll pay about 500 bucks. Whereas most authors will settle for more like 50....

It doesn't behoove you to haggle much with the anthologist. Remember that every time you're anthologized, you get at least one new reader.

* * *

[Attorney Deb Geisler, who was probably pressured into joining the Internet Superhighway/legal issues panel by Programming Co-Head Deb Geisler]

As a First Amendment scholar, I can tell you that there's no such thing as a public right to know.

* * *

[Panelist David Kogelman offers some valuable information]

The Constitution was designed to prevent the majority from giving away the rights of the minority....

People who say "Information wants to be free" are usually not people who create valuable information.

[Plus some information we suspected already]

Smut still provides one of the highest percentages of downloads over the Usenet.

[Fan Greg McMullin in an aside to an audience member, delivered in a slightly paranoid whisper]

Have you heard of the Communications Decency Act?

[We hate it already, just from the name; what about it?]

It's **dangerous.**

[Panelist Michael Benveniste pins his faith that Big Brother will fail on an essential characteristic of human nature]

That's where what I call The New Privacy will come from. People are too lazy to look at all this surveillance information in real time.

* * *

[Fantasy fan and world-class peripatetic David Bayly on the imaginative powers of author Tim Powers]

I lived for a while in the hills – you know, Switzerland. So I really loved the Powers novel *The Stress of Her Regard.* Great book, and it has that area for some settings. When I met Tim Powers later, I congratulated him on describing it so well. He said he'd never been there. It was all research.

I would have sworn he'd crawled over every inch of those mountains.

* * *

[A Major New Voice in Fantasy finds her opening statement on the Hard Fantasy panel to be – well, hard going]

As far as I – There is a certain – One could argue that – Oh! I'm Delia Sherman.

[Delia Sherman finds her voice]

I happen to think that the difference between SF and fantasy is that SF is predicated on the assumption that everything can make sense.

* * *

[I forget which panelist made this comment on the Swanwick article in the November 1994 Asimov's *that sparked the panel]*

What Michael Swanwick means by hard fantasy is fantasy that is hard to read.

[Editor David Hartwell agrees – but in a good way]

Hard fantasy is fantasy that has literary ambitions.

[HardFan Panelist Ellen Kushner on why she doesn't care if Swanwick's article wasn't analytically rigorous, she'd defend it at swordspoint]

I'm a bit of a style slut....

Michael Swanwick is definitely in the Kim Stanley Robinson School of Coolness and Smartness.

* * *

[HardFan Panelist Constance Hirsch, quoting a somewhat misguided cover blurb]

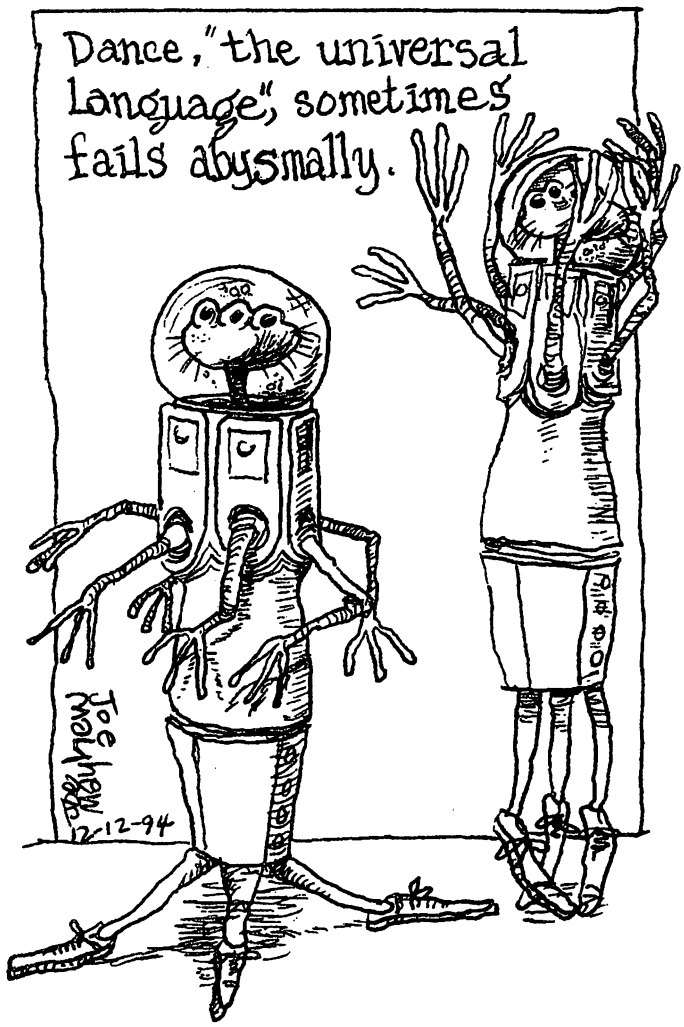
"In the tradition of Robert E. Howard and J. R. R. Tolkien."

[Michael Swanwick (as quoted by Baltimore bookseller Mike Walsh), on first seeing the beautiful British hardcover of his The Iron Dragon's Daughter, *bestowed on the cover artist a writer's sincerest tribute]*

If I'd seen this before publication, I'd have written the scene into the book.

[Which incidentally may demonstrate my assertion to the Hard Fantasy panel that]

Comedy is easy, fantasy is hard.



NESFA 1994 Hugo Recommendations

NESFA continues to maintain a list of Good Stuff to read. Any NESFA member who reads something that they would like to recommend to others to be considered for a Hugo nomination can add it to the list. We will publish it from time to time in *Instant Message* and on the nets. (Feel free to reproduce it, provided you reproduce it intact!) It's neither definitive nor complete, but it contains the stories, novels, and non-fiction works that a bunch of well-read fans feelt might be worthy of a Hugo nomination.

Novels

Solis	A. A. Attanasio	Hodder & Stoughton/HarperCollins	ca, gf
Feersum Endjinn	Iain M. Banks	Orbit (UK)	ca
Mother of Storms	John Barnes	Tor	ec, mlo, gf
Ring	Stephen Baxter	HarperCollins UK	mlo, daa, kp
Furious Gulf	Gregory Benford	Bantam Spectra	gf
Brittle Innings	Michael Bishop	Bantam	el, gf, ca
Mirror Dance	Lois McMaster Bujold	Baen	arl, ec, jr, by
Finder	Emma Bull	Tor	mlo, po, ec, cjh, by
Tripoint	C. J. Cherryh	Warner Aspect	pal
Foreigner	C. J. Cherryh	DAW	arl, ec, gf
The Waterworks	E. L. Doctorow	Random Hse; BoMC	el
Queen City Jazz	Kathleen Ann Goonan	Tor	ca
Rhinegold	Stephan Grundy	Bantam Spectra	el
Seeker's Mask	P. C. Hodgell	Hypatia	pal
Gun, with Occasional Music	Jonathan Lethem	Harcourt Brace	gf, daa
Towing Jehovah	James Morrow	Harcourt Brace	gf, ca
Starmind	Spider & Jeanne Robinson	*Analog* Aug-Nov 94	arl
Heavy Weather	Bruce Sterling	Bantam Spectra	cjh, ca, daa, gf
A College of Magics	Caroline Stevermer	Tor	mlo, arl, po, cjh, daa, gf, by, kp
Mysterium	Robert Charles Wilson	Bantam Spectra	ca, po, gf, el, daa, kp
Lake of the Long Sun	Gene Wolfe	Tor	mlo, ec, gf, rk

Novella

Remains of Adam	A. A. Attanasio	*Asimov's* Jan 94	arl, gf, ca
Soon Comes Night	Gregory Benford	*Asimov's* Aug 94	gf
Melodies of the Heart	Michael F. Flynn	*Analog* Jan 94	ca, gf
Composition with Barbarian and Animal	Alex Jeffers	*Universe 3*	gf
Another Story	Ursula K. Le Guin	*Tomorrow* Aug 94	gf
Forgiveness Day	Ursula K. Le Guin	*Asimov's* Nov 94	arl, gf, ca
Scissors Cut Paper Wrap Stone	Ian McDonald	Bantam Spectra	gf
Seven Views of Olduvai Gorge	Mike Resnick	*F&SF* Oct/Nov 94	arl, gf
A Fall of Angels	Geoff Ryman	*Unconquered Countries*	gf
Les Fleurs du Mal	Brian Stableford	*Asimov's* Oct 94	arl, gf
Uncharted Territory	Connie Willis	Bantam Spectra	gf

Novelette

The God Who Slept with Women	Brian Aldiss	*Asimov's* May 94	arl, gf
The Lovers	Eleanor Arnason	*Asimov's* Jul 94	gf
Shadow of the Falcon	Janet Berliner & Jack Kirby	*Galaxy* Jul-Aug 94	arl
Apocalypse's Children	R. V. Branham	*Asimov's* Sep 94	gf
In the Dazzle	Robert R. Chase	*Analog* Jun 94	gf
The Transcendentalists	David Ira Cleary	*SF Age* Nov 94	arl
Things of the Flesh	L. Timmel Duchamp	*Asimov's* Jan 94	ca
Cocoon	Greg Egan	*Asimov's* May 94	ca
The Martian Child	David Gerrold	*F&SF* Sep 94	arl, ca
The Wild Ships of Fairny	Carolyn Ives Gilman	*F&SF* Mar 94	gf

1894	Charles L. Harness	*Analog* Aug 94	arl
Going West	Phillip C. Jennings	*Universe 3*	gf
The Valley of the Humans	Phillip C. Jennings	*Asimov's* Nov 94	ca, gf
The Singular Habits of Wasps	Geoffrey A. Landis	*Analog* Apr 94	arl, gf
The Matter of Seggri	Ursula K. Le Guin	*Crank* Spr 94	gf, ca
Solitude	Ursula K. Le Guin	*F&SF* Dec 94	gf
Out of the Quiet Years	G. David Nordley	*Asimov's* Jul 94	arl
The Remoras	Robert Reed	*F&SF* May 94	arl, gf, ca
Stride	Robert Reed	*Asimov's* Nov 94	ca
Fan	Geoff Ryman	*Interzone* Mar 94	arl, gf

Short Story

Mrs. Lincoln's China	M. Shayne Bell	*Asimov's* Jul 94	gf, ca
Inspiration	Ben Bova	*F&SF* Apr 94	arl
Last Rites	Ray Bradbury	*F&SF* Dec 94	arl
Paris in June	Pat Cadigan	*Omni* Sept 94	ca
Death and the Librarian	Esther M. Friesner	*Asimov's* Dec 94	arl, ca
None So Blind	Joe Haldeman	*Asimov's* Nov 94	ca, gf
Fortyday	Damon Knight	*Asimov's* May 94	gf
Margin of Error	Nancy Kress	*Omni* Oct 94	gf
Killer Byte	Mercedes Lackey	*MZB Fantasy Mag.* Spr 94	arl
Wells of Wisdom	Brad Linaweaver	*Galaxy* May/Jun 94	arl
Sealight	Ian MacLeod	*F&SF* May 94	gf
Assassin	Bruce McAllister	*Omni* Jan 94	ca, gf
Standard Candles	Jack McDevitt	*F&SF* Jan 94	gf
Bible Stories for Adults: No. 20, The Tower	James Morrow	*F&SF* Jun 94	el, gf
Director's Cut	James Morrow	*F&SF* Mar 94	el
Abridged Edition	Jerry Oltion	*F&SF* Jul 94	el
Treasure Buried	Robert Reed	*F&SF* Feb 94	arl, gf
Barnaby in Exile	Mike Resnick	*Asimov's* Feb 94	arl
The Changeling's Tale	Michael Swanwick	*Asimov's* Jan 94	gf
Household Words, or, the Powers-That-Be	Howard Waldrop	*Amazing* Winter 94	ca
Why Did?	Howard Waldrop	*Omni* Apr 94	ca
I Know What You're Thinking	Kate Wilhelm	*Asimov's* Nov 94	gf
The Moon Garden Cookbook	Laurel Winter	*F&SF* Feb 94	el

Non-Fiction

I. Asimov	Isaac Asimov	Doubleday	mlo, po, ec, by, kvs
Spectrum: The Best in Contemporary Fantastic Art		Cathy Burnett & Arnie Fenner Underwood	ca, mlo, ged, gf, pal
Making Book	Teresa Nielsen Hayden	NESFA Press	mlo, arl, po, ec, ged, by
The Book on the Edge of Forever	Christopher Priest	Fantagraphics	by

Dramatic Presentation

All Good Things	*ST:TNG*	po, ged, kvs
Earth 2 premiere		po, sls, ged
Ed Wood		ca, daa, kvs, el
Space Trek (parody play)		sls
The Mask		sls, ca, daa, gf
Mary Shellley's Frankenstein		ca, daa
The Puppet Masters		ca, daa, rk, gf, kvs

