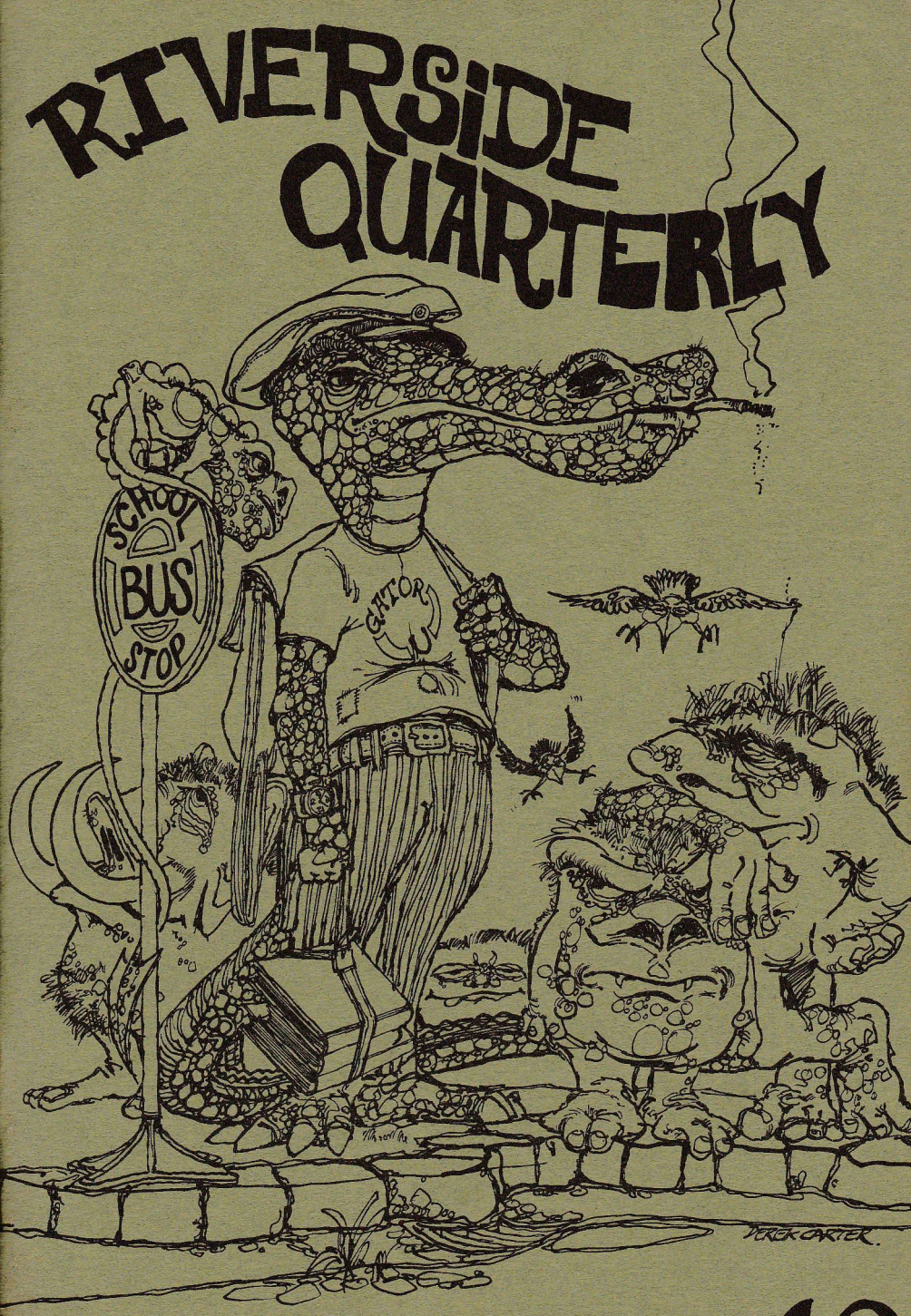
RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY



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60 CENTS

RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY

April 1974 Vol. 6, No. 2 (whole number 22)

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(Unsigned material is by the editor.)

Front Cover: Derek Carter

The number after your name on the mailing label indicates the issue (this being number 22) on which your subscription expires.

Subscription rate: $2.00 / four issues; back issues are 60¢ each.

RQ Miscellany

STUDENT ALLIGATOR

Derek Carter's cover drawing depicts your editor in his Gator status at the University of Florida, after his being released, ejected, vomited forth (choose the phrase that suits your fancy) from his job at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina. This new occupation--with the editor no longer able to balance publishing losses out of his own salary--necessitated circulating to 300 readers* an S.O.S., which in turn elicited over 80 responses in the form of renewals, donations, gift subscriptions, promises (to find new subscribers), and suggestions, including some from academics (unfamiliar with the amateur press) that "page costs" be charged to contributors. My thanks are hereby given to all those respondents for making this issue possible in '74. Dates of future issues will be determined by the remaining 700 subscribers, who should consider this as a personal appeal. To quote the last paragraph of the circular--

> I will not drop the magazine in any event, but the sooner the subscriptions, the sooner the next issue--and those to follow. A sorely-needed grant from the CCLM (Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines) failed to materialize because the RQ, being a science-fiction magazine, "does not fall within the scope of CCLM's current program"--so I'm asking readers for that help refused by the literary Establishment.

If the present reader has not obtained at least one new subscription, he or she is asked to run (not walk) out and do so.

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*Note: Excluded the first time around were 200 library subs, 250 expiring subs (who might have viewed such an appeal as bribery), and most of the 250 subs acquired the past six mohths, concerning which, see below.

AN EXISTENCE THEOREM

I now can verify that there is a Santa Claus--somewhere in the offices of Galaxy. Having bought (at the reduced fan rate) a full page ad, I was elated to see it given a privileged position on the Dec.'73 inside front cover--and was astonished to see the same ad repeated, free, at the same place in the Jan.'74 issue. These ads were mainly responsible for the new 250 noted above.

BOX-SCORE

To speak plainly, RQ needed 1,000 new subscribers, and its campaign involved: (1) getting new subs, (2) having its old subs get new subs, (3) having its new subs get still newer subs. Step one is complete, and part of step two, thanks to Galaxy and the Big Eighty; step three (and the rest of two) is up to RQ's new subscribers (and the remaining old ones).

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Science-Fiction Goes to College
Groves and Morasses of Academe

by Lloyd Biggle, Jr.

Speech to the New Orleans Nebula Awards Banquet

April 28, 1973

When I was an undergraduate university student, back in prehistoric times in the late 1940's, no fifth columnist, no subversive element, no organized or disorganized groups of radicals ever linked the two words "science" and "fiction" on that campus. The English major's Bible, A Handbook to Literature, by Thrall and Hibbard--a very useful book--acknowledged the existence of the mystery story but had no entry for science-fiction. The dictionary in use in the English classes, the 5th edition of Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, had no entry for science-fiction. The textbook for the literature of the Victorian Age made this intriguing statement about H. G. Wells: "His early novels show the romantic effects of science." Arthur Conan Doyle's important science-fiction novel, The Lost Continent, was not even included in the list of his works.

This was the state of affairs on that university campus in the late 1940's. I never heard of science-fiction until I discovered it myself after I had become a selling writer.

The Handbook to Literature that I just mentioned carries a year-by-year summary of pivotal literary events, and for the year 1933, the British listing includes works by W. H. Auden, W. B. Yeats, J. C. Powys, Osbert Sitwell, and Virginia Woolf. I wonder how many of you notice a significant omission from that list, a trivial little novel by Aldous Huxley entitled, Brave New World. The brave old academic world had not even heard of it in the 1940's; in this year 1973, anything purporting to be a literary reference work for college students that didn't mention Brave New World would get the author lynched, or at least demoted.

There's been a revolution, and it has happened so recently, and so suddenly, that those of us who were caught looking the other way are astonished to find that our image has been altered drastically without our knowing it. We are somewhat in the position of a folk character whom I describe in my novel, The Light that Never Was. "Paafz was a cowardly little thief, filthy in person and morals, and so stupid that he was invariably caught within minutes, severely beaten, and booted into the world to steal again because no jailer would accept such a scruffy client. Then, according to the legend, a miracle orrurred: Paafz was instantaneously transformed into a pillar of respectability and a man of substance because he managed to steal something successfully."

Without even trying we have managed to steal something successfully, and we have achieved instantaneous respectability.

The first question we must ask ourselves is, "Do we want it?"

I am reminded of an advertisement that had wide currency a few years ago. It showed a group of high school girls sitting around a table, and the caption said, "Coca Cola belongs."

Now we have a university campus ad that says, "Science-fiction belongs." Before we are overcome with the emotional thrill of looking into a university course catalogue--perhaps even Harvard or Yale--and finding that English Literature 157 is us, we ought to take a careful look and see what it is that we belong to.

One of the universities that discovered an interest in science-fiction in the late 1960's--that is, before the big bandwagon boom--was Bowling Green University, through its Center for the Study of Popular Culture. The university also sponsors the Bowling Green University Popular Press, which publishes books in this field, and a periodical, Journal of Popular Culture, which is the official publication of the Popular Culture Association.

"Popular culture" sounds harmless until you try to define it, and if you insist on trying I'll warn you that a dictionary is no help. The only way to find out what the term means is to observe how the missionaries of this movement are using it.

I regret to inform you that you just missed one of the cultural, social, and intellectual events of the year, which took place only a couple of weeks ago in Indianapolis, Indiana (April 13-15, 1973). That was the Third National Meeting of this Popular Culture Association. Through some dramatic miscalculation the organization keeps me on its mailing list, which is a little like the CIA routing its interoffice memos through the Soviet Embassy, so I am able to report to you on some of the thrilling events that you missed:

A meeting of the Tennessee Valley Old Time Fiddlers' Association.

A stirring session on Images of Women in Advertising, with scholarly papers on such subjects as, "The Uses of Obesity in Advertising," "Women's Bodies in Advertising," and "Women, the Cleanliness Syndrome, and the Media."

A discussion of The Sex Role Formula in Children's Literature, including a scholarly paper entitled, "What Boys and Girls Learn about Men and Women from Sesame Street."

A discussion of Men in a Sexist Society, which included a paper entitled, "The Androgynous Orchid and the Homophilial Relationship in the Nero Wolfe Tales of Rex Stout."

And then there was an enthralling hour and a half session on the subject, Culture and the Beer Can. It only goes without saying that such a highly specialized topic can't be handled by university professors without outside assistance, so this discussion was presented in cooperation with the Beer Can Collectors of America.

Also on the program was our own Miss Popular Culture of 1973. Joanna Russ. Excuse me, I'd better make that Ms. Popular Culture. Joanna Russ delivered a paper entitled, "Gothics--Somebody's Trying to Kill Me." She may be right.

And of course there was a session devoted to Science-Fiction and Modern Fantasy, with another paper by Joanna Russ, "The Subjunctivity of Science-Fiction," and papers entitled "Edgar Rice Burroughs' Heroes as Primitives," and "The Science-Fiction Hero as Superman and Scientist."

I want to digress here and consider this Popular Culture Association as a social phenomenon, because it epitomizes much that is going to be true about the academic approach to science-fiction. University faculty members have been plagued for decades by the notion on the part of university administrations that the ability to teach is directly reflected in an ability to write and publish scholarly books and articles and to write learned papers that can be read to resounding applause at gatherings of scholars. Probably you've heard the phrase, Publish or Perish. The concept is of course balderdash, but the universities had it and have it. One of our science-fiction writers who teaches at a university recently told me that he isn't writing science-fiction these days because the university has delivered itself of an ultimatum that he has to publish articles in his field of specialization.

So we have a situation where huge numbers of college and university faculty members who have neither the talent nor the inclination for scholarship are required to practice it because their promotions, their raises in salary, their tenure--in short, their jobs--depend on it.

The obvious solution would be to convince university administrations that it is more important that their faculty members be competent teachers than lousy scholars. The Popular Culture Association has taken a giant step toward an entirely different solution. The members of this organization, instead of directing their scholarly activities, however feeble, at the significant issues of the day in their respective academic disciplines, can prepare papers on such learned subjects as beer can collecting, or--these are actual titles of papers scheduled for delivery at that Third National Meeting:

"The Big O: A Study of Orgasm Fantasy in Dr. Reuben, Dear Abby, and Mary Self-Worth,"

"Amnesia, Illegitimacy and the Brain Transplant; or, The Sociology of the Soap Opera,"

"Supermodifieds, Supershow: A Study of the Socio-Cultural Matrix of Supermodified Automobile Racing,"

"The Wizard of Id: A Psycho-Political Interpretation."

I have myself spent uncounted hours in front of microfilm readers, in the small, stiffling rooms that libraries think suitable for such apparatus, to the considerable detriment of my eyesight, pondering such problems as whether a certain indecipherable mark was part of the text, or a blemish on the film, or something left by a 15th century monk with dirty hands, or a point where ink had eaten through the paper from the overleaf, and I will not disguise my envy of the scholar who is able to do his research in the pleasant surroundings of the breakfast table while reading comics in the morning paper.

These were research papers by university professors and graduate students, presented at a meeting of a professional association. It was a gathering of tremendous scope. Sessions were run simultaneously at perhaps a dozen different locations from morning until night for three days. No better evidence is required of the overwhelming need for a pseudo-scholarly organization where non-scholars can collect Brownie points for scholarship without doing any.

But obviously these people are not studying popular culture, any more than the passengers on a roller coaster are studying physics. They are there for the ride, for the good time, for the entertainment, and their titles are more indicative of the Art Buchwald school of journalism than academic scholarship. They are not studying popular culture: they are merely poking fun at it.

And why not? You may not be aware that when college professors attend meetings of professional associations, especially one whose aim is the elevation of their professional competence, their expenses frequently are paid by their institutions. They had a lovely all-expenses paid three-day vacation in sunny Indianapolis, they had a lot of fun exploring esoteric subjects such as beer can collecting, and those who delivered papers will list the titles and the occasion in their files of academic credentials and their universities will include them in the lists they publish at the end of the year of faculty members who have won awards and published books and articles and made speeches and otherwise distinguished themselves; and other than in our roles as the outraged taxpayers who have to finance this nonsense, I suppose it really is none of our business, except that the Popular Culture Association has made us a subject of these festivities.

The Popular Culture Association has condescended to take an occasional look at science-fiction provided that it can equate it with beer can collecting. I know not what course others may take, but I resent being equated with beer can collecting.

Further, I vehemently deny that serious science-fiction is a "popular culture." It is neither popular in the sense of appealing to the public at large, nor in the sense of being crude, or simple, or easy to understand, nor in the sense of any other commonly accepted definition of that word. It does in fact have a growing but limited and highly select audience.

So what are we doing at a meeting of the Popular Culture Association? I asked Ray Browne, Director of the Center for the Study of Popular Culture, what he thought popular culture was, and he replied that it was anything he wanted it to be.[1]

This is, unfortunately, one side of the coin when science-fiction goes to college. It is equated with beer can collecting, the uses of obesity in advertising, orgasm fantasy in Dear Abby, and other tongue-in-cheek diversions.

But as is appropriate to anything concerning science-fiction, this coin is many-sided. Only last month I received an announcement of a new publication from the Department of English of Indiana State University: Science-Fiction Studies (henceforth to be known in scholarly bibliographical circles as SFS), a semi-annual journal "devoted primarily to substantial articles of a critical, theoretical, historical, or bibliographical nature, and also containing a survey of scholarship in the SF field." One of the articles scheduled for Volume I, Number 1, is "A Study of Clarke's Childhood's End." This article is described in the prospectus as "the first substantial article to bring the critical apparatus of modern scholarship fully to bear on a representative specimen of the popular science fiction novel."

I will pass over the probable reaction of any author who hears his novel referred to as a "specimen."

The first comment I would make is that these scholars have got to clean up their terminology and start using words at least as carefully as they expect us to use them. The second is that they really ought to acquire some rudimentary knowledge of science fiction before they start bring the critical apparatus of modern literary scholarship fully to bear on it. I'm referring to the words "popular" and "representative specimen" when applied to Childhood's End.

On this side of the coin, it is just possible that they are taking us too seriously. It has not happened often in the history of the arts that there has been a scholarly interest in a contemporary art. One reason undoubtedly is because in the study of many aspects of an art, history is an indispensable tool. The verdicts even of contemporary criticism frequently are important only for their curiosity value. As for scholarship, a paleontologist may study the cow in his barn for a better understanding of some fossilized bones of the cow's ancestors, but to direct the full force of paleontological research at a contemporary cow would be rather a squandering of scholarly energy. I have the feeling that this is what Science-Fiction Studies intends, and I wonder how many of the science-fiction authors present really want the whole critical apparatus of modern scholarship brought fully to bear on their work.

Obviously we are caught between the crushes of being taken too seriously and not being taken seriously enough. If there is a reasonable compromise to this problem, we can accept with absolute confidence that the professors are not going to help us find it.

Let's weigh this fact carefully before we lose all restraint in the jubilation we feel because the academic community has condescended to notice us. The professors are not writing papers about science-fiction and teaching it to give a boost to a noble but tragically neglected branch of literature. Whatever the professors are doing, they are doing to help themselves. When they apply the full weight of modern scholarship to a work of science-fiction, their first intention is to demonstrate what brilliant scholars they are. This should not surprise us; a lot of book reviewers have been working the same technique for years. I made a back-of-the-hand comment about this to the professor who is in charge of an academic literary journal, and he answered, "Perhaps it is necessarily true that we murder to dissect. But we all have to make a living some way."

Whatever the motive for what the academic community is doing, how well it is doing it is a matter of our legitimate concern. As a group, how good are university professors in matters of scholarship and literary judgement?

Consider this interest in popular culture that is sweeping many of the nation's colleges and universities. The question I would raise is this: since popular culture went almost unnoticed on the academic scene until the late 1960's, why did it take these brilliant scholars so long to figure out that this kind of thing has both a contemporary and a historical value? The most dim-witted university professor would be aware that even a laundry ticket on papyrus from the First Egyptian Dynasty would be priceless, but none of them considered that what is now being called popular culture will be just as valuable and interesting to future scholars studying our civilization. That is, they didn't consider it until popular culture became a fad. Then a great many universities began forming popular culture collections. When enough people told them it was important, they began to believe it.

I point back to something I mentioned at the beginning, the fact that in the 1940's the academic community still was unaware that Brave New World was an important novel. It was waiting for someone to tell it so.

A relatively small percentage of English professors ever are required to make an original literary judgement. With most of the literary material with which they are concerned, history has done the judging for them, so they are able to write theses and dissertations and articles concerning such subjects as how much better Shakespeare was than his contemporary playwrights Chapman and Webster, or how much better a novelist Dickens was than his contemporary Mrs. Gaskell, and these are not topics upon which an English professor can easily go astray.

What happens, then, when the professors are forced to judge new writing, whether in scholarly articles, or in the teaching of literature courses that have to do with contemporary fiction, or in creative writing classes?

I recently read a book review in the Detroit Free Press (March 4, 1973, p. 5-D) concerning a collection of stories, A North American Education, by Clark Blaise. The review, by Brian D. Boyer, illustrates this problem.

> Once a good long time ago when I was a poet at the University of Iowa's redoubtable writers' workshop I learned that there were two kinds of people: writers and academics. Both drank too much and both had high-strung, pampered emotions, but the writers produced and the academics commented on it. The academics I'm talking about were all in the English department.
>
> Anyway, there developed a tremendous strain between the writers and the English teachers because they dealt with the same material--words--but in different ways. Sometimes--frequently, in fact--they would engage in fisticuffs and the writers would beat the hell out of the English teachers. Writers, like black children nowadays in public schools, were considered to have bigger muscles because they were so close to life in the streets.

Boyer goes on to comment on things he likes in the stories, and then he says,

> But there are bad aspects to these stories, which I am pretty sure are connected somehow to that writer-and-English system argument they used to have at the University of Iowa. The point of most of the stories is understated, like,"...and then the hero didn't feel anything anymore," and you are supposed to discover what the whole thing is about. English teachers teach people to do stuff like that. Writers generally want to come right out and say what happened.
>
> What I think happened was that Blaise was a writer who stayed too long in the universities and got the stuffings beaten out of him by the English teachers.

What this means, in part, anyway, is that English teachers like stories that provide raw materials for the sort of things they like to teach. This is not a recent problem. Only a few days ago I happened onto the anguished complaint of a 16th century writer. The terminology is different, but the problem is essentially the same.

> They are wrong, those stupid pedants of our days, who exclude from the number of poets those who do not use words or metaphors conformable to, or whose principles are not in union with, Homer and Virgil...They are no other than worms, that know not how to do anything well, but are born only to gnaw and befoul the studies and labors of others.
>
> (Quoted in Dan Levin, Spinoza (New York: Weybringt and Talley, 1970), p. 127.

This was Giordano Bruno, who later was burned at the stake. These days the academic establishment is less powerful--I hope.

The English teachers' viewpoint is perfectly understandable, and the principle has many ramifications. At one stage in my chequered career I wrote programme notes for concerts. If a composer did a set of variations on a theme whose notes spelled his mother-in-law's middle name backward, this gave me something to write about, and I did so enthusiastically, even though the music was deplorably bad. Certain works of music, or art, or literature are much easier to discuss, or analyze, or teach than others. On the level on which most teachers of music appreciation operate, it is far simpler to present a Strauss tone poem, Don Juan or Til Eulenspiegel, for example, than a Bach fugue. Reviewers may like the books of some authors simply because they enjoy writing reviews about them. Sometimes this has nothing whatsoever to do with the books. An author who supported himself while writing his book by wrestling alligators will receive more attention from some reviewers than an incomparably better author who did nothing but sit in a room and write.

English professors are human beings on this same order. They would rather teach, and write scholarly articles about, books that readily serve as props that enable them to demonstrate what brilliant teachers and scholars they are. Unfortunately, the qualities that best serve their purpose are unlikely to be the qualities that produce the best literature.

From our point of view, now that the professors have discovered us--and by that I mean that we have been brought to their attention by someone telling them that science-fiction is important--there is a very real danger that they will attempt to make science-fiction over in their own image just to make it more readily adaptable to their teaching and scholarly commentary.

The horror stories about university courses in science-fiction are piling up rapidly. SFWA member Joan Holly saw a science-fiction course listed among adult evening education courses offered by Michigan State University, so she happily went down and enrolled, and the course was spectacularly bad in all aspects. The approach was one fairly common in university literature classes --the professor's concern was not with the book so much as with using that book as a tool to psychoanalyze the author. This is a favourite approach with many English professors, and it works in this way.

Suppose a male science-fiction author, with the investment of considerable time and originality, were to describe a matriarchal society on a distant planet. The professor will not be concerned with how well the society is described, or whether it is in fact made vivid and believable, or how vital a function it plays in the development of the story. What interests him is in finding out what shock the author may have experienced in his youth that would lead him to reject his masculinity and indulge in these sick dreams of matriarchy. The fact that the author's other forty-nine books concern free love and polygamy won't be considered relevant because the professor won't have read any of the author's other books.

One title studied in the Michigan State University course was Alfred Bester's The Demolished Man, and during the class discussion a student said, "I don't understand all this ESP business. What's ESP, anyway?" The professor answered, "See--you've asked a question. That's what science-fiction does for you." And changed the subject.

At that point Joan withdrew from the course while she still could get some of her tuition refunded.

