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RQ Miscellany

GHOSTS--CHAPTER ONE

RQ readers may recall from issue eleven the article, "On Science-Fiction Criticism" by the late Jim Blish, an answer to Michel Butor's "Science-Fiction: The Crisis of its Growth," from the Fall '67 Partisan Review. Mr. Blish explained that a critic like Butor who mentioned only one living s-f author--and knew nothing of writers like Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, or Ted Sturgeon--was hardly qualified to speak of a "crisis" (or anything else) in s-f.

I had assumed this was the last of it, but was awakened from my own dogmatic slumber by a textbook (used for French Conversation 204) that contained a reprint of the speech, "La crise de croissance de la science-fiction," from which the PR article had been translated. From his reading of H.G. Wells the speaker was familiar with three types of s-f "voyages": Life in the Future (Things to Come), Unknown Worlds (First Men in the Moon), and Unexpected Visitors (War of the Worlds). Concerning the first category we learn that:

> Par la projection dans le futur, on révèle la complexité du présent, et la science-fiction de ce genre prend volontiers un aspect satirique. On en trouve d'excellents exemples dans les oeuvres de Huxley, comme Brave New World et celles d'Orwell, avec 1984.
>
> By projection into the future, the complexity of the present is revealed, and science-fiction of this genre readily assumes a satiric aspect. Some excellent examples of it are found in the works of Huxley, like Brave New World, and those of Orwell, with 1984.

My reaction to all this was that of a person who is served for dinner some rotting meat that had been tossed into last week's garbage. By next day I had recovered sufficiently to try to explain to the other students how Butor fails to understand the basic difference between s-f and satire. Simplifying things as much as possible, one can say that an s-f writer gives a literal rendition of some possible future society whereas the satirist, often in a fantasy context, uses his ficticious society(whether future or contemporary)to comment upon the one in which he lives. In the familiar simile, s-f views the future as a stained glass, worthy of being contemplated for itself, whereas satire regards it as a lens with which to focus on something actually present.

Brave New World, of course, is satire and 1984, science-fiction. A possible term project would be a letter to Butor and the publishers about Swift (who always provides the touchstone) and his allusion to a war between people who break their eggs at the big end and those who break them at the little end. For Swift was referring not to another possible society but to our own, where wars are often as pointless as that between the Big Endians and the Little Endians.

Fortunately, the new instructor for this course, M^lle Baker, is ordering a better text for next quarter, so that the "fascination of the abomination" will not be repeated at Florida University. As for Butor and the publisher, my letter to them possibly would meet the same reception as Jim Blish's reply at the Partisan Review, where it originally was sent. Just as PR held the article for six months and then returned it with the explanation, "...a little too late to use this now," so my own letter (if it were answered at all) might elicit the response that matters left uncorrected for nine years had best stay that way.

(continued on page 310)

No Stone Unthrown combined with Son of No Stone Unthrown by R.A. Lafferty

I'll say, when comes the time to rue it.
"The woman tempted me to do it."
An evil woman warped and witty
Who travels under code-name 'Smitty.'

P.J.F.

No Sturgeon, Trout, or Filchman's Daughter,
He swims in yet more ditchy water;
And were I not a washy-wishy
I'd nomenclate what kind of fish he.

G.W.

He gets confused in counting dog heads,
He runs with slammers yet and grog heads.
To get him in the solar plexus
Ask why they ran him out of Texas.

B.M.

He ain't a golden eagle neither.
He's more a kind of jive or juke bird,
Or barney owl, or finsh, or either
A plain New Jersey rookey-dook bird.
Moral: he's not all that big; he's mostly feathers.

L.S.D.C.

He writes of ancient worlds and wonders,
He looks exact like Colonel Sanders,
The flowing gestures, the Vandyke him:
He even fries fried chicken like him.

U.K.L.G. and R.A.H.

The queen of adult juvenilers
And while-a-time's uptightly whilers.
But what is she, to use the fine line?
A bit more mannish writing Heinlein.

And he's, to put it vicey-versula,
A bit less mannish writing Ursula.

A.C.C. or Is That You, Art?

He knows all about Two-O-O-One,
And the echo-bouncer's heart;
He knows the future next to none
For he drew its dinkum chart.
But the Devil whoops as he's always done
"It's clever, but is it Art?"

S.U.

In ninth preliminee event,
Hung like a Texas elefent,
the pride of Neos! (A propowse,
A Texas elefent's a mouse.)

H.E.

He cries like Alexander proudly
"Oh where's more worlds to conquer loudly?"
He wraps himself in prose that boggles,
His eyes are hid by deep-space goggles.
His thread shall Atropos not sever;
He shall be thirty-nine forever.

T.C., P.D.D., L.d.R.,
D.K., A.E.N., L.N.,
a.c., A.P., R.S.

They prove the law of 'Mike-and-Ike'
That guys with beards all write alike.

S. (C.) D.

He rages in non-sequential stages
Through sev'nty nine and eight-C pages
With all the verve of daytime possums.
Sweet sucker of divergent blossoms!

R.S.

Mephistophelean beard and eye!
They'd say (of one of lower level,
Magnetic less, nor fame so high)
"Hey boy, he sure looks like the devil!"

T.F.M.

A jangle of a tinny drum.
"Oh watch the way I bang and boff it!
Aim high! Aim high! I yet may come
To fill the shoes of andy offutt."

B.B.

Oh noble nose and noble profile!
(Believe him that he'll not buy off-ile.)
Remember, when you glim his gimmick,
That 'Ben' 's part of his patronymic.

I.A.

Of copiousity intense,
He cribs or cobbles or invents
A book-a-month, and never wavers;
And he's Gott Selbst to true believers.

F.P.

Each era gets the Andy Gump
That it deserves. Aw grump, aw grump!

D.G.

A fishy, swishy nothing-there,
A little bit deprav-ed:
But girls say 'Naught of fire or air
Is half so fair as David.'

P.A.

A kid with natch'ly curly hair
And natch'ly kinky brains
He wins a Danegeld every yair.
We'll never catch the Danes.

R.E.V.I.E.W.E.R.S.

More worse than Greekers bearing gifts,
Beward of pigs with poisoned arrows:
Of guilt transcending any shrift;
Not honest boars, but oinkie barrows.

E.D.I.T.O.R.S.

Oh denizens of stenchy sties,
Cheap snotters all! (And bot-flies hover.)
You are (when, hap, the better guys
Run out of Pearls) the swine left over.

ENVOI

Three things are onager manure,
And on the fourth a malediction:
A rebel on a sinecure,
A commentator cock-a-sure,
A paragon a little quuur;
And sacred cows in Science Fiction.

R.A.L.

A minstrel with a busted harp?
He's sharp?
But not so varry.
Aw take him back to Tulsa
Cause he's too young to marry.

A Look behind Conan Doyle's "Lost World"

by
Dana Martin Batory

The Victorian era saw the development of archaeology from an unsystematized treasure hunt into a science. Readers have always delighted in stories of strange peoples and customs, and this same curiosity was roused by the discoveries of those who explored not in space, but in time. The past was being recovered, but that wasn't all.

Burton and Speke were trekking across the savannas of Africa. Scott and Amundsen were racing to the South Pole. Catherwood and Stephens were hacking their way through Central American jungles in search of lost Mayan ruins. Zoologists Bates and Wallace were paddling their dugouts up and down the Amazon and Rio Negro. Archaeologists Woolley and Carter were digging up Egypt's past.

H. Rider Haggard carried such ideas one step further: what if an exploring party discovered a still living ancient world? The resulting King Solomon's Mines (1885) opened new directions to other fantasists, among whom was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, with his exploits of Professor George Edward Challenger.

Conan Doyle had written no new novel for six years, not since the disappointing acceptance of Sir Nigel (1905), when he sat down before his desk. The novel would contain one of his greatest creations. The idea had drifted into his mind in the form of an iguanodon, a twenty-foot dinosaur, whose fossilized tracks had been found on Sussex Downs beyond his Windlesham study-windows.

As usual, he set to work up the background. Conan Doyle was intensely thorough in his literary work and took enormous pains to get everything right. Thus in the fall of 1911 he consulted Professor Lankester's Extinct Animals (1906). He drew heavily from its text and illustrations.

Suppose, somewhere, dinosaurs still existed. If so, where? Conan Doyle seized on what is still one of the most mysterious regions on earth, the wild pristine bush country near the confluence of the Orinoco and Caroni Rivers. It still can't be reached directly by road, and no railway exists. If you don't fly, you must travel by foot and canoe. W.H. Hudson's Green Mansions (1904) was written about this florid and almost impenetrable country.

Conan Doyle had entered Edinburgh University in October 1876 emerged as a Bachelor of Medicine in August 1881. He was so impressed by two of his professors that they appear at great length in many of his books. Conan Doyle's literary professors were always attributed vast intellectual powers. The very real professors, Dr. Bell and Professor Rutherford, became Holmes and Challenger, respectively.

When Conan Doyle began writing The Lost World he knew the leader of the adventure had to be a zoologist. His memory went back to Edinburgh and Sir Charles Wyville Thompson, the zoologist fresh from his exploring expedition aboard the wooden corvette, H.M.S. Challenger. From 1872 to 1874 the Challenger made its famous world-wide voyage of deep-sea exploration under the command of arctic explorer Sir George Nares. The various specimens dredged from the ocean floor were submitted to the leading scientists of the day, such as Alphonse Renard, Sir John Murray, and Alexander Agassiz.

Thomson himself wasn't picturesque enough for Conan Doyle, so he based the physical description of Challenger on Professor Rutherford, a stunted Hercules, with an Assyrian beard, a prodigious voice, an enormous chest, and a very singular manner. "He fascinated and awed us," wrote Conan Doyle. "I have endeavoured to reproduce some of his peculiarities in the fictitious character of Professor Challenger."

Professor Rutherford would sometimes start his lecture before reaching the classroom, so the class would hear his booming voice saying: "There are valves in the veins," or some other information, while his desk was still empty. "He was, I fear," wrote Conan Doyle, "a rather ruthless vivisector, and though I always recognized that a minimum of painless vivisection is necessary, and far more justifiable than the eating of meat as food, I am glad that the law was made more stringent so as to restrain such men as he. 'Ach, these Jarman Frogs!' he would exclaim in his curious accent, as he tore some poor amphibian to pieces" (ibid., 19).

Although Conan Doyle himself believed his model had been Professor Rutherford and had depicted his physical characteristics; the originality, idiosyncracies, fiery energy, and uncertain temper of Challenger are copied from his old friend Dr. George Budd. Conan Doyle met this remarkable fellow student during his last year at Edinburgh, and for a brief time practice medicine with him. "Cullingworth" was the pseudonym invented by Conan Doyle for Budd in The Stark Munro Letters (1895) and retained in his autobiography, Memories and Adventures (1924). Conan Doyle never realized how much he owed as a story teller to Bud.

At a moment's notice Budd would take up any subject with intense enthusiasm and weave the most amazing theories around it, displaying a mind teeming with original inventions. He would carry the listeners away with him until they were gasping with excitement, only to drop the subject suddenly, take up another, and repeat the process.

Conan Doyle, while in practice with Budd, never could shake off the feeling he was "living with some capricious creature who frequently growls and may possibly bite."[2] Budd would constantly spring quarrels on him; suddenly, without the slightest provocation and then when he saw he had goaded him to the edge of his endurance, turn the whole thing into a joke.

Budd's mercurial and explosive temper, his genius for improvisation, his quick inventive mind, his range and grasp of ideas, his outrageous behavior, his buffoonery, the drama and comedy inseparable from his flamboyant personality, even the sinister and unscrupulous qualities in his character, made an irresistable appeal to what was most durable in Conan Doyle's nature, his boyish love of the unexpected, the mysterious, and the fantastic. Such was the effect of Budd's bizarre character on Conan Doyle's impressionable and easily stimulated mind that traces of its impact can be found all through his work.

Budd died in early middle age, and the autopsy revealed some cerebral abnormality, no doubt a pathological element in his strange explosive nature. But Conan Doyle always liked Budd and enjoyed the extraordinary situations arising from any associations with him.

The character of Professor Summerlee may have been based on Sir Henry Cole, 1808-1882, an English civil servant, who was the author of many topographical handbooks published under the pseudonym, "Felix Summerly." Cole was a leading member of the commission that organized the Great Exhibition of 1851. Upon its conclusion he was made secretary to the School of Design that became the Department of Science and Art in 1853. Under its auspices, the Victoria and Albert Museum was founded in 1855, with Cole practically its director.

It has been assumed that Conan Doyle's younger brother, Brigadier-General Innes Doyle, was the original Lord John Roxton. It's far more likely the character of Roxton was based on anthropologist-mystic-explorer General Candido Mariano de Silva Rondon, who was three-quarters Indian. Between 1905 and 1910 he led a movement that made Brazil a model to other nations in the protection of native inhabitants.

The first serious effort to protect the Indians began with Rondon's founding of the Indian Protective Service in 1910, with the motto: "Die if you must, but never shoot an Indian." In 1912, Rondon was engaged in building telegraph lines through the Brazilian jungle. It was he, as a young man, that accompanied Theodore Roosevelt on his journey up the Amazon in 1914 and explored the River of Doubt, the Rio Roosevelt on today's maps, in the basin of the Madeira River.

The leader of the "Lost World" expedition, Professor Challenger, quickly became his creator's favourite, "a character who has always amused me more than any other which I have invented." [3] It isn't hard to guess why: save for the colossal vanity, Challenger was a completely uninhibited version of Budd and Conan Doyle himself. As Challenger he could say and do those things society forbids, such as roughing-up an obnoxious reporter or sending insulting letters to his colleagues.