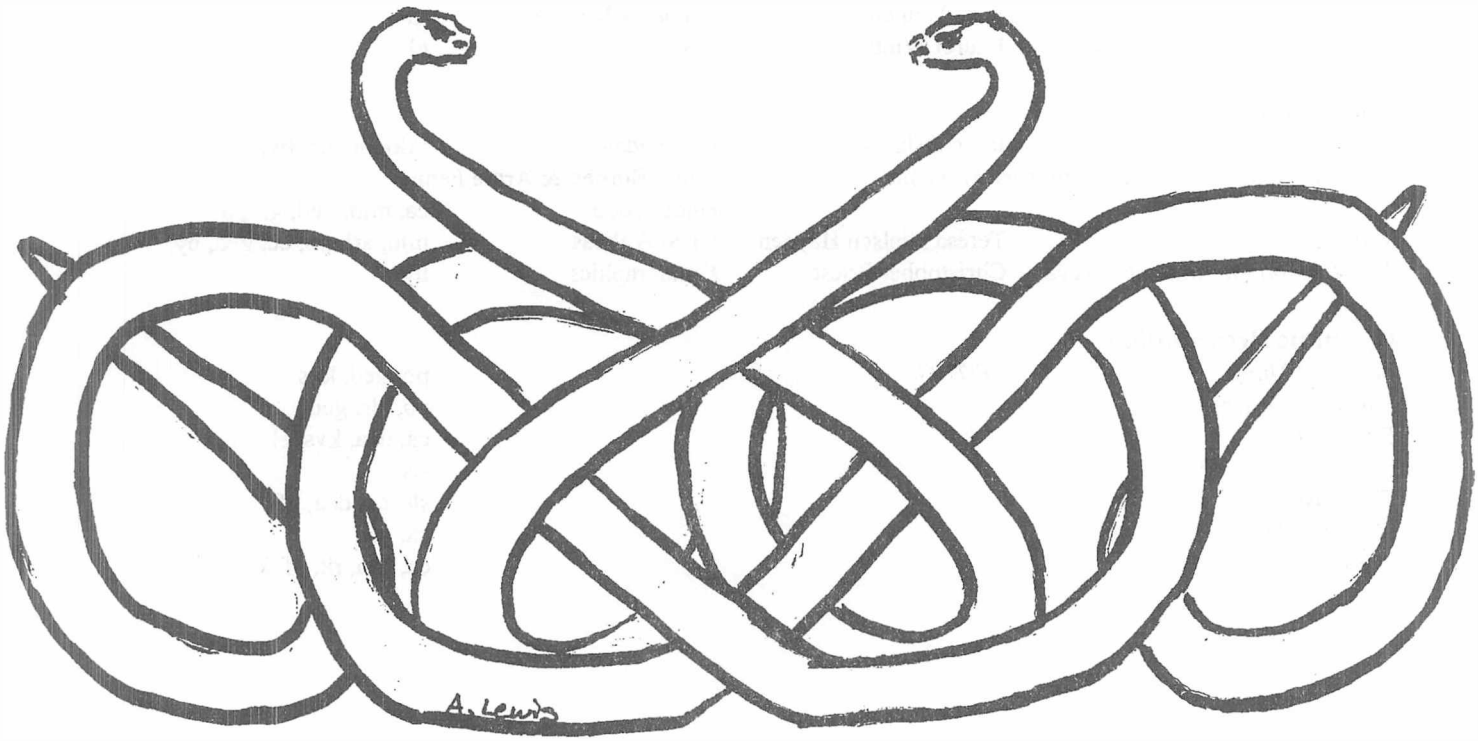
Original Artwork

"Solitude"	Bryn Barnard	F&SF Dec 94	gf	
Cover of *The Furies* by Suzy McKee Charnas	Rick Berry	Tor	ca	
Cover of *Lake of the Long Sun* by Gene Wolfe	Richard Bober	Tor	gf	
Cover of 10/94 *IASFM*	Kinuko Y. Craft	*Asimov's* Oct 94	el	
"Soon Comes Night"	Bob Eggleton	*Asimov's* Aug 94	gf	
Cover of *Mistwalker* by Denise Lopes Heald	Bob Eggleton	Del Rey	gf	
Cover of *Trouble and Her Friends* by Melissa Scott	Nicholas Jainschigg	Tor	ca	
Cover of *ClipJoint* by Wilhelmina Baird	Bruce Jensen	Ace	ca	
Cover of *Gun, with Occasional Music* by Jonathan Lethem	Michael Koelsch	Harcourt, Brace	ca	
Cover of *Everville* by Clive Barker	Kirk Reinert	Harper Collins	gf	
"River's Daughter" (sculpture)	Arlin Robins		kvs	
Cover of *Temporary Agency* by Rachel Pollack	Ron Walotsky	St. Martin's	ca	
Cover of *Foreigner* by C. J. Cherryh	Michael Whelan	DAW	gf	
Cover of *Scissors Cut Paper Wrap Stone* by Ian McDonald	Stephen Youll	Bantam Spectra	gf	

Campbell Award

Catherine Asaro	ca, gf
L.Timmel Duchamp	gf
David Feintuch	ged, mlo
Daniel Marcus	ca, gf
Felicity Savage	ca, gf
D. William Shunn	ca
Martha Wells	gf
Elizabeth Willey	mlo, po, by, gf

Key to nominators: ca: Claire Anderson, daa: Dave Anderson, ec: Elisabeth Carey, ged: Gay Ellen Dennett, gf: George Flynn, pf: Pam Fremon, mh: Mark Hertel, cjh: Chip Hitchcock, rk: Rick Katze, el: Evelyn Leeper, arl: Tony Lewis, pal: Paula Lieberman; mlo: Mark Olson, po: Priscilla Olson, kp: Kelly Persons, jr: Joe Rico, sls: Sharon Sbarsky, kvs: Kevin Standlee, by: Ben Yalow



Recommended Reading by Mark L. Olson FN

Making Book by Teresa Nielsen Hayden

I've always known that TNH has a marvelous way with words, but *Making Book* nicely proves it. This is fan writing at its best: essays on miscellaneous topics, all interesting and all beautifully written. (I *do* wish I could write like that!)

I particularly liked:

"God and I," describing a much younger TNH's ultimately successful effort to get thrown out of the Mormon Church.

"Tits and Cockroaches," with unforgettable descriptions of many NY fans based on how they deal with cockroaches.

"On Copyediting." TNH gave me a copy of this several years ago. It impressed me so much that when Ben selected the Nielsen Haydens to be his Special Guests at Boskone (an excellent choice, by the way!), I immediately urged him to see if they were interested in doing a Boskone Book. It's *really impressive* that anyone can making a guide to copyediting interesting and witty.

"The Pastafazool Cycle." A hilarious description of the historical development of a nonexistent historical cycle of epic stories which very neatly shows how *woo-woo* (a technical term for academic and semi-academic wish fulfillment) research gets done.

Teresa Nielsen Hayden is an interesting person and a wonderful writer. Read her book, you'll like it. Highly recommended.

I. Asimov by Isaac Asimov

Isaac Asimov was one of the giants of our field, and this is how he wanted to be remembered. Unlike his earlier two autobiographical volumes (*In Memory Yet Green* and *In Joy Still Felt*), which were day-by-day chronologies of his life, *I. Asimov* is Isaac talking directly to us about what (and who) mattered to him.

The book consists of 166 essays averaging perhaps 3-4 pages long on topics as diverse as "John W. Campbell," "My Father," "Heartbreak," "Job Hunting," "Off the Cuff," "SF Conventions," "Mystery Novels," "The Bible," "Death," "The Baker Street Irregulars," "Best-seller," "Senior Citizen," and "Hospital." They are written in an almost conversational style and tell – as best as he was capable of telling – what he thought about people, things and himself.

In places he seems brutally honest (talking about his son, his own failure as an academic, or about his divorce from his first wife), while other topics (particularly the ones about his colleagues) seem just a little too nice.

Asimov was obviously deeply affected by Heinlein's *Grumbles from the Grave*, and in one of the essays remarks on the tragedy that it was published at all, since it showed, in Asimov's words, "a meanness of spirit". Asimov felt while that "meanness of spirit" was a true picture of RAH as a person, it will now detract forever from Heinlein's deserved reputation as a writer. Asimov clearly intended to avoid doing anything like that to himself and largely has succeeded.

I say *largely* since Asimov's egotism is manifest throughout the book. He does his best to make it engaging – he asks us to join with him in laughing at his own foibles – but it is there and it must have made him very hard to be around. (I remember the note he sent to the N3 program saying that he doesn't do panels; he only does a singleton show.)

Interestingly, his evaluations of people are quite positive with five exceptions: Campbell, Heinlein, Martin Greenberg of Gnome Press (not the current-day anthologist!), his first wife, Gertrude, and his son, David.

Campbell and Heinlein are judged wanting: Campbell because he was an expert on everything and – more importantly, I think – frequently disagreed with Asimov's politics. Heinlein because he was able to dominate Asimov in the early days when they both did war work for the Navy.

While Asimov has correctly identified their foibles, I think he places too much emphasis on them, probably because they were the only two people in the field who were his contemporaries (and thus rivals) and who clearly were above him in the SF pecking order.

And Asimov *never* liked to be upstaged.

His problems with his wife and son seem ordinary enough and don't really tell us much about him. His problems with Martin-Greenberg-of-Gnome-Press-who-is-different-from-the-anthologist were the same as everyone else's: Greenberg was a crook who didn't pay for the stories he printed.

(There's an amusing anecdote here. Asimov, elsewhere, was asked if he was still angry with Greenberg. He said no, because (a) it got the books published at a time when there were few opportunities, and (b) if Greenberg had been honest and paid Asimov his royalties, he'd have had a right to a share in the much, much larger royalties Doubleday eventually paid for the books. Asimov says that financially he came out 'way ahead on the deal compared to how he would have if Greenberg had been honest.)

He didn't write about L. Ron Hubbard or A. E. Van Vogt. I suspect that he skipped them because he didn't like either of them and because they were people who weren't safely dead. (Granted, Hubbard is dead, but not safely dead. His organization still sues on flimsy or no grounds.

Normally grounds for libel end with death, so Virginia Heinlein – even if she were so minded – couldn't sue for libel against RAH, no matter what is said.) And, to be sure, I imagine that Asimov didn't want to be remembered by the grudges he held.

Interestingly, among his professional colleagues, L. Sprague de Camp and Clifford Simak seem to be the people Asimov most liked.

Two of the essays in combination struck me as particularly ironic. On Campbell – while giving him full credit for being the dominant person that he was, and giving him full credit for launching Asimov's career (though Asimov obviously feels that the good fortune was as much Campbell's as his), he felt that Campbell lost it fairly early.

He recounts telling a petroleum geologist who had never met Campbell how to recognize him: "When you run into somebody who, as soon as he learns that you are a petroleum geologist, spends the next hour telling you all about petroleum geology and gets most of it wrong, that's Campbell." Not entirely unfair, but....

In one of the later essays Asimov mentions debating Rosalyn Yalow (you know, Ben's-mother-the-Nobel-Prize-in-radiation-biology-winner) about radiation biology. He grumps that he wasn't able to convince her of the rightness of his view, and comments that while they were both equally stubborn, *he* was right, and *she* was wrong! (And the really amusing part is that, as he describes the point at issue in his essay, *he* was almost certainly wrong, and in a fairly elementary way, too!) Shades of John W. Campbell!

(Another funny Campbell story: Campbell forced Asimov to add one paragraph in "Nightfall" that Campbell practically dictated. Asimov didn't really like it, but gave in because Campbell was buying the story. That specific paragraph was later singled out by a critic as proof that Asimov could write lyrically as well as in his more common prosaic style. That must have rankled.)

I do also find his gibes at his political enemies rather funny, since Asimov had always struck me as politically rather naive, an impression not at all dispelled by the book. (Basically, he doesn't seem to have a political philosophy more complicated than "Why can't everyone be as reasonable as I am?") But then SF professionals in general seem politically fairly naive.

The last dozen or so essays are written with intimations of death clearly with him. They are not maudlin and in some respects are among his best and most affecting writing. One essay is particularly endearing, in which he struggles to live to his 70th birthday since he had gotten the notion that to die before 70 was to die a young man, while to die after 70 was to die at one's normal time. (He made it to 72.)

Of all the SF autobiographies I've read, this is easily the best. This will be a sure-fire Hugo nominee and the most likely winner in the Non-Fiction category. And it will deserve it. Buy it in hardback and read it.

[The paperback is now available. KK]

Highly recommended.

Ring by Stephen Baxter

This is a rare creature indeed: This is Good Old-Fashioned Super Science of the Arcot, Wade, and Morey school, and it is also well written and – this is really impressive – *completely* consistent with what we currently know about the universe. I enjoyed it thoroughly and I nominated it for a Hugo.

Unfortunately, *Ring* is a British hardback and it is unlikely to be out in the US for at least another year. I picked it up at ConAdian, and it doesn't have a prayer of getting on the ballot, since few voters will have had a chance to read it.

Much of Baxter's corpus takes place in a single consistent future history which I'll call the Xeelee Universe. The Xeelee are a race of transcendent aliens who – so far, at least – stay offstage. Their mysterious workings are central to many stories, but they don't appear in person, so to speak. The Xeelee appear to be fighting a losing battle against some unknown foe.