There are good and bad writers; there are good and bad English professors. Some of my best friends are good and bad English professors. One English professor, on hearing my profane reaction to such outrages, laughed and said, "But it's like the California mountains. Once the tourists have discovered them, they'll never be undiscovered again."

It's a frightening thought, but the professors are not going to undiscover science-fiction very soon, and it will do us no good to stand around screaming the message that the anonymous wag wrote on the blackboard at the Secondary Universe Conference:

> Get science fiction out of the classroom and back in the gutter where it belongs.

But there are alternatives. We can pretend to be scholars ourselves, and write pretend scholarly papers for their pretend scholarly journals and conferences. If you have bottled up somewhere deep inside you a lecture on "The Subjunctivity of Science-Fiction," and you think you'd feel better if you got it out, you're undoubtedly right. You won't have as much fun as the professors at those gatherings, because you'll be paying your own expenses, but if you think you'd enjoy that sort of thing, go right ahead.

One word of caution. Don't--repeat, do not--expect to give those professors the kind of broad, meaningful, informative discussion of science-fiction that they so desperately need to hear. They won't be interested. So that you'll be prepared with the kind of material that will interest them, I have a few suggested titles here for academic speeches about science-fiction. If any of you want to take notes, go right ahead. Here are speeches guaranteed to pack the house at any scholarly conference:

"The Dear Abby Syndrome in the Letter Columns of John W. Campbell,"

"The Etymological Derivation of the Word Grock and Other Mysteries; or, Typographical Errors in the Works of Robert A. Heinlein,"

"Sex and Superstition in Isaac Asimov's Three Laws of Robotics,"

"Strange Bedfellows: A Comparison of the Literary Styles of Henry Kuttner and Lewis Padget,"

"What Men and Women Learn about Boys and Girls from Childhood's End,"

"The Blunted Phallic Symbol: or, Women's Lib and the Nebula Trophy."

The only rule is not to take this kind of thing too seriously. Once you do that you may see what an ass you're making of yourself, and then it won't be fun any longer.

Another alternative is to become a professor yourself. If you can't beat them, join them. A growing number of science-fiction writers have done this. It may be harmless, but it is nevertheless a situation to be watched cautiously. Whatever the art, when one of its practitioners becomes a professor, he is in grave danger of working first and foremost to please other professors. This has happened in modern music with tragic consequences. The vast majority of serious composers in this country are college or university professors, where their primary concern is the teaching of young composers, who in turn will become college or university professors teaching other young composers. Having a composer on the faculty is an important status symbol for an academic instituion, and it provides a very good life for a composer--he receives a regular, generous cheque for composing when he feels like it and teaching ten or twelve hours a week, and his compositions are performed on the campus where he teaches, to the applause of his own students and other professors. As a result, modern classical music has become completely inbred. It exists in an ivory tower vacuum without a real audience. Something similar has happened with modern poetry.[2] If it ever happens that having a science-fiction writer in residence becomes a university status symbol, and writers write only to please their students and fellow professors, this literary medium, too, will become sterile.

Though I run the grave risk of seeming to contradict everything I have said, I want you to know that I am not offering an unqualified condemnation of the academic interest in science-fiction. There are genuine scholars who will take the trouble to ground themselves adequately in science-fiction before they write about it. They will handle our work with perception, and we can learn much from them. There will be English professors who not only are excellent teachers, but who grew up loving science-fiction, and one splendid result of the science-fiction fad is that such teachers can bring their interest above ground and teach formal science-fiction courses, and there will be much that we can learn from them.

On both counts, the quantity of excellence will be pathetically low, but that shouldn't surprise us. For years we have discussed Sturgeon's Law, that 90% of all science-fiction is crud, and this is the wrong time to be overlooking the corollary, that 90% of everything is crud. This means that 90% of the teaching, and 90% of the scholarship, and 90% of the speeches, including this one, will range in quality from the pathetically bad to the drearily competent.

Let us embrace excellence when we find it, and rise up in justified indignation when confronted with stupidity, wherever we find it, and let us not be intimidated by stupidity merely because it is signed with a Ph. D.

Above all, let us be ourselves. Remember--we didn't call them, they called us.

POST-MORTEM ADDENDA

1) Anthropologically speaking, he is of course entirely correct. Anthropologists have been trying to define "culture" ever since they figured out that culture was what they were studying, and they now have arrived at a definition somewhat like this one from The American Heritage Dictionary: "The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought characteristic of a community or population." In other words, it's anything they want it to be. Whether or not the subjects cited above from the Popular Culture Association's Third National Meeting are appropriate or potentially rewarding subjects for scholarly research is a valid question you will not hear raised at a meeting of the Popular Culture Association.

2) I'd rather not get involved in a discussion of whether composers and poets retreated to the campus because they had lost their audiences and had to earn a living some way; or whether they lost their audiences as a result of retreating to the campus. There is possibly an important sociological question here and I would refer it to the Popular Culture Association for investigation if I didn't know that the organization is much too preoccupied at the moment with beer can collecting to take on additional research projects.

Antique Axemanship: Hardboiled Cliché

by

S.C. Fredericks

(Indiana University)

Harry Harrison and Leon Stover, Stonehenge: A Novel, New York: Scribners, 1972.

Stonehenge is a blood-and-guts saga of imaginary characters and events that led to the construction of the world's most famous--and mystifying--magalith. Our story begins in the year 1473 B.C. when Perimedes, king of Mycenae and warlord of the Argolid, is informed of twin disasters: loss of his kingdom's tin mine on the Island of the Yerni and capture of his son, Ason, by the men of Atlantis, his bitter enemies. From here, the story proceeds to relate the gory melodrama of Ason and his comrades-in-arms, the Egyptian architect, Inteb, and Aias of Byblos, a scar-faced old boxer. They escape from Atlantis during a volcanic eruption, acquire a ship and crew, and make a hazardous return to the Island of the Yerni where Ason intends to restore the mine because only by means of its metal can Mycenaean warriors be outfitted with bronze armour and prosecute the war against Atlantis. To insure the safety of the mine and the flow of metal to Mycenae, Ason has to unite the quarreling Yerni tribes and fend off all sort of foes, both native and foreign: traitors among the Yerni, a Trojan spy called the "Dark One," and Themis, son of the king of Atlantis. For a time Ason's plans succeed and Inteb constructs the great sarsen circle of Stonehenge to symbolize the "imperial" achievement. Yet the forces of catastrophe win out in the end: the Atlanteans destroy Ason and wreck his unification of the tribes just before the final great volcanic blast at Thera in 1470 brings Atlantis itself to ruin. The Mycenaeans survive the cataclysm, however, and Ason has left a son; and, of course, there is always the lonely monument that will remain both a mystery and inspiration for the primitive natives of the island through all the dark times that must follow.

First it is important to set the issue of literary relationships aright because the novel is neither science-fiction nor fantasy. It scrupulously avoids any non-empirical atmosphere, creates no imaginary world, avoids magical and supernatural forces, and includes nothing that was not actually at the intellectual or technological disposal of ancient man in Neolithic or Bronze Age cultures.

Clearly the authors have avoided fantasy and selected a "realistic" framework with the intention of asserting this fictional narrative as at least a factual possibility; as a fiction that somehow offers an hypothesis on the origin of Stonehenge, and therefore speaks for scientific truth in novelistic terms.[1] The book may consequently be regarded as a literary experiment which tries to bridge the tension between its fictional and non-fictional elements, which attempts at one and the same time to be a plausible account of the building of Stonehenge and a vivid story interesting in its own right. For this reason, I must deal the the book in two discrete arguments: the first on the novel as a work of imaginative fiction; the second on the anthropological and archaeological material in it.

Strictly as a type of fiction, the novel demonstrates the closest affinities with "adventure" literature of authors like H. Rider Haggard, Edgar Rice Burroughs, and Edison Marshall. The last name seems especially appropriate for the resemblance between the racy violence of The Viking and Harry Harrison's "hardboiled" style. On the other hand, Haggard is equally important as the one writer who put the "romance of archaeology" on the literary map, though it must be admitted he never permitted non-fictional considerations to get in the way of his telling an exciting story and no one takes the archaeological material in She or King Solomon's Mines seriously outside the contexts of the stories themselves.

Let us call the plot "Sword and Sorcery without the Sorcery" and we will not be too inaccurate. Every page fairly crackles with the hewing of limbs and the bashing of skulls, and I assume the Mycenaean bronze swords and the Yerni stone-axes have little mileage left in them when at last we've managed to get the monument raised. This alleged narrative is, in fact, a remorseless catalogue of horrors: we are treated to three decapitations, one human barbeque, sundry massacres, a boar-hunt, a dogfight, petty bragging, bullying, and brawling at almost every turn, spitting and dung-flinging to satiety, and countless single combats to the death, no quarter given. And must every act of love-making be described as mutual assault-and-battery? I assume, for example, that the puerile violence-for-violence's-sake style is the following "sexy" passage is obvious to every reader:

> Down in the mud, on the ground, just as they did it in the spring, falling violently on top of her, pressing his body hard against hers until he penetrated her deeply and she screamed with pain and something greater.
>
> Thrusting deep as he would thrust a sword into a man's vitals.
>
> Taking her as he would take this Island of the Yerni. He could not be stopped.
>
> Laughing into the roar of the falling rain, not hearing her moans or feeling her nails on his back or her teeth closed in his flesh.
>
> Zeus hurled his lightning across the sky and the thunder boomed and rolled loud enough to stop the ears of anyone not already deaf.
>
> (p. 73; more of the same on pp. 101 and 128)

Or how about this for a description of Aias?:

> ...the nose had been broken, apparently many times; one eye was almost closed by scar tissue; both ears had been torn away, and part of the lower lip so that the man's clamped teeth peeked through. His hair was grey and cropped short enough to reveal even more scars.
>
> (p. 29; cf. p. 149 for the gruesome description of Atroclus' mutilated body)

And don't miss this quick retort aimed by Ason at the Dark One:

> "You lie to me, great ball of grease from the rotting walls of Troy. I know the people of your city, and their tongues are as twisted as a snake's spine, until the truth is harder to speak than the lies that fall from your painted lips as rain falls from the clouds."
>
> (p. 138)

Finally, the entire description of the erection of the megaliths in Part Four is pure Hollywood. The scene is full of grunting, swearing, sweating barbarians and replete with near-misses and bodies getting crushed under the huge stones. As if we require over-indulging in the "man against the elements" theme in order to be convinced that the actual rearing of the monument was one of the most impressive feats of ancient engineering. I believe the achievement of Stonehenge is exciting enough without the grisly time loss accidents the authors have inserted to romanticize the construction.[3]

I must therefore conclude that this particular story is a literary cliché, and I offer the following passage from A.O. Lovejoy's famous work on civilized man's nostalgia for the simple life because it so perfectly characterizes the viewpoint adopted by Harrison and Stover toward the "primitive" cultures they describe.[4]

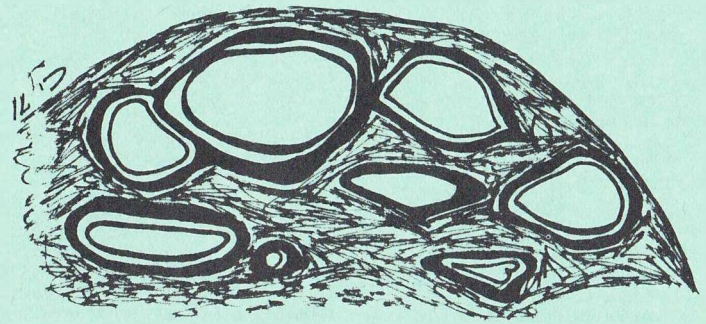
> The civilized man, constrasting the mode of life of his age with that of a less civilized people or epoch, will obviously find that the two differ in two opposite respects. The existence of primitive men, as it has usually been conceived, is both easier and harder than that of the civilized. It is easier precisely <u>because</u> it is (or has, in part erroneously, been imagined to be) simpler; it is less burdened with apparatus and (as has been supposed) with a multitude of restrictive rules and regulations and conventionalities. The individual in primitive society has often--by those who have known little of the complexity and terrible force of primitive <u>tabus</u>--been pictured as relatively exempt from constraint by the social group, more free to do as he pleases...
>
> On the other hand, the life of many savage peoples, and those the best known throughout the greater part of European history, is manifestly in certain respects, or when regarded in a certain light, harder than that of civilized mankind--at least of the more prosperous portion of it. It is, that is to say, characterized by a greater degree of physical hardship; if happier on the whole, it has fewer "enjoyments," and fewer "goods" in the economic sense. It is, in short, a life of extreme poverty measured by the standards of civilization; and it has often been supposed to be so because fewer desires existed in the savage bosom. He wanted less, and therefore knew how to be content with little; he was inured to hardship, and therefore bore it courageously and cheerfully.

Consequently, this novel does not provide us with an authentic reconstruction of the culture and psychology of ancient man but just another Hollywood showcase of rutting savages.[5] The entire story is simple and brutal, and Ason's heroics are accomplished in a single-handed, single-minded, and humourless fashion to the degree that both the plot and characterization are thoroughly one-dimensional. Our very first glance at Ason's thoughts (p. 31) can serve as a microcosm of this savage world:

> ...it was the battle he lusted after. There was no thought of defeat--or rather there was always the thought of death. It was not to be feared or welcomed but was eternally there. You killed the man who fought you. If you wounded him deeply he would die in any case so it was only right to finish the battle that had been started. When two men fought one died. Sometimes both died.[6] The weapon was of no importance. The battle was.

What we know of archaic man from his religion, art, architecture, and literature precludes the impossibly brutal and simple-minded picture offered by Harrison and Stover.[7] Stone-age man acquired his name from the material limitations in his tools and weapons, not from the hardness of his heart. The entire conception of ancient man in this novel is wrong because the prehistoric world is described as an arena for unlikely one-man heroics, where the environment (either natural or social) is so harsh and savage that civilization has lost all meaning and all the races--Yerni, Mycenaean, and Atlantean--are equally "primitive," warlike, and cruel. All we can see are successive levels of barbarity that deprive men of their humanity and convert them into snarling, howling beasts. Their idea of wit is to let fly at another person with excrement, of a holiday to beat their wives, of self-fulfilment to disembowel an old enemy.

What this novel exploits is the current taste for carnography in our films and literature. The most arbitrarily irrational and murderous of human impulses, especially the need for vengeance that is so characteristic of Ason throughout the story, are taken as the definition of heroism, that is, of human nature unhampered by the stifling restrictions of civilization. We have seen this brand of pseudo-heroism often enough in the adolescent antics of James Bond, Matt Helm, and Mike Hammer.



Many readers will be interested in the speculations about Atlantis and Stonehenge--and (more intriguing still) the connexion between the two. To entice us even further, then, the authors have appended an Afterword and a list of Selected Readings. Of the latter it may be said very simply that it provides a valuable guide to further serious reading on a whole range of subjects that the novel touches on, and as well it serves as a "documentation" of the book's non-fictional content. I use the term "non-fictional" rather than "factual" advisedly because <u>Stonehenge</u> is based on scholarly conjecture and theory, not a single iota of which is beyond reasonable dispute.

But I do have serious objections to the Afterword because it pretentiously accretes one conjecture and hypothesis on another and prescribes them flatly as <u>facts</u> commonly accepted among anthropologists and archaeologists. Such a tone of authority is just rhetoric, designed to convince readers to take the story more seriously as a plausible account and, <u>a fortiori</u>, as a historical novel. I therefore offer the caution that the scholarship in <u>Stonehenge</u> is thoroughly derivative. I am willing to grant that the authors have followed adequate authorities, but to hunt and peck in secondary sources is to accomplish no more than to elaborate a previous conjecture.

To explain the various hypotheses that appear in the novel, I should begin with the identification of Plato's Atlantis as an Aegean island empire (and not one outside the Pillars of Hercules where the philosopher located it), and designated[8] specifically as Minoan Crete in J.V. Luce's The End of Atlantis or[9] nearby Thera (the modern Santorini) in A.G. Galanopoulos' Atlantis. Fundamentally the idea in both of these recent books is to connect Plato's account of the end of Atlantis with the eruption of the volcano at Thera[10] which is believed to have occurred between 1620 and 1470 B.C. The theory is that this cataclysmic eruption not only destroyed Thera itself but severely damaged other islands in the Aegean area, especially Minoan Crete. The immediate effect of tidal waves and long term damage from ash deposits covering the cities and fields combined to end the Minoan sea-empire and to usher in the supremacy of the Myceneans who inhabited the distant mainland of Greece and so avoided the worst of the disaster.

Dating the volcanic eruption and postulating its effect on the Aegean islands is respectable theory, but it is a dubious step to connect it with Plato's description of Atlantis which appears in two different dialogues, a shorter but complete account in the Timaeus (20d-27a) and a longer one, which breaks off in the middle, in the Critias (108c--end), a[11] work left unfinished by the author himself. If there is a kernel of historical truth in this story --as we now universally admit there is about Troy in Homer's Iliad --it arrives third hand (from the Egyptian priests at Sais, who read it off a stele to Solon, an Athenian politician on tour there in the early sixth century, whose account may have reached Plato by oral tradition several generations later in the mid-fourth century, though the speaker in both dialogues is the philosopher's relative, Critias). In any case, Atlantis is neither a direct nor popular Greek legend[12] like the Trojan War, but an exotic byway unique to Plato.

The story of Atlantis is also a mythos or "fable" and is comparable in purpose and significance to the fables that appear throughout the dialogues of Plato's middle and[13] later periods in such works as Republic, Symposium, and Politicus. Hence, although Atlantis enjoys a unique popularity--if not sacrosanctity--among modern Atlantis-buffs, for Platonic scholars it is just one among many such myths that Plato inserts into his dialogues. Of itself the story combines variants of two well attested mythological motifs that reach as far back as the early Bronze Age: the description of a human paradise (and in its politicized form, as here, we might prefer to call it a Utopia), followed by its destruction by divine agency, whether directly or indirectly. The two most prevelant forms of this destruction are flood and fire (sometimes referred[14] to technically as the deluge-myth and the conflagration-myth), and the floods and earthquakes that submerge Atlantis are reminiscences of both forms of the world-catastrophe. As J.A. Stewart wrote in 1905:

> The doctrine of periodical terrestrial "catastrophes," universal or local, leaving on each occasion a few scattered survivors to build up society afresh, mythologically explained in the Politicus, was part of the "science" of Plato's day...[15]

Consequently, a reading of all the Platonic myths, instead of concentrating on Atlantis in Timaeus and Critias (as if they exist in a vacuum), plus a knowledge of the mythological precedents, will dispose of even the slightest of non-fictional elements in the story of Atlantis. Plato has merely revived an old myth--variants of which he even uses in other dialogues. We must not understand it literally any more than we would with other myths that describe the loss of paradise.

We should at last turn to Stonehenge itself. Attributing a "Mycenaean" significance or inspiration to the sarsen monoliths is not a new idea (though taking the plunge and dragging in Atlantis is); one can find the notion in standard authorities like Glyn Daniel[16] and R.J.C. Atkinson (op. cit., 165). It is based on the artistically superior, if not unique, architecture of Stonehenge, for which the only satisfactory parallels are believed to be at Mycenae; and on the carvings of axe-blades and daggers on the surfaces of the sarsen stones,[17] again the only respectable parallels being Mycenaean.

These factors led R.J.C. Atkinson to suppose, as pure speculation, that the most monumental phrase of the site, the sarsen ring and the trilithons, was due to some short-term concentration of political power in the hands of one man, some great king or leader, whether native or foreign, because only the will of one lone man would provide the conditions necessary for so massive an undertaking (op. cit., 166-7). This hypothesis is, of course, fundamental to the plot of Stonehenge.

One indication that the authors are hoaxing the casual reader is their use of the name "Druids" for the Yerni medicine-men. The Druids were, of course, a Celtic priesthood and had no association with Stonehenge at this early date since they made their appearance, along with the other Celts, only after 500 B.C.[18] But since the popular imagination has long[19] associated Druidical practices with the mysteries of Stonehenge, Druids, like the magical name of Atlantis, are rhetorical requirements, even though this means the Celts have made their appearance in Britain fully a millenium too early.

Finally, in two broad respects the story told by Stover and Harrison differs from standard scholarship. In the first place, we see only one brief moment in the history of the site, though it is the conclusion of recent archaeologists that there have been no less than five major stages of construction since the late Third Millenium. Our story, however, tells us only a fragment of the story about the sarsens themselves. For that reason alone the novel is inadequate in providing us with a feeling of the growth of the site. In the second place, there simply is not enough religion or religious significance worked into the story. Stonehenge ought to be a tale analogous to the building of a great shrine or cathedral like Notre Dame--or rather the story of a sequence of buildings, some large, some small, some permanent, others ephemeral, some even left uncompleted, whether by plan or by accident. It is obvious from evidence on all sides that Stonehenge was a sacred precinct for hundreds of years, and not a rude village as in Ason's story. And in fact the entire Salisbury plain literally reeks with religious significance, and Stonehenge, despite its undeniable supremacy[20] as a monument, is one among many such religious sanctuaries. None of this is apparent from Stonehenge, which is thin in both topography and chronology because of the story's accent on caveman militarism.

The best part of the book is the Selected Readings, and I think that those who are seriously troubled by the mysteries of Atlantis, Minoan-Mycenaean prehistory, the migrations of early peoples like the Wessex and Beaker cultures, Stonehenge, and the Druids should go directly to the experts and the field guidebooks (of which the majority also appear in my own notes for this review). Contemporary archaeology us a complex and exacting science, and it always challenges us not to take the romantic conclusions on faith but to stay as close as is humanly possible to first-hand evidence and reports.

As for the story of Ason, Inteb, and Company, I cannot take it seriously at all. For all the sex and violence, it simply is not adult writing--unless (and I believe few of us want to make this admission) Atlantis and Stonehenge and their kin are simply magical names and we are bound to be attracted to any book that invokes them regardless of literary merit or intellectual content.

FOOTNOTES

1) And so much is indicated in Stover's epitaph on his late colleague at the Illinois Institute of Technology, William F. Austin; for this, consult the close (in italics) of the Afterword, p. 251.

2) Examples in chapters 1, 6, 7, 12, 17, 25, and 30.

3) The description in Part Four is, like so much else in the book, bad melodrama. The authentic problems associated with the selection, transportation, dressing, and erection of the stones are interesting enough in their own right, and I refer the reader to the fascinating chapter, "The Techniques of Construction," in R.J.C. Atkinson, Stonehenge (Penguin Books, revised ed., 1960), 101-141. Atkinson has participated in the excavations at the site since 1958.

4) With George Boas, A Documentary History of Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity (Baltimore, 1935), 9-10. As a mode of interpreting cultures other than one's own, primitivism was already an intellectual commonplace in Graeco-Roman antiquity. The most important point to note is that this attitude towards primitives is a wish-fulfilment, not authentic anthropology.

5) Carlos Castaneda's popular trilogy on the old Yaqui sorcerer, Don Juan, is a much closer and cleverer approximation to recreating the psychology of a "primitive" as a personality type distinct from twentieth century man.

6) I recommend this entire section on pp. 31-32 to capture the spirit of romantic primitivism that suffuses both plot and character.

7) Modern man's attitude toward ancient or modern primitives is based on his discontent with his own lot (the disheartening complexities of contemporary life) and his desire to "get away from it all." This popular fantasy therefore often runs afoul of what anthropologists have to say of archaic societies, ancient or modern. For brief but accurate surveys, see E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Theories of Primitive Religion (Oxford, 1965) and Ashley Montagu, ed., The Concept of the Primitive (New York, 1968).