Scientists were impressed by Conan Doyle's accuracy in detail. How life-like his prehistoric world was may be judged by a letter he received from Lankester:

> You are perfectly splendid in your story of the "lost world" mountain-top. I feel proud to have had a certain small share in its inception. It is just sufficiently conceivable to make it "go" smoothly. I notice that you rightly withhold any intelligence from the big dinosaurs, and also acute smell from the ape-men.
>
> What about introducing a gigantic snake sixty feet long? Or a rabbit-like beast as big as an ox (Toxodon)? Or a herd of pigmy elephants two feet high? Can four men escape by training a vegetarian pterodactyle to fly with them one at a time? Will some ape-woman fall in love with Challenger and murder the leaders of her tribe to save him?[4]

Each evening through October and November, Conan Doyle read aloud to his wife, Jean, and her closest friend, Lily Loder-Symonds (and any other guests present), at his Windlesham home what he had written during the day, living the part as he read. The Victorian style in narrating adventure stories, with its earnest tone, its leisurely pace, and its naive and archaic flavour, were scrupulously adhered to.

"I think it will make the very best serial (bar special S. Holmes values) that I have ever done, especially when it has its trimming of faked photos, maps, and plans," he wrote to "Strand" editor, Greenbough Smith, when the novel was finished in December 1911 "My ambition is to do for the boys' book what Sherlock Holmes did for the detective tale. I don't suppose I could bring off two such coups. And yet I may" (ibid., 213-214).

At Windlesham, on Christmas Eve, he occupied himself with the faked photographs he had promised Smith. In a large black beard, with fake eyebrows and a wig, Conan Doyle stared out from a photograph as Professor Challenger. There was another photo showing him seated among three friends who represented Edward Malone, Lord Roxton, and Professor Summerlee. But the close-up, decorated with a silk hat, was to represent Challenger as an illustration in the "Strand."

Smith decided not to use the photos. The disguise, though hideous enough, wasn't undetectable, and might have gotten the "Strand" into trouble for hoaxing. "Very well," agreed Conan Doyle three days later. "Not a word about the photo of Prof. C. I begin to realize my own audacity. After all, it is not me. I am only a block on which an imaginary figure has been built up. But don't give it away" (ibid., 215).

Conan Doyle was so pleased with the Challenger disguise he had to try it out on someone. He decided on the Hornungs, living at West Grinstead Park, the estate of Sir Pitt Hornung, over thirty miles away. Conan Doyle arrived at the estate, announcing he was "der Herr Doktor von Someoody." He said he was a "friendt of Herr Doktor Doyle," who was away for the moment, "und would Herr Hornung" receive him?

Short-signted Hornung knew that a friend of his brother-in-law Conan Doyle might be anyone from a tramp to the Prime Minister. Conan Doyle stepped in and immediately began reeling off yards of German. He got away with it for a few minutes before Hornung caught on. Furious, he showed his guest out, and swore he would never forgive him. The silk-natted Conan Doyle, shaking with laughter, departed.

The Lost World, published in book form by Hodder and Stoughton in October 1912, still had its repercussions. In the press for April 1, 1913, Conan Doyle read the following.

> Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stirring romance The Lost World has aroused the adventurous spirit of a party of Americans. A few days ago the yacht Delaware left Philadelphia and sailed away for the broad waters of the Amazon. The yacht is the property of the University of Pennsylvania, and is bound for Brazil with a daring party of Americans, who propose penetrating to the far reaches of the Amazon and to the headwaters of many of its tributaries...They seek Conan Doyle's lost world, or some evidence of it. (ibid., 230)

The American reporter was adding spice to a real story. The article mentioned real names: Captain Rowen, who commanded the yacht, and Dr. Farrable of the University. The University Museum of Philadelphia equipped the expedition for collecting data on aboriginal inhabitants and to explore the forests where primitive Indians still roamed.

Jean was shocked at the article. "You don't think they took it seriously?"

"No, of course not," answered Conan Doyle. "In any case, let 'em go! If they don't find the plateau, they'll certainly find something of interest."

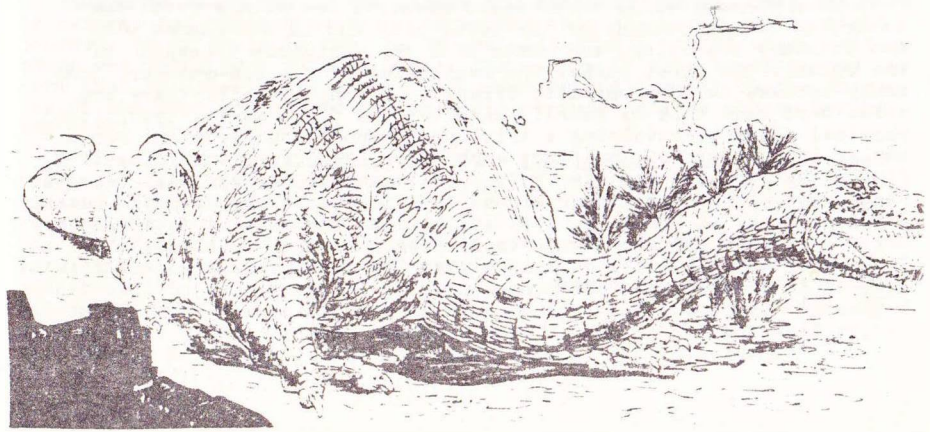
FOOTNOTES

1) Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Memories and Adventures (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1924), p. 19.

2) Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, The Stark-Munro Letters (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1895), p. 137.

3) Hesketh Pearson, Conan Doyle: His Life and Art (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1943), p. 164.

4) John Dickson Carr, The Life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 213.



The Night Journey Motif in Twentieth Century English Fantasy

by
Pat Hodgell

Fantasy is perhaps the best perpetuator of ancient myths available to us today. It draws its power from the same wellheads as mythology, making visible in its "pure forms" not consciously experienced human events, but "the fundamental archetypal structures of the collective unconscious."[1] Having the same basic source as mythology, fantasy not surprisingly makes use of a good many of the same themes. One of the most persistent is the night journey. In fact, when one begins to examine modern English fantasy in particular, the frequency with which this motif reappears in one guise or another is really a bit startling. The purpose of this article will be to consider briefly some of these forms and to make a few suggestions as to the rules that govern their structure and the purpose that they serve in modern fantasy literature.

First, a definition of terms. What is the night journey, or night sea journey, as some sources call it? In folklore, the story has this basic form:

> A hero is swallowed by a sea-monster in the West. The animal journeys with him in its belly to the East. During the journey, the hero lights a fire in the belly of the monster and feeling hungry, cuts off a slice of its heart. Shortly afterwards he observes that the fish has reached land; he then begins to cut away the flesh of the animal until he can slip out. In the belly of the fish it was so hot that his hair fell out. Often the hero sets free those who have been swallowed before him and they escape with him.[2]

Many primitive societies tell similar tales and re-enact a night journey of one sort or another in their initiation rites. Classical mythology has its own versions in the adventures of Ulysses in the Cyclops' cave, Aeneas' descent into Hell, and the rescue of Alcestis by Hercules. The Bible contributes the accounts of Jonah and the whale, Joseph cast into the pit by his brothers, and Daniel in the lion's den. The details vary, but all of these stories have the essential features of devouring by an animal or the earth (going underground), confinement, enchantment, and escape.

Modern fantasy takes these basic elements and reinterprets them according to the demands of the total plot and in accordance with the literary tradition, and often with the religious concepts of the author. The first phase, the swallowing by the sea-monster, commonly becomes the journey into darkness, death, or hell. There are three ways that this is usually handled. The first is the traditional, physical descent, involving a trip underground or underwater. For example, in The Lord of the Rings each major character finds himself facing the darkness and terror in very immediate and personal terms at least once within the larger night journey context of the total quest. Gandalf's fall in Moria is probably the most dramatic, and in a sense one of the most complete descents of this sort in that it combines both water and earth elements (a plunge from a bridge in a cavern into a subterranean lake or river).

As for the others, Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas go by the Paths of the Dead to summon aid for beseiged Gondor while Frodo, always with Sam and sometimes with Merry and Pippin as well, is precipitated into at least eight separate physical night journey experiences, four of which are within the earth (Moria, the mound of the Barrow wright, Shelob's cave, and the cavern in Mount Doom).[3] In C.S. Lewis' Perelandra, Ransom goes through an ordeal very like Gandalf's in Moria when he is dragged underwater by the Un-man to the subterranean regions of the Fixed Land. The young hero of Mervyn Peake's "Boy in Darkness" goes into a strange world beyond a river very like the Styx and after travelling through it for a while is captured and taken underground to the throne room of the Lamb. This same boy, who turns out to be Titus Groan of the Gormenghast trilogy, is later forced to escape from another frightening country by going Under-River.

Sometimes the setting of the night journey is moved above ground and given a much greater scope. There are regions, even whole worlds, that lie in perpetual shadow. The Nightland of William Hope Hodgson is a classic example. The same can be said for the false world of Tormance (A Voyage to Arcturus) when one has finally peeled away its last level of illusion. C.S. Lewis' Thulcandra, our own world, is as much under the shadow spiritually as the Nightland is physically. Simply to travel through any of these regions is a night journey, rendered all the more terrifying by the fact that escape is so much more difficult than from an ordinary underground situation. In fact, those who do manage to leave the dark lands often have to depend on divine or supernatural aid to do so.

The ultimate arena of the night journey, however, is within the human mind, and the darkest descent of all is into the self. The novels of Charles Williams provide especially good illustrations of this. For all his characters, despite a collection of external threats ranging from simple lunatics to personifications of Platonic ideals, the real battle is waged on the inner plain of the mind. This is true for almost all of the great adventures in fantasy. For example, Frodo's physical pain as he and Sam inch closer to the towering mountain in Mordor is nothing compared to the spiritual agony imposed by the Ring, the "wheel of fire" that blots out all fair memories and thoughts. The critical strengths, and weaknesses, of the hero are wholly internal.

> ...within himself
> The danger lies, yet lies within his power;
> Against his will he can receive no harm.[4]

Only when the will fails is the hero lost: Wentworth's mind disintegrates when he chooses illusion instead of reality (Descent into Hell); the recluse-hero in The House on the Borderland dies not because the cellar trapdoor barricaded against the swine-monster has finally given way but because his own decision to commit suicide has negated the power of the House to protect him.

In nearly every one of the situations mentioned above, once the hero or heroine has crossed over the threshold into the world of the night journey, be it where it may, he or she will find a mortal enemy waiting there who is at home in that place. The nature of this creature and the form that the inevitable combat will take depend largely on the character of the protagonist and the specific demands made on him or her by the moral structure of the plot.

If the author is following the older folkloristic and/or classical models, he is liable to produce a Beowulf type hero who must trust in his own strength more than in whatever god he may have. To paraphrase Patricia Meyer Spacks, his courage and will alone oppose the dark forces. They represent his triumphant assertion of himself as a man, his insistence on human importance despite human frailty.[5] For him, the combat will be very physical and the enemy some monstrous agent of evil and death. Most modern fantasy keeps some of these elements, probably because most modern readers prefer a hero who is active and self-reliant, at the very least. All of us are familiar with his type.

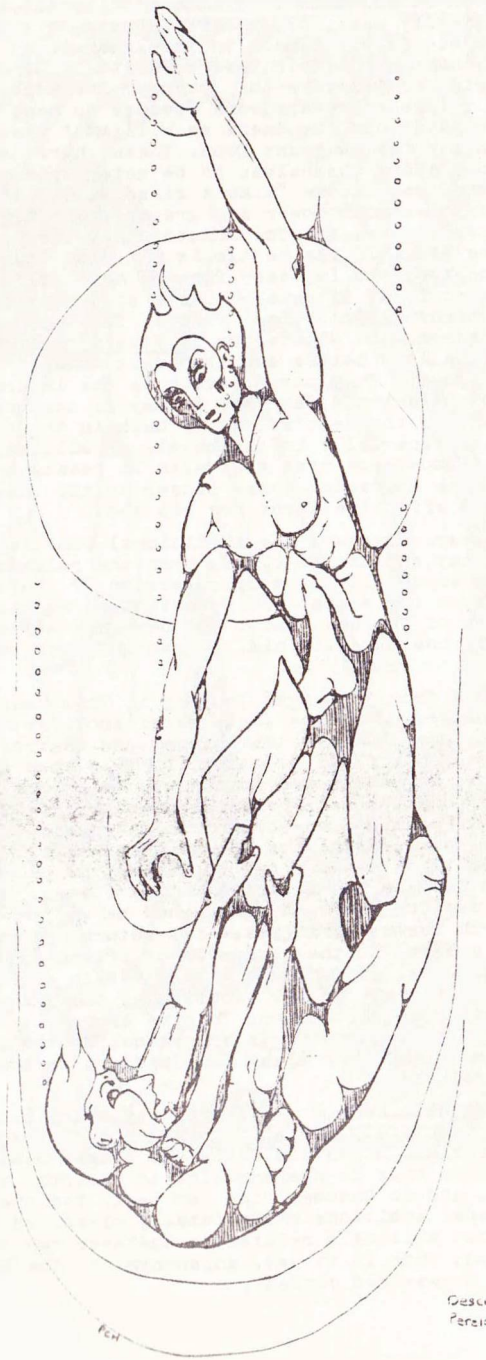
"The House on the Borderland" P.C. Hodgell

In the work of such Christian apologists as Charles Williams and C.S. Lewis, and even to some extent in Tolkien, we find a very different set of ideals. In any Christian story, as Dorothy Klein Barber has pointed out, man is not really the hero but the agent of Good and/or God.[5] To stress this fact, the protagonist is often represented as being physically weak, or at least unused to thinking in terms of physical violence (e.g., Ransom on Perelandra). As the story develops, so must this character's spiritual strength if he or she hopes to defeat the monster and survive the journey. The more one concentrates on this growth, the less prepared one becomes to meet external threats. In the end we have such phenomena as Williams' passive heroines and Frodo's being carried up Mount Doom. These characters are required not to act but to prepare themselves to be acted upon. If they succeed in the latter, they may become "like a glass filled with a clear light," vehicles of a superhuman power and grace. Their night journey is primarily an internal one, and the monster they must defeat lurks in the caverns of the soul. If the battle is won, the impurities there are vapourized and the hero is ready for the next stage of the journey. If he loses, his soul may disappear like a spider held in a flame (Wentworth) or be painfully scorched (Frodo). The lucky ones are those such as Gandalf, Ransom, and Nightspore (A Voyage to Arcturus) who are tempered before the last battle and then sent into it sure of themselves and their new power. This purification is the intermediate goal in most Christian-orientated fantasy. It may be accompanied by suffering (the equivalent to the hero's loss of hair in the folk tale) or even by death (this, especially in the novels of Williams), but it and the increased self-knowledge that goes with it remain the important points. Through them, the character comes closer to the ideal state of grace by becoming a more effective agent for his god.