The gist of this future history is that Mankind eventually developed interstellar travel using an advanced drive that is nonetheless slower-than-light. We discover that the Galaxy is full of other races, many more advanced than us, plus the Xeelee, who go about their frequently incomprehensible projects in this and many other galaxies without taking notice of lesser races. In due course Humanity is conquered and throws off the conquerors, is conquered again, throws off the second conquerors, decides to do some conquering of its own, rises ultimately to challenge the Xeelee themselves for mastery of the Universe, and is beaten into a pulp.

The stories cover the entire history.

Baxter's first book was *Raft*, which was followed by *Timelike Infinity*. This pair showed the dreaded Great First Novel syndrome, where a new writer bursts on the scenes with a first novel of considerable promise and then follows it up with something quite mediocre. (Lots of people do this, some never write a book to match their first: James P. Hogan comes to mind here.)

Fortunately, Baxter seems to have escaped this trap with *Ring*.

The story of *Ring* follows two trails which ultimately unite. The *Great Northern* is a relativistic, slower-than-light spacecraft sent on a 5-million-year circular voyage (time dilated to about 1000 years) carrying one end of a wormhole. When it arrives back in the Solar System, the wormhole will function as a time machine allowing humanity access to the world of 5,000,000 AD,

in which it is known that the Xeelee's long war will have reached its culmination.

The second thread concerns a woman whose mind has been downloaded into an AI and who has been sent to explore the interior of the Sun to learn why its neutrino flux is anomalously low. She is virtually immortal, and after the civilization which gave her her mission dies, she explores the Sun on her own, discovers why the Sun is dying, and eventually falls into a million-year dozing sleep.

Five million years from now, the *Great Northern* returns to a devastated Solar System and finds only the woman/AI in the dying Sun left alive.

And *then* things get complicated.

Ring filled my sensawonder quota for several months. I'm busy trying to get the rest of Baxter's books and have started another, *Flux*, a story about humans who live in the mantle of a neutron star.

Baxter is a writer worth following.

Highly recommended.

Mother of Storms by John Barnes

With *Mother of Storms*, John Barnes has proven that his previous successes (*Orbital Resonance* and *A Million Open Doors*) were not flukes. Barnes has to be considered one of today's best SF writers. And with any kind of luck he'll stick with it for the next thirty years.

Mother of Storms takes place about thirty years from now. The UN has become dominant, and at the start of the book the US President is maneuvering desperately to avoid losing any more sovereignty to the UN. The UN undertakes a nuclear strike against the Siberian Republic's secret – and illegal – nuclear weapons caches buried in the Arctic seabed. The explosions result in the release of huge amounts of methane from the methane clathrates buried there. The methane causes a near-runaway greenhouse effect, with global temperatures going up by 10°F in a matter of months.

The hot, wet oceans are perfect breeding grounds for hurricanes, which rapidly develop into storms of unprecedented strength, duration, and number.

I don't really care for the style Barnes used – I'm told that it's the thriller-best-seller style, where a half dozen stories are followed simultaneously by switching from one thread to another every few pages. I don't care for it, but I can certainly live with it.

I particularly enjoyed Barnes's cynical approach to government and above all the media. Central to the story is XV, a system which allows the "viewer" to directly experience events from an actor/reporter's perspective. Barnes extrapolates today's trends to yield Passionet, the world's most popular "news" network. Passionet's reporters roam the world letting viewers directly experience events – with frequent bouts of sex between the surgically enhanced reporters to keep people's interest.

I didn't find any parts which were unnecessary padding, nor did I see any sex or violence which didn't fit into the story. I did find a few too many leaps in the plot where people did things for inadequate (beyond advancing the plot, that is) reasons. (For example, is it really at all plausible that the last US astronaut at the space station would be chosen to reactivate the mothballed Lunar industrial complex? Much more likely a team on the ground, even if he was more qualified. And why did it get mothballed to start with – the story's explanation, while clever and interesting, strikes me as inadequate.)

A few cavils aside, I liked this book a lot.

Highly recommended.

The Lake of the Long Sun by Gene Wolfe

This, the second book in Wolfe's new series, The Book of the Long Sun, is a middle book; another book is promised, but there is a strong hint that that won't be the last.

This book takes the tale of Patera Silk a few days further (both books together cover not much more than a week) and tells us a lot more about the world in which he lives. (In some respects, I found that to be a letdown; I really enjoyed the elusive hints about the nature of the world in the first book.)

I won't try to summarize the plot. Like anything by Gene Wolfe, the plot is intricate and very well crafted. While it's necessary that you read the first book in the series, they stand together sufficiently well that there is no great letdown at the end when you realize that What Happens Next is a year off.

Recommended.

A College of Magics by Caroline Stevermer

I first ran across Caroline Stevermer as a co-author with Patricia Wrede of a little gem called *Sorcery and Cecilia*. Pat Wrede has since become an excellent fantasist, and now we see that Caroline Stevermer has too.

I'm not sure how to categorize this novel, but I enjoyed it anyway. The story takes place around the turn of the century in a slightly alternate world in which Graustark and Ruritania are principalities, and where Greenlaw College on the Atlantic coast of France is a very exclusive finishing school for upper-class young European women to learn to be witches. (It is very similar to the world of *Sorcery and Cecilia*, but there's no clear connection.)

Faris, the protagonist, doesn't want to be there, but her evil uncle Brinker, who is running the duchy she inherited from her mother until she is of age in three years,

has packed her off to Greenlaw. About half the story (the better half in my opinion) tells of her years there, her rebellions, her pleasures, and the process of learning. It's understated and magical and yet with very little magic.

In the latter half of the book she sets forth for home to retake her duchy, and winds up doing something else. This section is somewhat less well done and the conclusion seems a bit rushed, but it still presents a great picture of a time that ought to have been.

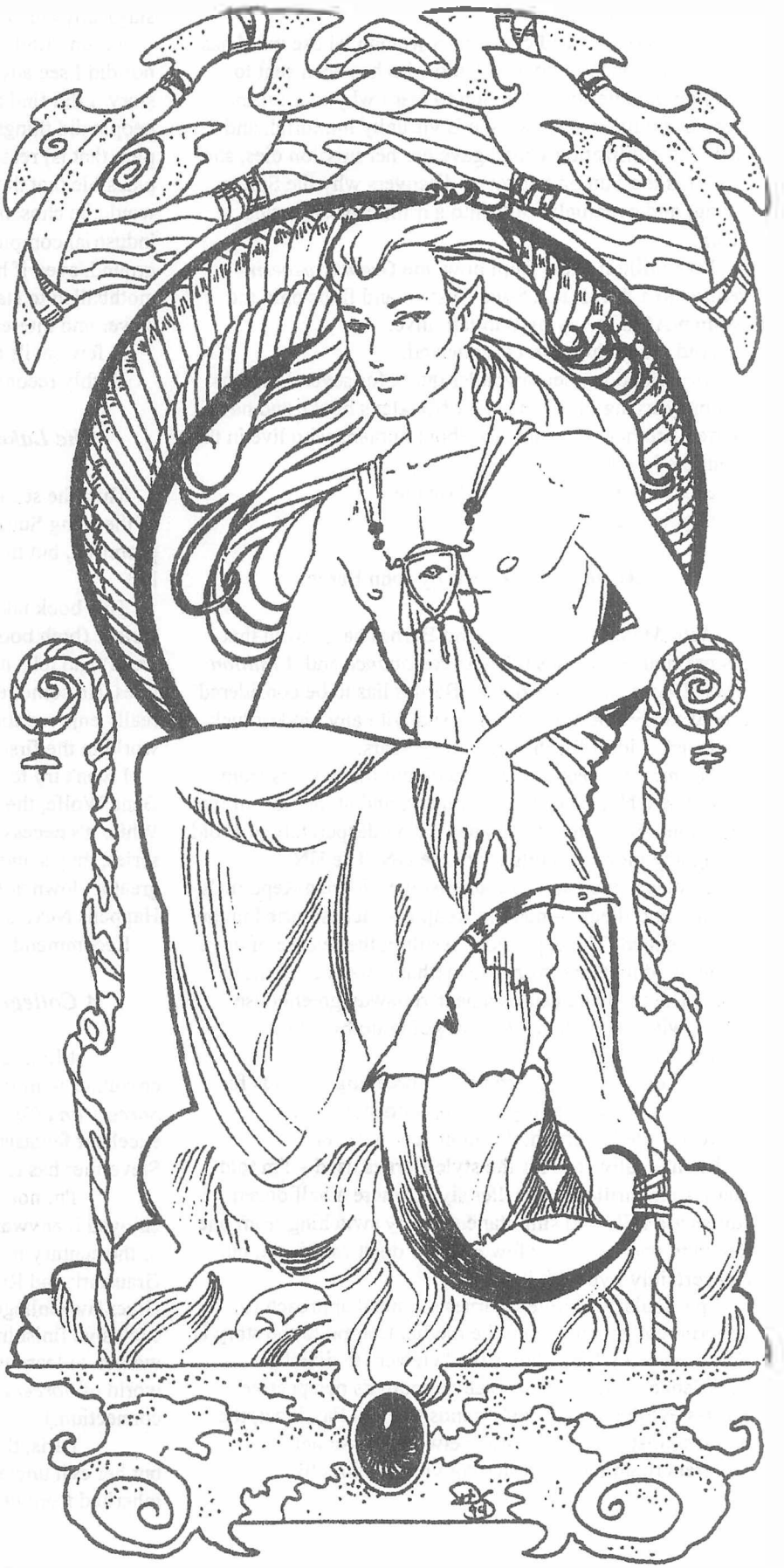
It's a great story with interesting, sympathetic characters and a great atmosphere. Highly recommended.

Foreigner by C. J. Cherryh
reviewed by Elisabeth Carey FN

An early human colonization ship runs into trouble with its stardrive and winds up in the wrong place, a place they can't identify from the records they have, and manages to limp into orbit around a habitable, but unfortunately inhabited, planet. A split developes between the colonists and crew; the colonists increasingly tempted by the habitable planet beneath them, while the crew want the resources of the system only in order to support their efforts to explore the region and find their way home. The colonists do settle on the planet, and work out a precariously balanced relationship with the natives, and the crew go off on their own business.

After two centuries, things are more precarious than ever, the natives have learned a lot from the colonists, and the human representative to the government of the nation on whose territory they live has to cope with a political crisis that he can't understand because he's been cut off from all sources of information. In the process, he discovers how much he has deceived himself about the truly alien nature of the people he's living among.

Cherryh is always at her best when creating really alien viewpoints; her sometimes grating language becomes much less noticeable.



The Bright Tide by Mark Rich

I begin with misgivings, knowing full well my shortcomings. I know too little of C. M. Kornbluth's fiction. My pile of Kornbluth and CMK-related material rises only nine or ten inches high; and different editions of the same book make up part of it; and I feel this deep yearning in my bones in knowing he wrote more, far more than that. I stand at the beginning place: a good place to be, yes, but hardly sufficient.

At least I have read what I have on hand, and have begun re-reading – pleasurable, every moment of it – and reflecting. His work encourages both.

Let me talk first about brilliance of prose. In most story-telling, especially in the genres, prose digs in to a certain depth and no lower: it communicates, usually efficiently, gets meaning across, and carries the reader. Occasionally the evocative and stimulating image creeps in: even Asimov of all people had poetic impulses that made themselves known in the prose. Less commonly does the prose hold a full weight of association and information, direction and misdirection, nuance and suggestion. Occasionally writers submerge themselves in the writing to the point of virtually writing to themselves: they have discovered the richness to be found in language, and luxuriate in it: and often they find themselves luxuriating alone, or in the company of a reserved few who appreciate such literary effort.

Very rarely a writer comes along who can tell a zinging story and at the same time dazzle not so much with literary effect as by audacious *verismo*: you do not realize the skill of the literary effect until afterwards, or on a second reading, or through cumulative effect ("Well, yes, I knew the writer wrote *this* – but *that*, too?"). The dazzling aspects keep themselves tucked away: you miss them because you are reading not the words but the story, you are *seeing* the characters, you *hear* the dialog, you *live* it in the way the writer wanted you to live it. The ultimate twist of the knife arrives with the ending: not with the ending of the story but the ending of the words themselves on the page. White space confronts you, the blankness that is the silence following the last sentence. You find yourself left high and dry in your own universe, the writer's universe having suddenly withdrawn; yet you have not been had, for you have been *given* something. Nothing was taken away. Only given. Only after having been truly given a thing can you feel the sharpness of its removal.

Kornbluth had a way of jamming material into a paragraph that few other writers squeeze into a page. Look through that incredible novel *The Syndic*, or the stories "The Last Man Left in the Bar" or "The Mindworm" or "The Altar at Midnight." An entire world spears through the writing, slantwise and askew; and when you take on the story in reading, you bear into your mind as on a banquet platter a milieu, a fact-filled and earthily real place and time. Oddly it never takes you off course: it gets you where you must go. Out of materials that would result in a fiction of utter confusion in less able hands, Kornbluth produced fiction of utter clarity and cutting sharpness. Not transparency – I have the sense that the apparent transparencies in his fiction arise from the opacity of the material itself, its very weight and substance. Does that *not* make sense? Then try this on for a contrary assertion: that CMK achieved his work by subtle legerdemain, in which the sleight-of-hand involved no trickery at all but instead a measured and controlled parceling-out of the world as he saw it, of human character as he experienced it. He fooled the eye by canny application of truth.