8) London, 1969. The same work was published in New York in 1969 under the title, Lost Atlantis. The identification of Crete as Atlantis is as old as E.T. Frost's article, "The Lost Continent," in The Times (London), February 19, 1909. His case was later repeated in "The Critias and Minoan Crete," Journal of Hellenic Studies 33 (1913), 189-206. A Greek archaeologist, Spyridon Marinatos, has been proposing since 1939 the volcanic eruption at Thera to explain the end of Minoan civilization (details in Luce's book). In Stonehenge, Atlantis is a combination of Thera and Crete though the action takes place on Thera in chapters 2 through 4.

9) Indianapolis, 1969; with Edward Bacon. There is a valuable review of this book, Luce's, and another recent description of Thera by James Mavor (Voyage to Atlantis, London, 1969) in the Times Literary Supplement 69 (1970), 773-4. I should remark that most reviewers--even in professional archaeological journals--take the volcanic theory seriously and are even willing to connect it with Plato's Atlantis; most, however, prefer Luce's scholarship and conclusions to Galanopoulos'.

10) This is the margin of error that is allowed by carbon-14 dating and by the ambiguities involved with dating Minoan ware pottery--the two major sources for the prehistoric chronology of this site.

11) I note the following discrepancies that militate against either Thera or Crete being identifiable as Plato's Atlantis: Plato's island was a continent of huge size (larger than Libya and Asia Minor together), outside the Pillars of Hercules; it and its city were fully ten times any possible dimensions at either Knossos or Thera, nor is Plato's topography anything more than his usual, overly rigorous geometry carried to the point of fantasy--as indeed it is also in the astronomical passages of the Timaeus; the fabulous destruction of the city took place, by his account, 9000 years (and not 900) before his time; finally, the name "Atlantis" is new coinage and--like other mythical landscapes that abound in ancient Greek literature--had never been associated with any real place. I also refer the reader to Rhys Carpenter's review of Luce in The American Journal of Archeology 74 (1970), 302-3, for a list of passages in Homer and Herodotus that served as Plato's literary models for his topographical description of Atlantis. Clearly the philosopher's story is a literary pastiche, and the educated Greek reader would have oriented himself easily in the direction of the older literature that inspired Critias' fable.

12) Plato is the first to mention Atlantis, and it remained an unimportant myth in the ancient world. But it was revived as a geographical romantic ideal by the Neoplatonists and Church Fathers, and its popularity has grown since then. See L. Sprague De Camp, Lost Continents: The Atlantis Theme in History, Science, and Literature (New York, 1954).

13) The classic work on the subject is J.A. Stewart, The Myths of Plato, newly edited and introduced by G.R. Levy (Fontwell, Sussex, 1960). For the context of myth in Plato's work, see Ludwig Edelstein, "The Function of the Myth in Plato Philosophy," Journal of the History of Ideas 10 (1949), 463-81.

14) The two types of world-destruction myths--both of which are Bronze Age themes that antedate the fifteenth century--are discussed in light of their most important textual occurrences in J. Fontenrose, "Philemon, Lot, and Lycaon," University of California Publications in Classical Philology 13 (1950), 93-119. The texts themselves--Sumerian, Egyptian, and Akkadian--may be read in James Pritchard, ed., Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (3rd ed., with supplement, Princeton, 1969).

15) Op. cit., p. 192. The world-catastrophe myth in the Politicus (268e-274e) is based on Hesiod's story of the five ages of man in his Works and Days, which itself was one basis for the idea of world-destruction in subsequent Greek thought.

16) In The Megalith Builders of Western Europe (New York, 1959), though Daniel talks about an Aegean significance for several different types of megaliths throughout Western Europe, not solely for Stonehenge.

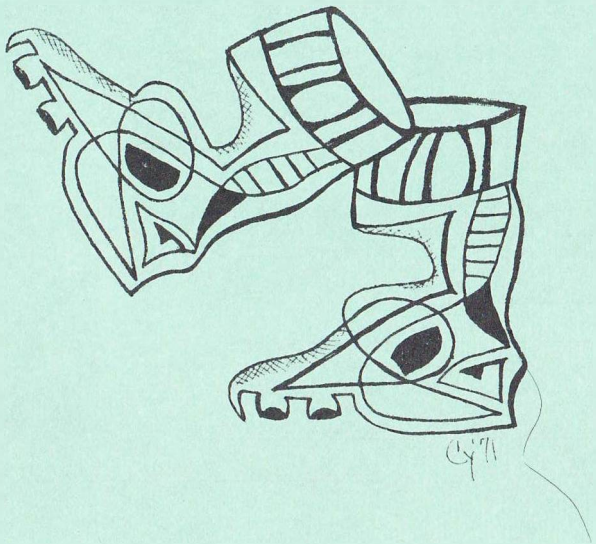
17) See R.S. Newall, Stonehenge (Department of Environment Official Guidebook, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1959), 27: "No less than 25 /incised axe-blades/ are on the outer face of stone 4 and originally about a dozen were on the inner face of 53." It was only in 1953 that Atkinson first discovered them!

But cf. C.G.S. Crawford, "The Symbols Carved at Stonehenge," Antiquity 28 (1954), 25-31, for one important authority who sees no need to bring in Mycenaean influences to explain the carvings.

18) 600 B.C. would be the very earliest if we may trust Anne Ross, Pagan Celtic Britain (London, 1967), 14. Yet in the Afterword, pp. 246-50, Harrison and Stover tell us the Yerni are Celts.

19) Since John Aubrey, the antiquary, in 1666 made the association. See R.S. Newall, op. cit., 27-28.

20) One need only glance at Atkinson's illustrated guidebook, Stonehenge and Avebury and Neighboring Monuments (Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London, 1959).



On Ursula LeGuin's "A Wizard of Earthsea"

by

Douglas Barbour

(University of Alberta)

A Wizard of Earthsea (Ace Books, 1971) was originally published as a children's book. Adults should be so lucky, for the level of writing is far superior to much of what is found on the best-seller lists, or even in much so-called adult s-f. There are now three Earthsea novels, so that place--like the consistent future of most of her adult novels--can be considered a complete Secondary World.[1] Earthsea is a world in which magic works, and in which certain people, with the right inner powers, become mages. The story represents one mage's early life and apprenticeship (the following novels deal with his later career). Ms LeGuin knows how to write children's books; she does not write down to her audience. Earthsea is adult in conception; the narrative form, however, is simpler than in her other novels. Nonetheless, I wish to argue that all the important patterns of meaning (the Quest, the Tao, the creation of a total culture, and the use of light/dark imagery) that can be found in her other novels are present here. It is because so many interwoven patterns of meaning move throughout this novel that it provides such a rich and rewarding reading experience.

As in City of Illusions, the Quest pattern is the basis of the plot, rendering Ged's gradual growth to self-knowledge and maturity as man and mage. Ged, as Ogion suggests in his letter to the Warden of Roke, is one who could become great (p. 48). Ogion's speech on this, early in the book, includes, as is his way, a veiled warning that Ged, as is his way, refuses to hear: "Any craft you undertake to learn you will learn, for your power is great. Greater even than your pride, I hope"(p. 36). Earthsea's conflict turns on the clash between Ged's pride and his genuine ability to learn, and comprehend, the deep meaning of all he is taught about mage-craft. Its most important lesson is that "The world is in balance, in Equilibrium" (p. 57), which means a true mage must never act without due consideration for that equilibrium. Ged hears that lesson quite early at Roke, but refuses its deeper meanings (p. 57):

> ...surely a wizard, one who had gone past these childish tricks of illusion to the true arts of Summoning and Change, was powerful enough to do what he pleased, and balance the world as seemed best to him, and drive back darkness with his own light.

Such pride must have a fall: Ged's pride (for he is a solitary, lonely person who has never learned to take insults or scoffing), plus his envy of another student, Jasper, drive him to "prove" his power while he is still an apprentice. The power is there, but it is uncontrolled. As he attempts the dread "Spell of Summoning," Ged looses upon the world a shadow that very nearly kills him. For pride as great as his the lesson in humility must be equally great: Ged's loss of a year from his studies in sickness and suffering is only the beginning. His gradual growth in true understanding of his powers, his constant fear of the shadow hunting him across Earthsea, and his gradual coming to terms with that fear until, with the help of his old master, Ogion, he sees that he must chase the shadow until he meets and, hopefully, vanquishes it, is the major part of it.[2]

This is a pure version of the narrative quest.[3] Ged is joined towards the end by his only friend from the school, Estarriol.[4] Together they sail to the ends of Earthsea, where Ged finally grapples with his shadow, naming it even as it names him. In a remarkable scene (p. 200-202) he battles his dark self and emerges not having destroyed it, but having accepted it as part of his whole self. Healed, a whole man, he can return to the world of men, ready to face the long journey of a mage's life that lies before him, as Estarriol clearly sees (p. 203):

> Ged had neither lost nor won but, naming the shadow of his death with his own name, had made himself whole: a man: who, knowing his whole true self, cannot be used or possessed by any power other than himself, and whose life therefore is lived for life's sake and never in the service of ruin, or pain, or the dark.

Ged's quest, then, is the plot of Earthsea. But the idea[6] of the anti-quest, of unaction, which is central to the Tao, is embodied in many of the teachings in the book, especially those of Ogion; and Ged's final maturity is marked by his acceptance of Equilibrium as opposed to the desire to exercise power.

Since Earthsea is a world in which magic works, it represents a Secondary World of a kind different from that of s-f novels, for the rules, though consistent, are of a different nature: power is discovered in different forms. Magic is a fitting metaphor for a fantasy novel about power and its properties. Earthsea's magic "Equilibrium" is the Earthsea equivalent of the Way, the Tao, for upon this Equilibrium everything depends, as everything depends upon the Tao (1, 4, 14, 21). To use Equilibrium for selfish reasons is to break its deep laws: this is the lesson Ged must suffer so greatly to learn.

Ogion, Ged's first and, as he later admits, his true master, is a kind of Tao-Zen teacher. At first he appears to teach nothing, saying little, doing less (magic, that is), and Ged, who dreams of power and of using it, is frustrated. Their interchange would have pleased Chuang Tzu, especially its conclusion (p. 29):

> "What, after all, is the use of you? or of myself? Is Gont Mountain useful, or the Open Sea?" Ogion went on a half-mile or so, and said at last, "To hear, one must be silent."[7]

Ogion's "long, listening silence that would fill the room, and fill Ged's mind" (p. 31) is the silence of the sage who "spreads doctrine without words" (Tao 2, p. 101). Ogion knows, as does Tao 23, that "Nature says few words" (p. 141). (Furthermore, Ogion is a living example of Tao 56 (p. 199): "He who knows does not speak. He who speaks does not know.") But Ged will not pay attention to Ogion's silence for he wants power, he wants to act. "He who strides forward does not go" (Tao, 143), but Ged will stride forward, so Ogion lets him go, with a warning he refuses to hear. Ged is like No-Toes, who "just didn't understand my duty and was too careless of my body, and so I lost a foot. But I've come now because I still have something that is worth more than a foot and I want to try to hold on to it" (Chuang, 67). Only after he suffers a great personal injury as the result of not understanding his duty does Ged, like No-Toes, truly set himself to learn properly from his masters. When he set out for the School of Wizards, with his great pride intact, he was like the "man of inferior virtue" of Tao 38 (p. 167), who "never loses / sight of / his virtue / And in this way he loses his virtue."

Ged is pushed by Jasper's mockery and his own wayward pride to an act of great peril. As Tao, 38 says, "The man of inferior virtue takes action, and has an ulterior motive to do so." More than anything else, that ulterior motive nearly causes Ged's death, for the rules of magic in Earthsea are strictly moral.

Ged succeeds, finally, because he learns this lesson, and acts, as in the cases of the Dragon of Pendor and Pechvarry's son, "with no thought for himself" (p. 96). For, by the rules of magic and Equilibrium operative in Earthsea, each such act has tangible results similar to those described in Tao, 81: Ged gains strength for his final confrontation with the shadow through his efforts on other peoples' behalf; he does not lose it. Insofar as he acts for others, and only insofar as he does so, he acts, most truly, for himself.

Earthsea is a particularly complete realization of a total world.[8] Insofar as it is the setting for more than one novel, its closest analogue would be Middle-Earth in Lord of the Rings. As it is a world where magic works, that fact is central to its ecology and the culture of its peoples. That is why, although Taoist ideas have influenced the artistic vision out of which it emerged, it is rendered completely in terms applicable only to the "laws" under which Earthsea exists.

Earthsea, as a unique ecology, is presented with great care and clarity, as the maps accompanying the text demonstrate.[9] Everything that happens in the novel fits into the particular space-time continuum that is Earthsea; Ms LeGuin never makes the error of taking her invented world less than totally seriously. Despite the fact that it is not in any way a social novel and doesn't even attempt to detail the daily lives of the various peoples of the world, enough detail is presented to provide a very fair idea of what kind of a world it is for its ordinary inhabitants. Most people are aware of, and to some degree dependent upon, the great sea, yet this awareness does not imply real knowledge; in fact, many folk know very little beyond their own village, let alone their own island (pp. 37-8). Earthsea is a whole world with a single civilization, one which is wide enough to contain such extremes as the warriors of the Kargad Empire, the poor fisher folk of Astowell, the sinister people of Oshkil, and the noble mages of Roke. Our closest analogue might be Mediaeval Europe, say during the twelfth century Renaissance, a world where high learning and philosophy could be found in the same village with complete ignorance, where material, scientific progress had barely begun, where the great part of the population were peasants.

The epigraph to Earthsea is taken from "The Creation of Ea," an epic of Earthsea, something indigenous to this sub-creation. It makes almost the same poetic statement as "Tormer's Lay" in The Left Hand of Darkness, and uses light/dark imagery in a similar manner (p. 7):

> Only in silence the word,
> only in dark the light,
> only in dying life;
> bright the hawk's flight
> on the empty sky.

Gwendolyn MacEwan's fine book of poems, The Shadow Maker (Toronto, 1969) is particularly fascinating to me because it is almost a running commentary on Earthsea, especially in terms of the light/dark imagery in it. This can be seen very clearly in the title poem:

I have come to possess your darkness, only this.

My legs surround your black, wrestle it
As the flames of day wrestle night
And everywhere you paint the necessary shadows
On my flesh and darken the fibres of my nerve;
Without these shadows I would be
In air one wave of ruinous light
And night with many mouths would close
Around my infinite and sterile curve.

Shadow-maker create me everywhere
Dark spaces (your face is my chosen abyss),
For I said I have come to possess your darkness,
Only this.

The import of the image pattern in Earthsea is very close to that of "The Shadow Maker," as well as to many other poems in the book.

Ged's quest for the whole self that is his when he finally possesses his own darkness is heralded in the epigraph from "The Creation of Ea": "only in dark the light." It is in his slow growth to understanding of this paradox that his maturing as a mage is described. Although this strong paradoxical use of light/dark imagery is central to Ged's quest, most of the meanings attached to darkness and light in this novel are fairly straightforward (as opposed to their use in her later adult novels, which is very complex and not straightforward at all): darkness is associated with evil; light with good; as Ged's first tainted experiences of great power suggest (p. 34).

But if the pattern is clearer and simpler than in the other novels, it is still subtly woven. It is basic to the book, and the careful use of the imagery throughout greatly strengthens its emotional power. Every approach Ged makes to power until the moment when he releases the shadow upon the world is accompanied by a reminder of that first episode.[10] The description of the casting of the spell powerfully renders terror through the imagery of shadow and darkness (p. 76). Ms LeGuin, keeping the nature of her invented world in sight, wisely has the Archmage explain to Ged the result of his tampering with Equilibrium (p. 81):

> "You summoned a spirit from the dead, but with it came one of the Powers of unlife. Uncalled it came from a place where there are no names. Evil, it wills to work evil through you. The power you had to call it gives it power over you: you are connected. It is the shadow of your arrogance, the shadow of your ignorance, the shadow you cast. Has a shadow a name?"

This is simple writing that contains depths. The question, which terrifies Ged, is eventually answered, by him, when he finally confronts the shadow. The connexions between names, life, light, and good; between no names, unlife, darkness, and evil, are firmly established as basic to the nature of Earthsea. Everything contributes to the whole. And to the whole man, Ged the Wizard. Vetch sees it happen: "Light and darkness met, and joined, and were one" (p. 201). The complex of ambiguous recognitions that the light/dark imagery has served in Ms LeGuin's other novels is served in Earthsea as well: her artistic vision is total, and enters all her work equally: which is why Earthsea is such a very fine novel, and only by publisher's definition a children's book.

FOOTNOTES

1) See J.R.R. Tolkien's use of this term in "On Fairy Stories," Tree and Leaf (London: Unwin Books, 1964), pp. 36 ff.

2) His adventures with the Dragon of Pender, and in the northern land of Osskil, where an evil sorcerer seeks to bend his will to an Old Power trapped in the Terrenon stone, are also part of his "education."

3) Compare with Tolkien's use of the pattern in The Lord of the Rings. Certainly it fulfils the expectations W.H. Auden discusses in his essay, "The Quest Hero" in Tolkien and the Critics, Isaacs and Zimbardo, eds. (Notre Dame, 1968), pp. 44-5.

4) As in her other novels, the necessity of friendship, the parts which friends play in all our most important moments, is emphasized here. Estarriol earlier gave Ged back some of his self-trust by trusting him with his "true name." Now he joins Ged not because he can do anything for him, but because a friend should be with him in his darkest hours.

5) Cf. Haber's refusal in Lathe of Heaven to acknowledge darkness in his world of rational light.

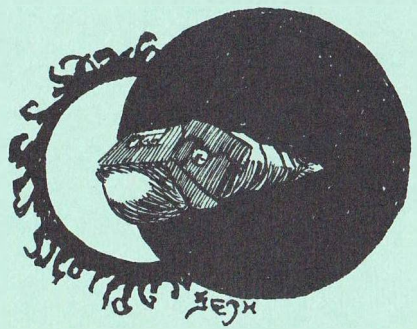
6) All references to the Tao are to Wing-tsit Chan's translation: The Way of Lao Tzu (New York, 1963).

7) "All men know the use of the useful, but nobody knows the use of the useless!" in the Chuang Tzu (Burton Watson, trans. Chuang Tzu: Basic Writings (New York, 1964), p. 63--hereafter called Chuang.

8) The Tombs of Atuan (New York, 1971) and The Farthest Shore (New York, 1972).

9) Because it is so fully imagined, Atuan, and its particular way of life, can be mentioned although they won't be truly seen until the next novel. See Wizard of Earthsea, p. 162.

10) As he steps through the doorway to the School on Roke, "it seemed to him that though the light was behind him, a shadow followed him in at his heals" (p. 47). This is but one of many examples.



Moore Meaning: In Fact, a Lot

by

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In 1953 and 1954 Ward Moore's two stories of a modern Lot were published. Anthony Boucher, in his introduction to a later story (F&SF, April, 1956), includes them among the stories he had "been most proud to publish." Perhaps they are worth a second look.

The origin of the stories is Genesis 18:16 to 19:38. The first story, "Lot" (May, 1953), is primarily based on 19:15-26. This tells of Lot being urged by two angels out of Sodom just before God destroyed it and Gomorrah with sulphur and fire; Lot, his wife, and his two younger daughters flee toward a small town, although Lot's wife looks back and becomes a pillar of salt. Later (19:30), Lot leaves the small town and moves to the hills to live in a cave. The second story, "Lot's Daughter" (October, 1954), is primarily based on 19: 30-36. This tells how the daughters get their father drunk two nights in a row, and how during his drunkenness each one lays with him without his knowing it, and each conceives. (His reaction to his daughters' pregnancies is not given.)

The basic situation in "Lot" is fairly parallel to the Bible. David A. Jimmon has prepared his station wagon for the event of atomic war sometime in the immediate future of the 1950's. (The society is not stressed as being greatly like Sodom: i.e., the homosexuality in Genesis 19: 4-11). After the atomic bomb is dropped on Los Angeles, the Jimmon family leaves Malibu and drives north toward the Big Sur area ("the hills south of Monterey"). On the way, before Santa Maria, Jimmon abandons his wife and two sons at a filling station, while she is attempting to phone friends in Malibu (equivalent to Lot's wife's looking back). The two sons are a variant to the retelling, as is Mr. Jimmon's having only one daughter, Erica, to take with him.

The point of view used for telling the story is third-person. The protagonist is always called "Mr. Jimmon" or a third-person pronoun, but the narration echoes his thoughts. Moore achieves part of his effect by the use of fragments, which suggest the pressure of the thoughts in Jimmon's mind:

> Eleven sixteen, and rolling northward on the highway. Not bad, not bad at all. Foresight. Now if he could only edge his way leftward to the southbound strip they'd be beyond the Santa Barbara bottleneck by 2 o'clock.
>
> (p. 108)

Of course, some of the story is direct description on the author's part and much of it is dialogue between family members, but I believe the main tone is established through Jimmon's thoughts. His personality is a compound of pride and irritation; obviously, his pride in himself will produce irritation at others who do not, he believes, think clearly. His "comment" about "foresight" indicates his pride; his irritation can be seen in this summary of thoughts about his wife, Molly, after she first complains about his not making a rest stop and then shushes one of their sons' complaints:

> Trust Molly to return quickly to fundamental hypocrisy; the automatic response--his mind felicitously grasped the phrase, conditioned reflex--to the customary stimulus. She had taken an explicit stand against his common sense, but her rigid code--honor thy father; iron rayon the wrong side; register and vote; avoid scenes; only white wine with fish; never rehire a discharged servant--quickly substituted patterns for impulse. Seventeen years.
>
> (p. 112)

This quotation also established one of the bases of Jimmon's pride: his belief in his flexibility. This is shown in several minor ways (e.g., the optional highways, thought about on p. 109), and it prepares for the conclusion when Jimmon suddenly decides to abandon his wife and sons, when he substitutes impulse for pattern. (His dislike for conventionality is also involved in his final decision, since he identifies--p. 121--the gouging but "respectable" filling-station man with his to-be-abandoned family.)

If my analysis is correct, Jimmon's personality is more complex than that of most science-fiction characters, and thus more realistic. Anthony Boucher as an editor had a penchant for realism. For example, his and J. Francis McComas' celebration of Bill Brown's "The Star Ducks" (F&SF, Fall, 1950) was in terms of realistic detail; rather mild realism, actually: "a new kind of science-fiction story, the homey interplanetary tale..." Perhaps this realism was for audience identification, but I suspect it was partially because of Boucher's background in detective fiction. Even though his own mysteries were puzzles in the Carr-Queen-Rawson tradition, the detective field has often had a strongly realistic emphasis--in Black Mask, with Dashiell Hammett and others of the hardboiled school. The realism of Ward Moore's story is partly psychological realism--Jimmon's summing up the survival chances of his sons and wife (p.115), then his fantasizing that his sons were not actually his (pp. 118-119), while he excuses a gibe from his daughter (p. 114): the "Lot complex," if Freud will pardon me, is clear. And the realism is partly outward details, in dialogue ("Aw, Mom, you agreed. You know you did. What's the matter with you anyway? Why are you acting like a drip?" asks Jir--adolescent David Jimmon, Jr.--on p. 116) and in action (the need to go to the bathroom, mentioned passim, pp. 105-120).