In all fantasy, however, the traditional function of the night journey underlies any additional twists that the religion of the author may give it. It is above all the middle section of the monomyth that provides the pattern for almost all mythological stories: it is the initiation, the rite of passage. Until the hero has passed through it, learning whatever it has to teach him, he can not move on to the next level of existence.

The emergence from the night journey in this changed state is rebirth, the culmination of the whole experience. From this point on, the focus begins to move outward. Having met and destroyed the darkness in himself, the hero now turns to others to help them do the same. In folklore, he enables his swallowed companions to experience rebirth with him by slicing open the belly of the sea-monster. In Buddism he is the Bodhisattva come back to the world from the gates of Paradise to teach that Nirvana is omnipresent for those who can see it. In Christian fantasy, he also returns to lead and encourage the people, with the emphasis once again more on the latter than the former. This sort of hero has even less use for force now than when he was in the middle of his journey. Rebirth serves to increase his natural passivity. Ransom simply waits for orders, to the confusion of friend and foe alike. When action is finally called for, the wizard Merlin and not the Pendragon takes over. Frodo's part in the Scouring of the Shire is limited to preventing unnecessary bloodshed. To give a more literal example, Chloe lies paralyzed for nine months after channeling the Stone of Suleiman out of this world, and then dies. This pattern is common to the mythologies of all religions.

> The individual, through prolonged psychological disciplines, gives up completely all attachment to his personal limitations, idiosyncrasies, hopes and fears, no longer resists the self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth, and so becomes ripe, at last, for the great at-one-ment. His personal ambitions being totally dissolved, he no longer tries to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him; he becomes, that is to say, an anonymity. The Law lives in him with his unreserved consent.



The role of each man or woman who survives the journey is to serve as a witness to others of the supernatural forces that he or she encountered there. Their very presence in a human community is like that of a pebble thrown into a still pool. The trial of one man becomes the trial of every man as others set out, willing or not, on their own journeys of self-discovery.

That, in brief, is the way the night journey motif operates: descent into the nightland, combat with the monster, victory or death, rebirth or damnation, and return. We have examined some of the forms it takes in modern and ancient fantasy, but not much has been said so far to explain its persistence or remarkable vitality. To account for these qualities, it will help if we look briefly at its significance from several different angles.

Sociologically, the night journey contains all the elements of the challenge-growth-victory drama stressed in one form or another by all cultures and all religions. Durkheim has called mythology as a whole a repository of allegorical instructions used to shape the individual to his group. As a rite of passage, the night journey plays its part in this process by making those who pass through it worthy to become responsible members of their society.

Psychologically, Jung sees the night journey as an expression of the desire for resurrection and the overcoming of death. He goes on to say that it is symbolic of the need to accept the possibilities that lie in the unconscious content, "activated through regression... and disfigured by the slime of the deep."[8] He uses the example of the Ancient Mariner who must accept the slimy things of the ocean with love before he can be saved. In this interpretation, the sea-monster becomes a symbol of the unconscious content, and yet it must be killed so that "the unconscious, robbed of its energy, no longer occupies the dominant position."[9]

Religious considerations also play a major role in many night journeys, whether the participant is aware of it or not. The motif is a special favourite of the Christian fantasists because it has all the elements that make the story of Christ so important to their religion. The successful night journey results in what J.R.R. Tolkien calls the Consolation of the Happy Ending, the eucatastrophy which is "the true form of the fairy tale and its highest function." It denies

> universal final defeat and in so far is evangelium, giving a fleeting glimpse of Joy, Joy beyond the walls of the world, poignant as grief[10]

and prefigures

> the promised redemptive ending, the triumph of good over evil of Christian theology.[11]

Jung has said that the evil present in the world today needs to be fought by a living myth. Through fantasy, such writers as C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams have attempted to revitalize the Christian mythos so that it can fulfil this role. They are constantly trying to tell their readers that the power is still there and can be used outside as well as in the world of the novel.

To sum it all up, the night journey represents in mythic form man's coming to terms with himself, his society, and sometimes with his god as well. Because it deals with such fundamental issues, it often appears as a central or governing motif in literature, both ancient and modern. Mythology and folklore provide especially pure examples, since they more than any other form of story telling were created to speak directly to man's most basic needs and desires. Fantasy is their offspring. It has inherited many of their characteristics, and uses many of their basic themes, giving them a new flexibility by taking advantage of the author's own imagination and beliefs. Modern society no longer acknowledges these motifs and the rituals they involve, but we can rediscover them, in all their dark, elemental power, in the works of such writers as Tolkien, Williams, and Lewis, where the myths regain their ancient significance.

FOOTNOTES

1) Marie-Louise Von Franz, "The Problem of Evil in Fairy Tales," Evil, ed. by the Curatorium of the C.G. Jung Institute, Zurich (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), p. 86.

2) Leo Frobenius, as quoted by J.E. Cirlot in A Dictionary of Symbols (New York: Philosophical Library, 1962), p. 218.

3) The others took place in the Old Forest, under Weathertop, in the Tower of Cirith Ungol, and during the journey through Mordor itself. The reader will probably find many other examples, both partial and complete.

4) Milton, Paradise Lost, ix, 348-350.

5) Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Power and Meaning in The Lord of the Rings," Tolkien and the Critics, ed., Neil D. Isaacs and Rose A. Zimbardo (Notre Dame, London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), p. 86.

6) Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 235-7.

7) Dorothy Klein Barber, "The Structure of The Lord of the Rings" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1965), p. 150.

8) Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 125.

9) C.G. Jung, Two Essays on Analytical Psychology (New York: Meridian Books, 1963), p. 110.

10) J.R.R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Tales," The Tolkien Reader (New York: Ballantine, 1966), p. 68.

11) Robley Evans, J.R.R. Tolkien (New York: Warner Paperback Library Edition, 1972), p. 12.

Broken Arrows

I met the keepers
of my tilled fields,
mind-furrowing.
The four of them,
centaurs.
Each had a task.

"Why?" I asked.
The young one
shot a golden arrow
into the sky,
and answered,
"To keep the buds visible."

"Which?" I asked, gesturing.
The graceful one
sent a bluish arrow
in quick pursuit,
and smiling, said:
"Only the soft, romantic ones."

"How?" I inquired.
The tall one
broke a green arrow,
placed it in the ground,
and replied,
"By keeping the possibilities open."

"Who?" I queried, perplexed.
The quicksilver one
uprooted a strung bow
from the fields.

Clear as glass, the bow,
and arrowless.

-- Vincent dePaul --

Books Received
(but not appreciated)
by Your Editor

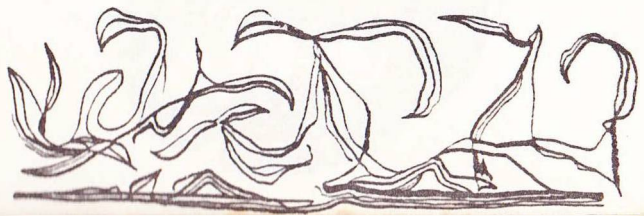
Arena: Sports S-F, Ed Ferman and Barry Malzberg, eds., New York: Doubleday, 1976, $5.95.

Being a Fight and Football fanatic, I expected to enjoy this collection, but found only two members--Vance Aandahl's "Beyond the Game" and Algis Budrys' "Nobody Bothers Gus"--worth attention. The title story, Fredric Brown's "Arena," depicts a man who saves the human race by killing, in single combat, a monstrously evil alien invader. To call this low grade comic book stuff would be to insult the comic books; suffice it to say that "Arena's" inclusion in Bob Silverberg's earlier "Hall of Fame" series will silence any apologist who claims s-f to be a literary art form.

Jim Gunn's "Open Combat" establishes still another point of contact with "Hall of Fame": the printing of second rate stories by first rate authors. Here we have a professional golfer, obliged to make $50,000 in order to win his girl; the sports fan will recall a much more exciting actual occasion when Gene Tunney was driven by this same motivation to earn a million dollars through beating the most dangerous fighter (Jack Dempsey) of his generation--and the literary fan will remember F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby. I suppose the existence of a robot in Gunn's story (the hero's antagonist in a tournament) qualifies it as s-f, but even s-f readers will recognize it as just another Saturday Evening Post type story of poor boy winning rich girl.

There are also null stories by unknown writers. We must accept the editors' claim that Bill Pronzini's Hungarian Cinch was written especially for this volume--since no other sports or non-sports publication would accept a notion as absurd as this: that a billiard champion can be hypnotized (by his non-terrestrial opponent) into thinking he has lost several consecutive games, with nobody bothering to prove otherwise with a camera or other mechanical device that can't be hypnotized.

Arena is justified, in the Afterword, by the personal relevance of sports as "a metaphor for all struggle" (cf. Malcolm Muir's "Flesh" in the present RQ). But in the 20th century such relevance has been disputed by only one person, Avery Brundage, who allowed Germany to stage the Olympic Games in 1936, during which time the Nazis removed the Jude markers from appropriate store windows and presented to outsiders an image of undisturbed tranquility. Of course, saying "what everybody knows" can be useful if the subject is thereby perceived from a different angle, but such new perceptions are not generated by the clichés and tired allegories rehearsed here. On this notion of new perspectives--I recall that when Princess Margaret once asked permission to marry a divorced man, the spiel of one newsboy became, "Hey, she wants a guy with experience--that's sport!" Indeed, a compendium of bedroom athletics, with its undoubted application to "real life," would have been more illuminating than the collection Messrs. Ferman and Malzberg have given us.



New Dimensions
by
Wayne Hooks

New Dimensions Science Fiction Number 5, Robert Silverberg, ed., New York: Harper and Row, 1975, hardback, $6.95, 211 pages.

Excellence and mediocrity never make congenial bedfellows, but never has this been so perfectly illustrated as in this volume.

"Find the Lady" by Nicholas Fisk is a delightful excursion into the realm of absurdity. Earth has been invaded and the human race has been exterminated, except for Mitch and Eugene, two aging homosexuals. By scavenging artifacts of human culture, they eke out an existence. The story surpasses ridiculousness as Mitch and Eugene, court jesters confounding the king, play upon the foibles of the omnipotent invaders.

"A Solfy Drink, a Saffel Fragrance" by Dorothy Gilbert is a chronicle of an alien literature and music. Unfortunately, the chronicle is botched. There is a lack of linguistic background and proper scientific progression. The pacing and language are deadly dull. The major omission here is plot: the story rambles and meanders to an ending that is more a death than a conclusion.

"A Scarab in the City of Time" by Marta Randall is the story of a future in a city which, by means of a dome, has isolated itself from the outside world for centuries. Imagine then, the disruption when an outsider, a sociologist, burrows underneath the dome and is trapped within the city when the hole by which he enters is filled up. The story is well written and well paced. However, it is a shame that the sociological, evolutionary, and psychological impact of such a self-imposed isolation upon a city populace is not more fully explored.

"Theodora and Theodora" by Robert Thurston deals with two women born at the same moment, identical, yet not twins. All facets of their lives are identical, including their personalities. Even their husbands look alike. After the first couple of pages, the plot becomes so predictable as to render it banal.

Felix Gotschalk, the author of "A Day in the South Quad," is a psychologist, which perhaps explains his unusual use of adverbs. His vision of the future is very trite, a future of machines overcoming humanity. There is a tongue in cheek quality, but it is muted.

Michael Bishop writes a metaphysical tale of a man transfigured into a planet-sized tomato. "Rogue Tomato" is an allegory of man's achievement of the perfect state of being. Mischievous, irreverent, Bishop's concept of a giant tomato with a missionary bent is a social comment upon the foibles of human nature.

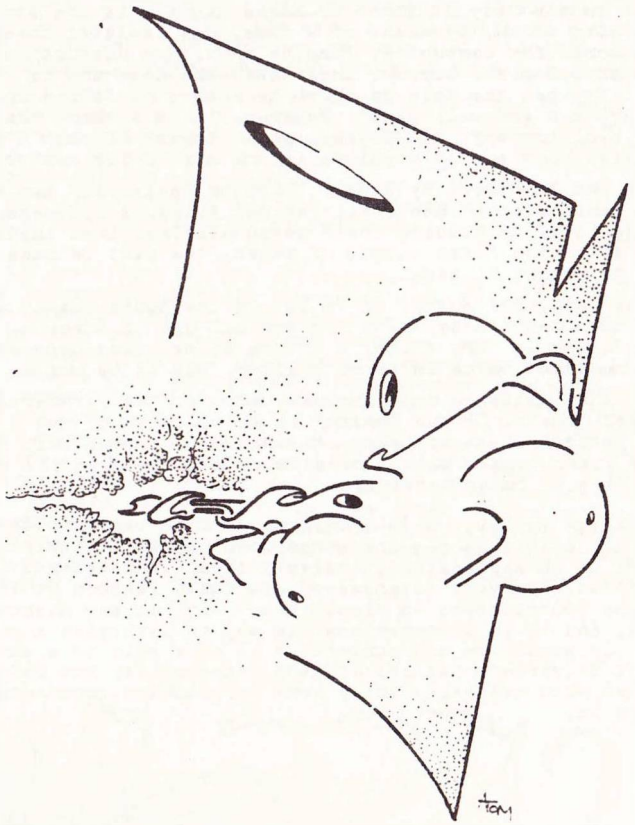
"Achievements" by David Wise should never have been written, if writing may be defined as placing words upon paper. If writing is viewed as art or an expression of talent, then "Achievements" never has been written. The very cuteness of its theme renders it inane. Likewise, "The Contributors to Plenum Four" by Michael Bishop is pointless, and it is incomprehensible why it is styled a piece of fiction. In structure and content it is more akin to a shopping list. Robert Silverberg has edited many anthologies, but unfortunately, even with his experience, some unfortunate accidents continue to slip in.