It troubles me sometimes in reading Kornbluth, when it hits me again, and then again, with what apparent ease he achieved excellence in his work. He managed things that I largely miss in other writers of his generation; and he managed these difficult fictional effects – effects is too weak a word but I will use it with the sense of a kind of transferred modesty – repeatedly, and not always in the same way but often with new twists and turns. A number of them fly to mind. The cascade effect of parallel paragraphs in "The Mindworm" that has a brief, weak echo in *Search the Sky*; the media transpositions in "Last Man"; the alien's absurd song in the sawdust in "Make Mine Mars"; the character of the Lonely Man stumbling through many stories; the effortless and somehow fascinating mysticism of the early tales, even in the world-wise – so early! – tale of Kazam; the irrepressible oddballs that bounce in and out of *Not This August* and *Gunner Cade*; the historical layering, the savvy, the gutsy and brazen interactions, the dialects, the occasional folksiness; the honesty; the witt...

I could go on. He has that effect.

This troubles me sometimes because in Cyril Kornbluth we find much of the potential of science fiction realized. In his work we find a rare pinnacle of achievement: it captures his times and renders them in a form we can still understand; it entertains; it educates; and it still has the potential to shape us. We find an indefinable something else, too, the thing we cannot apprehend directly but *feel*. Moreover it represents the work of a writer who felt the urge to render art from his craft, and who chose to do so largely within the confines of the science fiction of the '40s and '50s.

Yet with all this in his favor, and in his fiction's favor, Kornbluth died young, died poor, and left a wife and children poorly off. He worked hard and devotedly and whole heartedly and yet still this was so. Worldly success never reached him; the film option on *The Space Merchants* arrived in time to save Pohl, but not Kornbluth.

I have no precise facts on the matter but ample indirect evidence. Take Virginia Kidd's account in *The Futurians* of what must have been the last Christmas for CMK. The thought of the Kornbluth family entering that season in destitution, in the middle of a literary flowering that included *Wolfbane* and "Nightmare with Zeppelins" and "The Last Man Left in the Bar" and "Theory of Rocketry" – it devastates. Kidd, James Blish, and Blish's payment for "Reap the Dark Tide" – an appropriately ironic title – made a timely appearance, and saved the season, traditionally one that is supposed to be filled with comfort and joy. Yet the fact remains: in Kornbluth the field had a blazing talent who was at once an indefinable and elusive genius and a master craftworker, and who lacked the means by which to live. Can we blame him for bitterness, then? Can we blame him for reproachful attitudes toward his society? Can we castigate him for appropriate anger?

These questions may be the wrong ones. I question the assumption behind such questions, just as I question John W. Campbell Jr.'s assessment of Kornbluth's membership in the Drop Dead Club, and his blanket consideration of CMK's fiction as "angry-bitter."

Kornbluth dealt in an unconventional kind of hope. "Friend to Man," for example, has a patina of cynicism and bitterness; such will inevitably be apprehended in the story. At the same time, it shows how the universe refuses to follow the plans of mere humanity, and how a cog that fails to mesh with one gear may mesh with another. One strand of mysticism that weaves through Kornbluth's work flirts with a concern more popular among mythographers and feminist-humanists now than in Kornbluth's time: the rise of a modified matriarchy against the crumbling edifice of Western patriarchy. In "Friend to Man" the concern *appears* as afterthought, almost as whim, when the unconventional result beats down the expected, conventional result, when the story reaches its sly ending. The concern underlies and empowers the story, however. Convention rules humanity only when humanity is unquestioning in accepting it – the collaborative novel *Search the Sky* rides high upon this point; and any appearance of the "unconventional" is in part a manifestation of the universe itself, unconcerned with what mere humans want or need. Human variety itself is a manifestation of the variety and variability to be found in the universe. "Heigh ho," the wasp, the figure of Kali, the lover/destroyer Aphrodite of "Friend to Man," says: "I am simply doing what I need to do. That is all. I do what I must for my children. It is my role to play." The universe itself becomes Friend to Man, for it is unpredictable, and thus true to humanity's deepest nature, and false to humanity's most mean and shallow aspects. Humanity's beginning perception of that universe implies light, not darkness. Science fiction, even in a story in which we mis-identify with base humanity, in itself implies the light of understanding. Even a dim hope remains hope.

But what of that bitterness and cynicism? Isn't it true, after all, that it cannot be avoided in a story like "The Altar at Midnight," in which the initially chaste Moon, by story's end, has been made malignantly pregnant; and in which the symbolic father, the brilliant physicist who put the seeds of destruction in the Moon, is reduced to remorse and drink? What of the pathetic ghosts in the stories, the remorseful Lonely Man, Doc Jones of the Jones world, or the doomed historian of "The Only Thing We Learn"? Many if not all of them face their own misery: they confront themselves, sentence themselves, and sink beneath their own sense of guilt; for they see how have betrayed themselves or humanity; or, at the least, they see how they or humanity have failed to learn. Is the only thing we learn the fact that we fail to learn? Are these all then cautionary tales, bitter pills against the cold universe? Do they point the indicting finger without mitigating warmth and charity?

Stronger than any quality of "angry-bitter," Kornbluth's riotous sense of life emerges to enrich the fiction and move it beyond the sphere of futility and mindless surrender to fate. Kornbluth painted characters with too much truth, too much humor, and too much affection to be accused of bleakness. He worked with too sure a hand to be accused of inaccurate bitterness. He wrote with too much understanding to be accused of mere cynicism. He showed too much sheer ability to be ignorant of even his *own* promise.

Chinua Achebe maintains it is not the proper function of the artist to offer society despair. After all, there are plenty of people out there ready to offer despair. Plenty. We see it every day.

But what else than despair, we could ask, can angry-bitter writing provoke in us? What else could a writer offer us who belonged to the Drop Dead Club?

Yet I have never left the fiction of Kornbluth in despair.

Exactly the opposite. Always, always the opposite.

[Editor's note: Mark is busy working on a book about the life of C. M. Kornbluth. He sent me this piece last September. Here it is. Two issues later. Nothing good goes to waste. KK]

The *Crimson Queen* rode at her moorings, bobbing slightly in the waves. Pamela Morgan leaned over the rail, sniffing the distant scent of the Great Naseby Swamp. Her tall, athletic frame, brown hair, and blue eyes had already attracted the attention of a few of her fellow passengers. She relaxed, listening to the soft burble of relaxed thoughts from the people around her. Her mother would be along soon enough, and would want Pam to move their baggage. Mother was a Confederation senator, away from home for months at a time. Pam wished that Mother would someday learn to travel light.

Pam caught the trace of another mind filtering the area. It was a familiar mind: Smythe! Smythe was a senior operative of the Temporal Physics Center, the Confederation agency which covertly hid governmental mentalists and psionic engineers. He spent most of his time protecting Confederation officials from spying telepaths. Smythe would doubtless be less than delighted to learn that Pam was accompanying her mother, ostensibly to write a term paper on the swamp. Of course, Pam remembered, Mother wasn't entirely delighted with the situation, either. Mother had already planned Pam's future career for her, and dabbling in science rather than studying law was not Mom's idea of the right direction.

Smythe was an egotist, convinced that only the TPC gave proper psi training. He had to be circumspect. Government agents who harassed daughters of legislators risked misfortune. Once, he had told Pam that he would show her the benefits of TPC training, as long as she promised there would be no hard feelings afterwards. He knew her well enough to be sure that she would keep the promise. She knocked him cold with a single psi-blast. He had probed her screens, and then been too slow to meet her counter.

Pam saw Mother on the dock, alighting from a spaceport air-taxi. Mom had company, too. Were those important leaders, Pam wondered? Mike and Trish Sparron were fellow psi talents, apt to be found on the shady side of any deal. Their crony was Humbert Mumford, a man of similar ethics and with a taste for attractive women.

Pam sent out a tendril of thought to draw Smythe's attention. She felt his gorge rise as he recognized her. (I suppose,) came Smythe's thoughts, (since your mother is here, I must endure your presence.)

(Now,) she answered, mind-to-mind, (I promise to be on my best behavior. Honest! Besides, the trio down there has a worse record than I do. Or don't you know them?)

(Miss Morgan, you may rest assured that I am acquainted with Lord Protector Sparron, who is a valuable friend of the Confederation, and with whom you are most decidedly not to tamper.)

(Him? Lord Protector! Of what? The Greater Thieves' and Pirates' Guild? Well, I promise to be the perfectly well-behaved younger daughter. Just so long as Mumford keeps hands off Mom. And maybe even two seconds longer.) She grinned.

(Don't worry, Smythe. I'll protect Mom for you.) His response came as the scent of ozone and burning rubber. Pam skipped down the gangplank and let Mother introduce her to the Sparrons. They dutifully made small talk, pretending they had never met before. Mumford made a show of kissing Pam's hand. She caught from him the veiled thought of an obedient soldier kissing a serpent. Then Lady Morgan and the Sparrons drifted up the gangplank, leaving behind Pam, Mumford, and an implausibly large number of suitcases.

"Are there porters?" he asked. She nodded and held up two fingers.

(Lord?) she asked. (Lord Protector? What are you guys up to this time?) She had clear memories of their last meeting. She had found herself on the planet Coronado, which the Sparrons, Mumford, and friends were preparing to take over, through somewhat legal means. Pam hadn't stopped them, only urged them in the wrong direction. Of course, she recalled, she also hadn't bundled them all up afterwards and handed them over to the TPC for reprogramming. She had definite doubts about the TPC's methods for rehabilitating criminals.

(We turned legit. Honest, Pam. Well, sort of legit. Nemon is outside the Confederation. No one can annex us without starting a major war. We protect the locals from psis of criminalistic tendencies, and get paid for it. People even like me.)

(I see. No hard feelings about last time?) she asked.

(Hard feelings? We could have got rehabbed, and you didn't squeal on us, just — what you did. Mike even likes you again, sort of.)

(I meant more the other last time,) she corrected. Some of the Sparrons' friends on Coronado had argued that Pam should have been forced to support them, using telehypnosis backed by drugs. Mike's answer had been, "This is a bomb. If you hit her hard enough, she will take you with her." Mumford had then searched Pam out to settle one-on-one who was the master of offensive psionics. He was eventually found in a shallow decorative pond, convinced that he was actually a bullfrog.

(Okay, I learned a lesson. I confess I wasn't happy to see you again, but I don't hold stupid grudges. Now, you called porters, didn't you? The boss is something of a clothes horse.)

"A porter, here he is," she said. She scooped up the first set of her mother's suitcases and followed the porter up the gangplank, leaving behind Mumford and a mass of luggage.

As she walked away, Pam traced Mumford hauling his own suitcases across the deck. Surprisingly, Smythe had joined him. She had no trouble listening to their conversation without being noticed.

(I see,) went Mumford, (that you've met her, too.)

(Oh, merciful heavens, not her again!) answered Smythe.

(Those were my thoughts, too, though she is a lady, not like some people you meet in this business. I'd still rather find a Goan winged constrictor in my bed than her in the next cabin.)

(It seems,) answered Smythe, (that we have certain tastes in common. At least, a certain distaste in common.)

(You can say that again. I think she likes to trample people, just for fun.)

(You also suffered at her hands, I take it? After we get these bags moved, perhaps we can discuss this in more relaxed circumstances.)

(Now that I can agree to. Though don't get me wrong, I'd rather trust her with...) His thoughts trailed off as the two men moved inside a psi-block.

* * * * *

Smythe and Mumford sat nursing their drinks, listening to the rhythmic throb of the ship's engines as they watched the marsh drift by. (Now,) commented Mumford, (Lady Morgan, the older, she's a class looking broad — and don't go lecturing me about what I/we do on our own time. You know perfectly well I can't get through whatever blocks you guys give her, no matter what her mind is on.) After his thoughts trailed Mumford's images of Lady Morgan's gentle curves.

(I believe,) answered Smythe, not entirely primly in tone, (that unlike some of my other charges Lady Morgan is not prone to extramarital dalliances.)

(Now, look, I'm supposed to escort her at the captain's party tomorrow, and if everything goes well afterwards...)

(If anything goes wrong, the younger Miss Morgan promised me she'd be on her best behavior only until you laid hands on her mother. She did not seem to shrink from anticipating what might ensue. For a young lady, she is somewhat bloodthirsty.)

(You, of course, don't view protecting visiting dignitaries of great importance to the Confederation from the depredations of private citizens as a part of your duties?)

(If you commit suicide, Mumford, I have one less problem in an overcrowded life.)