The plot itself is fairly simple, being a narration of the events and Jimmon's thoughts from the homeleaving through his problems getting on the highway and a part of their trip up the highway to his abandonment of three family members. Despite Jimmon's pride in his foresight, his abandoning of his sons--and probably his wife --is not well thought out. A family with a large number of members makes a more viable farm unit or fishing unit than do two people. Of course, as indicated earlier, he has no great expectations of the survival abilities of his sons and his wife, but (although he does not so see it) his opinion is also a comment on his inability to control his family, to play the patriarchal role.

Whether or not Moore intended his surprise ending, with its sudden fulfilment of the archetypal pattern, to be an ironic revelation of Jimmon's limitations is of course uncertain, but it may certainly be so read, and "Lot's Daughter" is filled with other limited failures of Jimmon.

Here I would like to comment on the question of irony, which may be defined as a revealed discrepancy between appearance and reality. There are three categories. First, verbal irony, where the discrepancy is between what is said and what is meant. Mark Anthony's insistence that "Brutus is an honourable man" is an example. Swift's "A Modest Proposal" is perhaps the best extended example of verbal irony in the language. Obviously the point of "revealed discrepancy" is that unless the audience/reader sees the difference, the irony is taken as factual statement: Swift's projector is actually advocating cannibalism. In "Lot" verbal irony appears primarily in Jimmon's mentally-formed retorts to his family: "...customarily he reacted to his wife's habit of posing unfinished questions... with sharp and querulous defense. No matter how often he resolved to stare quietly or use the still more effective, Afraid I didn't catch your meaning, dear, he had never been able to put his resolution into effect" (p. 100) and "...he formed another sentence: Molly, your talent for irrelevance amounts to genius" (p. 108).

The second category is dramatic irony, where the discrepancy is between what the characters know and what the audience knows. A classical example is Oedipus' curse on the killer of Laius, at the first of Sophocles' Oedipus Tyrannus: he acts as King of Thebes, protecting his people; unknowingly, he is cursing himself. The Greek audience, knowing the myth, perceived the discrepancy between Oediupus' reality and true reality. In "Lot" dramatic irony is found in the conclusion, if the reading suggested above is correct: that is, if Jimmon, believing he acts rationally, on the basis of the survival value of his sons and his wife, actually abandons them because of his "Lot complex," his sexual desire for his daughter, and because he misestimates the utility of numbers in survival living. Certainly Jimmon never--in "Lot's Daughter"--changes his mind about the necessity of abandoning them, so the dramatic irony is sustained through both stories.

I believe my reading of the "Lot complex"--which we might today call a "Lolita complex," or incestuous nympholeptia--can be supported from the text. The first description of Erika does not certainly follow her father's thoughts, but it may:

> Erika came in briskly from the kitchen, her brown jodhpurs making her appear at first glance even younger than fourteen. But only at first glance; then the swell of hips and breast denied the childishness the jodhpurs seemed to accent.
>
> (p. 102)

(Humbert Humbert, we may remember, classified nymphlets as being from nine to fourteen.) A discussion in the car also shows Jimmon's interest:

> / Jir: / "Listen, brat, if you weren't a girl I'd spank you."
>
> "You mean, if I weren't your sister you'd probably enjoy such childish sex-play with any other girl."
>
> / Molly Jimmon: / "Erika!"
>
> Where do they learn it? marvelled Mr. Jimmon. These progressive schools. Do you suppose...?
>
> (p. 107)

(Lolita lost her virginity when eleven, at summer camp; she first suggests intercourse to Humbert.) Other passages hint at the same meaning: Jimmon's identification of Erika as the only true Jimmon in his family (p. 108), the "feeling" of Erika's sympathy though she says nothing, while discounting his sons' words (pp. 116-6), and the marvelling at Erika's cool tone in answering her mother's foolishness (p. 118). When the family stops at the filling station, Jimmon has unconsciously, not yet consciously, made his decision:

> "Erika," began Mr. Jimmon, in a half-whisper.
>
> "Yes, Dad?"
>
> "Oh...never mind. Later."
>
> He was not himself quite sure what he wanted to say; what exclusive, urgent message he had to convey.
>
> (p. 120)

(Later, from "Lot's Daughter," we may recall how Lolita left Humbert.)

The third category of irony is that of universal irony, where the expectations of both the characters and the audience are refuted, where the reader no longer foresees the discrepancy. Cheaply, this is the surprise ending; but the irony is there only if the dénouement is a fitting surprise. In E. M. Forster's "The Road from Colonus," Mr. Lucas misses his chance at a Grecian transfiguration in the first part of the story; in the second part, the resulting trivialization of his life in England is shown: the mysterious welling of a spring from the base of a tree gives way to noises in water pipes. Like the two parts of Forster's story, "Lot" and "Lot's Daughter" show the discrepancy between the moments of (near-)success and the moments of failure. (Mr. Lucas' daughter, called Antigone in part one, is preparing to desert her father, her Oedipus, for marriage in the second part; for Forster is also setting up an ironic juxtaposition to Sophocles' last play; but how analogous to Moore's two stories!)

"Lot's Daughter," then, is in ironic contrast to "Lot." It also is not as closely related to the Biblical account. Moore's second story begins six or seven years after the atomic war, with Eric, the child, being about four years old. There is no suggestion in the text that Erika particularly wanted the child (as Lot's daughters wanted to continue their line--19: 31-32), or that Jimmon was drunk, literally or metaphorically at the time:

> Staring down into the grass, he stared back into the past. The vitality he'd had when he and Molly, Jir, Erika, and Wendell had started off in the station wagon, gaining new force with the sloughing off of Molly and the boys, reaching its peak with the attainment of the hiding place and the almost mystic propriety of the relationship with Erika, had really seemed to change him from man the commuter and taxpayer to man the lair finder, man the dwelling maker, man the provider. How long had this impetus lasted? A few months? Less than a year, certainly; it was long gone before Erika found herself with child. (p. 14)

(On p. 10 it is mentioned that his grass pallet is across the wooden dwelling from the car seats used as beds by Erika and Eric.)

Other archetypal patterns, beside the Biblical suggested by the title, are also primarily contrasts to the story. First, the usual science-fictional survival story, as Jimmon thinks of it:

> People who used to write stories about what would happen instinctively agreed with Erika, leaping for shock-cushioning fancies / about survival after an atomic war /. Like living in deserted mansions, enjoying unlimited supplies of canned goods from abandoned markets, banding together with like-minded survivors--one of them always a reservoir of esoteric knowledge about the economy of the American Indian, agronomic chemistry, textile manufacture--to rebuild civilization. Limited imagination, unable to envisage realities. (p. 11)

A number of bypaths are suggested by this passage. One notices the implicit assumption of realism for Moore's story, for example. And one wonders whether Jimmon, getting most of his food from the sea coast, is not living almost at the level of some California Indians without realizing it. And finally, one remembers that other survivor stories have not been as extravagant as Jimmon's imagined type: a character in Poul Anderson's Twilight World comments, "Books don't say too much. Not much we can use, like how to make a gun. Handiest damn book in town was somethin' called a Boy Scout manual." (I do not, however, commend Anderson's book as very realistic as a whole: it is a mutant-survivor story.) Moore's second passage of this sort, with an inside joke, appears shortly afterwards:

> It must be a couple of years since he'd seen any cattle. Miles away, how many he could only guess, were ranch houses, stables, corrals, outbuildings. Beyond them were thousands of other grazing acres. The heroic fictional man (homo gernsbacchae) would have found the house, rounded up the cattle, started all over.
>
> And been a fine target for the first passing looters. (p.12)

The joke, with its pun substitution of homo for Hugo, may be less functional than disruptive to the tone of the story: perhaps one of Boucher's limitations as an editor was that he seems to have encouraged such references (this being the complement of his interest in and brilliant development of traditional genres in the field).

A different survivor story also provides an allusion, after Jimmon sees the jeep tracks:

> Warily he moved foreward. Neanderthal sniffing the spoor of Cro-Magnon. Friday astonished by the print of Crusoe. (p. 21)

The two comparisons, with their sudden analogies, function as minor examples of universal irony: the discrepancy, the reversal, from the Defoe original adds to the effect.

The relationship of "Lot's Daughter" to "Lot" is also worth pausing over. The several limited failures of Jimmon's foresight, mentioned above, may be pinpointed. The motif that opens and closes the story is Mr. Jimmon's toothache (pp. 3, 27):

> Should've had them all extracted, he thought as he had thought so often. And appendix. Apprehension projected a detailed picture of unendurable pain while Erika stood by helpless to ease him. (p.3)

He also fails, despite his knowledge of theory or method, to roof adequately their shelter (p.4), to tan leather (p.6), to make soap (p.7), to put a door on the shelter (p.9), to learn how to make mortar (p. 10), to fill adequately the cracks between logs (p. 11), to make gun powder (p. 14), to find a lost shotgun shell (p. 16), to dam up a nearby stream (pp. 16-17), and to salvage a snagged fishing hook and sinker (p. 25). Not all of these involve his foresight, which he praised in "Lot" (and praises briefly in this sequel, p.8), but they set the different tone of this sequel. More generally, Jimmon may be said to have had prepared for a number of years of isolation, but not for a perpetual isolation. "He had been provident and thought of the future, but apparently he'd not thought far enough" (p. 25). Thus he has enough shotgun shells for another year (p. 16) and he worries about the fishing lines rotting (p. 25).

The two stories are also related in ways other than the reversal of Jimmon's competence, in the obvious character and plot continuance, and in the parallel structure of climactic abandonments. For example, it is Erika who turns on or adjusts the car radio several times in "Lot" (pp. 103, 107, 109); likewise, she was emotionally dependent on the radio, even after no stations were on the air, in "Lot's Daughter" (pp. 14-16). And, as Erika's shift from "Mom" to "Mother" in "Lot" was an epiphany to Jimmon (p. 118), so her shift back to "Mom" in "Lot's Daughter" is a psychological revelation that Jimmon does not fully catch (p. 18). Other ties between the stories--Jimmon's memories of comments made by his sons or his wife, for example--exist, but these indicate the type of the cross-references and suggest the allusive structuring of the sequel.

As with "Lot," the actual plot structure of "Lot's Daughter" is simple: it tells of one day in Jimmon's life, from his getting up in the morning to his evening meal; also like "Lot," it is the quality of Jimmon's thoughts that sets the tone. And, as with the irrationality of the decision to abandon wife and sons in "Lot," so in "Lot's Daughter" are there very odd decisions by the protagonist. I do not understand why Jimmon, whose intelligence was emphasized in the first story, did not pack a tarpaulin (which could have been made into a basic roof for the shelter). More specifically in the second story is the oddness of allowing the government pamphlets to be ruined in rains (p. 10)--why were they not stored in the station wagon instead of the poorly roofed shelter? Why did neither Erika nor Jimmon try to plant a garden in their six years in the wilderness?--the seeds he took in the car are referred to as "never-planted" (p. 10) and "ruined" (p. 26). Why did he never put a door on the shelter (p. 9)--would that not allow him to store some food, which he hesitates to do because of predators (p. 4)? (Or why not use the station wagon for food storage?)

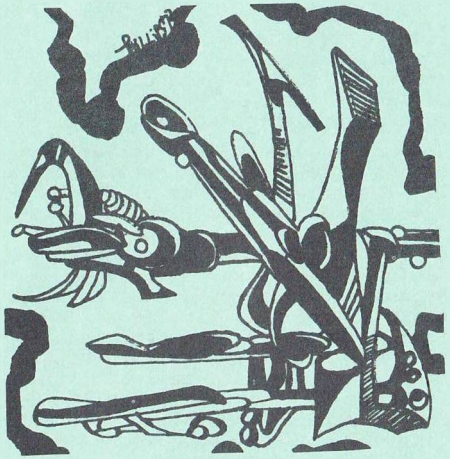
I realize that some of the examples mentioned are meant simply to reflect the incompetence of Jimmon, an insurance company employee, in trying to survive at a primitive level. But six years without a door to keep out rain and small animals! My great uncle, who built an earthen dugout in the side of a canyon when he staked a land claim in western Oklahoma, was able to beat that his first year. (I am also dubious about Jimmon's ability to smell the jeep's exhaust fumes--"acrid, faint, almost sweet," p. 20-- several hours after the jeep has gone by, but that's a different sort of improbability.)

The essential difference between the two stories, then, lies in two areas: first, the reversal of Jimmon's hopes to survive at a civilized level (cf. his resolve to preserve Erika's "civilization" --"Lot," p. 115), caused by his own inabilities, with hunting and fishing, to live at much above subsistence; second, the technical shift in plot structure (like a movement in a kaleidoscope) which causes the point-of-view character, the abandoner of the first story, to be the abandoned of the second. Indeed, the second may be enlarged into a discussion of characterization.

Erika's personality is more fully shown in this story than in the first (she is now twenty or twenty-one, she has a child, perhaps she is more of a person, a personality, than she was at fourteen). In one aspect she does not question her father's assumptions: speaking of his abandonment of her mother and brothers,

> "They would have been quite impossible," she admitted dispassionately. (pp. 18-19)

But this, of course, is part of her psychological preparation for abandoning her father and her son. (Eric's "impossibility" on Erika's journey is implied in the trouble Jimmon has with him on the fishing trip, pp. 19-25). In other ways she is also like her father in personality:



> "If you expect to eat, you better get up now."
>
> Erika's voice was matter-of-fact, emotionless. She was not nagging him at the moment; she did not condemn his idleness, she stated the incontrovertible. He who doesn't work won't eat. In a dead world the cliché was immortally triumphant.
>
> (p. 4)

That is, like her father in the first story, she sees reality clearly; and, like him also, no doubt she privately prides herself on her flexibility in her decision to abandon her family on the day she sees the jeep tracks.

On the other hand, she has traits of her mother too. Particularly after the Monterey radio station--the last station--went off the air.

> Had the power failed? or the engineer finally given up his deception / of Monterey still existing as a functioning community / --if it was? Or succumbed to illness? Erika impulsively had wanted him to drive the station wagon north and find out. Her childish obstinacy had ignored his adult reasoning; for the first time he saw signs in her of her mother's blindness to facts. She could not argue with his deduction of the danger, she merely repeated that they ought to get in the car and see for themselves.
>
> (p. 15)

Thus,like her mother, she looks back to, and ultimately forward to (if these directional metaphors are not misleading), the type of civilization Jimmon thinks wiped out. From her concern over the station wagon and its radio, she turns to an action in response to the jeep and its tracks.

Jimmon, with his incessant cerebration (something like J. Alfred Prufrock finding himself in a survivor story), I find slightly less believable in this story than the first. This is partly owing to the large mumber of things he has not done in six years; partly owing to his being able to lose his balance and fall while shooting at a jackrabbit, despite six years practice in hunting. Despite his self-abnegation -- "Another irreplaceable shell wasted, another simple task bungled" (p. 13) -- I find it dubious that he could have been quite that inconpetent and survived six years. Or perhaps Ward Moore is deliberately upsetting the balance of probability: it seems unlikely that Jimmon could have a toothache and fall shooting at a jackrabbit both on the same day the jeep tracks are discovered and his daughter leaves him without his thinking at some point what a completely miserable day this has been.

Although I think the author's method of narration--showing Jimmon's continuous internalization of events--works best in a short story (despite Joyce's ability to spend all of Finnegans Wake on a dream), Moore succeeds fairly well in this novelette. I believe we accept Jimmon's thoughts as a convention, like Shakespeare's characters speaking in image-filled verse. But I find two things wrong with his thoughts, in terms of realism. First, for a one-time insurance worker, he is singularly free from precise thoughts about numbers and never refers to an actuary table or his possible life span in the wilderness. Second, despite the comment when Erika kisses Eric goodbye that "None of the Jimmons were demonstrative" (p. 19), I simply do not believe that Jimmon could fall down shooting at that jackrabbit, break the strap on his briefcase, lose a good shell, and do no more than sigh: no curses (internal or external)? no kicking or hitting the ground in anger? no hurling away of the ejected shell when he first thinks he has found the good shell? I am led to suspect that Jimmon is suffering from some sort of severe repression that is not clearly accounted for by the author.

Near the end of the story, perhaps owing to his fairly successful fishing, Jimmon's mood shifts: "Suddenly his depression lifted" (p. 26). This may be simply a plotting device to build up Jimmon's emotions before he gets back to the shelter and finds Erika gone, for the sake of ironic contrast between mood and actuality, but (except for the return of Jimmon's toothache in the last three sentences of the story) it does not seem to function this way. The mood is not destroyed by Erika's absence. Before he gets back to the shelter, he resolves to damn the stream, turn the shelter into a cabin, and teach Eric to read (p. 26); after he is certain of Erika's leaving, he treats the boy gently, calling him "Eric" for the first time and thinking of his needs (p. 27). So the author, in the last two pages, shifts Jimmon to being a more sympathetic protagonist than he had been before. (Of course, a reader may assume that despite his good intentions, Jimmon will not do the jobs he sets himself; however, the concern for Eric, symbolized in the use of his name, is still expressed in Jimmon's thoughts.) Is this just a gimmick, an appeal for sympathy for the abandoned, with avoidance of his guilt in an earlier abandonment? I confess I do not know: I was, in reading and re-reading the story, rather tired of Jimmon's incompetence, the slight edge of irritation to his thoughts, and the length of his meditations: the shift in tone was welcome, even though it may have been done for artificial reasons.

Since I find little in Eric's personality of any complexity, I would like to return to the question of civilization. Jimmon's resolve in the first story to protect Erika's civilization has been mentioned; the resolution is ironic, since she leaves his society for another: she is not content with the life, the civilization, he can offer. Tied into this is Jimmon's meditation after he has fallen (symbolically?) while trying to shoot the jackrabbit, a meditation that is seen as an example of universal irony, and of Jimmon's rationalizing ability, when the jeep tracks appear:

> Civilization, no matter how you defined it, was a delicate, interdependent mechanism. Suppose he had been, not an insurance broker but an Admiral Jimmon, the Elizabethan universal man born out of time: crack shot, first class woodsman, mechanic, improvisor, chemist, physicist, farmer. Would anything have been qualitatively different? Wasn't it an imperative that all men had to sink to a common level before there could be a new raising? To believe as he had believed, or thought he believed, that it was possible to preserve in himself and Erika--and the boy? that was a nice question--an isolated vestige of the decencies, amenities, attitudes, techniques of mid-Twentieth Century life without a supporting network of goods and services, mines and factories, was a delusion. A remnant of the primitive idea that man could get help from spirits or a watchful god to overcome obstacles, as though man had anything to depend on but mankind. If mankind sank, man sank with it; the variants in depth were insignificant.
>
> (p. 13)

(As noted before, these reports of his thoughts must be taken as conventions, in part; what insurance man would allude to Barrie's The Admirable Crichton and an Elizabethan universal man in the same mental phrase? For that matter, what man would produce the above meditation after missing a shot? But a reader had to make less allowance for such a convention in the first story.)

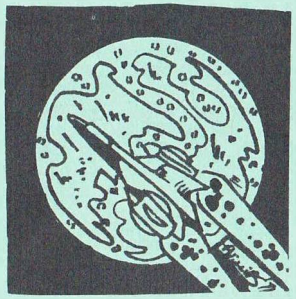
The reference to belief in spirits near the end of the above quotation later reappears as a temptation after he has lost "leader, hook, and sinker":

> One could almost sink to believing in some malicious design. The final irresponsibility of shifting cause and effect onto the shoulders of devils or gods. The retreat from payment for mistakes and rewards for intelligence. The Lord is my shepherd because I have the brains of a sheep.
>
> (p. 25)

Although this belief in demons is seen as a retreat from reason, nevertheless it is a temptation, at least during Jimmon's depression. The seed of a primitive, far less "civilized" life than he had achieved is here.

Overall, as said above, the two stories are based on the two ironies of, first, planning not leading to success and, second, the reversal of who abandons whom (like father, like daughter). Of the two stories individually, I find much more wrong with the sequel than the original (as is often the case with that relationship). For one example, in the original story Jimmon spends time mentally phrasing replies to his wife; in the sequel, he has little trouble in mentally stating elaborate propositions. Thus his thoughts are more thematic and less dramatic in the second story; less realistic too. Other examples are scattered throughout the above discussion. Even the plot could have been improved, with a more realistic presentation of the difficulties of getting food (in the story the sea and seashore seem to give a fairly dependable supply--so long as the fishing line lasts).

Boucher wrote in his introduction to "Lot's Daughter" that "Lot" has proved to be F&SF's third most popular story of 1953 in a poll of the readers; I doubt, despite the lead position of "Lot's Daughter" in its issue, that it proved as successful: for whatever reason, Boucher did not choose it for one of the anthologies of F&SF stories, although Boucher and McComas chose "Lot" for the third volume. But this, if it were my conclusion, would imply too much. "Lot" is a brilliant attempt at fusing a realistic style and texture of fiction with a traditional science-fiction theme of the attempt to survive atomic warfare, and both with the Biblical archetype of Lot. "Lot's Daughter" is less successful in its choice of realistic detail while being more nearly original in its genre; the relationship to the Bible is also less precise. However, the second story becomes more nearly successful if it is regarded not as an attempt to repeat the formula of the first but as an over-long yet often sound attempt to ironically invert the first formula. In Northrop Frye's terms, the second story is less of a novel and more of an anatomy then the first.



The Prudish Prurience of H. Rider Haggard and Edgar Rice Burroughs

by Richard Dale Mullen

(Indiana State University)

(Part Two)

#6--HERO AND TEMPTRESS: LOVE VERSUS HONOUR

If we reverse the coin of rapist and heroine we find temptress and hero. The most persistent of Tarzan's admirers is La, high priestess of Opar, and though she seems never to have aroused in him any emotion other than that protectiveness which every true gentleman feels for a lady in distress, there is one occasion on which she subjects him to an ordeal that most men would find rather troublesome. Having been bound while unconscious, Tarzan awakes to hear La tell him that since he refuses to be her mate, she is going to revenge herself by torturing him all night long. She raises her knife to strike but then loses heart and collapses "weakly on the body of the man she loved":

> She ran her hands in mute caress over his naked flesh; she covered him with her body as though to protect him from the hideous fate she had ordained for him, and in trembling piteous tones she begged him for his love. For hours the frenzy of her passion possessed the burning handmaiden of the Flaming God, until at last sleep overpowered her and she lapsed into unconsciousness beside the man she had sworn to torture and slay. And Tarzan, untroubled by thoughts of the future, slept peacefully in La's embrace.

Comes the dawn:

> "Love me, Tarzan!" she cried, "Love me, and you shall be saved." Tarzan's bonds hurt him. He was suffering the tortures of long-restricted circulation. With an angry growl he rolled over with his back toward La. That was her answer!
>
> (Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar: XIII)

Since Tarzan is not only the bravest and strongest of heroes but also the most beautiful of men, he of course finds it necessary to fend off the advances of a number of eager women: of La on several occasions other than the one recounted above (Return of Tarzan: XXV; Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar: VIII; Tarzan the Invincible: VI) of Janzara (Tarzan and the Ant Men: XIX), of Mentheb (Tarzan and the Forbidden City: XXI), and of Nemone, the only temptress who succeeds in inflaming his passions: there is a moment when he is drawn to her "by a power that is greater than the will of man" but very soon "all that was fine in him revolted" (Tarzan and the City of Gold: XIX).