Jack Dann is best known for his excellent Jewish science-fiction. "The Dybbuk Dolls" is no exception to his usual writing performance. The characterization is excellent. The flavour is ethnic and the plot is as futuristic as it is timeless. It is the story of the Jews after the Diaspora. No material hope is offered for the future, but the strength of the story is the strength of Judaism.

"Museum Piece" by Drew Mendelson is a haunting, devestating view of the future. It damns humanity to its inevitable end.

"Dybbuk Dolls" is the best piece in this anthology, but "White Creatures" by Gregory Benford and "Sail the Tide of Mourning" by Richard Lupoff are both excellent. The former is the story of the sorrow and misapprehension of aging, and paints a harrowing future that none of us may escape. The latter, a sequel to a story in a previous anthology, is a delicate fantsy of man's wandering through the universe and beyond death. Particularly notable about this story is that the main characters are Australoids and the plot is woven around their psychology and mythology.

Some fair, some atrocious, most mediocre, with a few excellent stories in the mire of tedium--such is the best characterization of New Dimensions. It is no worse than most anthologies on the market, nor is it any better, which is its failing.



Flesh

The Cornell-Harvard hockey game
Is an icon of flesh, breathing
In the swirling darkness.

The blistering sight of referees
And tangled bodies is the skeleton
On which I hang the revolving sights
And sounds of my ever-dissipating world.

The flash of jerseys the thump of pads
Electrify me as if I were the still point
In the great pond of the universe.

Harvard, you will be pius Aeneas,
Stalwart as virtue.
You, Cornell, will be a makeshift,
Temporary symbol of the forces
Of evil -- Dido or Juno.

Take me away from the hideous shadows
On the horizon, and give me the mock
World of the Harvard power play.
I will sell myself for this game,
For an artifice I can turn on and off like water.

-- Malcolm Muir III --

Future Lumber
or
Arboreal Genocide Today
by
Camille La Bossière

Robert Theobald and J.M. Scott, Teg's 1994: An Anticipation of the Near Future. Chicago: The Swallow Press, 1972.

"It is a fitting home for Fern Fenwick."

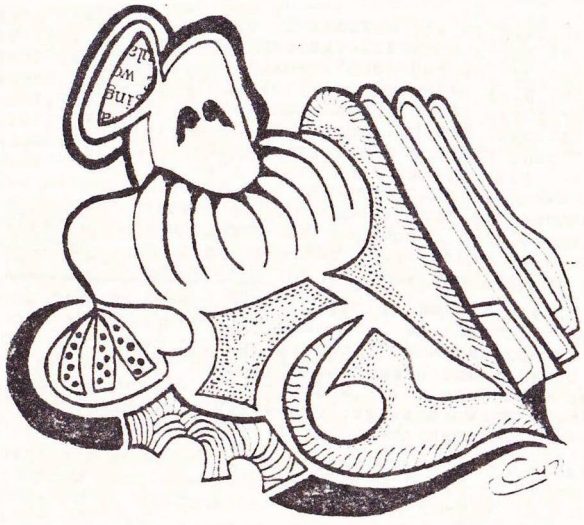
-- Milan C. Edson, Solaris Farm

In the introduction to Teg's 1994, the authors, invoking Socio-economics, Anthropology, Communications Theory, and Education, earnestly pronounce: "...the seeds of the Teg-type personality are already present. If society wishes for warm, sensitive, imaginative personalities in 1994, the effort must be made now." The type of personality referred to is "synergetic," that is, in touch with the positive force in the human mind for the cooperation of all that exists, interdependent in the oneness of being. The increasing number of such integrated personalities, Theobald and Scott hope, will lead to the growth of an ecology-conscious world, in which the individual's potential for moral integrity and mental health will be realized in cooperation with the citizens of a single world community. The sanguine reader, gifted with an evangelical optic sufficiently secularized and deprived of an adequate knowledge of arithmetic (History is a supernumerary here), might rejoice at the good tidings as prophesied by Teilhard de Chardin and McLuhan, both alluded to in validation of the notion of a "global village." No such luck, however: the authors, veiled by a rhetoric common enough among spies, protest that their views are not to be found in this book, which is not, they insist, a Utopia. The views expressed in these recordings of Teg's growing up in 1994 are open to discussion. Theobald and Scott, it appears, are fond of seminars. These teachers with no message prove hard taskmasters, requiring us to duplicate for ourselves, with the artists of the past, the act of creation, to paraphrase Coleridge's often-cited formula. It seems that the authors of Teg's 1994 are not jealous of the craft of the imagination; they are willing to let us do the literary work. The message implied by the call to seminars is clear enough: if we don't do our assignments, we'll be doomed to the fiery ice that awaits the slothful and the indifferent. The very form of this book suggests that the craftsmen of the literary imagination are to be revered, then exiled from the city of enlightenment, as in Plato.

The most striking aspect of this "futurist writing" is a studied nescience, expressed as language and culture. Teg, the protagonist, is an adolescent expert in language. Fluent in English and French, and competent in Chinese and Spanish, she manages to get by in Portuguese--so we are told. But her English is distinguished from that of other characters principally by her predilection for split infinitives, misspellings (e.g., "negligable"), and confusing syntax. The poor marionette, in addition, is not spared the erudition or jargon of her creators: "dysfunctionally high emotional level," "to employ...emotions functionally," and so on. She may take some consolation from the fact that all in 1994 are condemned to share in this poverty of expression: "monolithic tendencies," "sedentary diets," and "numerical weakness"--these speak with similar eloquence of the wit of her fellow citizens and their creators. It was with much pleasure, however, that I read the words of an eminent socio-economist in the fiction: "The very fact that the words and terms were unambiguous reduced the unexpected occurrence of potentially--if often immediately accurate statements--during conversations" (p. 72). Even William Empson, a master sleuth of ambiguity, might find the mystery here beyond his ken. Culture, appropriately enough, is accorded an analogous treatment. By omission, the Quebec of 1994--Teg has been raised there--has been purged of its music, literature, hockey, religion, and other idiosyncracies, including joual, its French dialect of such growing significance in the politics and literature of Canada. Nor is Africa excluded from this vision of nescience: inter-tribal conflict in the 1970's, we are informed, was a direct result of the artificial boundaries established by Europeans at the turn of the century. Cerebral overload...dysfunctional emotional levels...

My epilogue, with apologies to Mother Goose:

A wise hermaphrodite of Gotham
Put to sea in a bowl.
If the Bowl had been stronger
My song had been longer.



"The Investigation" Stanislaw Lem's Pynchonesque Novel

by
Stanley Fogel

Ignoring the staples of science-fiction, which are the real or fancied products of science, Thomas Pynchon engages scientific concepts such as thermodynamics, entropy, and information theory; moreover, he uses these concepts as structural principles as well as thematic motifs in his fiction. Although radical, Pynchon's work has analogues in the many experimental fictions that have recently been published. John Barth, John Fowles, Anthony Burgess, and Robert Coover, among others, all practise this kind of formalist art in which the methods and conventions of fiction-making are preeminent; as John Hawkes says, for these writers "the true enemies of the novel are plot, character, theme and setting." The concept of randomization, for example, has triggered Marc Saporta's novel, Composition #1, which is boxed rather than bound and allows the shuffling of pages. Another extreme example is Charles Aukema's "Frozen Voices"; Aukema writes of his own short story that it is "a formal exercise in structural fiction...a kind of Rube Goldberg machine that does nothing in a very elaborate way. For instance, each particle of the story is repeated twice, in staggered sequence."[2]

The works of Saporta and Aukema, it might be argued, operate on the periphery of serious novelistic experimentation. What is clear, however, is that no "sacred cows" remain for novelists. Their (to some irreverent) play with the stuff of fiction--its theories and conventions--produces a conscious examination and alteration of traditional fictional models. In the realm of science-fiction, though, only Thomas Pynchon has been constructing his novels in this consciously playful way. In novels that involve sorting and ordering information, hewing meaning out of a disordered world, Pynchon structures his novels so that his readers must undertake the same fictionalizing processes his characters undertake, i.e., making sense out of tantalizing but elusive clues. Articulating that dilemma, Oedipa Maas wonders, in The Crying of Lot 49,

> whether, at the end of this (if it were supposed to end), she too might not be left with only compiled memories of clues, announcements, intimations, but never the central truth itself, which must somehow each time be too bright for her memory to hold; which must always blaze out, destroying its own message irreversibly, leaving an overexposed blank when the ordinary world came back.[3]

The directives to Pynchon's readers and characters are clear: there is no order [illegible] in the world except that which one arbitrarily places there. The quest (scientific or otherwise) for meaning is [illegible] endlessly pursued.

Although a writer of science-fiction and an outspoken critic of the genre [illegible] for the past thirty years, Stanislaw Lem, with the recent translation from the Polish of Memoirs Found in a Bathtub and The Investigation, is just now becoming more accessible to American readers. Because of the Pynchonesque quality of his writing (if one may write this of a man who is Pynchon's senior), Lem is making a timely entrance onto the American literary scene. (The present dominance of formalist fiction, in fact, has caused Saul Bellow to lament that the Dickensian, socially concerned writer is being overlooked in current critical examinations and editorial decisions.) Like Pynchon, Lem is a formalist writer who employs scientific--specifically, in his case, statistical and mathematical--principles and motifs ultimately to undermine the scientific mode of perceiving and structuring the world in any but an artificial way.

The Investigation is a multi-layered parody of both science-fiction and detective stories. The narrative delineates the investigation of a series of puzzling corpse robberies and/or corpse movements. Gregory, a detective who prides himself on his deliberately random movements, and Sciss, a statistician who revels in his meticulously planned life, are the two principal antagonists who attempt to solve the riddle. It is a riddle studded with tantalizing clues: the names, for instance, are replete with double entendres --the bodies of James Trayle, Stewart Aloney, and Samuel Filthey disappear; the incidents occur in Engender and Spittoon; peripheral characters include Plays and the gothic-sounding Fensnawes. As with the panoply of Pynchon characters (Stanley Koteks, Ghengis Cohen, Bloody Chiclitz) and institutions (W.A.S.T.E., N.A.D.A.), however, the connexions they promise are never made. Again, as with Pynchon's fiction, endings and order are elusive not merely because the author wishes to indulge in some legerdemain, but because Lem's epistemological vision in The Investigation is that knowledge is a construct, tenuously wrought, which makes sense out of existence only by falsifying it.

Most elusive of any reductive significance in the novel are the corpse disappearances. Along with this "case" which engages Chief Inspector Sheppard, Gregory, and Sciss are other recurrent things and events, such as mannequins which are manipulated at various points and which provide a taunting reminder of the inexplicability of corpse movements and the sexual innuendo of what might be called the Gregory-Sciss dialectic. The two men, offering in their actions and discourse two different modes of coping with inchoate reality, have dinner together and on leaving find that they must "skip around the edge of the dance floor, jostled by the dancing couples."[4] They dance together deservedly, neither one finding absolute meaning or even consolation in the highly deliberate way each (the scientist and the detective) attempts to solve the case and to cope with the world.

At the heart of the novel, though, is the search by Gregory and Sciss for an answer to the case of the aberrant corpses. Gregory, as mentioned previously, is a detective, one who needs a crime and a human perpetrator of that crime in order for his perception of the universe, full of logic and of cause and effect, to remain stable. As one of Sciss's acquaintances tells him:

> A culprit who isn't caught is a defeat for you--it means still another folder in the unsolved cases file. But a culprit who doesn't exist, who never existed, that's something completely different, worse than all your records burning up, worse even than confused language in your official reports, it's the end of the world! For you, the existence of the perpetrator of a crime has nothing to do with victory or defeat--it's a matter of the sense or absurdity of your profession and your daily activities. And because [illegible] means peace of mind, salvation, and relief you'll [illegible] get the bastard even if he doesn't exist! [5]

Yet not only the futility of his quest for that agent, but also other facets of his world undermine his perspective; there are, for instance, the unanswered questions about the noises which obsess him and which emanate from Mr. Pensnawe's room, the one beside his own.

There is also Gregory's habit of releasing himself in the random world around him by haphazardly traversing London and, more importantly, by playing a game unique to him since his school days; that game involves randomly getting on and off the subway trains at intervals chosen spontaneously (or, in other words, selected by chance). Gregory's preoccupation with chaos prepares the reader for his dogged pursuit of Sciss as the criminal and also for his compromise at the end of the novel after he discovers Sciss is not the human agent for whom he desperately wished.

At once falsely pursued and idiosyncratically pursuing, Sciss both lives his life and sees the case antithetically to Gregory. His life is organized around statistics, which supplies him with the hedge against random existence that Gregory finds in police work. Yet variables work against Sciss's neat constructs as well. His health, he reveals, and his sexual proclivities, it is intimated, conspire to thwart the statistically charted, fastidious life he wishes to live. Not to be denied, though, is his herculean attempt to live by the mathematical order he creates.