(Okay, Smythe, a hint like that I can take.) The two men leaned further back in their deck chairs, watching a pair of brightly colored bats chasing insects in the afternoon sun. (But, Smythe,) returned Mumford persistently, (what if her Mom wants to? It's not exactly unknown, after all. Or does Pam know when to stay away?)

(Mumford, I am not in the habit of prying into my clients' private, ummh, affairs. Miss Morgan is assuredly that discreet. She'd better be. She knows more Confederation secrets than half the rectors. But I am absolutely certain that she never reads her mother's mind.)

(What? The lady isn't resistant to probes, not without your help. And you can't stop Pam any more than I can. You've got something psionic that stops Pam-baby? I don't believe it.)

(Mumford, the younger Miss Morgan is not arbitrarily powerful. A good mechanical or chemical shield — not commercial stuff — will stop her in her tracks. I think. Her mother is protected from her by something far more powerful: the Ayenbite of Inwit.) Smythe indulged himself with a pause. (The pangs of conscience. Pam doesn't think it would be right to read her parents' minds, so she doesn't.)

(Her? That little — well, not so little anymore — demon? She has a conscience? Since when? No, you're right. I was with her once, never you mind when, and there was this guy about her age who she seemed to like. A lot. He didn't notice her. But he didn't have any shielding. She could have fixed him so he would have come running every time she even considered snapping her fingers. She didn't. And she would've been furious if I'd taken care of it for her.)

* * * * *

Late afternoon. The sun had slipped behind the tree branches, sending speckles of light across the *Crimson Queen.* Pam lay in a deck chair, looking into the undergrowth. The first parties to explore Naseby had noted native creatures with empathic talents. None were terribly dangerous. The most common, a gregarious fruit bat, chased predators away from its rookeries by giving them bad dreams. For no apparent reason, the empathic creatures had slowly dwindled in number, and were now believed to be extinct.

Were they? Or had they just moved to stay away from human minds? Naseby was very lightly settled, and the Great Naseby Swamp was the wildest terrain on the planet. If the creatures weren't extinct, this was the place to look. Pam was nominally making a tour of planetary museums. But if she found something interesting, it would be child's play to convince a museum curator to make a field trip.

The ship's paddle wheels threw up a slight mist, setting a rainbow around the sinking sun. One of the ship's junior officers had lectured her on how the wheels — eccentrically mounted with curved, sharpened steel blades — were the best engineering response to heavy weed in deep water. She suspected he could talk about them for days.

She had spent the afternoon pretending to read, while putting probes out over the swamp. Once she thought she had found something: strong signals distant from any human habitation. They disappeared before her like fog under a hot sun, never giving a sharp indication of direction or range. Then there had been a unique psi signal, not on any band that the local animals seemed to emit. A tracery of red and violet had swept over the ship, caressed her shields, and vanished. When it came, she had been searching very far out over the water, and barely noticed the effect before it was over. The hardest-driven sweep she could muster didn't reveal any hint of what it had been.

The sun touched the horizon. She stood to watch the ship's bow plow through shallow waves. The deck was nearly deserted. She heard steps behind her. The absence of thoughts told her it was a robot. Immediately she corrected herself; Naseby didn't allow robots. As she turned to look over her shoulder, a short, lightly built man tackled her.

"Let go!" Pam shouted. She stepped back into the rail, expecting him to hang on to her. He pushed her back over the edge. She tried to hang on, but her balance was gone. His mind was protected by blocks — planted, not natural — which turned a hastily charged psi-bolt. As she fell towards the water, she managed a single shriek. Her mind's eye fixed on an image of the paddle wheels — tons of polished steel — threshing their way towards her. She straightened out into a clean dive, hit the waves, and stroked hard away from the ship, deeper and deeper beneath the lake. The native might also have a handgun, but few light weapons were effective through a couple of yards of water. She heard a rumble and swish to her side, coming closer and closer. The wash from the paddle wheel spun her around and pushed her towards the lake bottom. Suddenly she was too deep to see any light through the mucky water. Safe from the ship's engines, she clawed for the surface again, swimming towards the thoughts she could hear above her. She broke through the waves, blinked, and found the ship had passed her by.

A column of spray marked the paddle wheels being thrown to full stop. Pam was pulled from the water by a very concerned officer of the watch. With only a little telepathic prodding, the ship's physician announced that Pam needed a shower, a change of clothes, and a hot dinner. Pam made sure Mother would be told that she had fallen, not that she had been pushed. Meanwhile, Smythe had taken her assailant into custody.

For once she was grateful for Mumford's company at dinner. She was still shaken. Whoever had attacked her had been prepared for psionic countermoves, and most people emphatically did not know that she had mental powers. Her opponent's blocks were implants, suggesting that he was part of a larger group. Mumford gracefully waited until she brought up what had happened, then listened patiently.

"Smythe," whispered Mumford, "says the man is a native, too heavily shielded for him to read, even after Smythe gave him a sedative. The fellow's name is Kronor; apparently he's a regular passenger. Smythe's private sources say Kronor is well off financially, but no known source of income. It seems that this is common on Naseby, though the planet is not a center for smuggling, piracy, or anything else. It just has a lot of people with no apparent way of earning a living. In any event, Smythe could use help, though he won't admit it."

"Well, why not? I can always add to the list of favors the TPC owes me, not that I have any hope of collecting." She stood and followed Mumford.

Smythe was expecting them. Mumford let Pam into the cabin and closed the door, leaving her and Smythe with Kronor.

"You're sure," asked Smythe, "that you're ready to go ahead with this? It's not likely you'll get anyplace. His blocks stopped you last time, after all."

"I got a surprise swim. I didn't get hurt. I just don't want Mom to have to worry." Pam sat down across the room from Kronor.

The native tossed and turned against his bonds, talking as Smith's sedative had its effect. "Angara," Kronor mumbled. "Angara. Angara waits." Smythe prodded at him. "Angara commands. She must be excised. Gone from the sight of Angara."

"The sedative I gave him," remarked Smythe, "seems to have made him talkative."

Pam traced the outlines of Kronor's shields. He had an installed mind-block: heavy, crude, and, given a little time in which to work, not at all immune to penetration. Had Smythe carelessly missed the weaknesses in Kronor's shields? Or did he suspect that Kronor might be dangerous, so someone else might better act as cannon fodder? Ever so slowly, she infiltrated past the blocks into Kronor's mind. A mesh-like psi-structure had been implanted in his brain. Structures were

not something she naturally worked with, but she had seen enough that she could work out what this one did. When triggered, it blanked out Kronor's consciousness, leaving him literally unable to think, and took control of his body. The weave of the structure was not what one would expect from a human psi. Its colors were those of the mysterious emanation she had felt that afternoon. She thought something was familiar about them, but couldn't remember what.

The rest of Kronor's mind was free of alien influence. She couldn't erase the blocks, at least not easily, but with a little work she rendered the psi structure harmless. Now, who or what was "Angara"? That seemed to be Kronor's name for his boss. And why the block? Someone had gone to a great deal of trouble to give him a heavy mind-shield, and then left very little inside to protect. For a one-shot assassin, there were simpler protections. She snatched at bits and pieces of memory, of deep jungle clearings in which birds called and insects darted. All she could find were disconnected fragments; the cues which unified them into coherent thoughts were lacking. (Smythe?) she asked. (Are you following all this?) She could feel him tapping her probes, but hadn't checked what he could see.

(Clear so far,) came his answer.

Perhaps, she considered, "Angara" was not the phrase which would link the memories together. Perhaps the jungle, the unseen watchers beyond the clearings, were more important. What unseen watchers? That hadn't been a conscious element in the images. It was something which just fell into place, organized out of the shadows of what she found. She isolated a memory, let it take her ahead. She passed from one clearing to another in a remembered sequence. Finally she came to a temple, a great structure overgrown by the jungle but still in use. Within it lay a massive slab of stone illumined by a huge rent in the ceiling. The holy of holies was a potted plant.

A plant? A potted plant? A Nuzeem! Kronor hadn't recognized it, but Pam did. The Nuzeem were still a Confederation secret. She felt goosebumps rise on her arms. Unbidden, her own shields and probes and offensive methods came to maximum alert. Smythe caught a hint of her fear, but didn't see the cause.

(What?) he asked mockingly. (Not a human sacrifice in sight. Afraid of the bogeyman, are you?)

"Smythe! Shut! Up!" she whispered angrily. Nuzeem doted on lethal traps. Kronor probably was one. (In fact, Smythe, why don't you go hide behind your shields? These guys aren't a bunch of lightweights. Unlike you.) Smythe's thoughts vanished behind a now tautly held screen. If the cannon fodder urged the elect to hang back, Smythe was happy to hang back.

Patterns of light and dark, scent of musk and cardamom and shadow. Pam filtered Kronor's memories. No, she concluded, she wasn't transferring a set of compulsions onto her own mind; she had only found events in the native's memory. She let those memories unfold. The synesthesia ended. Kronor walked out of the temple, oblivious to his surroundings. The Gods had called. Soon he would see the Gods. He came to the top of a shallow cliff. Before him stretched an open forest of green, sprinkled with rose and saffron flowers. He knew he was to return soon, bringing the Gods...

Pam felt sick to her stomach. Kronor had seen a Nuzeem grove about to go to seed. If they weren't stopped, they would overrun Naseby in a few weeks, killing everything intelligent that they could find. That explained the decline in the empathic native species; the psionically active Nuzeem disliked competition.

The Nuzeem had an obscure form of space travel. They must have come to Naseby untold millennia ago and established themselves, living without increasing their numbers very much. Now they had begun to spawn. Such things had happened before elsewhere, with extremely unpleasant consequences.

Pam saw what the Nuzeem had done. Sometimes they made genetic adjustments in other species to render them harmless. Here, they had taken men as their servants. Her subconscious drew her back and froze Kronor's recollections. Something was happening to Kronor's mind-blocks. A block was just an inert slab of psi-energy, placed around the mind like the armor of some giant reptile. Kronor's blocks were fragmenting, little sparks of light appearing on their surfaces. Something must be inside them — a Nuzeem trap. She had never seen a trap hidden in a mind-block before. Desperately, she searched Kronor's mind for the location of the Nuzeem grove. Nothing! That fact was only to be found at the conclusion of his present line of thought. To trace out that line would set off whatever was inside his psi-blocks. Her shields hardened, armoring the probe she had placed on his most hidden memories. She completed his words for him, "...new acolytes, loyal to Angara." Then she snatched at the ideas which she had evoked.

Psi-blasts lanced out from the blocks, raking Kronor's brain. His mind burned. He screamed, snapped his bonds, and jumped for Pam's throat. Psi-bolts streaked out from him, all focused on her. Her own shields tingled as she deflected his assault. She knew his mind couldn't supply the power levels he had reached; somehow, he had been turned into a psychic minefield. She jumped back. Her own psi efforts concentrated on immobilizing him. He wasn't that heavy. She was almost certainly in better physical condition than he. She still didn't want to find out if he knew anything about hand-to-hand combat. She certainly didn't.

Kronor fell to the floor. Within him, organized thought was ending. The flotsam and jetsam of old dreams echoed against the Nuzeem influence and the remnants of his own conscious will, swirling like an eddy in the *Crimson Queen's* wake which gradually faded out as it receded in the distance.

She closed her eyes, squeezing down in the instinctive reaction to bedazzlement. Her probes had held in place while Kronor's mind tore itself apart. In some instances, she found facts: in others, she found herself staring into the core of a star.

(Smythe?) she called. "Smythe?" she repeated in voice. He lay unmoving on the floor. Mumford, two security guards, and another TPC agent — someone she didn't know — crashed through the door with guns drawn.

"Pam? Are you all right?" asked Mumford.

"Yes. No serious damage. Kronor was booby-trapped to dispose of prying minds. He went off, too late to do his masters any good."

"We heard him go. At least, Cameron and I did."

"Through the..." Pam stopped talking in mid-sentence, (...ship's psi-barriers?) she continued telepathically in slight disbelief. (Was he that high-charged? I thought he was pretty heavy, but I was too busy at the time to calibrate. I assume [she added an image] that you're Cameron?)

(Of course,) he answered. His thoughts were cold, nearly hostile. "Might we hear your version of what happened, from the beginning?"

"Smythe couldn't probe Kronor, so I volunteered to help." She recounted what followed, leaving out the Nuzeem. They were a Confederation secret, sufficiently sensitive that they were better left unmentioned. Pam could taste Cameron's rage. He must have wanted Kronor for himself. Cameron scanned Smythe, briefly, finding only that he was unconscious. Then he tried to get through Pam's personal shields. She kept talking, pretending not to notice what Cameron was doing. He was skillful — clearly one of the stronger human psis she had ever met — but he wasn't so good that she had to take active measures to stop him. She could always close him out by hardening her own shields, but that was a two-edged sword. If she shielded herself so nothing could get in at her, she couldn't drive a probe out, either.

"So," she concluded, "the traps were hidden inside Kronor's blocks. They went off when I traced the key memory."

(Oh, please!) interrupted Cameron. (Structures inside a block? That's impossible.) "Miss Morgan, you've made quite enough trouble for me. I suppose you also claim that the native, who had no psi talent of his own, knocked out Smythe while his shields were up. Only you could have done that. Not Kronor! You! You! I don't know what your game is, but I'll find out. Now, go away! I have enough headaches already!