Editor's note: Corrections for part one are: (1) p.9, line 30, reference should be Tarzan and the Madman:III instead of John Carter of Mars; p.11, lines 20-21, correct listing is Oakdale Affair: X, not Wanderer's Necklace.

Haggard's principal hero, Allan Quatermain (Macumazahn, Watcher-by-Night), although twice-widowed, middle-aged, and afflicted with a limp, is also attractive to women. Determined that he can never love again, he usually finds it easy to nip their advances in the bud, but there are two occasions on which he is sorely tried. The greatest danger to his integrity in the role of heroic white man is posed by Mameena, the Child of Storm:

> There, standing in a beam of golden light that, passing through the smoke-hold, pierced the soft gloom of the hut, stood the most beautiful creature I had ever seen--that is, if it be admitted that a person who is black, or rather copper-coloured, can be beautiful...This beautiful girl with the "fire in her heart," this woman who was different from all other women I had ever known, seemed to have twisted her slender fingers into my heart-strings and to be drawing me towards her. It was a great temptation.

A great temptation, but one removed by Mameena herself, who after all may have been only practicing for those more serious endeavours that she was to undertake in later years.

> "Do you think that I do not read your heart, that I do not know that you believe that I am dragging you down to shame and ruin? Well, I spare you, Macumazahn, since you have kissed me and spoken words which you already may have forgotten, but which I do not forget...And now, lest you should be moved to folly and forget your white man's pride, I bid you farewell, O Macumazahn."
>
> (Child of Storm, IV)

Although this was his greatest danger, the greatest blow to his pride was delivered by She-who-must-be-obeyed, who at first dismissed the love he had not consciously offered--

> "If ever I chose a husband it would not be a little man at the doors of whose heart so many women's hands have knocked--yes, even those that are black--and not, I think, in vain."

--and then brought him to his knees, where he spoke words of love:

> "What words are these?...Art thou he who not a minute gone swore proudly that never had his heart and his lips wandered from certain angels whither they should not?...Shame on thee, thou fickle Allan!"
>
> (She and Allan: XIX, XXII)

No woman ever made a fool of Tarzan, or of any hero in Burroughs.

No hero in Burroughs ever completely yields to sexual temptation: so far as we know, each and every one comes in all purity to the bed of the heroine on their wedding night. In some cases, as we have seen in #5, his purity is preserved by chance or Providence, but in other cases it is his own virtue--as when Nu is assailed by Gron (Eternal Lover, Part 2: XXI), Tanar by Letari (Tanar of Pellucidar: VI) and by Gura (Ibid.: XII), Hadron and Nur An by the girls of Ghasta (Fighting Man of Mars: VIII), David Innes by O-ra (Land of Terror: XXVII), and The Kid by Naene (Tarzan and the Leopard Men: XXI-XXII), though this last hardly counts since he is little more than amused at the idea that a black girl should think herself sexually attractive to a white man.

The heroes in Haggard are not all so heroic. The wiles of Charmion are resisted by Harmachis (Cleopatra, Book 2: VI), those of Asika by Alan Vernon (The Yellow God: XVI), and those of Irene by Olaf (Wanderer's Necklace, Book 2: IV), but Harmachis is seduced by Cleopatra (Cleopatra, Part 2: XIX), Odysseus by Meriamun (World's Desire, Part 2: X), Eric by Swanhild (Eric Brighteyes XIX-XX), and Umbelazi, in a noble-savage variation on the love-and-honour theme, by Mameena.

In Child of Storm, one of the four romances in which Haggard recounts the rise and fall of the Zulu nation, King Panda is growing old, and the kingdom has divided into two factions, one supporting the accession of Umbelazi and the other that of Cetywayo. Among Umbelazi's most important supporters is Saduko, whose second wife but one and only love is Mameena. But Mameena seeks power, and being sure that Umbelazi will emerge as the new king, offers herself to him--and he, in the pride and arrogance of his youth and strength, takes her as his mistress. Saduko conceals his grief and anger and bides his time, but when the battle is joined he leads his companies to the camp of Cetywayo. And so Umbelazi falls from glory to defeat and death, as does Saduko, since kings do not love traitors, and fear especially those who have helped them to a throne.

We have some other rather nice contrasts between Burroughs and Haggard with respect to the virtue of the hero. Both Leo Vincey and Tanar of Pellucidar find themselves in a free-love society in which the woman does the proposing, but whereas Leo enters Ustane's bed as soon as she offers herself (She: VI-VII), Tanar rebuffs and continues to rebuff the beautiful Letari (Tanar: VI).

For Burroughs' Jimmy Torrance and Haggard's Arthur Heigham there comes a time when each believes himself betrayed by his beloved. Jimmy reacts by taking a prostitute to the movies, to supper, and to the door of her apartment, where he thanks her for an enjoyable evening and departs (Efficiency Expert, XX-XXI). Having no acquaintance with prostitutes, Arthur reacts by going to "a man whom he had known slightly up at Cambridge, a man of wealth and evil reputation"; after four days in a blank space Arthur emerges "shrunk, shaky, and looking permanently old" (Dawn: LXI).

While adventuring in Mexico, Haggard's Thomas Wingfield is captured by Aztecs and installed as God of the Year. Toward the end of his reign he is given the four most beautiful maidens of the city; with three of them, one having proved to be a bit fastidious, he enjoys a month-long orgy (Montezuma's Daughter: XIX)-- moreover, despite this wickedness, he is rescued from the sacrificial altar and eventually allowed to marry the English girl who has for eighteen years been keeping herself pure against his return. Burroughs' Stanley Wood has a somewhat similar opportunity deep in Tarzan's Africa, where a tribe of beautiful warrior women, determined to breed themselves white, kill their male children and use captured white men as studs. Having escaped after six months of captivity, our hero tells Tarzan about the experiences of himself, his friend Bob, and the villainous Spike and Troll: "Bob has had adventure and I have material for a book...Spike and Troll haven't the diamond / they sought /, but they each have seven Kaji wives (Tarzan the Magnificent: II). But what about our hero and his friend Bob, also a decent man? Were they excused from, or where they required to perform, the duties imposed on Spike and Troll? We will never know: on such matters the reticence of Edgar Rice Burroughs is absolute.

#7--THE BRIDAL BED

In Haggard the consummation of a marriage may be indicated with words--

> Now Eric Brighteyes and Gudruda the Fair slept side by side, locked in each other's arms.
>
> (Eric Brighteyes: XXIX)

> For the rest of the day, why should I write of it?--there are things too happy and too sacred to be written of.
>
> At last I had, if only for a little while, found that rest, that perfect joy which we seek so continually and so rerely clasp.
>
> (Allan's Wife: X)

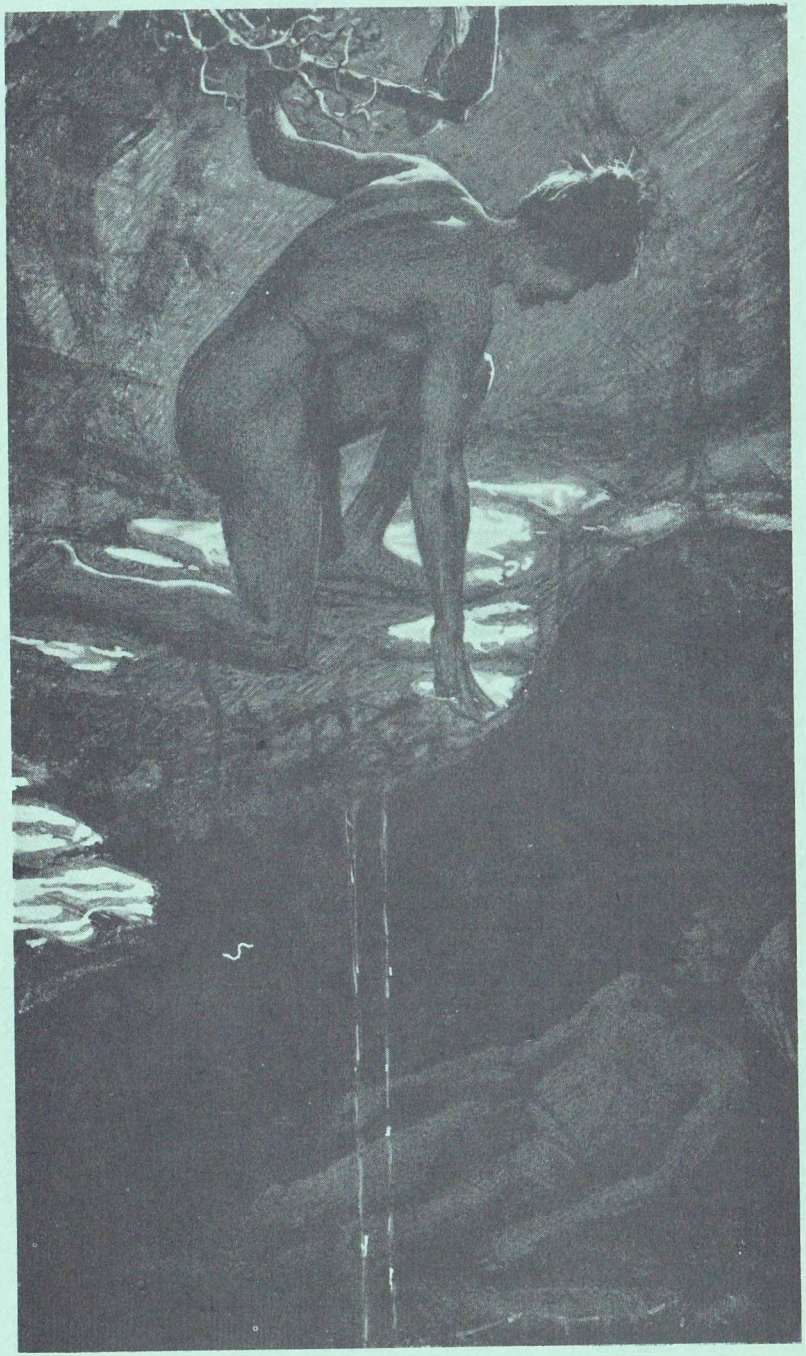
--or with a blank space:

> Thus they / the bride and groom / reached their chamber, and its carved door shut behind them.
>
> It was morning when the serving-women who waited without that room were summoned to it by the sound of a silver gong.
>
> (Fair Margaret: XIX)

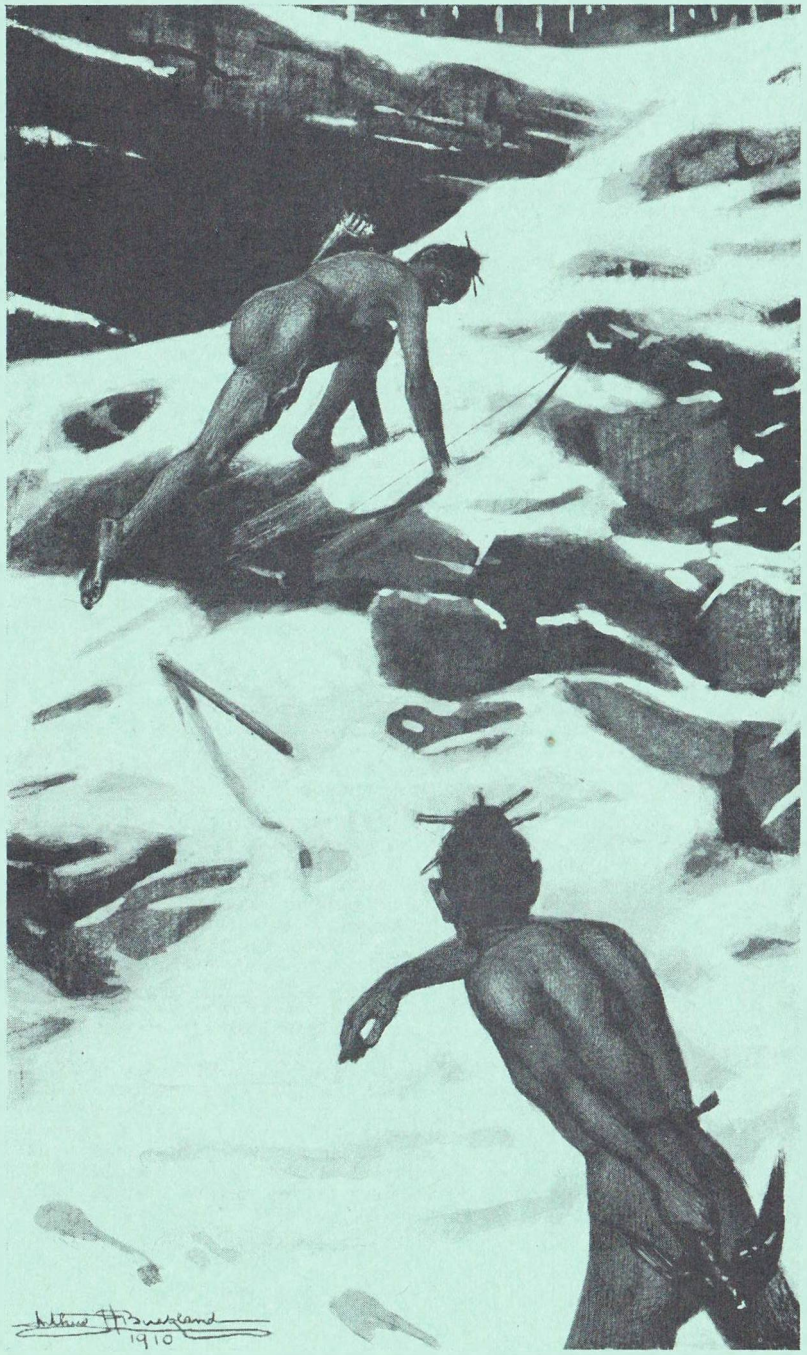
In Burroughs, on the other hand, we do not accompany bride and groom to the bridal bed or even to the bedroom door; instead we leave them at the altar, if indeed we are permitted to go even that far.

With Tarzan and Jane, and with John Carter and Dejah Thoris, we leap over, not only the wedding night, but also the wedding itself. In the first case one paragraph ends with the decision that there is to be an immediate double wedding (Hazel and Tennington as well as Tarzan and Jane) and the next begins, "The next day they sailed" (Return of Tarzan: XXVI). In the other case the leap covers a more extended period of time: "For nine years I served in the councils and fought in the armies of Helium" (Princess of Mars: XXVII).

Wh n first learning that David Innes and Dian the beautiful are married, the reader might well do a double-take: "Dian quickly drew / her brother / toward me, telling him that I was David, her mate" (At the Earth's Core: XV). If the double-take is followed by a perusal of the preceding chapters, the reader will find no direct reference to any mating of David and Dian, but will perhaps come to realize that since marriage in Pellucidar is by capture, it presumably involves no ceremony other than the defloration of the bride. If he then looks for a passage indicating a period of time in which this could have taken place, he will find a paragraph beginning "After a time we decided to set out for Sari" (Ibid.: XIV). Two paragraphs later David is bitten by a poisonous snake and they have to return to the cave in which Dian has been living, where "Dian's poultices of herbs and leaves finally reduced the swelling and drew out the poison." "And it was with feelings of sincere regret that we bade good-bye to our beautiful Garden of Eden, in the comparative peace and harmony of which we had lived the happiest moments of our lives." So if the defloration did not occur in the period covered by that "after a time," it surely did soon after the Serpent made his appearance.



LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT



HE THREW SHORT WITH A GASP

If the reader has read the first two of the Venus novels, where there is indeed talk of "marriage" (Pirates of Venus: XII; Lost on Venus: IX, XIV) and nothing to indicate that marriage on Venus has no legal basis, he is likely to be both surprised and irritated at finding in the third Venus novel an announcement that Carson and Duare are at last man and wife:

> "This is Duare, janjong of Vapaja, wife of Carson of Venus," and, indicating me, "this is Carson of Venus." It was all very simple. Of course Taman didn't say wife--there is no marriage among any of the people I have known upon Amtor /Venus/. A couple merely agree between themselves to live together, and they are ordinarily as faithful to one another as married couples on Earth are supposed to be. (Carson of Venus: V)

Again there is a Garden of Eden passage in the preceding chapter:

> For the first time in many months we could utterly relax without concern about the safety of ourself or that of the other /sic/. Those were the most perfect twenty-four hours I have ever spent.

And so it goes: there is no place in Burroughs where bride and groom are clearly put to bed with words, with asterisks, or with a blank space.

#8--LOVE SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL, AND THE RECURRING TRIANGLE

> It is interesting to imagine that somewhere in the universe or beyond is hidden...a complement of the other sex who exists for us alone, he or she from whom fate has separated us for a while and laid upon us the need to find again in life or death.
>
> (Treasure of the Lake: XII)

Haggard wrote seven novels in which the hero discovers his soul-mate only after he is already bound to another woman. In four of these the lovers keep it spiritual (Beatrice, Stella Fregelius, Way of the Spirit, Allan and the Ice Gods); in two they have at it one time (Jess and Joan Haste; cf. #4); and in one they set up housekeeping (Mary of Marion Isle).

Beatrice and Mary of Marion Isle offer a neat contrast. In both the hero's wife is interested in him only as a means of social advancement, and in both the mortal or nearly mortal illness of the hero's beloved child is due in large part to the mother's neglect. The heroine of Beatrice, in the agony of her unconsummated love and in order to nip a scandal that would wreck the hero's political career, drowns herself. The author thereupon clucks in disapproval: if she had had faith in Providence all would have been well, for a week later the hero's wife dies in a fire. In Mary of Marion Isle, the hero, cast away on a desert isle, finds there a girl who has lived alone since childhood. When love develops between them, the heroine has no thought but to follow nature, but the hero, a moral man, tries to keep it spiritual. When this attempt leads them both to mental and physical illness, it becomes obvious that they must choose between living in adultery and living completely apart. They choose adultery, they have a child, and they are completely happy until a rescue party arrives headed by the wife, who is of course quite indignant at what she finds. Our heroine now attempts the watery sacrifice but is found and rescued--and behold! a great storm arises and the wicked wife is drowned.

All this is the standerd stuff of Victorian melodrama, stuff so conventional that attempting to draw from it the author's personal philosophy would be absurd. But it does indicate that Haggard and his Victorian and post-Victorian readers, far from seeing in spiritual and physical love a contrast between good and evil, believed instead that in this life spiritual love is in itself incomplete, that indeed it is agony unless completed by physical union.

After all, what is the Ayeshan trilogy (She, Ayesha, Wisdom's Daughter)--what is this trilogy about other than one woman's 2000-year effort to reach of the bed of the man she loves? Still a virgin, since she has pledged herself to Isis, but past her first youth, Ayesha sees and falls in love with Kallikrates, who returns her love in the spirit but not in the flesh, for he already has a wife that he loves, the beautiful Amenartas (Wisdom's Daughter: XII). Knowing that she cannot compete in beauty with the youthful Amenartas, Ayesha bathes herself in the Fire of Life, which restores her beauty but also clothes her with the terrible powers of divinity--"Oh brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter/ When he appeared to hapless Semele!" (Marlowe's Doctor Faustus)--powers that make it impossible for her to have physical union with any man who has not also bathed in the fire, as she learns when the reluctant Kallikrates is stricken dead by what from another woman would have been mere angry words (Ibid.: XX-XXIII). For her sins she is condemned by the gods to continue to live in this world of flesh until she succeeds in achieving union with Kallikrates, who will be reincarnated sooner or later, and as often as necessary (Ibid.: XXIV-XXV).

Two thousand years later, on the Plain of Kor, Kallikrates reappears in the person of Leo Vincey and immediately becomes the lover of Ustane (She: VI-VII). Having disposed of this rather pallid reincarnation of Amenartas by killing her out of hand (Ibid.: XX), Ayesha leads her beloved to the Fire, where he again proves reluctant and where she makes the mistake of attempting to demonstrate its harmlessness by entering it for the second time (Ibid.: XXV-XXVI).

Since she has not fulfilled her destiny, her death from this foolhardy venture is immediately followed by another reincarnation, this time in central Asia, where Leo finds her twenty years later, having searched the whole world over (Ayesha: XIV). They know that they had better not touch each other until Leo has bathed in the Fire, but the Fire is thousands of miles away and they are impatient (Ibid.: XVIII); furthermore, Leo having this time passed through the ordeal of Amenartas entirely on his own (Ibid.: VII-X), as well as two other ordeals (XV-XVIII), is perhaps spiritually stronger than before, and she herself has been trying for several days to divest herself of some of her divinity, so they embrace, and Leo falls dead (Ibid.: XXIII). After taking a few hours to settle her mundane estate, Ayesha calls up some sort of flame that sweeps herself and Leo's body away to somewhere or other (Ibid.: XXIV). But this of course is not the end of the story unless the gods have relented, for they have not yet worked out their doom. Somewhere a reincarnated Kallikrates is searching, searching; somewhere a reincarnated Ayesha is waiting, waiting--waiting and hoping that this time she will be able to rid herself of what must surely be the oldest maidenhead in all the universe.

In addition to the books already mentioned, Haggard plays variations on the theme of love eternal in The Wanderer's Necklace, Love Eternal, When the World Shook, The Ancient Allan, and She and Allan. Burroughs attempted the theme in one book, The Eternal Lover. While vacationing on Tarzan's "vast estate in equatorial Africa," a girl from Nebraska swoons at the rumbling of an earthquake (Part 1: II), dreams that she is rescued from a rapist by Nu of the Neocene, who has been awakened by the same earthquake from an earthquake-induced sleep that began 100,000 years ago, and who carries her into the jungle in the belief that she is his stone-age sweetheart (Part 1: III-XIII). When they arrive at Nu's cave, another earthquake sends them back to the stone age, where she is saved again and again by the incomparable Nu from rape and similar indignities until still another earthquake returns her to the 20th century, where she awakens firmly resolved not to marry the Nebraskan who had proposed just before she swooned--or any other civilized man of these unmanly times (Part 2: XV).

#9--POST COITUM TRISTE, AND THE TIME-TRAVEL PARADOX

Writing in collaboration with Andrew Lang, Haggard combined the theme of the recurring triangle with that of the lost first love in The World's Desire, which may perhaps best be described as a book-long lamentation of post coitum triste or, if you will, a book-long celebration of its corollary: "though thou hast not thy bliss / For ever wilt thou love and she be fair!"

At the beginning of the story the aged but still virorous Odysseus has a vision of Aphrodite, who first reprimands him for never having worshiped at her shrine--

> For thou didst but endure the caresses of Circe...and thou wert aweary in the arms of Calypso, / who / never came to her longing. As for her who is dead, thy dear wife Penelope, thou didst love her with a loyal heart, but never with a heart of fire.

--and then goes on to show him Helen as she was when he once saw her in their youth, before her marriage to Menelaus, and to promise him that if he remains true to this vision he will "sleep at last in the arms of the fairest of women" (Book 1: II).

In Tanis, in the Temple of Hathor, we find Helen as the goddess incarnate. For every man she is his own first love--either the girl he wooed and lost, or the girl he wooed and won as she was before he possessed her. In Tanis we also find Queen Meriamun, who tells us that these three had once been two: until "the kiss of our love awakened That which slept, the fire of our love warmed That which was a-cold" (Book 1: VII). When Odysseus has made his way through battle and intrigue to what he thinks is Helen's bed, the woman he wakes to find in his arms is Meriamun, who through witchcraft had assumed Helen's appearance. When he finally reaches the true Helen, it is only to be told that since he has not been true to his vision, having allowed himself to be led astray, he cannot enjoy her in this incarnation. Even so, he can take heart, for the three of them will meet in a future incarnation, the struggle will be joined again, and perhaps this time he will win his way past Meriamun to Helen's bed.