In terms of the corpses, Sciss epigrammatically states, "This isn't a criminal investigation, it's a scientific study" (pp.117-8). This scientific study, it is important to note, does not explain what causes the phenomena of the world; it merely orders them. This "merely," however, does not reduce statistics' claims. Sciss says:

> Nowadays rationalism is the fashion, not the method, and superficiality is always one of the characteristic features of fashion...At the end of the nineteenth century it was universally believed that we knew almost everything there was to know about the material world, that there was nothing left to do, except keep our eyes open and establish priorities... So-called common sense relies on programmed nonperception, concealment, or ridicule of everything that doesn't fit into the conventional nineteenth century vision of a world that can be explained down to the last detail. Meanwhile, in actuality you can't take a step without encountering some phenomenon that you cannot understand and will never understand without the use of statistics. (pp. 156-7)

Thus Sciss can analyze the events that perplex the criminal investigators and can at least provide a regulatory grid for their occurence. Although he cannot provide definite answers as to why they occur, he can, as can medical researchers about cancer, predict under which conditions they are most likely.

After being defeated by the case and by Sciss, Gregory comes to appreciate Sciss's partial victory over disordered existence. In a lengthy passage which is the philosophical centre of the novel and which paves the way for his acceptance of the Chief Inspector's artificial and "neat" resolution of the case (achieved by Sheppard when he produces a recently deceased truck driver who could have been in the area of each corpse snatching), Gregory says

> What if everything that exists is fragmentary, incomplete, aborted, events with ends but no beginnings, events that only have middles, things that have fronts or rears but not both, with us constantly making categories, seeking out, and reconstructing, until we think we can see total love, total betrayal and defeat although in reality we are all no more than haphazard fractions...The daily commonplace is automatically regulated by the world's vastness, its infinite variety; because of it, what we see as gaps and breaches, compliment each other; the mind for its own self-preservation, finds and integrates scattered fragments. pp.234-5)

To save oneself from being overwhelmed by the surrounding chaos (Gregory's metaphor for the world is that it is like soup), he advocates the following: "The mathematical order of the universe is our answer to the pyramids of chaos" (p.205). Clearly, though, statistics is arbitrarily and selectively used, and provides nothing approximating an absolute order: it is merely an aid in coping with a variegated universe.

In The Investigation Lem is probing one of the basic paradoxes of human existence which Georg Simmel, a contemporary of Max Weber and another who was influenced enormously by Marx, has rendered as the dualism of "life" and "the forms of life." For Simmel, "Since life is the antithesis of form, and since only that which is somehow formed can be conceptually described, the concept of life can not be freed from logical imprecision." [6] For Lem, only statistics, which maps the frequency with which various events occur, does not distort too grossly what Simmel has called the "restless rhythms" of existence. Nonetheless, the arbitrary nature of all answers is clearly manifested in Lem's fiction as it is in Pynchon's.

FOOTNOTES

1) For an insightful discussion of the role these elements play in a Pynchon novel, see Anne Mangel's "Maxwell's Demon, Entropy, Information: The Crying of Lot 49," Tri-Quarterly, number 20.

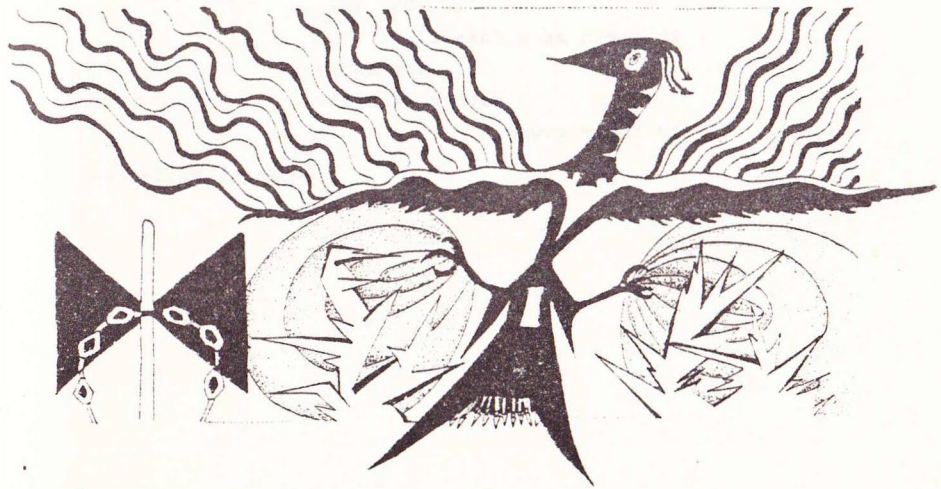
2) Cutting Edges: Young American Fiction for the 70's, J. Hicks, ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973), p. 217.

3) The Crying of Lot 49 (New York: Bantam, 1966), p. 99.

4) See his "Robots and Science Fiction" in SF: The Other Side of Realism (ed., T. Clareson) for a discussion of science-fiction as a game played with autonomous rules that can deviate from "reality."

5) The Investigation (New York: Seabury, 1974), p. 156. Subsequent quotations refer to page numbers from this edition.

6) Georg Simmel, The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays, K.P. Etzkorn, ed. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p.29.



a.m. Rompers

early sunday
the morning awaits light
tradition
of drawing the shades
in bad times
deserted streets
the natives
composed of culture
heroic pasts
& clumsy paintings
in iowa
the moderns awaken
stretch into
their bloody marys
folk tradition
from ohio
motif motif
american life
based on war
new school
on starting fires
genuine participation
in city scenes
to earth as a fossil
the hunters
rather sensitive
in their gowns.

-- Errol Miller --

marvel how the rain
sweet
and your age has revealed to
me mine and yours have lakes apart, glow not stillness not
rain or death or thundering blows,
altar gleaming in silence, deep vows and cauldron boils
silence grain and your winter heeds startled calling,
fruit a wild vastness beyond name, for
i pledge throat of winter doing, god remorseless
cries all bitter emblems shield your wit,
mercy calls in fields, drooping poppies, drugs,
alone all GRAIL has swollen, and
YOU ALONE have amber
green falling and your wings, sweet faery,
green
winter calls
a child searching, winter walls and this seed
at sea, all dawn witness barren, all restless and un-relentless
perusal of, and then betray not the stars, for another glows,
is seldom is, sweet believer and then all steel
burning cross while i temper and you vein, burn, glow, boil all
in vast midnight, leaking air i am, your sweet and flowing.

-- Andrea Moorhead --

Letter from Smyrna
by
Lauri Anderson

I am writing from Izmir, the ancient Smyrna of history books. Izmir is Turkey's gateway to the Aegean, and its pillared Agora attests to its age: it is one of the oldest cities on earth. Over the centuries the city has gained and lost a multitude of peoples, and today the modern port city still contains a bewildering array of communities, several of them rather exotic even for the Orient.

The purpose of this letter is to let you know about the state of s-f in Turkey. Actually, that sentence is a bit grandiose since I know of only one original Turkish s-f writer, a startlingly beautiful almond-eyed girl of twenty-four. Her name is Yasemin Akbuz and her family is Levantine. This means that she is a mixture of Mediterranean bloods. Just yesterday, over a bottle of Thracian wine in one of the local seaside cafes, Yasemin explained to me her descent from various minority groups of the old Ottoman Empire.

Yasemin is one-eighth Armenian, one-eighth Circassian, one-eighth Greek, one-eighth Lebanese, one-fourth French, and one-fourth Spanish. Her family speaks six languages at home, including Cervantean Spanish, a hold-over from the sixteenth century when a Jewish ancestor fled the inquisition for the relative security of the Ottomans.

Yasemin has taken it on herself to introduce science-fiction to modern Turkey. This is no small task. Turkey is a country that prides itself on its past and on conformity, and the government has never hesitated at branding those artists who advocate rapid change as political revolutionaries. Most of Turkey's contemporary writers spend their art in writing protests against the deplorable living conditions of the Turkish villagers and the ever-expanding gap between the rich city dwellers and their country brethren. This social literature is not necessarily Marxist in intent, but all of it is construed that way by the government, and consequently many of the books are taken off bookstore shelves and many of the authors are harrassed.

It is under this type of censorship that Yasemin is forced to ply her trade and, following the tradition of much s-f, she has bravely carried certain unhappy aspects of her own present-day society to an even unhappier conclusion in the future Turkey.

To date Yasemin has written three novels. None of these has been printed by a reputable publisher. The press seems to fear that publication would cause a violent reaction from conservative elements in the country, and this could lead to real danger for the young author or the publisher. Consequently, the books circulate only in manuscript form, but all three have been read avidly by certain circles here in Izmir, in Ankara, and in Istanbul.

By far the finest of Yasemin's three books is Rumi's Antenna. This short novel of 140 pages begins straightforwardly enough. The opening chapters introduce a village idiot from Eastern Turkey who is humiliated constantly by the cruel peasants of his mountain home. The sufferings of the poor unresisting fool are piled one upon another; they culminate in his near-drowning in the village cesspool after a beating from a village tough. After this episode the boy is sent to stay with relatives in Konya, the religious capital of Turkey and its most conservative city. The relatives treat the boy harshly but realize that there is a religious tone to his innocent suffering. The relatives introduce the boy to the Koran and then introduce him to the whirling Dervishes of the Mevlana sect of Islam. The boy shows great enthusiasm for the Dervishes and is soon initiated into their dances.

At this point the novel breaks with its linear narration and begins to assume the circular pattern of the dance itself. As the boy raises his right hand palm upward to touch God and thrusts his left hand palm downward to touch the people, the ever present confusion of his mind is spun away. He begins to speak with clarity and wisdom, and the audience is astounded to hear him overflowing with blissful poetry. The poetic outpourings of the whirling Dervish are now the central narration of the book, and these outpourings interweave with each other and repeat as the narration moves slowly forward through the sedate ecstasy of the whirling boy. The discerning reader soon begins to realize that the prophetic songs of the idiot are actually not his words at all. They are the words of voyagers who are approaching Earth from another galaxy. The space visitors are able to communicate with distant worlds by casting their brain waves over vast reaches of space, but to be able truly to communicate, these visitors must find a receiver and sender of like brainwaves. The boy is such a receiver and has been one throughout the book, but this is not apparent to the reader until the boy dances. In the Dervish dance the boy concentrates his entire mind upon receiving God, and as he whirls, his own mind is no longer jamming the waves of the future visitors. We learn from the boy's song that the future space visitors have visited many planets throughout the galaxies, and they have often met with violent hostility; therefore, this system of sending words of great wisdom has been developed in order to prepare potentially hostile planets for the arrival of guests. We also discover that if we re-read the opening chapters we can now gain meaning from the previously incoherent garblings of the village idiot. With care we can unravel the boy's words from the interplanetary words, and suddenly it is obvious that the boy is not an idiot at all: he is only the hapless victim of a short-circuited nervous system that is being jammed from space.

Soon the boy is accepted by the people of Konya as a new voice of God, as a poet who speaks with the authority of a prophet. All of Konya is sent into a state of religious ecstasy verging on hysteria. Messages are sent throughout the Moslem world proclaiming the arrival of a new prophet. In the meantime the boy whirls on and on, and the words that are spun out from his dance are hastily recorded by scribes, who add new suras each day to the Holy Book of revelations.

In the end the conservative Imams of Konya plot against the new prophet and destroy him in a grotesque and macabre dance of death. Turkey's provincialism wins out, and the novel ends with a touch of doom lingering in the background.

The novel's intentional ambiguity leaves the reader with a number of unanswered questions. For example, is the idiot an isolated case or is Yasemin also implying that all of the prophets of the past have been receivers for interplanetary messages?

Yasemin's second novel, Zap, seems to fulfil the fondest wishes of her country's politicians. The main character is a Turkish doctor of great ability who has spent years in the United States. There he has done a lot of research on brainwaves. The doctor has finally invented a machine that enables the controller to track and record all brainwaves within a given area. When the doctor returns to Turkey, he shows his device to a friend in the Turkish government. The friend recognizes the political importance of the discovery and the Turkish government sets aside a large portion of its meager wealth so that a greatly refined copy of the machine might be produced. In time the infernal machine is unveiled. In this new machine, with the aid of a built-in computer, the various emotional levels of brainwaves can be filtered out and recorded. Soon the government discovers that it can detect and identify certain brainwaves as potentially dangerous to the society. The next step is for the inventive doctor to devise a means of immobilizing (or short-circuiting) all potentially aggressive brainwaves so that no violence can be committed by any citizen.

The results are both tragic and humorous. Nearly all love-making comes to an abrupt end until the government learns to turn off the zap machine during certain night hours. In several cases the short-circuiting results in the deaths of some citizens, but these deaths are dismissed as inconsequential side-effects of the machine. The zapping machine's shortcomings are made apparent, however, when the students at the university in Ankara riot during the late afternoon rush hour. The government turns the zapping machine to its maximum force, and the students are zapped with such violence that they tumble in heaps onto the concrete in front of the parliament building where they have assembled. Unfortunately, the rush-hour drivers are also full of equally violent thoughts, and their zapping cascades them into horrendous accidents that involve hundreds of vehicles.

The climax to the story occurs when the President of the Republic discovers that his mind is zapped by the machine every time he tries sexual intercourse with his all-too-willing secretary. Finally the President himself orders the machine destroyed, and Turkey returns to the usual bumbling chaos of its political and social in-fighting.