(Cameron!) Pam held her contact with him tightly focused, keeping Mumford unaware of her message. (I found out what planted the blocks. Nuzeem! There's a Nuzeem grove on Naseby, in seed phase. Its position...)

(Spare me!) he answered. (Even most children half your age have more sense than to try to cover an exposed lie with another one. Just go away, little girl. Go away!)

Startled by Cameron's hostility, Pam backed through the doorway. She had quarreled with the TPC before, but Cameron was thinking of her as a dangerous criminal, if not an enemy of the Confederation. He hadn't even listened when she mentioned the Nuzeem. That was a real crisis to which his mind was closed.

She would have to deal with the Nuzeem by herself, assuming that she could. The last time she had encountered one, it had nearly killed her. Of course, she told herself, she had been much younger then. Her shields hadn't really been proof against the more lethal psi wavelengths in the Nuzeem attacks. Still, a Nuzeem was not something she wanted to tackle by herself. What other choices did she have? The Nasebonian Hierarchate denied the existence of psionics. If she did nothing, the native population would be slaughtered. She had spent the past few years minding her own business, choosing not to use psi to help others, but that couldn't go on forever.

♦ ⁜ ⁜ ⁜ ♦

Late night. The starfire of the cluster dominated the northern sky. On the bow promenade deck, Pam settled back in a couch. She had found a place sheltered from the thoughts of the other passengers, so she could concentrate without anyone disturbing her concentration.

Mother was still awake, hammering out details of diplomatic negotiations. Pam had announced where she was going. Mother nodded, exactly as though her well-brought-up nine-year-old daughter were still with her. Pam had a portable law library under one arm. If Mother thought that Pam spent the wee hours reading something desirable, rather than theoretical physics, that was Mother's problem.

Nuzeem and human minds could communicate on a limited range of topics. Mutual incomprehension was more normal. Pam reached out, calling, projecting the Nuzeem neutral sign of greetings. Psi didn't depend on range, not in any ordinary way, but for the Nuzeem to find her, she had to be conspicuous. She knew where they were, but didn't want

them to know that she knew. So they had to find her. The Nuzeem symbolism was a tag, something they couldn't overlook. She waited, staring up into the cloudless sky.

(Who?) came an answer. (Who? Who? Whowhohooo?) The alien voices grated and rumbled, obscuring all sense of their direction.

(Friend. Peace-friend. End-of-time-friend,) she answered. She had used those symbols elsewhere, to persuade other Nuzeem that she was not their enemy. That their millennia-old war with the Others had ended. She told them of the Confederation, of Nuzeem groves elsewhere. The constellations made their slow wheel through the heavens.

Later, much later, she ended her story. She stood and touched her toes.

(So you are not the Others,) came the toneless answer. Grove-thoughts flitted about her, out of synchrony with a human sense of time. Gingerly, she opened some of her private memories to them. This was a risky step. If they disbelieved her, they might attack while her shields were weakened.

(A human does not have Masters,) they commented. (No Masters? Then who is he who waits and watches in secret silent deep?) They followed with a sense of position and duration. Someone had been spying on her, someone who knew she was so involved that his presence could pass unnoticed.

"Cameron?" she called.

(Master?) came alien questioning. (Your Master?)

(No!) she answered. "Cameron, I don't have time for games. It's hard enough to negotiate — it's hard enough to keep in phase with Nuzeem minds — without your making trouble."

(Oh, please, little girl,) he answered mentally, clearly audible to the listening Nuzeem. (You killed a prisoner. You knocked out one of my best operatives. And now you pretend to negotiate with a restricted species which actually isn't found within thirty parsecs of here. Over the years, you've done quite enough harm. This is the last straw. If you won't grow up, we'll just change you, you little monster. I've read your files. I know all about you.)

"Cameron, show some slight sense," she whispered. "You know perfectly well what else is listening to us."

"Nothing." (How naive do you think I am, anyway?) He pulled a stungun from his jacket pocket. She dove for the cover of a bulkhead. What a trap, she thought. If she used psi against him, the Nuzeem would type her as a violent warrior, one of the Others. If she didn't, she would soon be Cameron's prisoner.

(Monster, he said!) chanted the unseen watchers. (Monster! Monster! An Other Monster, as we were warned! Kill the Other Monsters! Kill! Kill! Killillill!)

Cameron's first burst took her in the chest: a second caught her legs. Her internal pain blocks flared. She collapsed to the deck. Her head and shoulders had reached the wall just before he fired. She barely clung to consciousness, then let her shields relax, allowing the slightest trickle of confused thought to escape. With some luck, Cameron wouldn't suspect she was awake. She could hear the Nuzeem reaction. They were working themselves into a frenzy. (No!) she told them, fiercely. (We are not the Others!) Cameron's mind-probes draped over her like a wet blanket, searching for gaps in her screens, forcing her to break contact with the Nuzeem.

There were footsteps on the deck around her. Several pairs of hands lifted her into a pallet. It wobbled and floated upwards. Someone thoughtfully wedged her law library under her feet. The very tight, very potent, inwards-facing psi barriers of the stretcher flickered into place. She couldn't, she found, push a thought through them at least without being conspicuous. She couldn't move, and didn't dare open her eyes.

Pam heard the voice of one of Cameron's guards. "Optical deflectors engaged, sir! Lifting away. We broke the rail, arranged for witnesses to their unfortunate demise, and weren't observed, sir."

"Orders, sir?" Another male voice, one Pam didn't recognize. Where was she? Optical deflectors? Lifting? Their — my tragic end? she asked herself. What was going on? The sounds and the bright lights beyond her eyelids didn't make sense.

"She's been electrostunned," Cameron spoke again. "She'll pull out in two hours. When she does, sedate her — Quilnosom will do. She's too valuable to risk taking through the subspace barrier while she's in stasis. She can stay out until we reach Choculac."

"Yes, sir! Should I initiate recovery before landing?"

"Ideally, she wakes up inside an Androw Cell, just as we hit her with deep rehabilitation. She's stood up against our conventional equipment, but we'll hit her with things even her shields can't stop. Meanwhile, once she wakes up she'll be extremely dangerous. Put her into isolation, and when you go in to sedate her, use triple isolation procedures. And leave someone outside the door, even now while she's unconscious, just as a safety precaution."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, get her into isolation."

Pam felt her litter drift ahead. The conversation had clarified matters. Cameron had kidnapped her onto a TPC starship and arranged for people to believe that she was dead, so no one would complain or look for her. He wouldn't be

the first to discover that she was tougher than expected. He still sounded unpleasantly confident about what an Androw Cell — whatever that was — could do. A planet full of TPC agents was probably enough to dispose of her.

This was not the first time that death had stalked her. She was scared stiff. The heroines of historical romance novels claimed that facing death became easier with practice. She suspected that their authors lacked personal experience on the question. Rehabilitation — brain bending — was more terrifying than dying. After rehabilitation, you were alive, with your own body as the most subtle of prisons. You felt what your jailors wanted you to feel, desired what your jailors wanted you to desire, and after a while thought only what they wanted you to think.

On Choculac, she thought, there would be batteries of psi machines, hordes of trained telepaths, and an arsenal of robotic weapons. If she waited until she got there, she would be shot down and drugged, or her screens would be swamped by sheer weight of numbers. She had to get out now, which probably meant doing something unpleasant.

A door slammed shut. The litter settled to the floor. Its psi screens flickered out. Delicately, she scanned the space around her. The walls and floor held mechanical psi barriers. A careful search found no flaw, no gap she could get through quickly. The barriers turned the sharpest probes she could muster. That was hardly surprising. Her radical, unreliable, and personally dangerous alternatives to a probe would be her last resort.

For a moment, she panicked. In the end...in the end, if she couldn't escape, she would have to choose between being brainwashed and killing herself. If she stopped her heart, they could restart it. She couldn't imagine, though, how they could keep her from projecting herself out-of-body, meanwhile doing enough damage that Pam-body would never support Pam-mind, or much of anything else, again.

She shrank from that line of thought. It was too dark and twisted for her. She had a few other choices. She could try to overpower whoever came to sedate her. That didn't sound promising. A mental attack against someone with good screens, in the few moments she'd have, was risky at best. She could sometimes get around mechanical screens, but internal biological protections were often more effective. Given surprise, she had a nominal chance of jumping whoever came in. That would leave armed guards outside waiting for her. Breaking out of a prison cell before they came for her sounded preferable.

Well before Cameron's two hours were up, the numbness faded from her arms and legs. He had assumed that his weapon had reached her brain; the motor nerves recovered rather more quickly. Cautiously, she opened her eyes. The ceiling was a pale shade of apricot; various pieces of scientific equipment lined the walls. She shifted from side to side, ever so slowly, identifying bits and pieces of machinery. This wasn't a jail cell. It was just a private room in the ship's infirmary. There seemed to be no special precautions. After all, they knew that she was unconscious. She slipped off her sandals, stood, and silently searched the room.

She found nothing especially useful. Tools were in very short supply. The ventilator ducts were too narrow for her shoulders. A closet yielded a leaded canister: not quite a club, but it was heavy enough to surprise someone. She could wire the doorknob to the ship power mains, but the knob was almost certainly a non-conducting composite, not real brass. The hinges were on the wrong side of the door; she couldn't even pry them out. What was her next step?

Pam finally remembered the obvious. In a prison ward all the equipment wouldn't have been left lying around where someone could reach it. One can almost never lock a patient into a conventional hospital room. She leaned on the lockless door, pushed it ajar by a hair's breadth, listened, and opened it far enough for her to get out. A guard sat at a night table, eyes glued to a television screen. The audio suggested a lurid entertainment tape. He was facing away from her, and didn't look up while she elbowed the door shut. The guard was wearing a mechanical static generator, strong enough to protect him from rapid telehypnosis. If she tried to break the barrier, she would set up enough of a commotion to alert every telepath on the ship. She edged across the room, bare feet padding noiselessly over cold tile floors. Two swift final steps brought her to his back.

Unconscious, without the static generator, the guard's mind was an open book. In a few moments she had acquired a complete description of the ship and its crew. To her surprise, Cameron was the only telepath on board. Quickly, she learned from the guard the trained reflexive use of his hand weapon and — to her surprise — the location of the other prisoner. They had taken Mumford, too. Psi-learned skills tended to fade quickly, but they would last long enough to dispose of her present enemies.

She adjusted her psi-bubble around her, making it look as much as possible like a stray bit of static. Releasing Mumford took a few moments. For a pair of armed telepaths to hunt down an unwarned, non-telepathic crew took little longer. The crew members they left in the ship's stasis shells, shut off from the flow of time until someone released them.

(Cameron,) she told Mumford, (is on the bridge. I think he's noticed us by now, but he can't strike back unless he comes after us.)

They stopped a few compartments away from the bridge. (Cameron?) she called. (We have something to settle, you and I.)

(Miss Morgan? I see you've escaped,) answered Cameron. (I suppose I should wonder how. And my crew seems to be missing — put them into stasis, did you? It doesn't matter. I can fly my yacht solo.)

"I suppose," Cameron's voice continued from the intercom, "you'll be stubborn about going to your cell. Stubborn, but not stubborn enough. Go quietly, or I'll be obliged to use force."

(You force me?) she sneered. (You and which army?) She projected a protective bubble round Mumford, her own psi screens blending smoothly into his. (Just keep quiet,) she told Mumford. (He can't reach you unless he beats me.)

She probed Cameron's defenses. There was a psi structure, massively charged, around his head. It felt mechanical in nature.

(As you see,) he said, (I had a psi amplifier implanted in my scalp. It leaves me with all the flexibility of my own mind, and enormously more power. Indeed, I am stronger than any unaided human psi, and I never tire.)

(Is that all?) she sniffed. (My more serious opponents thought humans with the talent were all fragile wallflowers.)

(And they were right, at least about you, little girl.) He followed with a vicious series of probes and blasts, trying to drive a wedge into her shields. She countered hard. They found themselves on the same channel, locked face to face. Pam drove in against him, finding it like climbing uphill into a fierce gale. She could barely push ahead against his resistance. She could beat him this way, she concluded, but doing it would leave her rather thoroughly drained. She dropped back and let him work over her screens. The demand on her strength wasn't all that impressive. The difficulty was that his gadget might let him keep his attacks up indefinitely, while her own strength was very definitely finite. It was time for her more radical measures. His screens did have flaws, if largely on bands that she didn't want to use. Those approaches did avoid having to take him on directly. She picked the least noxious band and attacked. Her own psi-bolts struck home, followed by bursts of color. Cameron drew on chaos for his defense. She pushed through it. There were a few moments of confusion inside Cameron's mind. Then she leaned back and took a deep breath.

"So much for him," she said to Mumford. "He talked a good line, but his toy didn't help him much."

"Right," he answered. "You don't look so well off yourself."