It should not be necessary to point out to readers of science-fiction that we are here involved in the time-travel paradox: if Odysseus ever succeeds in reaching Helen's bed, the three will become four: one Odysseus, one Helen, and two Meriamuns.

#10--THE WICKEDNESS OF WICKED PEOPLE

The hero in Burroughs is not only chaste himself, he is also properly self-righteous about the unchastity of other people. While seeking an exit from the palace of a wicked jeddak, Hadron, in a cloak that makes him invisible, stumbles into

> the forbidden apartment of the Jeddara herself. It is a good thing for the royal lady that it was I and not / the Jeddek / who came thus unexpectedly upon her, for her position was most compromising, and from his harness I judged that her good-looking companion was a slave. In disgust I retreated...
>
> (Fighting Man of Mars: XII)

There are at least two other scenes of this type in Burroughs (Bandit of Hell's Bend: XIV; I am a Barbarian: VII), but none at all in Haggard, who is quite casual about adultery when practiced by wicked people (Dawn: XIV; Colonel Quaritch: XIII).

The posthumous I Am a Barbarian, which Burroughs wrote a few years before his death, is almost entirely given up to the hero's disgust at the wickedness of the Romans, and while this wickedness of course includes other things, it is the sex that bothers him most, as may be seen from a rather curious statement about the murderous Agrippina: "She was haughty, arrogant, cruel, bitter, half-insane, and wholly dominated by a fanatical desire for power, but morally she was above reproach" (XII).

In this book we are asked to believe that a Briton captured when a boy of eleven and brought to Rome as a slave of the imperial family would have, not only when first captured but also during his adolescence and young manhood, the moral attitudes of Victorian melodrama. And indeed, we are asked to believe the same thing about the Stone Age hero of "The Resurrection of Jimber-Jaw" (in Tales of Three Planets), who has been found in a glacier, thawed out, and brought to Hollywood, where he becomes so disgusted with the loose morals of twentieth-century girls that he finally steals into a meat-freezing locker and so returns to whence he came.

There is no mention of homosexuality in any book by Haggard or Burroughs other than I Am a Barbarian. When our hero, now twelve, finds himself in prison, he is puzzled when two of the older men start fighting over him; fortunately for his innocence, the guard takes the two men away and the other prisoners are too delicate to explain what the fighting was about (IV). In a later chapter it is mentioned in passing that Caligula has begun to give "increasing attention to young boys" (XVII).

In his eight Egyptian romances Haggard treats incest with what may be called casual disapproval; that is, he expresses or has a character express some disapproval of the practice, but no one ever holds up his hands in horror. The following is typical:

> "A brother wed a sister!" exclaimed the Wanderer.
>
> "It is the custom of the Royal House, from the days of the Timeless Kings, the children of Horus. An old custom."
>
> "The ways of his host are good in the eyes of a stranger," said the Wanderer, courteously. (World's Desire, Book 1: VI)

Aside from the instance of a heroine who inexplicably refuses to marry her hero and keeps refusing him until she learns that her dead husband was not the hero's father but only his adoptive uncle (Girl from Farris's: XIV), there is no mention of incest in Burroughs, except again in I Am a Barbarian, and the way the subject is handled here says a good deal about the effect of self-righteous prudery on Burroughs' writing.

Still the girl advanced—chained by that clammy eye.

A Mahar casts her sinister spell

Our eleven-year-old hero begins his life in Rome as the personal servant of the four-year-old Caligula, upon whom he remains in constant attendance for some twenty years. The first fifteen chapters are devoted to the childhood and youth of Caligula and his brothers and sisters, and in these chapters nothing whatever is said about their sexual practices other than two or three comments in passing on visits paid to whore houses by the young princes. And then in Chapter 16 we come to the decision of the young Emperor to marry his sister:

> While I was shocked, I was not wholly surprised, as it had long been apparent to the members of the household that he was fascinated with Drusilia, with whom, as with his other sisters, he had had sexual relations since boyhood.

Even though the narrator was to these children more a playmate than a servant, we are still expected to assume that he himself is innocent--and innocent in both senses of the word, for when he is seventeen and has just met our heroine (has, indeed, just saved her from rape, which is the usual form of introduction for hero and heroine in Burroughs), he is utterly astonished to learn from the heroine that her young mistress has a lover--and she only thirteen years old! (VII).

We may add here that there is one orgy in Haggard and three in Burroughs. In Haggard it is the conquering Persians in the Temple of Isis, with the Great King himself attacking Ayesha:

> His fierce bestial face glared into mine; his hot arm was about me, he dragged me to his embrace, while all the beasts of his company shouted in vile joy. (Wisdom's Daughter: XVI)

But Ayesha is saved, having foresightedly made plans to burn the place down. In Burroughs we have a Roman orgy, where Caligula is delicate enough to take the woman he has chosen into another room (I am a Barbarian: XVII), a Negro orgy in the Temple of the Leopard God, where the villain does the vile deed in the company of priests and priestesses who are presumably also doing it (Tarzan and the Leopard Men: X), and a nice clean orgy enjoyed by the members of a robber gang in mediaeval England, robbers whom their leader, our hero, will not permit to harm women or children (Outlaw of Torn: VII, XV).

ILLUSTRATIONS

Pages 138, 139: These are from The Master Girl (London, 1910), a caveman story by Ashton Hilliers. They should be contrasted with the illustrations by St. John for At the Earth's Core, Pellucidar, and The Land That Time Forgot--or, for that matter, with the covers for the current paperback editions of these books, the other Pellucidar stories, and The Cave Girl.

Pages 144, 145: Two illustrations for the same scene in At the Earth's Core--the one by St. John from the original edition (1922), the other from or intended for an edition published or planned by Canaveral in the 1960s. The scene (Chapt. 8) is the beginning of a ritualistic meal: the Mahar is preparing to eat the girl. The girl is from a group of humans that the Mahars have raised as food animals. With his customary vagueness, Burroughs says nothing whatsoever about how, or whether or not, she is costumed. As a food animal she would presumably have had no opportunity of obtaining even the modest costume of the earlier illustration--much less the jeweled g-string, the metal (golden?) earrings and bracelet, or the lipstick, rougue, and eyebrow pencil that she has obviously just used, in the later illustration.

The Man Assumes His Echo

With his dark horse
he measures
silence.
He knows what it is like
when there is something left over.

He moves
along the walls
of immense buildings.
The shadow of his small black horse
passes by outside him, passes by
within, and is extended
into stallion.

Growing larger
and larger, he travels about his neighbourhood
living with the company
of a few words

    give space
            give space
    to my body.

Time
after time he bumps against
the walls. He is followed by the cart,
its incantations to exorcise
his new life. The eyes
of his body tell him
that he is an everyday man, that he arrived
in this shape to witness
the colourless bleeding
of his history, his freshly forgotten
and unrespectable death. To convince himself that
he is distinct from others
the iron of his hooves strikes noon.

-- Rosalind MacPhee --

Alibi

Sometimes,
I dream of disappearing
and then again, sometimes
I think of preparing myself for fire:
the breaking and coming together
of stone: the world, a land-
slide, a confusion
of rivers. Naked,
a polished stone, I dive
downward
with whitened face,
to roll over years, the eminence
of my armour.

Years ago,
I cried for immortality.
Someone came and brought me
centuries, brought me tears of sulphur
and a river mouth
made crude
by my insensitive years. So now,
from the river of stones
I am content to be
the smallest
of
stones.

How to leave oneself
without really leaving. Sometimes,
looking inward,
I get into this dangerous position: stone,
river, woman. Other eyes say:
"that is a river, or a stone" or
"that is a woman." Strange, how
out of this indiscriminate behaviour
something real is planned.

-- Rosalind Macphee --

Gazelle

Remember when I was a gazelle and so were you?
Remember the news the day we left the Louvre:
Six men seared to curls, others
Badly burned but still alive in cotton?

Remember the way we shook our heads like cock
Robins? Oh, the grace of our bounds through high grief!

Remember: curled that night against me, saying
Lines about roses in the flecked dark?

Remember gazelle? Gazelle.
We talked so many words,
Never saw one even in a zoo.
We settled for the bent-nosed elephant,
That pile of exotic snakes,
Those two flamingos that stared.
Sad strange creatures so like us, we said.

No gazelle, though I hear you have one room
And a sofa bed in Maryland.
No gazelle, though you might not recognize me
In a beard.

No gazelle. But I'll save the sound
And the sight
Suspended.

-- Bruce Mayers --

There Are More Cat Poems

There are more cat poems than there are
Cats on speaking terms with poets.
And yet every cat poem is
Quite favourable to cats.
My cat and I are not on speaking terms,
And still I am writing this poem
About him. He is arrogant,
But I want to explain away
His pride. His bare-assed, neutered pride
Will call me to my study door,
For nothing, a dozen times a night,
And only when I swear, "Last chance,"
Will he come in. Then he will go
And eat his fill and drink his fill
And spill his full self on the chair
That is his chair. And he will stare
At me at my desk with his closed eyes.
I never catch him looking at me,
But he does invariably
Catch me peeking at him.
If I go to him and touch
His supercilious fur, he
Immediately will clean
The furrows my fingers left.
If I ignore him he will move
Against my stand. His insolence
Will make me comb across his stripes,
And he will guide my raking hand.
But after all his synonyms
Of pride have called me to perform,
He will come up to me and purr.
There are more cat poems.

-- Henry Petroski --

The Mad Man's Love Poem

I still remember.

The wind pulls your hair from
right to left, like unhappy butterflies
against the rain.
You're out on that ledge,
the hotel's wall meets
you from behind.
All these people stand around
and you only make out their eyes.
You shudder--you jump.
You free fall from three
stories up without a
chute. Like the butcher
slamming a side of beef
on to his meatblock, your
body interrupts the
sidewalk. From your mouth
gushes blood--I want to
kiss you; from your hands,
thighs and feet ooze
that blood--it's like squeezing
a mosquito when it is sucking from
you.

My mouth tears into your
neck like a dog shaking
a dead rabbit. I bite down
deep into the veins and
tear out the side of
your neck.

The attendants have taken
away my mattress--
I've shredded it, again.

I'm your husband.

I keep pounding on these
damn white
walls.

I still remember.

-- Peter Aleksandrowicz --

Concentration Camp Poem No. 719

these nights then are filled with dark,
and light
and particles of dust.

one speck enters the light
of the artificial sun,
and is jolted (the desperate sound
of a wintering fly)
and magnified
and suddenly sucked into my pupil.

yes, i am filled with dark.

Concentration Camp Poem No. 1648

a pretty daffodil
explodes from your eye
abe,
you are
a superb flowerpot.

-- Reinhard Walz --

Saturday in the Park

by

Mort Castle

The piece directly ahead of me in line was rye good stuff. A long, blond scalplock hung down from her shave-pate and she wore a silver streetsuit that squeezed her tocks and made me want to. On the rare occasions a piece does make the park Saturdays, she's generally a tideturner-sunstopper that looks like she belongs on the Thursday night SlamFace shows on the tube.

JimBoy, I told myself as the line advanced, you can't tickle your brains thinking about gronking that piece. You've got to keep rye tuned to the Scamper and the tower. That's why you're here, meandude.

Rye good advice, but the brain tickle didn't go away as I eyed that wiggling good stuff. She showed her punched plastic card to the parkpapa in the gatebooth, and he held it up to the walleye behind him. I was rye surprised when parkpapa told her "Prepshed Five."

Five is reserved for fourth degree meandudes and there's not a lot that can claim that rank--rye not a lot of pieces. I managed to catch up with her on the way to the shed. There was a deep blue dot in the middle of her forehead, exactly the colour of her eyes, and the bounders she had upfront bounced and bumped like they were trying to outdo the smooth action of her tocks inback.

"Haven't seen you here before," I said.

That was a rye ig opening, but it worked. I told her I was JimBoy Jardin, fourth degree too, and in return for that datahunk learned that she was SueBaby Donald, earned her rank in St. Louis, was staying with her aunt while on vacation, had heard about the good scamper action here in Chicago, and wanted to try it out.

"Something else we could try out too, piece," I said.

"A gronk?" she asked.

"Rye," I said. "I know a nice place where we could have a couple of brain wasters, and then we could out to my 'partment and gronk away the afternoon."

We stood still for a moment and I felt something go tickclick between us the way it sometimes does for a dude and a piece. Even though it's every meandude for himself in the Scamper, I knew that we'd just made up a new rule for the two of us; we'd still be out for the tower and the big slice of the action, but neither one of us was going to grease the other.

"The scamper runs rye," she said, "we'll do that."

We went into the prepshed and the door locked behind us. We checked in at the walleye in the hall, got our plastiarmour suits from the autovend, and entered the main dressing room. There were already ten meandudes getting dressed and when they saw good stuff SueBaby, it got a lot of them like a skullsmash.

I picked a vacant bench, one of the six, and started peeling my streetsuit. SueBaby joined me and everyone's eyes watched her skim off that tight silver skin.

Why not? She was the ultimate goodstuff, all bounders and tocks and smooth moves. I wondered how many of these meandudes had ever gone up against a piece in a Scamper? Not many, you can bet, so it was doing a real brain-tickle on them.

That was all to my advantage. Too many of them were going to be thinking gronking when they should be thinking tower, tower, tower. The way Suebaby slowly got ready convinced me she knew rye well what she was doing to those meandudes.

When we were all dressed, the walleye in the centre of the ceiling blinked twice and ordered, "Line up." A row of blue lights on the far wall lit up and we got into formation. SueBaby was at the end of the line, to my left, and there was a heavy-breathing meandude to my right.

I figured I'd have it rye sweet taking him out before he even got scampering.

The wall before us slid down and we had a view of the grounds. I glanced at SueBaby and I could see she was impressed. The hundred yards of astroturf are kept in the best condition, not like at some parks, and the three safefences are replaced on a yearly basis. The best though, two hundred yards past the safefences, is the tower, forty feet tall, the highest in the midwest. On top of that tower you can see all of the park, and anything below looks so small as to be rye well worth nothing. It's a tower you want to climb, and no meandude had better try to stop you.

"Ready," announced the walleye. I took a deep breath, got loose.

"Set." I checked on either side. SueBaby was in a half-crouch, looking like she knew what she was doing, but the heavy breather on my right was holding himself too stiff and straight, a perfect target for a quick elbow-shot.

That's what I gave him. When the walleye barked, "Scamper!" I lifted my fist under my chin and then snapped a rigid arm back. My elbow caught him in the throat. I heard him gasping and choking but by then I was moving.

I had speed. I left most of the meandudes at least ten yards behind and it was all clear to the space between the second and third fence. I glanced back to see two meandudes who might have been able to catch me waste themselves slamming each other. That's double ig stuff. You don't slam unless there's someone rye by the tower; you scamper around the slammers and you only get into that action if you have no choice.

Then I heard running coming up hard. "Here's one, JimBoy!" SueBaby was real fourth degree. The foot she jammed at my ankles would have had me doing about three yards on my nose if it had caught me right. But I'm fourth degree for sure too, and so I turned on a little extra speed and took off like someone had slipped a thumb to my tocks.

There were only twenty yards or so to the tower. I don't know where he came from, but I saw something rushing at me from the right and I tossed on the stoppers. Rye smooth move, because the meandude throwing the big body-block had enough bulk to skullsmash me with one bootshot. My sudden stop left him off balance. I gave him the elbow in his gut spot and a quick two-hander to the back of the neck. He landed on his face.

I shouldn't have done it, but I was mad, and the mean tickle in my brain was cutting at my thinking. I did my heels on the small of his back and, next thing I knew, SueBaby was scampering past and starting up the tower ladder.

I ran and leaped. I got my hands around her ankles and tugged. Her feet slipped off the rung and I let my weight pull her down. She landed hard on her hands and knees.

Anyone else, I'd have given a boot to the skull so he'd stay put until I made the tower platform. Instead, I slapped Suebaby's tocks to pay her back for the shot at my feet and laughed, "Sorry, piece," and grabbed the ladder.

I must have set a new record getting to the platform. The rifle was waiting for me. I scooped it up and slammed it to my shoulder. I wasted precious time making rye sure that none of the scamperers in my sights had a long blond scalplock. When I was certain, I opened up on three of them jammed between the first and second safefences. I greased two of them, but the third managed to dive out of line and I wasted a bullet.

A poor scamperer was caught less than halfway to the fences. It had to be the one I'd done the backbuster on. He was trying some fancy broken field moves, but I put the sight on him and exploded his skull.

One shot left and there was absolutely no one in sight to put the big grease to. Well, it had been rye good action anyway, and I'd taken out three at least. I fired the last shot into the air.

The announcement carried all across the park. "Scamper, Fourth Degree! Ended! Report back to the Prepshed!" I took my time about it. I stood there on the platform looking down at where they were carting off the meandudes I'd greased.

SueBaby was already in the showers when I got to the prepshed. I joined her after dumping my plastiarmour in the burnemup, and did a slow study this time of her good stuff.

"Good action," she said.

I nodded. "Maybe Charles Whitman Park doesn't get the publicity like Calley in New York or some of the university parks like Kent State, but we have the best scamper that I've ever been in." I soaped my hair, adjusted the spray so that a warmer blast hit me. "Where did you disappear when I made the platform?"

SueBaby laughed. "Some meandudes get the big brain tickle when they get the gun. If it moves, or if it's bigger than a bug, they'll grease it, so I crawled under the tower and stayed there until you finished."

I smiled. "Not this meandude, piece. No way I'd miss out on gronking with you. You're good stuff."

The gronking we did that afternoon was the best good stuff yet.

Will the Real Belief Please Part the Waters?

by

Steven Domeo

Clifford Wilson, Crash Go the Chariots, Lancer, 1972.

Since sightings of flying saucers tripped off a spate of books and movies in the 1950's, the subject of verifiable earthly visitations from extraterrestrials has enjoyed a fluctuating popularity with the public. The film 2001: A Space Odyssey brought another aspect to the fore: could alien beings have dropped in on man from time to time in the past and influenced his development? The German "autodidact" (actually a euphemism for "unlearned") Erich von Däniken's sifting of archaeological artifacts for evidence in Chariots of the Gods: and Gods from Outer Space (both 1968) has lofted the theory into renewed prominence even to the point of warrenting an hour-long television documentary called "In Search of Ancient Astronauts" earlier this year. Dr. Clifford Wilson, who holds degrees in religion and archaeology (in that order), has, however, attempted to dispute von Däniken's contentions in his own book, Crash Go the Chariots. But what could have been a critically vital rebuttal to von Däniken's Chariots of the Gods? quickly dissipates into an awkwardly written, hypocritical, bigoted, illogical, inconsistent, and often trivial tract that will only embarrass scientists the more. Wilson does properly discredit many of the weaknesses in von Däniken's largely unsupportable theory. But by retorting in the same kind of incoherent style and logic as his adversary, Wilson undercuts the credibility and usefulness of his entire effort.

It is true that he does attack some major points and offer more archaeologically sound alternatives. Von Däniken's suggestion that the strange intersecting roads at Nazca were landing strips for ancient astronauts, for instance, is at least called into question when Wilson presents some culturally comparative data to indicate they may have performed some astronomical or religious purpose. Wilson's alternative account of the destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah by relatively natural volcanic means seems more readily acceptable, too, than von Däniken's which presupposes a deus ex machina nuclear devestation. The same can be said of Wilson's investigation of the 16th century Piri Reis map which is not as accurate as von Däniken claims when he tries to show that it must have been based on photographs from space. Wilson also points to a number of inconsistencies such as von Däniken's speculation at one point that the aliens were from the Pleiades and at another from Mars, or his dependence at times on dates provided by means of carbon-14 dating whose accuracy he elsewhere questions. Neither of course can offer tangible proof, but Wilson's general dependence on archaeological and physically natural explanations makes von Däniken's theory seem wildly unnecessary and desperate in its attempts to encompass all mysteries with one superimposed oversimplification.

But Wilson's arguments are so haphazardly organized, so hastily written, so embarrassingly repetitive, that his professionalism as a writer becomes as dubious as von Däniken's. "We have said," he repeats at one point, "that von Däniken jumps from subject to subject." Then eight pages later when he repeats that again, he rationalizes his own structure (and this "introductory" defense comes more than halfway through the book): "Thus a systematic analysis of his work is difficult, and even impossible if it must be confined to a small book." With that kind of self-justification Wilson would no doubt argue that an analysis of Joyce's Finnegans Wake must be written as chaotically as the novel seems to be. Capitalized headings boldly interrupt the prose in each chapter but more often than not fail to label a transition in thought or subject. Proper transitions between paragraphs and ideas are frequently non-existent. "As we conclude this section," he writes, "let us glance at those Nazca 'roads' again"--after he should have finished the subject more thoroughly when he first brought it up. An anecdotal and irrelevant digression about his having to pay to get into the Cairo Museum (poor fellow) proves an awkward way for him eventually to take up von Däniken's belief that embalming was a kind of primitive cryogenics. He similarly backs into his alternative suggestion about Sodom and Gommorah's destruction by introducing geographical data without first preparing the reader with a reason for it all. In Chapter 8 entitled "Spiritual Forces Around Us" Wilson digresses to summarize Greek mythology (a subject on which he is obviously no authority) without ever returning to dispute any specific point von Däniken made relative to that topic. In addition to such "literary" techniques, Wilson also adds two dialogues, one with Geoff Peers, an electronics technician who easily invalidates von Däniken's theory that the Ark of the Covenant was an electrically charged communications device, and a final one with Dr. Frederick H. Giles, Jr., Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy at the University of South Carolina, who contests von Däniken's presupposition that life exists elsewhere in the universe. While it is admirable in a way that he accepts his limitations in these areas and calls on specialists instead, the dialogues prove unnecessarily long-winded and repetitive. Simply recording the taped interviews verbatim like this is literary laziness.

But to judge from the calibre of his writing throughout the book, it's understandable why he might be tempted to rely on the greater security of a tape recorder. Wilson obviously suffers from an extremely limited vocabulary and apparently the delusion that it is not limited at all. If it isen't evident from his relaince on the phrase "way-out" to describe von Däniken's theories, it is after reading six vastly overdone metaphorical descriptions of his opponent's chariots symbolically crashing into anything from the Great Pyramid of Cheops or the Dead Sea to "the oblivion of forgetfulness," which must have sounded particularly cute to someone of Wilson's sensibilities. When he isn't making flagrant mistakes in word choice, he titillates us with this kind of humour (speaking of his adventures in the Cairo Museum): "It was enough to scare you off mummies for the rest of your life. Though I suppose life would be rather odd with only daddies." All of this would seem like petty criticism except that such things convey the singular impression that this book is but a first draft frantically dashed off to the publisher not as a serious scientific refutation but rather as something meant only to cash in on the sudden popularity of von Däniken's books.