Yasemin's third book is Perpetual Love. This brief novel was written during the two ecstatic weeks that Yasemin and I camped out on the balcony of a belly-dancing acquaintance's apartment. The book reflects the frantic activity of those two weeks: the wild bouts of love-making alternated with long periods of frenzied writing. In this book Yasemin's inventive doctor has devised a means of protracting orgasm for long periods of time. In government love parlours the fee-paying customer is hooked up to an individual machine that instantly sends the participant into constant orgasm for a time that is controlled by the amount paid for the admission ticket. In the case of a female the machine is relatively simple and causes continuous orgasm for a hundred, two hundred, or even a thousand times, until the body is utterly exhausted. Unfortunately, few of these machines are needed for women, since few Turkish wives and daughters are ever allowed to leave the protective sanctuary of their homes. The few female love machines are therefore available for prostitutes and foreigners. The machine for a man is necessarily more complicated. The testicles are connected to a great sack of artificial seminal fluid, and collecting tubes catch the constantly [illegible] and recirculate the stuff until, once again, the body is utterly exhausted. In time, physical love between couples is no longer expressed within Turkish society.

In actuality, no man or woman is allowed to show affection in public in Turkey, but now in the book this affection is also lacking in their private lives. Soon the men are spending inordinately long hours away from home, either working to earn their next admission fee or sitting in coffee houses with their cronies and discussing their next trip to the love salon. The lives of the women are outwardly changed very little by these events; they still spend their days sitting on their balconies and watching the world go by. There is one big difference, however, and this is that the women are no longer constantly pregnant as in the past; in fact, the birth rate of the population drops nearly to zero. When the women of Turkey discover that they have lost their one purpose in life, the raising of their children, then they too devise means to escape into the pleasures of the love parlour. An enterprising Japanese firm comes up with a miniature love machine, and the women are able to hook themselves up in the solitude and safety of their own homes. Over a period of time the Turks are genetically adapted to their new way of life. The sexual organs grow more and more pronounced and the limbs atrophy.

Finally the day comes when all resistance has ceased and the love-obsessed country is ripe for invasion. Turkey is invaded by its traditional enemy, Russia. The Russians take over everything, including the lucrative love salons. The selfish Russians, in the best capitalist tradition, instantly raise the price of admission. Now the orgiastic Turks must work longer and harder to spend less time in the love parlour. After some time the Russians raise the price of admission again. Now many Turks rediscover their spouses. Finally, the Turks are once again spending most of their time working instead of climaxing. They now rebel and drive the Russians out of the country. The salons are destroyed and life is normalized.

Yasemin Akbuz is a fine writer in a little-known and rarely translated language. She has written controversial literature against terrific pressures from various camps of her conservative society. Her themes are protests against the stifling and authoritarian elements in Turkey, yet they apply anywhere. I look forward to many more thought-provoking books from her, and I hope this brief introduction has whetted your own appetite for her books, when and if they are ever translated into English.

OPERE CITATO

BY HARRY WARNER JR.

Commercialism has grown lamentably in science-fiction and its related fields. But one possibility has been overlooked by the hucksters up to now. I haven't seen anywhere an advertisement for a coffee table designed specifically for the display of extra-handsome fanzines.

Several of these fine-looking fanzines have attained ample fame through large circulations and Hugo nominations. In different ways, Andy Porter's Algol and Bill Bowers' Outworlds became widely known for their combination of lots of wordage, superior art, imaginative layout, and large printings.

But there are other fanzines which share most of those attributes. I can't cover all of them here and I'll leave out of consideration those that haven't published an issue during the past few months. Nevertheless, if you feel better about it when the fanzine you're reading is superior in general appearance or if you are tired of snide comments when friends catch you with sloppily mimeographed or barely legible dittoed fanzines, you can't go wrong on any mentioned here.

Maybe it's stretching things to refer to Starwind as a fanzine. But nobody has invented yet the badly needed term to use for publications in the Algol class. Its second issue has 82 large-format pages, 25 individuals and one firm in its personnel list, and a full-page advertisement for a bagel shop. But mundane advertisers help to pay the bills for such an expensive-looking letterpress publication which contains articles on the fiction of Moorcock and Howard, reprints of Jacobi and Bradbury stories, some original fiction, and more first-rate illustrations than all the fanzines published in an entire year possessed when I was breaking into fandom. Many of the people who produced and wrote for this issue are Ohio State University-connected. Its first issue was called Rune, then the title was hastily changed because of the discovery that a Minnesota fan club has been publishing for years a fanzine with the same title.

Just to complicate things, there's another superior-looking fanzine entitled Starfire. This seventh issue is almost as big, with its 64 similar-sized pages, I wouldn't want to have to decide which fanzine has the better art; the offset reproduction is perfect although a typewriter face is used, and the contents are perhaps more calculated to appeal to both the active fan and the reader whose interest is solely in professional science-fiction. Miraculously, it's mostly the accomplishment of one person, Bill Breiding, with the help of a handful of friends, not the achievement of most of the non-football players at a major university. Don D'Ammassa on Clifford Simak's fiction and a George Barr interview are particularly noteworthy.

Even more enormous in sheer bulk is the April, 1976, issue of Nyctalops. It offers 124 of those 8½ x 11" pages that Starfire and Starwind also use, plus such extras as a four-colour front cover and a remarkable variety of artistic techniques inside. This one is almost a one-man accomplishment. Harry O. Morris, Jr., emphasizes material with a fantasy and weird slant. It ranges from such esoterica as the influence of Baudelaire on the poetry of Donald Sidney-Fryer to material of general interest like a Frank Belknap Long interview.

If you live in a small apartment and you have a second-hand coffee table which you bought from a hobbit, you might prefer the smaller fanzine that in a sense started it all. Amra seems to have been the first long-lived fanzine that put all this emphasis on ample quantities of first-rate art alternating with razor-sharp offset reproduction of text. It celebrated its 20th anniversary by putting out two April 1, 1976 issues. They would get crushed to death if the fanzines previously mentioned ever ganged up on them. But these 20 page issues in a smaller format continue to serve as the focal point of the sword and sorcery movement without restricting their appeal to admirers of that genre. People who rarely appear in other fanzines, like Roy Krenkel and L. Sprague de Camp, continue to be prominent in Amra.

Even longer-lived than Amra is Bill Danner's Stefantasy. Bill continues to insist that it's not a fanzine despite such suspicious features as an ATOM front cover, six pages of fascinating reprints from 19th century issues of Scientific American, and Randall Gould's musings on what progress has done to communications and learning. Even though newspapers all over the nation are scrapping their linotypes in favour of cold type production methods, Bill shows no inclination to pick up a bargain for use in Stef. He continues to set every line of it by hand and to run it off on his own printing press. In some ways, that's a greater achievement, to fill 24 pages one piece of type at a time, than to produce masters for a 100-page fanzine from one of these new-fangled devices called typewriters.

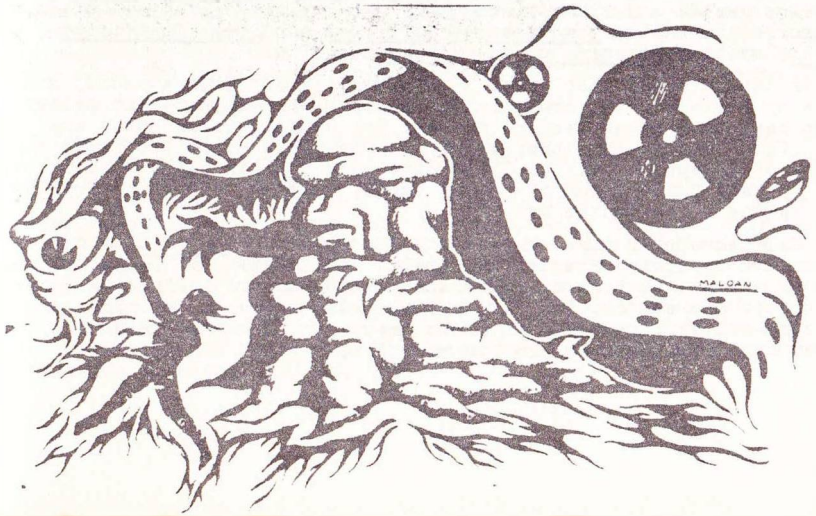
Starwind: $1.50 per copy. The Starwind Press, P.O. Box 3346, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 43210. Published twice yearly.

Starfire: $1.50 per issue. Bill Breiding, 151 Arkansas St., San Francisco, California, 94107. Published quarterly.

Nyctalops: $4.00 for this special issue. Harry O. Morris, Jr., 500 Wellesley S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87106. Published irregularly.

Amra: 75¢ per copy. Box 8243, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19101. Published irregularly.

Stefantasy: "Price 33 Bolivars except for your copy which is FREE!" R.D. 1, Kennerdell, Pennsylvania, 16374. Published occasionally.



the Seasonal Fan

Jim Harmon

Tom Mix Rides Again

Tom Mix turned from his seat at the bar, pushed back his Stetson, and said, "Well, hello there, Jimmy!" Just as if he had known me all his life.

The above should be fantastic enough for a magazine dealing in science-fiction and fantasy. Considering that this happened in 1975 and that Tom Mix was killed in an automobile crash in 1940. Of course, I've managed to write more about Tom Mix in s-f fanzines than any other man alive, for perilously close to thirty years. About that long ago, I wrote about the Tom Mix radio show (along with more conventional fantasy programmes like Lights Out) in Langley Searles's Fantasy Commentator. (I was about 12 years old.) At least one movie made by movie actor Tom Mix (The Miracle Rider, a Mascot serial) is science-fiction, as well as [illegible] stories and the Ralston comic books based on the broadcasts. So there is a relation between Mix and fantasy. But enough [illegible] for his ghost to appear before me?

Perhaps I should write "Tom Mix" with quotes, but this man greeting me had been Tom Mix to me (without quotes) all of my childhood and probably had been more important in framing my concept of Mix than the real motion picture actor. This man was Curley [illegible], and had played the part of Mix on the radio for many years. I [illegible] remember an earlier actor in the role, but I had always [illegible] Curley. Now a middle-aged kid, I was meeting my hero for the first time.

As suits a man who played a character who was not only a cowboy, but a great detective, a man of mystery, the whereabouts of Curley Bradley had been cloaked in shadows for decades. I had made a number of inquiries to AFTRA and other actors' guilds for years, asked his former co-workers, everything. There were legends--that he was managing a tiny radio station somewhere in the Southwest, that he was in a Veterans' hospital somewhere. None proved true.

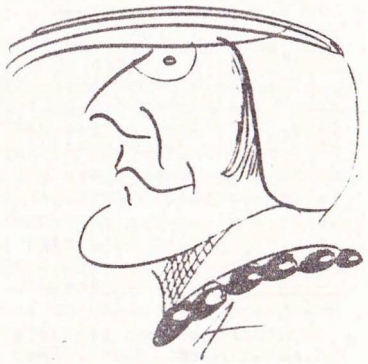
Years passed and I occupied myself with writing science-fiction, nostalgia books like The Great Radio Heroes and Great Television Heroes, editing Monsters of the Movies magazine.

One day in April last year, I received a visit from somebody who likes my books and who drops in on me about once a year--Bob Walters. A fan particularly of Western movies, Bob usually talks about the real, late Tom Mix and other stars with me. This visit I offered him a copy of a reprint edition I had done of a Tom Mix radio manual booklet. "I have the original of one of these," Bob said. "Curley Bradley gave me one a few months ago."

I felt something like an electric shock pass [illegible]. This man had talked to Curley Bradley, literally and truly. To me, Curley had been as elusive as Howard Hughes and Amelia Earhart combined. My fellow writer and editor, Ron Haydock, was also there at the time, and although not as interested in radio greats as I, either sensed or shared my surprise, from his own reaction.

Bob Walters seemed to have regretted speaking so quickly. The thought crossed my mind that he might like to be the ultimate collector--the only one who knew where Curley Bradley was. I got him to tell a little more of how he had met Curley--some years ago th through Curley's mother, a remarkable woman who had just died a few months before. He told me that Curley spent a lot of time at a veterans' organization in a neighbouring town. I thought this would give me enough information to find him, but I asked Bob if he would ask Curley if he would mind my visiting him.

Two days later, Bob called to tell me that Curley would be glad to see me, and gave me the phone number. I phoned almost immediately, and talked to Curley. The voice was older, deeper, but the voice of radio's Tom Mix. I was about eight years old again. This led to the meeting at the veterans' club where Ron Haydock and I met Curley.



Beneath the Stetson, the face had aged also, but the voice and personality were much the same. I listened mostly, to Curley tell of his work in the business world for many years. He had gotten that job to be near his invalid mother in her final years. (Several marriages before his recent one had only left him poorer and wiser.) He talked of working in radio, of leaving work in the movies for radio, which he loved. (He had been a stuntman with the real Tom Mix in the silents, but he prefers Buck Jones as a man and Western star. In an early talkie he did the riding and the singing voice of John Gilbert. One reviewer noted: "If Gilbert could act the way he can ride and sing, his success in talkies would be assured.")

As he talked, a plan began formulating in my mind. I had saved a few bucks from the monster magazine operation, and had been thinking of trying to do a syndicated radio series, probably some sort of science-fiction/mystery/horror series. But here was "Tom Mix" sitting next to me at the bar--and now he was mentioning that he was going to be retiring from business in just a few days!

"Curley, how about doing the Mix show again?" I said. "We could get some of the old gang, and do it for syndication. I don't know about getting the rights to the 'Tom Mix' name. You could just use your own name, Curley Bradley. You did that in that Singing Marshal series you had for several years after the Mix show went off."

Ron Haydock, next stool over, just about fell off. Of course, he had gone up the mountain road to Carlton Morse's castle to get the last remaining transcriptions of I Love a Mystery with me, so he should know I'd dare anything where dramatic radio was concerned.

Curley did not have to be pressed to agree.