"Me? I'm fine." Then she noticed she was bathed in sweat, and was shaking as though she had downed a whole pot of her father's Turkish coffee in a single gulp. To use the more exotic psi bands, she paid a price. "But I wouldn't complain if you could dig up some lemonade — and maybe a towel."

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Mumford returned to find her on the yacht's bridge. Cameron was handcuffed to an acceleration couch. To Mumford's surprise, he was awake and arguing with Pamela. "Cameron," she snapped, "if I were as nasty as you, I'd throw you out the airlock. Without a pressure suit. If you break the holds I put on you, so we have to go one-on-one again, I may do it anyway."

"Pam?" asked Mumford. "I thought he was knocked out."

"I blocked his gadget — and tied him up. It's easier to work on his memories while he's conscious. Note I said easier, not easy." (His shields are full of holes. I don't want him to know that I can get through them.)

(Is it that hard to fly his ship?)

(The controls come with built-in combination locks on them. Start talking. He'll hear me working, and I don't want him to know what I'm doing. Make small talk, and prompt me with answers — I'll be too busy to notice what we're saying. Oh, and Mumford, I don't want to notice that I just agreed to one of your more exotic romantic propositions.) She followed with the feel of a grin.

(Your technical level of chastity,) he answered, (for whatever that means to a good telepath, shall remain unblemished. But aren't those the weapons banks?)

(First things first. As I may be about to get killed, I've opened up an escape pod for you. I suggest not landing on Naseby if I don't make it.)

(Get killed? Cameron's a master pilot. Without his memories, how can we crash-land?)

(We aren't landing. The other side shoots back. Hard.)

(Pam, not that I don't trust you, but what is going on? What other side? Why not just dump it in the lap of the Naseby government? That's why people have governments, after all. I'm part of one now. I found out. They exist so people whose parents happen to stick them with more courage and honesty than is good for health and long life don't have to play vigilante.)

"Mumford," she asked, "do you know what a Nuzeem is?"

"A what?"

"An exceedingly nasty, intelligent, psi-using plant."

"A telepathic tomato? No, never."

"Miss Morgan," intruded Cameron, "they are a state secret. Besides, we convinced them that their war is over."

"Cameron, no one bothered to tell the grove on Naseby. No one knew there was a grove on Naseby. They think that we are the Others. They are about to seed, which will doom Naseby. I might have persuaded them to stop if you hadn't stunned me."

"Of course I stunned you," he murmured. "You've made quite enough trouble. And why should you get credit for contacting the Nuzeem here? I'd done it first, anyway. Besides, any good deeds that you did might make it harder for me to get approval for your rehabilitation."

"What the Nuzeem told you can't be trusted. Your attack on me probably convinced them that we are their enemy." Her anger showed in her voice. "If I move quickly, we can still stop them."

"Pam, old girl," asked Mumford, "why not just have the Naseby Space Navy spray them with weed killer until they learn respect?"

"Because," answered Cameron, "if they're hostile, which they're not, and if the NSN attacks them, which it won't, the NSN will lose. Even a few Nuzeem can swamp the psi screens on a normal warship."

"Besides, the Nuzeem probably control Naseby," Pam said. "They're strong enough. And it would explain Kronor's finances. Now, hush. The Nuzeem are rational beings. I can't just kill them without trying to reason with them."

Pam bent her head and pressed her fingertips against a control console. Mumford felt no hint of psionic activity. Then she began to talk under her breath. Her face shifted from a tired smile to a look of horror. "No!" she whispered. "No!" She was reacting to something that he couldn't detect. On the planet, he thought, not through the ship's screens. He could feel the strain on her, but felt no sign of what she was straining against. She snapped back from the console. Mumford was convinced that she had just broken a link to another mind, but there hadn't been one.

"Cameron," her voice froze the air, "while you had me tied down, they went to seed. They bounced my message back in my face."

"Mumford," begged Cameron, "can't you see she's lying? We're on a TPC cruiser, behind the toughest psi screens in the Confederation. How could she have gotten down to the surface?"

"You call that junk a screen generator?" she snapped.

(Because,) Pam told Mumford, (one of my less human friends taught me how to use psi bands the TPC doesn't know about. Here, I'll lead you to one.) She did. Mumford turned pale.

(That stuff, not again, please. It can't be good for old men like me.)

(It's just as bad for growing young girls,) she countered. (But sometimes you don't get nice choices.)

"Now, Cameron," Pam said, "I need your thumb and right eye." He lurched to his feet, every move driven by a compulsion mesh. His face contorted. He faced the weapons banks. "I've keyed everything in," she continued. "All I need is your body scan to arm the warheads."

"How?" he asked.

(I used your mind. Or did you think you have working screens, you creep?) Her words were tinged with hatred.

His hands touched the controls. Status markers began their countdowns. The displays showed the ship's missile batteries, all targeted on Naseby. "You'll kill millions," he whispered. "You'll never get away with this, even if you flee beyond the edge of time."

(I? Kill? No,) she answered. (When the Nuzeem spawn, they cleanse the ground where the seed will fall. Those people are dead already.) For an instant he felt her shake with tears for the departed. "I was with each of them," she choked, "as they died. That was the Nuzeem answer, you see." Cameron knew she was very close to tearing him apart.

"We have a few moments before we fire," she went on. "You'll be in stasis, Cameron, where you can't make trouble." She tapped a button. "I have no choice," she told Mumford. "They've killed everyone on the North Polar Cap, and are seeding it. Their next step will be the rest of the planet. The only way to keep them from killing everyone on Naseby is to use force, killing them and their seedlings. Fortunately the ship has enough torpedoes and disruption bombs to do that. This, Mumford, is the real difficulty." She waved a small box at him. "The Nuzeem will be dead in twenty minutes, but there's in between to worry about first. When they see the missiles launch, they'll come after us, looking for this box. The ship has psionic control circuits, and this is the master control unit. If the Nuzeem reach it, they'll just abort the attack."

"A good sledge hammer?" suggested Mumford.

"It's got backups, also psionic, and equally vulnerable to Nuzeem control. They're scattered the length of the ship. Some are armored. We can't smash all of them and I can't possibly protect a whole ship from a Nuzeem forest. I'm not sure I can protect anything from even one Nuzeem. Putting the control unit into stasis won't work either — the backups will turn on."

"How do the Nuzeem know what to do? I didn't know the TPC has psionic control circuits for their spaceships, and that's part of my job."

"Cameron," she said. "They dominated him. Enough that they are sure to know how his ship works."

"So, how do we keep them from grabbing it? Cameron said they could get through a ship's screens."

"I protect it. You'll be in stasis, and I will be behind the toughest shields I can drive."

"Pam! I saw what Cameron thinks of the Nuzeem. They can turn mechanical screens into cole slaw. You can't — not even you — hold up against that."

(Now, don't you worry about me. I don't chop up all that easily. Besides, Nuzeem are a whole lot better against machines than against people. Anyway, I have some advantages. This ship has good mechanical screens. We are a long way from Naseby. Now, no more talk.) She touched another button. As temporal precession carried Mumford into stasis, his last words came as "...one class body..." She snorted gently.

Now she only had to face her own thoughts. She was frightened. When the Nuzeem knew that their death was inevitable, they would try for revenge. On her, if they could reach her, and on humanity if she hid away. Even if the ship had no psionic control unit, she told herself, she couldn't have hidden in stasis. She had to stay where she was, and give them a target, or she would be responsible for more mass murder below. Her mother's murder, in particular. For now, her conscience would be her only company. Mumford's cynical comments about governments brought tears to her eyes.

She sat down, folded her knees against her chest, and waited. The control unit was cradled in her arms. A flurry of indicator lights marked missile firings. The tactical display showed scarlet sparks edging their way towards Naseby. She fingered the sides of the box and waited.

(Cameron,) came a pale voice. (CAMERON. OTHER VERMIN. TRAITOR!) it shouted. The Nuzeem had saturated the ship's psi-barriers. The air around her flickered slightly. The Nuzeem knew the ship, and were looking for the way to stop the attack. All they found was inert metal.

(YOU,) came the shout. (You have the control. We can see it. Give it to us. We are the Nuzeem and we are strong. We are the Nuzeem and you must obey. Obey, or die.)

She sealed her mind against their ravings, then shivered slightly at the thought of their strength. She had gone around the ship's screens; they were coming straight through them. They said they could see the controls. If they could actually see the master control unit by scanning through her personal shields, without her even being aware of it, her resistance was going to be very short. She hoped that they were only tapping a psionic link in the ship's security system.

The Nuzeem attack came as a wave of pressure, the tolling of a great bell lost in the ocean's deep, the fire of the newly risen sun. Pam hardened her bubble around herself. For a moment, the more jarring sensations faded. Already, the pressure was sapping her strength. Three years ago, a single Nuzeem had come close to killing her. Now she faced a forest of them. She told herself that her age would make a difference. Her previous foe had attacked her in ways she couldn't really block at the time. She hoped she was right. So far, they had used only familiar methods: a lot of energy, concentrated on a few bands, without anything beyond brute force. If they tried some of the more exotic psi effects, she could still be in trouble. She could block an attack on any band she had ever encountered, but the side effects from some blocks were almost as bad as the attacks they countered.

The pressure rose more swiftly. She had stood off the great psionic machines of the TPC, but never anything like this. Her screens glowed blue, gently at first, then as brilliantly as if she stood within an enormous unfaceted sapphire. So far her shields were solid. She began to tremble. Lines of light, each as bright as an electric arc, burned their way across her inner vision. Her body screens were saturating. The Nuzeem couldn't put coherent commands through to her yet, but that moment was approaching. Pam closed her eyes, wishing she could shut out the light. From someplace she found further reserves of strength. Then she fell into a maelstrom of fire.

She found herself back in her parents' garden, holding hands with a boyfriend. "Pam," he said, "Pam, don't hide from me." He took her by the waist. "You're beautiful. All of you. Join with me." He moved to kiss her. She felt his mind press against her shields, waiting expectantly for her to lower them so they could share the moment completely. Share the moment. All she had to do was lower her screens and...

"No!" She managed to pull back. A trap! The few fellows she had dated were all non-telepaths. She had never really cared enough for any of them to share minds with them, not when she would have had to do all the work. The illusion shimmered and faded.

There was a laugh. It was Michelson, a perhaps-likable rogue who occasionally worked for the TPC. She cursed under her breath. She could feel her internal screens protect her will, but the Nuzeem could affect her memories, at least enough to draw illusions from them. It was a very low-power trick, not enough to hurt her, not enough power to affect the control unit in her lap, but enough to confuse her. The Michelson-ghost laughed again. (You see,) came his thoughts, (I. and my friends can deduce your fate. With your mind, your talents, you will never love, never marry, never have children. Your family line will end with you. You're a freak, a monster. You are doomed. We can give you peace instead. All you have to do is open your mind to us. Open your mind to the peace and solace of the grove. Open! Open!)

(We have your memories.) This was another voice, very different from the others. Was she at last hearing the Nuzeem? She had no further sources of strength to draw on. Either she was strong enough to hold them off, or she was not. (We'll tell all: You're abnormal, weird, an alien monster.) She could feel her mother's thoughts, burning with shame and embarrassment at her freak daughter. Her career was in ruins, her family name was besmirched. What could she do? What could she ever do?

No, Pam told herself. No! If the Nuzeem actually had her memories, they had far more potent ways to threaten her. They were getting through to her just on the level needed to excite nightmares. They were getting through to her, but the threats were all from her own imagination. Very deliberately, she separated herself from her unconscious mind. Her screens burned. The fire, she thought, the fire outshines the sun. She rolled on her side, aware of nothing except her shallow breathing and the Nuzeem battering at her screens.

She was lying on the floor, still clutching the override controls. Her head throbbed. Dazed, she forced herself to sit. She was so stiff. Her shields? They were locked as tight as they could be, though there didn't seem to be any pressure on them. What had happened, she asked? Fainting was not good form. How much longer did she have to hang on against the Nuzeem? Her throat was bone-dry.

She stared at the tactical display. The missiles had reached their destinations. And not recently, either; from the clock, she must have spent the better part of a day collapsed on her back.

She could remember being trapped in an endless column of flame, which burned without touching her. Then there came darkness. That must have been the end of the Nuzeem. At the time, the dark seemed to be an adequate excuse to take a nap. She didn't seem to be hurt, though she must have come very close. With a forced, conscious effort, she edged her screens down enough that she could work beyond them. The shields kept wanting to go back to maximum density. It was an interesting side effect, which she knew would go away with time.

* * * * * *

Later, her hands and Cameron's memories piloted them back towards Naseby. Mumford watched over her like a solicitous mother hen.

"Pam," he said, "you won again, old girl. If your parents hadn't made you so honest, you could be just as successful in more profitable work."

"You call this success?" she asked. "I lived through it, barely, but plenty of people didn't. I ran up another list of TPC people with private grudges against me. All I proved is that you can't break a good screen with brute force, crudely applied."

"But the force! They rolled over the ship's screens."