Even worse, however, Wilson seldom argues as a scientist. He remembers the scientific method well enough to write patronizingly, "Scientific investigation, and the research methods of modern academic inquiry, demand that ALL evidence be examined impartially." But everywhere else in the book he is either too irrationally defensive about archaeologists or too blinded by religious bigotry to do what he condemns von Däniken for not doing. His greatest proof that von Däniken is wrong is the disputable inviolability of the Bible whose accounts Wilson considers "superior." In comparing the Biblical and Christian god to Babylonian gods who are fallible enough to be terrified, Wilson actually labels pagan belief in gods "gross polytheism"--this from an archaeologist! But he doesn't stop there. The Bible, he asserts, "does not bear the marks of the grotesque, the superstitious or the magical," something no Bible scholar with the slightest awareness of comparative anthropology would say. Assuming only mono- rather than polygenesis as an explanation for similarities in folklore and mythology, Wilson stubbornly clings to "that impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture" merely to prove that the Biblical version of the Flood came before the Babylonian--a fact that is not only debatable but irrelevant in contesting von Däniken's suppositions. Though he says, "This present writing of an 'alternative' to the 'Chariots' is not meant only for a 'Christian' circle of readers," he concludes the book by passing off von Däniken's extraterrestrial alien-gods as arrantly "objectionable" to the Christian concept and reminds the reader that we should hold no false gods before the "real" one.

To use another phrase that Wilson belabours, this is typical of his approach. Although he denounces von Däniken for begging the question, Wilson hardly seems the one to cast even a fragment of the first stone. Examples of Wilson's peculiar brand of logic are endless. Our primitive ancestors, he says, couldn't have passed on ancient legends of divine visitations because their languages were not "simple" nor was their knowledge (Wilson almost flirts with substantiating von Däniken's premise when he adds, "They appear rather to have been transported by some time machine into the 21st century A.D."). He does the same thing elsewhere by declaring, "The / Biblical / statement 'there were giants in the earth in those days' is simply a factual presentation..." as if that somehow discounts any explanation of what the giants were or where they came from. Again, the account in Exodus couldn't have been modeled on the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh because "Exodus begins with the birth of Moses, and is a historical record of Israel as they became a nation." In trying to explain how Lot's wife could have been drowned by an avalanche of salt, Wilson implies a totally interpolated causality by concluding with a curious brand of objectivity, "In her heart Lot's wife was rejecting the graces of God, and she was overcome by the descending salt which encased her." Even the fact that Abraham saw smoke ascending as though from a furnace contains, at least in Wilson's mind, an "incoherent meaning" of "the idea of pressure--the result of many tons of earth pressing down on that hidden oil field." Proof that ESP is possible also inheres, so says he, in the "fact" that man was created in God's image. And this is Wilson's coup de grace, his imperious dismissal of von Däniken's entire repetoire of speculations: "The answer to Eric von Däniken's question on the cover of his book, 'Was God as astronaut?' is easily answered. No. The true God, the Almighty, is the One Whose character is consistently presented in the pages of both Old and New Testaments."

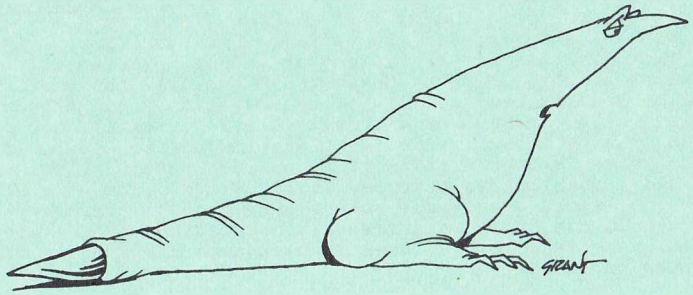
"Sometimes," he explains earlier, "the points that von Däniken brings up are so weak as supports to his argument that one feels like saying, 'So what?' " And once again, true to form, Wilson proceeds to bear out an hypocrisy he apparently fails to see. By disputing that the Sumerian king list was perpetuated not on "seals and coins" as von Däniken says but rather on clay tablets, Wilson neatly avoids dealing with the more significant and uncomfortable detail that only eight or ten kings are included on a list meant to cover over 400,000 years. Neither does there seem to be much point when he calls our attention to an inconsistency in von Däniken's reporting that the oldest books ever written appeared in 2,000 B.C. and 5,000 B.C. He doesn't even seem to have read his own quotations very carefully. Before concluding that the Biblical account of the Flood is superior to all others, he quotes Robert T. Boyd's "telling summary" that the Flood motif appears in nearly every culture, a quotation that in fact could actually challenge his later statement but which he simply leaves hanging as if the quotation were only on display to prove Wilson's questionable erudition. By looking for trivial errors, admittedly an easy thing to do in von Däniken's books, Wilson frequently manages to sidestep any meaningful confrontation.

Without question von Däniken's Chariots of the Gods is fraught with mistakes that anyone well versed in anthropology and archaeology would recognize. His sequel, Gods from Outer Space, when it isn't simply repeating what he claimed already, only makes matters worse by adding such things as the assumption that extraterrestrials caught man committing Original Sin--sodomy, to von Däniken, which produced the half-animal, half-man creatured immortalized in stone, paintings, and mythology--promptly chastized the human race, and sent us all off on a more moral path. Even if aliens had visited Earth, odds don't exactly favour their appearing as often or in as varied forms as von Däniken believes. Neither do his explanations need to presume extraterrestrial visitations; if they really did take place, they could have been made by fellow human beings from a more technologically advanced civilization, a theory Atlanteans have found more attractive. In many ways von Däniken does seem more than vaguely reminiscent of the most famous Atlantean of all, Ignatius Donnelly, who first proposed in Atlantis--Myths of the Antediluvian World (1882) that refugees from the destroyed continent populated the rest of the world. (He later went on to popularize that irritatingly persistent myth that, because of punctuation errors in early folios, Shakespeare's plays must have all been written by Francis Bacon, a bit of reasoning that suggests why the comparison with von Däniken is inevitable.) Certainly such people at least must be given credit for their imagination. Were it not for von Däniken's poor writing (and / or incompetent translator), he might make a much better science-fiction writer. For as a non-scientist, he is, as he many times points out, free to propose revolutionary explanations to scientists who regrettably don't accept revolutionary or imaginative ideas with as much dispatch as Wilson would like to believe.

A case in point is the scientific establishment's reception of another relatively wild theory concocted by Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky in his Worlds in Collision (1950), which proposed, among other things, that Venus invaded our solar system as a comet.

But Dr. Clifford Wilson--"M.A., B.D., Ph.D." as the book cover impressively adds--hardly proves even qualified to write a rejoiner to von Däniken's theory--although in another way he is a worthy opponent in that his irrational and aimless style of writing and his self-righteous, pseudo-scientific biases merely enhance the absurdity of dealing with a presentation like von Däniken's at all. Curiously, the most pertinent reaction to this debate does appear in Wilson's book; it comes, however, not from him but from Dr. Frederick Giles who quotes G.K. Chesterton: "Life is full of a ceaseless shower of small coincidences...It is this that lends a frightful plausibility to all false doctrines and evil fads. There are always such props of accidental arguments upon anything." Von Däniken's euhemerism substantiates a preconception no less than Wilson's unswerving faith in the Bible's historicity, but both share that all too human flaw of presuming any sense of order in a reality of chaos.

The one remarkable denominator in all this is that in his search for simple patterns and teleologies, man longs to believe somebody or something is out there in space watching or waiting. Even figures as reputable as exobiologist Carl Sagan of Cornell University and astronomer Frank Drake, director of Project Ozma, have searched Biblical and other ancient sources of myths and legends for evidence that aliens have visited us in the past, as Walter Sullivan reports in the 1965 winner of the international non-fiction prize, We are Not Alone. In the "appendix" of Crash Go the Chariots, Dr. Giles questions the likelihood of other planets and, assuming only anthropomorphic forms of life, believes we are indeed alone in the universe. "Of men elsewhere and beyond," anthropologist Loren Eisley also concludes in The Immense Journey (1957), "there will be none forever." But the hope persists that some kind of life besides ours exists somewhere out in the billions of stars and galaxies that populate the cosmos. Significantly, both Pioneer 10 and 11 which will sail to Jupiter and beyond bear golden plaques describing our civilization in symbols on the remote chance that they may be intercepted by intelligent life in the future. But as long as man refuses to accept his own strengths and weaknesses in a still lonely universe, we will continue to be plagued by desperate theorists like von Däniken and pietistic pundits like Wilson. If this is more than slightly disconcerting, there is some consolation: it might be better to dream now than really know the truth.



Theatre of the Absurd
The Future as Metaphor for the Marx Brothers

by

Peter Bernhart

Editor's Note: Peter Bernhardt is not a substitution for RQ's other columnists, but an addition. Bill Blackbeard and Jim Harmon are to return next issue (and Harry Warner, after completion of his All Our Yesterdays, vol. 2), and there'll also be a Fifth Columnist, Redd Boggs.

All the clichés have been lined up in a row. You can pick out the slithering horror, the robot butler, the hero from the past revived in the future, automated sex, the brutal security force, and the technocracy ruled by deceit. Now imagine Woody Allen craftily sneaking up to each one and slamming a shaving cream pie right in its face. This is basically the theme of Allen's latest film, "Sleeper." His aim is perfect.

Followers of Allen's brand of comedy recognize his love affair with traditional fantasy techniques and science-fiction. His anthology, Getting Even, includes a day in the life of Dracula and a short play entitled "Death Knocks," where a clumsy grim reaper plays cards with his intended victim a la "The Seven Seals." In "Play It Again, Sam" the neurotic hero is coached by the spirit of Bogart. In his film version of Everything You Always Wanted To Know about Sex, a mad scientist creates a gargantuan homocidal breast,and there is a clever look behind the sex drives of a normal red-blooded male who is operated submarine fashion by a host of tiny technicians wearing white laboratory smocks. With "Sleeper," Allen engulfs his audience with a brilliant parody of pulp science-fiction and grade B sci-fi flicks.

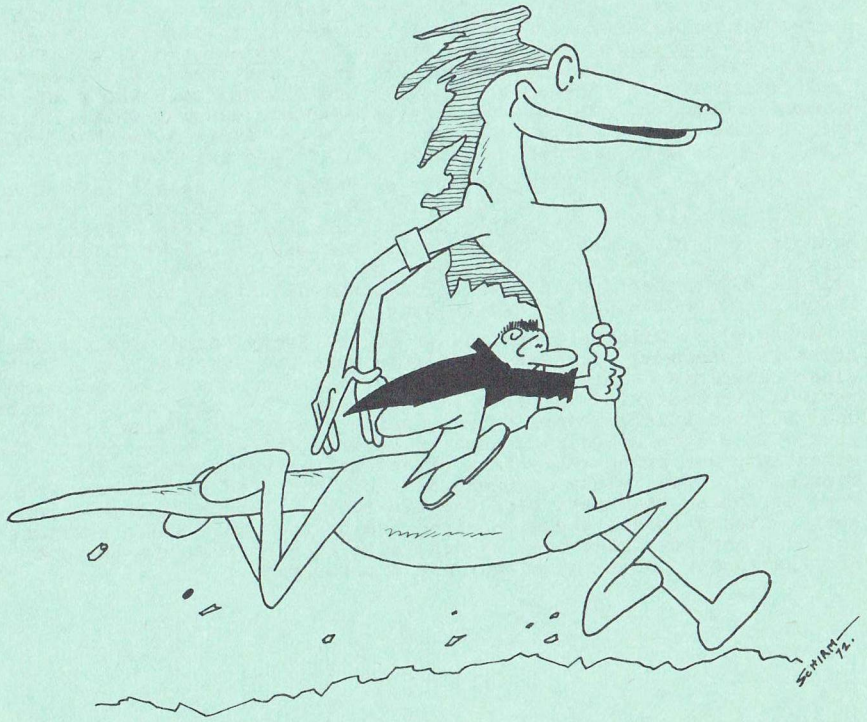
Woody uses slapstick as a weapon of satire. He doesn't just slip on any old bananna skin. No, he slips on the skin of a fruit the size of a canoe that has been pumped up by transfusions from a futuristic hydroponic farm. Although he fears hideous monsters like "Something with the body of a crab and the head of a social worker," his own private BEM arises from a bowl of unattended instant pudding, then turns into a malicious overgrown blob.

Woody plays Milo, a former owner of the Happy Carrot organic food store in Greenwich Village who checks into the hospital for a peptic ulcer, develops complications, is placed in a cryogenic capsule and revived two centuries later to save society. "How does it feel to be dead for two hundred years?" the heroine (played by Dianne Keaton) asks. "It's like spending a week in Beverly Hills," Woody quips. The scientists who bring Woody back expect to resurrect one of those broad-shouldered, clean complexioned gods out of a Phil Farmer novel. However, once they peel back the tin foil, all they find is a neurotic, bleary faced, snaggle-haired health food nut, while everyone in their century knows that starch, high cholesterol, and tobacco are the essence of a sound body and a clear mind.

The movie is produced in the same spirit as the comedies of the Twenties and Thirties. Like Laurel and Hardy, Woody must contend with a series of not so inanimate objects that usually get the better of him. Like Groucho Marx, he uses his wits against the banal brained establishment. A faceless flock of security guards pursue him over the countryside, Keystone Cop style, to the refreshing strains of Dixieland jazz and an uproarious recurring sight gag. Once captured, Woody goes through a re-programming session that should have George Orwell spinning like a lathe in his grave. His new occupation is to rewind computer tape that becomes snagged and twisted on giant spools. Maybe this is a playful poke at Fritz Lang's "Metropolis," where humans are chained to machines.

Dianne Keaton is delightful as the lovely Luna, a bourgeois McKuen inspired poet turned revolutionary. She throws temper tantrums when told that caterpillars change into butterflies, not vice versa. Luna wants to lure Milo into an orgasmatron, a copulation machine for the frigid and impotent citizens of America.

"Sleeper" is filled with lines that only Woody Allen could get away with, so it's best not to repeat them. He leaves no stone unthrown and even takes a potshot at cloning a nose. If "Sleeper" could remind me of any speculative literature I've read, it does slightly remind me of the DeCamp-Pratt fantasies of the late Forties and Fifties. In these blithe romances Woody Allen type heroes are transported to fantastic worlds where they finally conquer their own inferiority and reap the benefits of Faerie. "Sleeper" is far more sophisticated. Only in an Allen comedy could the hero triumph because of his faults and not in spite of them.



Selected Letters

1022 Victoria Drive
Port Coquitlam, B.C.

Dear Leland,

I feel that...Doug Barbour made a subtle cut in the direction of Isaac Asimov by stating that The Gods Themselves "...is not speculative fiction in the sense that Asimov does not really speculate outside purely scientific boundaries" and also by carefully labeling Gods "science-fiction," while referring to Malzberg's and Wolfe's Beyond Apollo and The Fifth Head of Cerberus, respectively, as "speculative fiction." To speculate is to "pursue an inquiry, meditate, form theory or conjectural opinion on, upon, about, the subject, nature, cause, etc., of a thing." Well, that is just what Asimov does! In Gods he speculates on time and space, an alien culture, and the effect of an alien environment on conventional human behavior. Moreover, he does so credibly, something which Malzberg, for one, seems incapable of. At least that's what I gathered from Mr. Barbour's review of Apollo. And what is "science" if not logic based on observation and theory, or in other words, "speculation"? Are not Malzberg's "speculations" in the realm of psychology, itself a science?

I believe that Mr. Barbour should realize that forms of speculation other than those which are in the realm of direct human experience, such as the currently fashionable area of scientific thought, have merit also. To limit s-f to the narrow range he personally favours can do the genre as a whole nothing but harm.

As for Asimov's "middle-class" views on the relations between the sexes, I can only refer both Mr. Barbour and Joanna Russ, and for that matter probably Peter Bernhardt as well, to an article by Asimov himself in the February '64 issue of F&SF entitled, "Uncertain, Coy, and Hard to Please," which was reprinted in The Solar System and Back.

Best Regards,
Jim Maloan

Wolfe's and Malzberg's works were "speculative" in the New Worlds sense (as Asimov's was not) in that they described another problem or another mode of consciousness--identity and insanity. In the strict dictionary sense, of course, Gods was, as Hugo Gernsback might've said, Speculation Plus.

7512 Eastlake Terrace
Chicago, IL 60626

Dear Leland,

"The Myth of Descent" is another in your continuing revelatory exposé of the novel as Bildungsroman (one would think the accumulated evidence would be enough for RQ if it's enough for college English departments, but perhaps you're trying to set a record for exactingness...) Mr. Fredericks' contribution is better written than most however, and even seems to differentiate the specific work in question from other Bildungsromanen, as most novels only contain one "descent to the underworld."

The Lowndes piece was an interesting personal-history thing, and contained some intriguing ideas. I like the parallel he draws between the latter-day emphasis on correct morals in fiction and the current emphasis on correct politics, as I've been pointing that out for years. Also that the purpose of art should not be improvement, which is far too limiting. Of course, the gentleman also wants to confine his s-f reading to tales of technological optimism, which is also too limiting, in my view.

Jim Harmon's parody of space-opera excess was fun indeed...

Harry Warner's article on apas explained everything about them except, why? I can understand the rationale for people engaged in the solemn hobby of fanzine publishing to want the admiration of their peers--but only their peers? And always the same ones? To an outsider...the apa-phenomenon looks like the fannish disease of insularity in one of its more advanced stages...

I do disagree with Douglas Barbour that the Zelazny short-shorts in The Doors of His Face/ The Lamps of His Mouth collection "don't deserve re-publication." True, these tales are not heavy-weight Zelazny (if that term can ever be applied to such an agile prosodist); but they are such deftly-done exercises in tone, and so luminously delightful, that to depreciate them as mere "fluffy games" seems to me overly fussy. And I don't see why readers should be made more "sceptical" of Zelazny's writing abilities by a collection that demonstrates the range and versatility of his talents. Besides, with so many good stories yet unanthologized, perhaps we may hope for yet another collection...

Somewhat-less-derogatorily yours,
Sheryl Smith

The notion of admiration generally doesn't apply to an APA mailing, which can be regarded as a conversation between close friends--with the opinions of outsiders being neither asked nor desired.

Room 911 Funnelle Hall
SUCO, Oswego, NY 13126

Dear Leland,

While I deplore letters to the editor volleyball games I feel I must respond (albiet briefly) to the criticisms against my review Heatrays and Hotdamns. Jeffrey May's comment on"where did I get this chattels and humanoid chunks of genitalia line" shall be first.

I got it from Lundwall's book. In fact, I deliberately used it to lead into his reflections on women in s-f. Perhaps it is a hard line to take against a childhood favorite of mine but a hard line was necessary for the review. By the by, May's defense isn't very comforting. Surely the "pedestal" approach is no better than the slave.

In response to Ms Fein's downgrading of the Sheckley tales I disagree vehemently. She is taking "Love Inc." too seriously. It is a satire after all. The kill-a-woman game is a parody on the dunk-the-clown booth at carnivals. The hero is not using the female targets as a scapegoat. He has merely succumbed to brutal and insensitive attitudes of earth to his education by Love Inc. Therefore, he is easy prey for the horrors he formerly rejected. Sheckley uses the elegantly dressed woman as the antithesis of the clown, heightening the absurdity. I don't see where government tactics come in.

As for Melisande the maneater, if she had been poorly contrived and flat she would have been a cliché. She is neither. I found her a deft humorous character analysis from her hidden fantasies to her obvious hates. The only flip of the coin I approve of is a flip from lifelessness to liveliness. Nasty doomed people (male and female) have captivated literature since the beginning. Surely Ms Fein would not deny their influence in science-fiction. O.K. we need more nice ladies (woman authors can take care of that if they wish) but a Hedda Gabbler or a Lady Macbeth is a good thing to have around too, if only for laughs.

Best,
Peter Bernhardt

I'll avoid the Robert Scheckley controversy and just note that Mr. Bernhardt's argument about the "pedestal" approach is made explicit in the letter that follows.

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26 Oakwood Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605

Dear Leland:

1) Dragons--Got RQ...looks beautiful. Especially my dragon. The dragon by Erik Nillson is also nice...if you had used my dragons for the front cover, you would have had to change the zine to "Dragonside Quarterly."

2) Illiteracy, Inc.--I wouldn't enjoy prunes unless I was stewed...I hate them.

3) The Seasonal Fan--I am not going to say anything...I am not going to say anything...I changed my mind. I hereby offer a gold-plated no-prize to the first person who writes a story about a liberated woman who really enjoys turning down the man she doesn't like--"No, I don't want to screw--and I wouldn't want to do it with you even if I did!"

4) Naked Realism vs. the Magical Bunny Rabbit--Because some people think "sentimental goo" is actually "true understanding of the human heart" and a hallmark of a great writer, is why "Helen O'Loy" is a classic.

5) letters--

A) Gerald Lange--Somebody ought to sneak into Gerald Lange's home and file the "!" off his typewriter...

B) Jeffrey May--If I were going to make a comment like "treats women as chattels and walking humanoid chunks of genitalia" about any of Heinlein's books, I would make it about I Will Fear No Evil. That book has the epitome: a hospital administration so kind and considerate, it refrained from taking disciplinary action against student nurses who were gang-raped by student doctors--and a student nurse who is properly grateful...

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress proves that if one must be a commodity, it is better to be a rare one. When women are "scarce" men tend to think of them as valuable: valuable property, not necessarily unique human beings. Women on Luna had some things going for them: they were free to take the initiative in matters of sex and marriage; they had real and important roles in running farms, businesses, even governments...They never had to worry about rape --at least, as long as there was a man around stronger than the would-be rapist. Men on Luna treated women with extreme care partly because they were afraid of other men--rather than from regard for women's feelings. Sure it's good not to be raped--but I'd rather have a man refrain because he knows how much it can hurt, then have him refrain because another man might beat him up. (What happens when the other man isn't around?)

May says that on Luna, women are treated with extreme care and consideration. Well, valuable antiques are treated with extreme care--but not treated like people. There's a difference. Victorian gentlemen treated upper class ladies with extreme care--so much care, they virtually kept them in cages, totally unfit for real life...

D) David Lunde--Oh, yes, people do speak the cornball way Heinlein's characters do in I Will Fear No Evil--unfortunately.

E) Dwight R. Decker--I have seen stories on repopulating the world which deal with incest ("The Land of Nod"), insanity, mental retardation, venereal disease (Earth Abides), etc.

E) Leland Sapiro's reply to Lester Boutillier--No doubt about it: styles are cyclic--the old ways will come again. Look at fashions, such as platform shoes...Or better yet, Don't look...

F) Sheryl Smith--It seems to me that "shiftgrethor" is similar to the Oriental concept of "face"...At least, enough like to start a discussion on that basis.

G. Adrienne Fein--I didn't like your reply to my letter (again). "Alternating chapters" may have been a poor choice of words...But that doesn't necessarily imply that the practice referred to is a device used primarily by hack writers to cause suspense...Tolkien used it in LotR for contrast, etc. I believe LeGuin uses it primarily to enable the reader to reach his/her own understanding of certain facets of the story, rather than explicitly stating these things...Nevertheless, I still maintain, whether suspense was the objective or no, it is still there.

Adrienne Fein

I agree that women's privileged status does not guarantee their treatment as human beings.// Concerning Ms. Fein's dislike of my reply to her letter--well, I don't like her reply to my reply to her letter. But she can't say she doesn't like my reply to her reply to my reply because then I'd say that I don't like...etc., etc...I mean, the infinite sequence has to stop somewhere.

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57 South Hill Park
London NW3, England

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

...the attacks of both Sheryl Smith and Douglas Barbour depend upon confusing various types and usages of myth which I attempted to carefully distinguish between (see...my abstract for a perhaps simplistic summary). I make no attempt to argue, as Doug Barbour imputes, that The Left Hand of Darkness is "really rather badly put together." On the contrary, his point that "Each hearth-tale or 'myth' appears just where it will be most informative in terms of the next part of the action" is surely implied by my reference to "the 'myths' that are injected into the book in relation to various aspects of the plot" (p. 293).