A few weeks later, we had assembled a cast featuring Richard Bulla, who had been a radio actor in Chicago near the end of dramatic radio; Alan Alyn, primarily a movie actor (as the original Superman, as everybody must know) but who had done some radio work; George DeNormand, another movie actor and stuntman; Forrest Lewis, Curley's original sidekick on Tom Mix (although all too briefly with us--because of advancing years, he doesn't care to work too much); Ron Haydock (who had done screen acting and narration) and, of course, me. I played Curley's second sidekick, a deputy named Dallas. I had done some acting on educational FM stations with such people as TV vampire Barry Atwater, and have made dozens of radio and TV appearances, occasionally appearing in sketches with Steve Allen, etc.

I won't say the acting styles were an immediate perfect blending. The final product does not have the polish of a programme made for radio in the Forties. I don't see how this is possible until there are dozens of actors and technicians working every day in radio drama again. But the new programme--Curley Bradley's Trail of Mystery--compares favourably with some of the few new shows being done for radio, in the opinion of my mother and other unbiased critics. Kris Neville, famous s-f writer, says he can't tell the difference between our show and one of the old shows done in 1948--but then, he is a better judge of wines.

I wish I could say that the new Curley Bradley show is a tremendous success. At this moment, a number of stations are considering it. I have a modest mail order business selling the first two half-hour stories to individual collectors (on reel or cassette, for $10 sent to Jim Harmon, P.O. Box 38612, Hollywood, Calif. 90038). At the moment, Curley has been called back to work as a "consultant" at more than he used to get at his old job. I've stopped writing Curley Bradley scripts--yes, I wrote them, except for two by Haydock--and am now working on a novel. We all have hopes that we can sell the original series of ten shows, and perhaps even do others.

The whole experience was to me like actually living a dream. I guess I'll never fly in a rocketship to Mongo with Flash Gordon, or ride the silver screen with Gene Autry. But by god, I did stand beside Curley Bradley at a microphone and play "Tom Mix's" deputy!

This sort of seemed a culmination of all the radio show tape collecting, the books about movies and radio, the articles on comic books and box-top giveaways. With meeting and working with Curley, I think I have at last made a peace with my childhood. I'll return there again--and I would particularly like to return to do some more Curley Bradley shows--but if I do, it will be my decision, not my compulsion.

Unfortunately, according to tradition, after writers make their peace with childhood, they formulate their philosophy of life and make their peace with death. It would be nice to experience a few years of maturity before having to deal with senility.

Theatre of the Fantastic
by
Peter Bernhardt
The Fiendish Fish Meets the Fishy Fiend

Now that the fad generated by the film is over, I would like to suggest that we take a careful look at Jaws. Of course, I run a risk. While an undergraduate Biology major I was exposed to the dreary task of dissecting a dogfish (a small species of shark). It had been dead a long time and the noxious odour of the preservative was overpowering. While controversy over Jaws is now equally inert, I feel that repricking the cinematic carcass may draw the same result as cutting into a fish loaded with formalin. The only difference is that the smell is retroactive.

I intend to ignore the early criticisms that were continually voiced over the talk shows. On one hand there was the Rex Reed school of, "Oh, this hideous film will have such a terrible effect on the kiddies who see it." On the other, there was Cousteau father and son who were ready to sue both author and director for what amounted to a piscatorial defamation of character. I am sensitive to both pleas, especially to the Cousteau family's rage caused by the twisting of science fact. When the Arts toy with the Sciences for their own benefit the effects can be unfortunate. However, this does not concern us here. It need not have really concerned the former three gentlemen if they had paid more attention to the genre of cinema that Jaws so obviously exemplifies.

To put it bluntly, Jaws is a horror film. To be even more blunt, Jaws is "merely" a horror film. To pin down this movie completely, I find that Jaws is in the exact same mold as the "monster movies" made during the Fifties. That is, both audience terror and suspense is based completely on the rampage and final destruction of a larger than life creature. Jaws may be put on the same shelf with such flicks as It Came from Beneath the Sea, The Giant Behemoth, Tarantula, and Them. The only real difference is that it is probably a better made film and, comparing the profits, a better sold one.

Jaws follows the outline presented in the stock monster flick of the Fifties. Let us review this outline of plot and characterization:

1) The monster has amoral tastes. While it might have been the spawn of an evil construct (atomic testing, naughty scientists, selfish extraterrestrials) it exhibits an entirely catholic taste for destruction, and the good must suffer with the bad.

2) The monster is slow to show itself visually. This is useful in building up tension and letting the audience in for those body-in-the-closet pratfalls we all love to shudder at.

3) Disbelief in the existence of the monster holds sway until a horrible crisis, created by the monster, convinces everyone. Subsequent eradication of the fiend is often delayed by human weaknesses such as avarice, stupidity, or nigh ranking government officials (who combine the previous two).

4) Women are used solely as emotional ploys. They are expected to become hysterical, mocking, angry--and to fall in love with the monster killer, but not always in that order.

5) Killing the monster is a male task that is usually undertaken by a surprisingly small group of men. What is even more surprising is that the monster picks them off one by one.

6) The monster dies with a bang, never with a whimper.

These, I would say, are the major requirements of a Fifties style monster movie. (The monsters born in the Thirties are creatures apart and will be discussed later.) Now, let's apply this outline to Jaws.

The shark devours a nubile nymphette, a precocious little boy, an old man, a young man, a crusty ol' seadog, and (although it is left to the imagination) somebody's puppy. However, Spielberg exerts a more sophisticated horror by presenting individual victims we can identify with rather than raining death on the nameless masses. The opening sequence, where the girl has her legs chomped off and is dragged under, is far more chilling and makes a more lasting impression than (say) Harryhausen's giant octopus rising from the deep to pull down a ship.

Spielberg milks number two for all it is worth. The shark does not put in a full appearance until halfway through the film. It's one body-in-the-closet thrill after another. The opening sequence is undoubtedly the best, but the part where the icthyologist runs into the disembodied head aboard the wrecked schooner has its own classical slickness that I find preferable to the first time we see a sucked dry corpse in Tarantula.

The greedy motel owners and the mayor let the tragedy continue and ultimately induce the big crisis scene where the sheriff's son narrowly escapes becoming a box lunch in full view of the tourists and townspeople. Prior to this sequence we have had the scene where a group of greedy off-island anglers try to kill the shark, provide some light humour with their confused and self-endangering attempts, and finally catch the wrong fish, which is quickly accepted as the real thing.

The death of the pretty girl in the opening sequence sets the mood for the women who follow. I think Spielberg overdoes this a bit. Even the films of the Fifties sometimes portrayed the love interest as a competent scientist or the daughter of the professor. The women in Jaws hold no claim on rationality. The sheriff's wife mocks her husband for his fears and then, after viewing a picture of a shark destroying a boat to get a man, screams at her son for playing in his new boat. A little later we have the vengeful mother of the dead boy who publicly castigates the sheriff for allowing people to go in the water when he knew there was a shark.

The death of the huge white shark is entrusted to the crusty ol' seadog, the long suffering shefiff, and a puckish icthyologist. Here, the monster makes a surprising though (in tune with this type of film) predictable display of low cunning and eliminates them one at a time. He eats the crusty ol' seadog, incapacitates the puckish icthyologist, and closes in on the long suffering sheriff. However, the shark cannot escape the fate of the giant movie monster. In his rapacity the shark partially swallows a tank of compressed air. Finally, the sheriff gets in a good shot, hits the tank, and the shark goes up in a cloud of sardines.

Yet Jaws is superior to the other films it copies. It had a larger budget and was able to avoid the cheapie effects that so often break the audience's mood that takes so long to construct. Oh yes, there is some initial clumsiness. In an attempt to show just how close together the people are in the water the scene looks exactly like a bunch of people in a swimming pool. But colour photography becomes the film's greatest ally instead of a hindrance, as it was in so many of the earlier horror films. I would argue that colour photography was the greatest enemy of the horror film for the longest time. It was not until the mid Sixties that camera technique made blood, gore, and the monster a tangible terror and not a suggestive fear that was so easily destroyed by the probing lens of the camera. Spielberg's interplay of light on the sea allows for different kinds of gruesomeness all variations on a single theme. The girl vanishes into the obsidian sea against a salmon coloured sunset. The head is discovered in the dead of night and is briefly illuminated by a spotlight. The other deaths occur during the day, and the charming [illegible] and the gentle beat of green waves gives fun in the sun an entirely new and unpleasant aura.

I still feel that Jaws is rather pedestrian fare. True, it does what is expected of it and it does it extremely well. Surely there is room for a bit of inventiveness. I was looking for a personal touch that would make the work of the director distinctly interesting like the best of Hitchcock or Pal. It never occurs although there are a few clever moments. Appetite plays an interesting role. As the appetite of the shark increases that of the sheriff wanes. We see him rejecting a large piece of beef, and while he is on the ol' seadog's ship there is a plate heaped high with food that is barely touched.

One sequence is truly original and inventive. While tossing bloody bait into the sea to attract the shark, the sheriff turns to see the head of the huge creature briefly raised out of the water. He drops the fish scoop, walks up to the busy captain and murmurs, "You're going to need a bigger boat." That, I think, will ultimately rate with the classic horror film lines. It's certainly on a par with Bela Lugosi's, "I never drink...wine" uttered during an uneasily casual moment in Dracula.

If Jaws is a case of old wine in a new bottle, Mel Brooks's carefully distilled the old beverage, produced a superior brandy and funneled it into an ancient cask. After months of contemplation I have tried to pin down why I am so entranced by Young Frankenstein. I think I finally understand why. This is a very, very funny film that pays a loving tribute to an older style of film making. It is a parody but it never satirizes the genre it emulates. Brooks barbs are directed at the audience. The horror film of the Thirties has been kidded again and again. It's an easy target, but even during this era of instant nostalgia I do not believe that Young Frankenstein would have achieved the level of popularity it managed to attain if it had remained on the same level as so many television skits and magazine parodies.

No, like an unscrupulous psychiatrist, Brooks plays upon our own personal fantasies and sympathies. He knows who we're really rooting for and what we really want to happen. We want mercy and compassion for the monster. We want to see what really should happen when he carries away the hero's fiancee. We feel eminently superior to the superstitious townsfolk and we [illegible] in their misery. It's the same mixture of fascination and [illegible] identification that Fritz Leiber and Phil Farmer have so often [illegible]. The goblins will get us if we don't watch out, and damned if we don't really want it to happen.

Brooks's film takes us back to a time when horror was suggestive, rarely descriptive. One never saw streams of green vomit, much less blood. The world of the macabre was painted in muted grays and our own imagination filled in the rest. Evil shadows walked in a shadow world.

Brooks has brought all this back. We have blasted heaths drowning in dry ice fogs, Transylvanian peasants who speak with a rich Katzenjammer Kid accent and sport glazed porcelain faces. All his people lack pores. He has even gathered up all the old props from the original Frankenstein and restored the electrodes we have known and loved

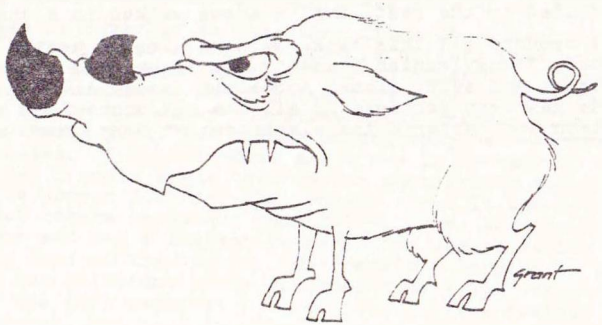
For those familiar with Blazing Saddles, Young Frankenstein is something of a surprise. Brooks's reputation for obscenity and coarseness was made with the former film and it isn't completely deserved. Blazing Saddles attacked our preconceived notions regarding those pristine little western towns Hollywood dreamed up and which we accepted without question. The dependence on four letter words and flatulence is relatively absent from Young Frankenstein because the spectre of wholesomeness never really pervaded the classic Hollywood horror film. True, Brooks does renew his old animosity with people in crowds, but this seems to be a recurrent theme in all his films. The mob is a mercurial, merciless creature, according to Brooks, that will applaud one moment and throw vegetables the next.

His people begin as hollow caricatures we've seen repeated over countless sequels and yet they metamorphose into interesting characters under very bizarre circumstances. Gene Wilder's Dr. Frankenstein is a self-rightous pompous man until he learns to care for someone else. In this case it's someone he's made with his own hands. The evil Frau Blücher (Chloris Leachman) turns out to be nourishing an ancient crush. Madelaine Kahn's Elizabeth is a picture of preen and primp. She is so carried away by her own coiffure that she sings the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" while brushing her hair and she instinctively flinches from a kiss thrown by her lover. It takes a monstrous rape to change her.

To digress--I don't think that rape is a funny subject. At least, the rape of real women is never a funny subject; but Kahn's Elizabeth is no more a real woman than Marty Feldman's Igor is a typical example of the physically handicapped.

Brooks is a vindicator because we want vindication. Unhappy moments in the original film are defused. The sequence of the monster and the little flower girl is reduced to honest burlesque. The rather sentimental friendship of the creature and the blind man is absurdly disrupted. In his eagerness to make a friend the blind man (Gene Hackman) pours boiling soup on the monster, breaks his wine mug, and lights up the end of his thumb. The monster (Peter Boyle) flees not out of rage but out of a justified sense of self-preservation.

For me, there is one cruelly pungent moment in the film. This occurs when the doctor puts his creation on the stage. First, he demonstrates how it can move back and forth. The audience is wild with approval and he slips the thing a cookie as a reward. The lights go out for a moment and when they blink on again the creator and his created stand replete in tie and tails for a song and dance number, with the monster belting out the chorus line in a high uncontrolled screech. One wonders what the original Dr. F. would have done. I suspect that there wouldn't have been much of a difference.