"No skill of application. They had about two methods for breaking screens, and didn't change when they failed. I could crack my own screens if I could handle a tiny fraction of the power they did. Well, most of Naseby is alive, you concocted an innocuous cover story for us, and Cameron's compulsion mesh won't let go of him until he returns to Choculac and confesses. I've told him who he's going to confess to. I don't think she'll be too pleased with him, either, though I'll be blamed for anything the TPC doesn't want responsibility on." She stretched and yawned.

"You...you just roll over everything in your way. Nothing even slows you down..." said Mumford.

"Me? I've been lucky. Very lucky. If I'd run into — some of the things I ran into a few years ago, before I started keeping my head down — in a different order, I'd have been stepped on. Actually, I was stepped on, more than once. I'm not all that powerful, or all that good, no matter what I did to you, the last time we met. I've just managed to be good enough, when I had to be. Of course, a sixteen-year-old with a more-than-adequate ego can believe that absolutely nothing can really stop her, even after it happens. I finally decided to let the TPC earn its pay. I just wanted to grow up. And now this. The Nuzeem here weren't wicked, just isolated, old, and afraid. The Nuzeem image of the Others matched the Naseby Hierarchy's image of the Confederation, so I couldn't possibly prove that we are friendly. They already knew the answer. Even so, killing the Nuzeem will make me a lot of enemies. Maybe even more than if I had let the Nuzeem kill the people of Naseby. The overgovernment sometimes gets very nasty with people they don't agree with, and they're a lot more dangerous than the Nuzeem were. And I know they have people who are better telepaths than I am."

"If things get too hot for you, Nemon's security forces can always replace a few dozen good men with one good woman," said Mumford. Pam's smile widened. Cameron was a fluke, not an uglier face for the Confederation. Wasn't he?

November 29, 1994

Dear Ken:

Many thanks for issue 33 of *Proper Boskonian*...it just arrived today. I still have issue 32 sitting here, waiting for attention. Thank you for your patience and understanding, and sending me issue 33 anyway, and I will try to out together a decent loc for both issues.

32...I think the misunderstanding about Joe Mayhew's "Bart and Eddy" comic has been straightened out. I still have plans for a new fanzine Real Soon Now, whenever I can scrape extra cash together. The Mayhew portfolio is wonderfill to see. Some of this I have seen; much of it, I haven't.

Both Worldcon bids looked great, and they provided the best competition for the Worldcon in some years, but San Antonio's got it, and I can hardly wait. Should be good fun, and Yvonne and I fully intend to enter the chili cook-off.

33...Evelyn Leeper provides a detailed ConAdian description...the dealers complained about the lack of communication and help coming from the convention. In fact, that was one common complaint about ConAdian, that they almost never answered their mail. Many dealers couldn't figure out the customs regs, or didn't want to be bothered with them. Some American dealers, once they got there, refused to accept anything but US currency, and then couldn't figure out why their sales were so low. The facilities were great, even though you could get lost from time to time.

A great tribute to Cyril Kornbluth in this issue. My own library of Kornbluth books is a little small...*The Syndic* and *A Mile Beyond the Moon*, plus, with Frederik Pohl, *Critical Mass*, *Wolfbane*, and *Gladiator-at-Law*. Great books, but as we often do, we laud the man after he's gone.

And now that both issues are done, I'll finish off saying it was great to meet so many more Bostonians and NESFAns at ConAdian this year. I think we'll have to give Intersection a financial pass this year, so L.A.con III is the new target for our own personal Worldcon fund. [It was nice meeting both of you too. Since I am also skipping Intersection, let's hope Evelyn Leeper writes a loooong con report. KK] Take care, and see you next issue.

Yours,
Lloyd Penney

December 7, 1994

Dear Helmuth and the gang:

Herewith comments on the commentary on ConAdian.

On the "Genre Crossing" Panel: "Heck gave as a possible genre-crossing example setting a 'Star Trek' story in the Old West." You mean like Barbara Hambly's *Here Come the Brides* crossover novel? (It comes from Mark Lenard having been the principal antagonist in that series.) [Yes. The title of the book is *Ishmael*. KK]

On the "Should SF Have Rivets?" Panel: Sir Kingsley Amis puts the detailed technical "rivets" in the Bond books as coming from the boys' book tradition, where such "rivets" were an essential part of the style. As for Brown's *Silver Tower*, somehow I never noticed the bit about the normal-g coffee cup in a microgravity environment, perhaps because I was too bothered over the space station changing from a polar orbit to an equatorial orbit without any bother. (I understand plane shifts are most difficult.)

On the "Alternate Histories" Panel: Believe it or not, *Time* Magazine had reviewed Sobel's *For Want of a Nail: If Burgoyne Had Won at Saratoga*, and favorably, too! About the only alternate history of World War Two that holds together, in my opinion, is David Downing's *The Moscow Option*, where the Axis gets bigger breaks but still loses. *Fatherland*, for example, had a change in U-boat code machines leading to a German victory over Britain. Alas, they did change the code machines about the time he said they did, the British started breaking the code again (though there were some bad patches there), and in addition the British and the U.S. were producing anti-submarine ships at a sufficient rate to give the U-boats a hard time anyhow.

On the "Designing Diseases" Panel: Well, the Writers' Guide book on poisons, *Deadly Doses*, contains a chapter on inventing a poison to fill plot needs. So the chatter about inventing a disease to fill plot needs does not seem all that far off. Still, given what Leeper said about the sloppy course of the panel, she seems to have been right to leave early.

On the "Alternate Canadas" Panel: Yes, the Norse who explored Vinland were Christian; at least the sagas mention that one of them was not, which implies that such a status was something out of the ordinary. There was a cathedral and a bishopric at Gardar, the capital of the Greenland colony.

Congratulations on getting a first-hand impression of Kornbluth to begin your Kornbluth section! And Michel hit the point with Kornbluth not reaching the audience his talents merited – though given the Futurian state of mind, one can wonder if he was not being slyly backhanding there. Nevertheless, it is one of the ironies of life that Kornbluth died the day he was going to interview for the

editorship of *F&SF*, which could have earned him that audience.

Tim Szczesuil's short Best of Kombluth's Short Fiction is thought-provoking. A couple of short notes, though. While Kombluth recycled "The Slave" into the beginning of *The Syndic*, he also recycled "The Marching Morons" into the ending of *Search the Sky*. And "The Little Black Bag" was made into a *Night Gallery* episode, not a *Twilight Zone* one.

After reading the long report by Mark R. Leeper on the Golem in all his manifestations, I was reminded that the first computer built in Israel was called "Golem 1." Gershom Winkler, trying to impart knowledge of Judaism through fiction in his book *The Golem of Prague*, sounds like he is trying to muscle in on Harry Kemelman's field, the "Rabbi Small" detective novels, except Kemelman explains the knowledge as he goes along.

Best wishes to you all.

Námaríë,
Joseph T MajorNew Year's Eve

Dear Nesfans,

I have the latest *PB* sitting here, and continue to marvel at the intricate detail Joe Mayhew puts into his work – really gorgeous stuff. Joe was part of the latest *Mimosa* collating party...and a ghood time was had by all. [At Boskone Joe gave me twelve new pieces for *PB*, and he is doing a new cover for the December issue based on an idea of his I liked. KK]

I could say I'd like to see the zine come out monthly – ah, now that you are over your coronary, I presume any schedule that pleases you and permits the publication of the material you have on hand is appropriate. Of course, selfishly, I'd like to see the zine out as frequently as possible, but I'm not the one putting in all the work. I'll take what I can get! [How about a bonus issue in only 10 weeks? More art from you can only help. KK]

Hmm, I haven't been to a Balticon in a very long time...but since I haven't been to any con in a long time (in fannish time, that is) then I guess it would have to be I haven't been to a Balticon in a *veeery* long time. I seem to recall that the last few I attended seemed to be more media and huckster in orientation, but that may be selective memory at work. At any rate, I am glad to read *Joe's* version of what happened at a *recent* Balticon. [Since I have never been to a Balticon, your memory is much better than mine. Joe wrote that piece before the convention. It was done for the program book. Joe gave it to me at Boskone 31 in 1994 with the stipulation I not use it until after Balticon. KK]

I read the ConAdian report and hope that I'll see as many nice long (and some shorter, but just as interesting in detail and anecdotes) reports about Glasgow as I have seen on Winnipeg. That is the main vicarious experience those-of-us-who-can't-make-the-trip are likely to get. I keep hoping there will be videotapes – but the closest I have come is actually ordering them from a group at *Chicon* and even getting a form postcard from them saying they did, indeed, have my order and it would be a little late. I thought Winnipeg might be a good bet – but no one has mentioned having tapes – so maybe Glasgow, [I hope so. I will not be going either. KK]

If it is possible, when you finally decide on the author(s) to be showcased in the next issue(s) – if you happen to have a bibliography, please let me see it – I may be able to *illustrate* some of them once I get a look at them and have a batch from which to select. [For next issue I have been promised a bibliography of Stanley G. Weinbaum by someone who did one for the apa. He said he wanted to enlarge it. Two other people have promised reviews of his work. I doubt I will have the material much before the deadline. For the December issue, I am planning on highlighting Henry Kuttner. If I get working on it soon, there should be no problem giving you an advance work-in-progress copy. KK]

That back cover is quite a piece – nice to know the background to it.

The *Stein* fillo on page 67 made me double-check it to be sure of the signature – Diana continues to develop her style even though this particular piece has a '93 date on it. [No good art goes to waste. That piece both was good and fit in with the story. (It is close to what the main character looks like.) Yes, Diana continues to improve. Every piece of her art in the Boskone art show sold. You may be interested that I have three pieces of your art in my files. Just waiting for the right spot to illustrate. KK]

Thanks for a healthy looking tome and to all –

May '95 be a ghood year to us all!

Sheryl Birkhead

March 28, 1995

Dear Ken,

Congratulations on a fine issue: *Proper Boskonian* 33.

The Evelyn Leeper report on ConAdian was wonderful; thorough and thoughtful. I thought I was panel-retentive. (That's "panel" with a long "a.") But Leeper is the sultana of scribes. When you go to a con and then read her report, it all comes flooding back with lush detail long forgot. An invaluable service. Friends, why suffer the heartbreak of con registration? Just leaf through Leeper.

(Also appreciate your party and business meeting squibs in between, Ken. Guess even Leeper can't be everywhere.)

The Michel article from 1939 on Kombluth was rich. Looks like fan style has thinned out a bit since Hitler was a pup.

Tim Szczesuil, Gordon Benson, Richard Newsome, and Joe Michaels on Kombluth made me feel terrible. I just haven't read enough Kombluth. Shame on me. (The capper was a great line from Tim S., talking about the story "That Share of Glory." Avoiding lame superlatives, going right to the heart of the critic/reader relationship: "If you haven't read this, I pity you.") I'll try to catch up, honest. Tim's upcoming Kombluth collection should help immensely. [*His Share of Glory* has been delayed. The book will not be out until January. This gives you plenty of time to catch up. KK]

Admittedly, I avoided the golem piece by Mark Leeper the first read round. Looked a little heavy. But I went back later and forced myself; glad I did. Very solid, and with plenty of entertainment value. Interesting take on the Wandering Jew, that this legend of a peripatetic immortal arose just to make sense of Jesus' claim that some who heard him would still be around at the Second Coming. Anyway, what's next from Leeper: "The Dybbuk in Literature"? [How about it, Mark? I would welcome the piece. KK]

Must also mention Joe Mayhew's cover, "Golem & Gollum." Recognized Gollum all right, but thought his companion was a hungover Prince Valiant. One ambivalent visual cue and I gallop off in the wrong direction. Did appreciate Joe's comic "A Trip to Balticon." Given his talent in both art and writing, maybe *Joe Mayhew* is the Kwisatz Haderach....

About publication frequency: the more the merrier, if the quality and your strength hold up, Ken. Authors to highlight: I like both Henderson and Kuttner. If Kuttner, I've promised you a piece on Kuttner's Hogben stories.

Later, how about Keith Laumer? Before his illness and his dark spirits took him down, Laumer could serve you satire and adventure straight – in the same glass. Now that's rare. Swift, for instance, couldn't. Raise your hands, all those excited by the *story* in *Gulliver's Travels*.

If you're game, Ken, put me down for a piece on *A Plague of Demons* or *The Great Time Machine Hoax*. [I will be highlighting Kuttner in the December issue. Thanks for committing yourself in writing to submit material. Any more volunteers? KK] And is Laumer long gone enough for a Neglected Authors panel next Boskone? [I do not see why not. I will pass your suggestion along. KK]

Thanks,
Bob Devney

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Boskone 33

Guest of Honor

Lois McMaster Bujold

Official Artist

Gary Ruddell

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Lois McMaster Bujold is the winner of multiple Hugo Awards, best known for her stories of the mercenary, Admiral Miles Naismith -- or are they stories about that sprig of Barrayar nobility, Lord Miles Vorkosigan? The first book about Miles was *The Warrior's Apprentice*, and the most recent was *Mirror Dance*.

Gary Ruddell is a Hugo-nominated Artist who has done cover art for fantasy and SF titles, such as Dan Simmons' *Hyperion*, Brin's Glory *Season*, *Greene's Brotherhood of the Stars*, and many others.

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