...let me congratulate you on the last issue. I particularly enjoyed Dale Mullen's survey of purient incidents in Haggard and Burroughs.

Best wishes,
David Ketterer

My abstract of Dr. Ketterer's abstract is this:

> Mythic content, which may be creatively reworked by an O'Neil, and even made anew by some science-fiction or sterilely revamped by s-f writers like Zelazny, is distinguished from the kind of displaced mythic structure that may be said to underlie any literary form, whether unconsciously or consciously. LeGuin's LHoD exemplifies the dangers inherent in the last possibility. The mythic pattern of death and rebirth structures the experience of the human protagonist who comes ultimately to truly appreciate the alien reality of the planet Gethen and its ambisexual inhabitants. But to the extent that every aspect of the narrative is contrived to illustrate the archetype of death, destruction, chaos, etc. (e.g., the border dispute, the journey across Gethen) or the archetype of rebirth, creation and unity (e.g., injected Gethanian myths, web imagery, etc.) such elements lack that surface coherence that comes about when the succesion of events is determined by their inner momentum and the logic of plot development.

If mythical elements are to be intrinsic in the sense of being implied by the story's inner momentum, then a simple test might be: can these elements be removed without essentially changing the plot? (In this sense the web imagery and the interpolated hearth-tales, e.g., are not intrinsic.) Trouble is, such a criterion assumes a non-existent distinction between form and content--since a deletion that leaves plot unchanged still can damage the story, so in a broader sense the web imagery and Gethenian "myths" are still "radial" components of momentum. My "conclusion," then, is that I can't settle the question without achieving a state of insight beyond my present capabilities.

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332 East Adams St.
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

...When I saw the section by Richard Mullen on "The Fate Worse than Death" in Burroughs, it was familiar, as a similar article had appeared in an earlier issue; having read Mr. Mullen about his uncle, I understood. At first opportunity I'll re-read the original version and compare it. Damned decent of Mr. Mullen to carry on his namesake's work.

Jim Harmon's story was hilarious. I used to toy with an s-f story that would start, or somewhere within state, "As the rocket ship blasted off, the captain shouted, 'Hold on to the ropes, boys!'" but Harmon has gone it several times better.

From a Corner Table at Rough House's puts me into a psychological dilemma. On one hand, I would like for Bill Blackbeard to maintain this thoroughness of detail throughout the ongoing history of the comic-strip he is writing...On the other hand, I wish he would hurry up. I do not wish to sound uncharitable, but Mr. Blackbeard is not a young man. Since he is writing the definitive history of comics, he cannot work with regard to how much or how little time he has to complete it--but if he doesn't finish, then the definitive, correct-all-the-other-histories'-mistakes history might be lost or, worse yet, taken up by someone with not quite the same dedication. All in all, I would feel much better knowing the history were in its final,and not beginning or even merely middle, stages.

Respectfully,
J. Wayne Sadler

Many others have enjoyed Harmon's story, which already has been reprinted in a university student journal.//I'm happy to report that Blackbeard is completing a shorter History (for the Oxford University Press) that's scheduled for publication sometime in '75.

---

75 Caldwell Avenue
Glasgow G13 3AS
Scotland

Dear Mr. Sapiro,

I notice there has been some criticism of the content of RQ, both in its letter column and in other magazines. I am not competent to comment on the criticisms, having only seen 3 issues of RQ. (So far, however, I've always found something of interest in each issue.) I wonder if this is an indication of the attitude of "fandom" (of which I am not a part) to the "academics" (of which I'm not a part either) who are interested in applying themselves to the study of s-f.

I see examples of this in the way in which some fans ignore or treat with hostility magazines such as RQ and Extrapolation. Also, attempts by fanzine editors to "go serious" and discuss s-f are often attacked by those who think fanzines should discuss fandom.

I may be generalizing too much from a few examples but I feel that some fans have a two-way view of the matter--on one hand they plead for s-f to be regarded as something special and separate; on the other they wish it to be recognised as part of literature in general and able to stand up to general critical scrutiny. In the latter case, however, they look down on those academics who have just "discovered" s-f. There really is room for both a "fannish" and an "academic" approach to s-f.

Regards,
George T. Geddes

Judging from the last four reviews I've seen, I'd say fans are 50-50 on RQ. Warren Johnson (Perceptions, Sept. '73) calls it "one of the best fanzines kicking around," while Ethel Lindsay (Haverings #56) characterizes it as "very scholarly"--with "scholarly" meant in the non-derogatory sense. Representing the other side is Peter Roberts (Checkpoint, Oct. '73), who says RQ is largely comprised of "subacademic articles on trash books." But my favourite review was Iain Ban's (Chao #13), which says that RQ's contents "have one thing in common, a considerable obtruseness" /sic/ and complains that "...reading black ink on blue paper is hard under fluorescent light."

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184 Graduate College
Princeton, NJ 08540

Dear Leland,

Not much to say about #21. All articles seem at least minimally competent for a happy change. In the absence of any real contributions to Knowledge or Esthetics, prizes will be awarded on the basis of amusement, which Richard Dale Mullen coming in first and Jim Harmon a close second.

I suppose Zamiatin could have had the "classical temper" on his mind when he wrote We. It seems implausible at first (after all, hadn't Romanticism taken care of Classicism a full century before?), but the link might be the analogy of the French Revolution. If the French revolutionaries, encouraged by Classicism to believe they understood all, and hence could safely make drastic changes, had come to ruin, why should not the Russians? Still not, I think, a very exact parallel--there is much of Romanticism in revolutionary Marxism--but perhaps one which we could plausibly read out of Zamiatin. . . La Bossiere's article reminds me of an oddity about We which I recently noticed: if you look at the Russian version (which may or may not be accurate, as it was published abroad when Zamiatin was still in Russia), you will find that some of the letter prefixes in the characters' names are Latin alphabet, some are Cyrillic, and some could be either. This is lost in all the translations I've happened to look at. R-13 and S-4711 definitely have Latin letters: in the case of S, there is even reference in the text to the s-shape, so that certainly cannot be blamed on printers or editors. D-503, the narrator, has in the original a Cyrillic D, and the character U (or more properly IU), whose number is withheld by the narrator, also has the Cyrillic form. O-90 has a letter common to both alphabets, as did I-330. (The letter I has since been removed from the Russian alphabet as redundant, although other Slavic languages such as Ukrainian retain it.) Now, mixing alphabets this way would produce an exceedingly complicated scheme for naming, so I suspect the element is non-realistic and supposedly significant. Just what it Signifies I'm not sure, and I'm not sympathetic enough with Zamiatin to come up with a plausible guess. But some interested reader might like to try.

Sincerely,
Patrick McGuire

I think the French Revolution is more often associated with the romantic temper, as when, for example, Rousseau is cited as a responsible party. A wish for drastic change doesn't require the illusion of complete understanding, only faith that the new will be better than the old.

3425 Prudence Drive
Sarasota, FL 33580

Dear Editor:

Thanks for RQ, vol 6 #1. I enjoyed much of it but must carp a little at the short-shrift given to the visuals. The 2 illos for ERB & Haggard were miniscule! Enclosed find a couple of rough tracings to show how the "Opar" and the Mickey Mouse /drawings/ should have been laid out.

Enjoyed Prurience article by Mullen--well researched--the tone was not holier-than-thou either.

Blackbeard's article on the "Mouse" is definitive and interesting.../although/ he spends a little too much time patting himself on the back for being so perceptive a fan way back when...

Harmon's tongue-in-cheek was a worthy take-off and an addition to your cliché article.

Wayne Connelly's note on the Clarion workshop could well apply to RQ--consistently better essays than original work.

A stimulating assortment of literate comment--very enjoyable reading.

All the best,
Harry Habblitz

I simply failed to instruct the printer that the ERB illos should be run full size instead of being reduced, like the rest of the magazine by a factor of 2/3. For a second instance of editorial negligence see the letter below.

P.O.Box 68
Liberty, MO 64068

Dear Leland,

Aha! I've caught you in a goof, I think. Nothing you could say would ever convince me you've read the Gor novels. This in itself isn't a crime, but to generalize about the books without having read them sort of bugs me. Specifically, "a society that has developed interplanetary travel and yet uses female slaves for towing carts." Gor's dominant race has interstellar and interplanetary travel, true, but this race is not Gorean "society" as you mean it. This dominant race keeps itself apart from the humans who live on much of the planet. To the hymans the dominant race are "gods," or at least semi-mythical beings. The humans of Gor do not possess interplanetary travel.

Neither is it a common practice among Goreans (i.e., Gorean humans) to use female slaves to pull carts. The incident you refer to came as the result of a bandit raid on a slaver's cavern. The slaver's draft animals were killed, stolen, or driven off. Many of his slaves were stolen. Many of his men were killed. The slaver found himself many miles from any town or encampment where he could replace the lost animals. To save his wagon and what merchandise (apart from his slaves) he had left, the slaver had to make the slave girls pull his cart. It was strictly an emergency measure, and not a common practise...

As I recall Beyond This Horizon, the hero wasn't going to hit said girl because she had assumed various male perogatives, but because she was a bitchy little brat. Besides, Bernhardt's reference was specifically to The Moon is a Harsh Mistress, where it doesn't fit at all...

Best,
Jeffrey May

If Mr. May thinks I just gave up on that Gor novel--he's dead right! After reaching the slave-cart episode I had the same experience as Dick Geis, who figured "...it was a woman-in-chains soap opera...('Oh, the humiliation!') and put it aside." // In Beyond this Horizon it wasn't the girl's bitchery but the hero's son-of-a-bitchery.

"The Cottonwoods"
42 Mair's Crescent
Faulconbridge, NSW 2776
Australia

Dear Leland,

Your "Illiteracy, Inc." promotes in me a feeling of inadequacy. I have, doubtless, misused "transpire" and may well have blundered in the other fashions you mention. Perhaps you had some reason to allow Bill Blackbeard's misuse of "disinterest" (p. 48) in /this issue/, but I would regard it as a blunder just as serious as any that you castigate...

There is little doubt in my mind that Lowndes' requiem for the prozines is, once again, premature. We are all well aware of their troubles, but they have weathered other, and greater, troubles in the past. It would be quite difficult to find a time when the situation has not looked grim...

Unfortunately, I cannot agree with Blackbeard that "...the local afternoon race-result dailies, or...blatantly sensational morning tabloids" were "not widely read by home subscribers." In this fair city of Sydney, and in all the other cities I have lived in, these are the kind of papers most frequently reaching homes. Perhaps you order these things better in Canada, but I think Bill would only need to check with his local newsagent to disabuse himself of his notion...

Peace,
K.W. Ozanne

It's not prozines in general that are in trouble (Time and Reader's Digest--alas!--will still exist in 1984), but pulp magazines and, in particular, those devoted to s-f. To confirm Lowndes' worries just inspect a news-stand, where(I'd estimate) there is not one tenth the number of pulp titles that were available in the 50's.

Box 72 P.O., Maryborough
Vic. 3465, Australia

Dear Leland,

Dwight P. Decker's letter on the possibilities of stories going further than the single pair left to repopulate the earth (and your comments on the Bible) prompts the stud-master in me. In livestock breeding the brother-sister mating is the most dangerous of all. To stabilize a blood-line we use what is called line breeding. Briefly, the most acceptable way to start a new line from a single pair would be to mate the father with the daughter and the son with the mother. The half-sister-brother mating follows. Usually it is impossible for a grandson-mother mating, but a father grandaughter mating is used and the father-greatgrandaughter mating is known. Almost certainly this sort of thing has happened in the past with castaways, and almost certainly they would develop a system of 16 moieties to regulate marriage law (used at least by some Aborigine tribes). There is a case of this line-breeding in the Bible (not the one you'll think of). Abraham married his half-sister (father's daughter). His brother married their niece. Abraham's son Isaac then married the grandaughter of Abraham's brother and niece. Isaac's son then married his cousin (mother's side)...Actually he married both of them. The twelve sons were apparently so much the stock of Torah, Abraham's father, that they could marry outside the family. This line-breeding would have preserved the blood-line of Torah almost exactly the maximum amount. Incidentally, the daughters of Lot raped their father when they thought there were no other men left alive. There is also a Greek legend of a remote family whose brothers and sisters paired off not knowing any better...

The story is not new. However if the original partners were both reasonably healthy, there would be very little worry about recessive genes providing a rigidly controlled mating system was organized and enforced for say sixteen generations. In general, the smaller the population the more rigid and complicated are the regulations relating to marriage.

Yours etc.,
John J. Alderson

H.L. Mencken says the Bible was written by God, so it appears that He bred people the same way a ranch owner breeds cattle.// For a modern version of Lot's story see Joe Christopher's review this issue and for another view on incest see Anthony Burgess' M.F.--whose designation in the present context is easily guessed --or Jean Kennard's article on it in a forthcoming issue.

4566½ Hamilton Street
San Diego, CA 92116

Dear Leland,

"Asylum and the Fantasy Element" is actually the first "movie review" I've been interested in reading straight through in a long time. I no longer enthusiastically read film analyses that treat the narrative film as the great and true art of the cinema, and can't take them seriously; but I do have a long-held and only slightly pretentious love of horror movies and curiously enjoyed Tom Greeniones' reasonable explication...I /saw/ "Asylum" on a double-bill with the same production company's "Tales from the Crypt" and another thought struck me for the first belated time. Two pictures of the cluster-story mold were a surfeit, despite the pleasant patina of modernity and (almost as a result) thin sophistication. A reason these short-story horror anthology films seldom seem really satisfying is that when you stick with the supernatural tradition, no matter how clever the stranding and end-tying of each little story becomes, no matter how cleverly compressed the elements are, the result usually tends toward the joke with a brief story and a punch line; but the surprise is a shock instead of a laugh. Of course, this is obvious. However, the joke can be anticipated, even in close detail, and still be laughed at. The horror can be anticipated and relished...yet the horrific conclusion is seldom satisfactory, no matter how visually pleasing. Simple cleverness is the best one can hope for. As the article points out, lack of intelligent concentration on detail is part of the problem, but one also gets the impression that, in keeping with this movie-form's similarity to the joke and the comics in which it has its origins, the film makers don't expect to do more than divert and entertain; the prominent British character actors are having very privileged fun (and being well paid for it), and the pleasure for the audience is modest, respectable and aboveboard...who can ask for more? Surely you don't expect the old specialized concerns of traditional horror movies to do more than entertain briefly and without tedium? After all, wasn't that aspiration what made them "B" movies?

It's nice to see Douglas Barbour acknowledging Barry Malzberg--the man needs all the appreciation he can get. However, I get the distinct impression that Barbour hasn't read much Malzberg, or at least has very curious views on his writing ability, when he says "..with The Falling Astronauts and Overlay, /Malzberg/ began to reveal the real quality of his talent." I find this baffling:Malzberg has been writing well for a long, long time, dating from the period he was producing "erotica" rather than s-f. As far as I've read, there's never been a quick-for-the-money taint about his writing, especially as far as the quality of his prose is concerned. If by "quality of talent" Barbour means a sort of greater distinctiveness of personal vision, I'd say he's also wrong on that and, where this piece is concerned, his further thoughts either don't carry this through or don't make much sense. One other quibble: Barbour's judgment that Malzberg's handling of a standard theme (how space can drive men mad) is better than earlier efforts because of the author's command of language. True enough, as far as it goes--but in addition there's the important fact that the earlier writers, from the '50s, 40s, or whenever, did not conceive that space could drive men "mad" in the way Malzberg has. Those writers were not good enough with language to render the madness, but they were also not sensitive and personally concerned enough to be aware of said madness in a complicated, human way. The concept of madness is no longer an image worthy of a parable or simple awe and wonderment, but of an endlessly involved and funny personal problem. Malzberg's vision has been developing, in its astronautical manifestations, for a long time...he seems to have culminated and even consummated this concern with Beyond Apollo.

Jim Harmon's piece is brilliant in its hilarity. I haven't had more provocative fun in ages. But he'll simply have to watch out for the way in which he seems to "toss off" all those brilliant ideas without really giving them carefully considered development. Such thought and concern with the implications of what a writer is proposing--and, in effect, doing--is what makes for the best, the most lasting, in s-f. One must be true to the rigorous tenets of development in this field, not to mention the traditions; what has worked and been used often is there for a reason. If he can overcome being spendthrift, Jim Harmon may someday soon be a major writer of s-f...

Bests,
Jeff Clark

Mr. Harmon is presently occupied in exhibiting the 30's and 40's as objects for Nostalgia--on which he's our leading expert. And by the time that project is finished the 50's and 60's may well have become such objects. So Jim's date of re-entry into science-fiction is, as the phrase goes, highly uncertain.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM.....

Edgar Glen (English Dept., Chico State College, Chico, CA 95926), who likes "Illiteracy, Inc." and wants me to keep it going. "Precise use of words badly needs to be insisted on, over and over and everywhere."

> I also enjoyed "The Myth of Descent in Vincent King's Light a Last Candle"...The myth and archetypal elements in science fiction are fascinating, and I like to have them pointed out, a purely personal interest. On the other hand, Pound has them, fairy tales have them, and so does Saul Bellow.

RQ has been derided in certain quarters for following an academic trend, which currently happens to be myth. Modestly I note that RQ doesn't follow trends: it starts them!

Larry Mitchell (Box 533, Brooks, Alberta, Canada):

> Although I've only skimmed it, so far, I really liked the latest RQ. I'm naturally interested in Harry Warner's article on FAPA, which I had heard about but that's all, and especially interested in Bill Blackbeard's tribute to Floyd Gottfredson, whom I'd also heard of but that's all.

I assume there'll be much more FAPA information in the second volume of Warner's fan-history which he's now writing--and which is responsible for his temporary absence from these pages.

Jan Pinkerton (Box 1047, Evanston, IL 60204), who objects to the term opi on p. 70 of last issue:

> Many, I'm sure, have pointed out that the Latin word opus is neuter, despite the us ending (which is usually masculine...Because it is neuter, however, the plural is opera. Similarly, the plural of corpus ("body") is corpora.

I'm sure Mr. Schweitzer was aware of the Latin plural. But since opera is generally used in English to denote a single musical drama, he thought (as did I) that less confusion would be generated by some other term.

Alexander D. Wallace (306 E. Greenhouse Dr., #11, Metairie, LA 70001). This correspondent, formerly chairman of the Gator Math. Dept., says that "In the context of Ms LeGuin's peroration" (reprinted in RQ #18),

> ...there is no cult of fiction...concerning poets and poetry, or novels and novelists, or musicians and music... It is perhaps accidental that there is a cult of fiction about science.

While individual poets, musicians, etc. (like Byron and Paganini) can become mythical figures they are not associated with an organized mythology like that furnished by present-day science, so this particular cult of fiction is no accident.

G.M. Gielgud (8 Rutland Pk. Mansions, Walm Lane, London NW2-4RB), who regards "Illiteracy, Inc." as pedantry, "a measure of last resort by an editor."

> The hilarious "dangling participles" are quite inexcusable, of course, but I would have thought that a magazine of literary (as opposed to the narrower field of simple syntax) criticism, might have left such errors to condemn themselves.

Unfortunately, such errors do not condemn themselves, but proliferate continually. See Dwight Macdonald's essay, "The String Untuned," for particulars. Mr. Macdonald errs in thinking that the (London) Times Literary Supplement is a model of correct usage, but his general conclusions are indisputable.

Darrell Schweitzer (113 Deepdale Rd., Stratford, PA 19087):

> Skimming through the present issue I spotted one glaring blunder. Please tell Leon Taylor that The Man from P.I.G. is by Harry Harrison, not Dean Koontz. The Harrison story is a novelette from Analog (July '67) later expanded into a novel. The Koontz book that Leon was obviously thinking of is The Pig Society published by Aware Press a while ago.

James Wade (Library Service Center, HQ U.S. 8th Army, APO, San Francisco, CA 96301), with a note on Asylum, whose reviewer had noted that it had "a lovely score"--

> It ought to be lovely, since all the crucial passages are "borrowed" from the works of Moussorgsky, specifically "A Night on Bare Mountain" and "Pictures at an Exhibition," while the music credit is given as "music composed and arranged by..." whoever the thief was.

Henry Charles Lewis (2323 Napoleon Ave.,New Orleans, LA 70115), who thinks the articles on Ballard and LeGuin "cogent and clear and well-written" and who asks why in Joe Christopher's discussion of Operation Chaos "...there was no comparison to Magic Incorporated (The Devil Makes the Law) by Heinlein?" // Such a question is best left to God and to the reviewer himself, RQ just being a local manifestation for both.

 (continued from page 99)

IDIOT COA'S

But this Santa Claus act had a peculiar sequel. In December I began to receive change of address notices from persons unknown. Since each of the first half-dozen bore 10¢ postage due I refused all those that followed, despite a warning from a postal clerk that unpleasant things might happen. Shortly after, I got a phone call from Bill Baker, City Post-Office Supervisor, who mentioned computer-printed address labels (in the envelopes being refused), asked if I knew anything of a magazine called Galaxy,and invited me down to see him. From all this a solution was easy. As I later told Mr. Baker, RQ has no computerized addresses, but there's a big-time New York operation that does. I then showed him my advertisement. It transpired, then, that about thirty Galaxy readers, seeing my address on its inside front cover, thought I was Galaxy and sent COA notices to Florida. As to how any rational person could identify these titles--especially with RQ's advertised subscription rate of $2, which could not buy ever three issues of Galaxy--this is one of those mysteries that, God willing, will never be fathomed.

LUNAR ALLIGATORS

Anybody who wishes to become an honourary Gator should send a dollar to Mike Everling, editor of Moonrigger (room 300, Reitz Union, Gainesville, FL 32611), published by the University of Florida Science-Fiction Society. Mike's first issue featured Howard Modell's neo-platonic cosmic breakthrough, an equally funny Analog rejection thereof, and the usual letters, reviews, etc. There was also a Pat Munson latter-day Gorgon story, which--while below her present capabilities (it was written in high school)--marks her as Somebody to Watch. The issue as a whole establishes the Society as a "local" semi-group-with-identity that lacks only a set of diverse elements (responses from fans) to attain group status--and from there the possibilities are limitless.

MLA FIGHT NIGHT

I've been asked to reprint the following announcement:

> The Science-Fiction Seminar of the Modern Language Association is looking for futurists, s-f writers, teachers of literature, etc. to participate in a panel, "Science-Fiction and Future Studies: the Usefulness of Literature," at the MLA convention, Dec. 21-26, 1974, in New York. Prospective participants should write Prof. Dave Samuelson, English Dept., California State University, Long Beach, CA 90840, giving a brief statement of background and suggested means of addressing the topic. If possible, copies of papers should be distributed to other participants before the convention, summaries distributed at the Seminar, and a round-table discussion of the issues substituted for the reading aloud of papers. Publication of well-written papers is likely.

I think that what's meant here is not the usefulness (as I'd understand the term) of literature, but its utility, in the sense of "public utility." Either way, this panel could be as exciting as a Tony Zale-Rocky Graziano title fight or as dull as a professional wrestling match, depending on who's there. Under more formal circumstances the most logical choice for discussant, I'd say, would be either Ted White or Bob Silverberg--and for panelists I'd nominate Jim Blish and Damon Knight.