Selected Letters

c/o U.S. Embassy (Peace Corps)
San Salvador, El Salvador
Central America

Dear Leland,

I've been doing a lot of serious thinking regarding Dale Mullen's point number 6 and your own follow-up comment to the letter in RQ 23. I'm afraid you can't really blame Aldous Huxley for the "anti-science" attitude prevelant in the humane discipline. At least, Huxley can only be considered one of a cumulative process that thrives in the best of Wells and Verne and may be traced back at least as far as Swift.

I suppose I was bound to become oversensitive following my graduation and professional entry into the scientific community. I found that I become rather offended by portrayals of scientists by contemporary authors. If science is what scientists do I find that what I do furnishes both a didactic and often sarcastic platform for a variety of authors whom I formerly admired and believed were on my side.

...I believe that the majority of /science-fiction authors/ persist in the belief that /scientists/ can be classified into two major stereotypes. Either we are dispassionately cruel, disembodied intellects who, for all our brilliance, are ethical and moral morons or we play the role of the "absent minded professor," suitable for comic relief. Variations and combinations of the two are possible but essentially we have a tendency to make life complicated for all you just plain Joes.

Of course, I understand that authors are not all to blame. When some fine scientists have turned to writing s-f it's amazing how often they can find the enemy within. You've only to reread Julian Huxley's "The Tissue Culture King" to find a re-enforcement of stereotypes by one of our own. I've always enjoyed Clarke's Tales of the White Hart. It's a pity the author couldn't find much good to say about his own.

As long as the majority of s-f authors continue to treat science as magic that works I'm afraid that the scientist will keep appearing in the ambivalent role of the wizard. Deliciously contrived, though maliciously forceful caricatures continue to populate the novels and short stories. Vonnegut's Cat's Cradle is a perfect example. I think the book is Vonnegut's masterwork but how many accept the characterization of the inventor of Ice-9 as a good approximation of the collective mind of the scientific community? In more recent times we have Larry Niven's "The Hole Man" where an enterprising physicist finds a both technical and gruesome method to destroy a human gadfly. Do any of you profess to a little bit of paranoia that what the general research scientist potters about with in his laboratory confines is unwholesome for man? Do scientists unleash threats on the world or do they present new knowledge that is abused by others?

I'm not asking for a whitewash. Blish has already given us the scientist as saint and savoir. It's nice but if overused will be as unsatisfying as the original two stereotypes. Criticism is very important as long as the problem is thoroughly understood. If you'd like a perfect picture of the dangers of lab politics you've only to read Asimov's The Gods Themselves. I've worked under a variation of that system and I know that it exists.

So far, I think that Ursula LeGuin has come closest to the truth with her latest "ambiguous utopia." She knows that the scientist need not be a mere plot prop. Intelligent world influencing minds do harbour startlingly complex personalities complete with their own seeds of actions and motives.

Sincerely,
Peter Bernhardt

On misconceptions of science and scientists, give Boris Karloff some credit too, as in the case of the Cambridge City Fathers, who because of their private Frankenstein fantasies just extended by 6 months their recent moratorium on genetic research at Harvard and MIT.

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569 Dubie Ave
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Dear Leland,

Shortly after the last RQ appeared, I met an acquaintance of mine, a university English professor, at a party. He drew me aside and said, conspiratorially, "About that speech you gave. You did the whole thing tongue-in-cheek, didn't you?" "Of Course," I said, "Wasn't it obvious?" He burst into laughter. "Don't answer them," he said. "You've got them all looking like asses. Don't answer any of them."

I wish it were that simple.

Some oddly revealing quirks emerge in these replies to my speech, but I'll comment on only one of them. I referred to the disadvantages inherent in a scholarly consideration of a contemporary art. I expected an answer to this, and the proper answer is that the disadvantages can be more than compensated for by the tremendous advantages scholarship benefits from when its subject is contemporary. None of the replies mentioned these. Is it possible that there are scholars of s-f who don't know what the benefits are? The articles in Science-Fiction Studies, for example, are directed almost exclusively at those areas in which the contemporary scholar operates at the greatest disadvantage and are entirely negligent of those areas in which the contemporary scholar could function at greatest advantage. It is not a coincidence that these latter areas contain the subject matter that would require the most work.

It would be great fun to reply to all of these replies in the nit-for-nit spirit in which they were written. Joanna Russ's defense of the Popular Culture Society and its Journal, for example. She writes, "J. Popular Culture has one article at least per issue that's genuinely worthwhile, and often two or three..." What she fails to mention is that J. Popular Culture is--or was, in the issues I've seen--a huge publication, with some twenty-five articles per issue. I said that 90% of its material was crud. I now amend that statement to conform with Joanna's personal research. Using her figures, /one can calculate/ the amount of crud in J. Popular Culture as 92.88%. She also neglects to mention that mine was not the first attack on the Popular Culture Society and its publication. An earlier one, published in the SFWA Forum, also lamented the idiocies this organization perpetrates. Its author was Joanna Russ.

But nit picking obscures basic problems, and we--both academics and writers--have/these/critical problems to contend with. Deplorable scholarship and teaching are conspicuously present, and defending them won't make them go away.

The failure of academics to speak up against them is especially regrettable. Dale Mullen may be able to number points to infinity to demonstrate that he is good and pure and wise, but I would be much more impressed if he would show me carbons of letters he has written to protest the ridiculous factual inaccuracies or the violation of fundamental principles of scholarship in supposedly scholarly articles on s-f. He does not protest such things; he publishes them.

Writers are angry. This, also, is regrettable. When I mentioned to one extremely well known s-f writer that I was about to reply to these replies, he wrote back,"Give them hell, and a little extra for me." S-F writers at first reacted rather indifferently to the growing academic interest in s-f. They absently muttered, "That's nice," and kept their attention on something more important: their writing. When eventually they encountered, usually by accident, some of the absurdities being perpetrated, they felt outraged. This increasingly hostile attitude on the part of the writers apparently is not considered serious by the scholars studying their work. Unfortunately, it is extremely serious.

The notion that this writer is anti-academic will come as a total surprise to the professors and teachers I've worked with on so many projects. I share with many of them a profound skepticism that the deficiencies of s-f scholarship--from the Journal of Popular Culture to Science Fiction Studies--are likely to be corrected if no one bothers to point them out. I neither want nor enjoy this critic's role; I simply occupy it by default.

Lloyd Biggle, Jr.

To state a tautology, insofar as the speaker was joking, his statements can't be taken seriously--which is why I'm upset! // I think we'd agree that the exact ratio of successes in JPC, whether 1/10 or 1/20, hardly matters, since there are so few journals anywhere that consistently do any better. // Concerning SFS, I'd want to be shown scholarly disadvantages in specific issues, e.g., those devoted to writers like Ursula LeGuin or Phil Dick.

7141 Sherbrooke St West
Montreal, Quebec H4B-1R6

Dear Mr. Sapiro,

As my final word in response to Sheryl Smith's "final word" on my Left Hand of Darkness article, may I suggest that she read Refail Nudelman's "An Approach to the Structure of Le Guin's SF" in Science-Fiction Studies, 2 (November 1975). Nudelman and I are concerned with the same aspect of Le Guin's work and if Sheryl Smith can understand what Nudelman is saying she should be able to recognize what I'm getting at. There is, however, an important difference between Nudelman's approach and mine. While I regard Le Guin's repetitive structures as a weakness, Nudelman evolves an argument whereby they may be construed as a virtue.

And by the way, "misguided gentleman" that I may be, I am not so obtuse as to assume with Sheryl Smith that to label certain material as digressive from the viewpoint of, say, plot is necessarily to object to that material.

Sincerely,
David Ketterer

LeGuin's "repetitive structures" would appear to include material that's "digressive from the viewpoint of...plot"--yet our correspondent objects to the former as a "weakness" and not to the latter. I'm confused!

10808 75th Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta

Dear Leland:

...Joanna Russ /put/ things to right, and a veritable army of others strung out behind her /made/ sure no stone was missed. The points are good, and one could hope, but not too much I suspect, so blind he showed himself to be in the original paper, that Mr. Biggle better understands just how foolish the totality of what he said was. Ah well, at least it gave us a meaty lettercol, and for that we can be thankful. At the MLA in San Francisco, Joanna Russ gave another of those "useless" papers Mr. Biggle couldn't possibly find any value in. It was succinct, intelligent, witty, and an attack on sexism, the kind of sexism Mr. Biggle practices quite unconsciously not only in papers like the one you printed but in the rather obviously conventional s-f he publishes. Too bad he wasn't there to hear it.

But although I enjoyed all the articles in their ways, especially Bill Blackbeard's opening chapter (although he has pretty well as much said, "Since all the rest has been so bad, I have had to come along and make things better in the field of comix-criticism;" and that kind of assertion is a pretty tough act to follow. I await the next installment, of course); I want to say a few words in response to Joe Christopher's essay in defence of the older Heinlein. It's an interesting essay, and helps to prove a point I've often felt needed making about such articles, such approaches to criticism. I basically agree with Christopher that the various forms he discovers in Time Enough for Love are there, somehow, in vestigio perhaps, but there. Fine, it's an anatomy, then, and contains some inserted romances, etc. Now, the big question: so what? What Christopher seems to me, to be discussing are those aspects of a work of art which can be extracted from it as a skeleton can be extracted from a body; the problem is that the body, the flesh and blood are then gone. If they were ever there, and that's the hooker in this particular case. If these forms are the skeleton of Time Enough for Love (and I'm willing to accept that they are), I don't believe the body ever had real flesh and blood. It never was much more than a skeleton, a dead thing. I'll get off this metaphor because I'm riding it to death, but I hope my position is clear. Christopher doesn't offer me one reason for thinking the book is a good one, that is a complex exploration of human love such as I would expect from a great writer. And indeed it is not. I've read Time Enough, God help me, I have. And I came to it, despite what I'd heard about Heinlein's later work, and what I'd read of it--I had at that point read /most/ all his later 60s novels--with high hopes because I thought perhaps by returning to the material which fueled his earlier work Heinlein will return to those kinds of story he best understands. Alas, alas, such was not the case: Heinlein wanted to talk about sex, and love, neither of which he has ever shown much comprehension of. Aside from the fact that the book is insultingly sexist, it is badly written. And that means it says things badly, and says bad things. Not that I'm against Heinlein's ideas about love and sex; in the abstract--or, better still, presented by a writer of grace and wit (I'd mention Delany here, but someone would shudder Ghalgren aloud and attack me with a bludgeon)--they are worthy of attention. Heinlein can no longer write interestingly, at least not about those things he obviously most wants to write about. There are passages in Time that are like unto the old Heinlein, which means they're good pulp s-f, but they are few and far between. When he actually confronts the experience of sexual love (and I don't just mean a fuck scene)Heinlein fails miserably because he cannot articulate the complex plays of emotion which such situations evoke. The book is a long slow death of language trying to pretend about life in the very heart of human experience. It is all the sadder for that very reason. Yes, it can be discussed as Christopher does it, but until someone can demonstrate the value of those silly sentences, those flaccid witticisms, that flat, lifeless prose, I won't really care, because, having read the book, I know it's a painful experience to undergo. And I'm not really interested in looking to Heinlein's personal life to find out why. We need only trace the failing powers of the prose over the past decade to see the truth writ plain: the man's literary powers never were up to the kind of emotional explorations he wants to undertake.

He was a capable writer of technological s-f, but the style which can render technological connections is not enough to render emotional ones, especially those central ones of love and sexuality. No, no, Heinlein can't write the books he obviously wants to, and it's really too bad that he must keep trying, and thus trying our patience.

Peace,
Doug Barbour

Maybe the best defense here is the old Cosmic View and its corollary, the unimportance of human happiness in general and of love, in particular. To quote from Voltaire's Persian sage, "When His Highness sends out a ship...is he bothered about whether the mice in the ship are comfortable or not?" If these circumstances seem inappropriate, see Heinlein's own restatement of this theme in "Goldfish Bowl."

2111 Sunset Crest Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Dear Leland:

A fascinating issue, this #23, for which I do indeed thank you.

I was particularly impressed by the dichotomy of critical values expressed: contrast Nick Perry and Roy Wilkie's attitudes in their article on Ballard with that of Bill Blackbeard on comic art. Reading both, I was forcibly reminded that my own attitude frequently seems to fall somewhere between these two stools, with the result that my median views meet with little favor, since extremism is the accepted posture today. If pressed, I'll admit a bias towards Blackbeard's defense of the simplistic rather than espousing obscurantism. While I'm not one to call a spade a bloody shovel, I'd rather that than refer to it as a hand implement consisting of a broad scoop and a more or less hollowed-out blade with a handle--and complicate this definition with references to animals being neutered...and Sam Spade.

Best,
Robert Bloch

Some RQ readers will be surprised to learn that in many ways Blackbeard's attitude coincides with that of Perry and Wilkie, who even publish a magazine, Popular Arts Review, that features the sort of thing Blackbeard likes to write about. For details, see RQ #20, p. 351.

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306 E. Gatehouse Dr. #14
Metairie, LA 70001

Dear Mr. Sapiro:

So very many thanks for the bulging RQ 23. It seems remarkable that so many disagreed with Lloyd Biggle, raising the academic hackles to a high point.

Among the difficulties involved is the meaning of "popular": received with approval or pleasure by the generality, or as vulgar or common in the old sense, something of, for or by the people. SF&F is popular only in a very limited sense, it is not a populist literature. Instead of Popular Culture one should really have Vulgar Culture, I suppose, never having seen a course outline or a departmental program for Pop Cult. Courses titled Nurse and Gothic Novels, Comics from 1900 to 1930, Films of Charlie Chaplin, Early Electronic Music, Emergence of Pop Art...at a guess. But all of this is beyond me.

In case you missed this during your summer acation:

R.E. Geis, as we all know, is a great First Amendment Man, which may be verified by reading a few issues of SFR. Richard Lupoff wrote a destructive review of a novel by J.O. Jepson for Andy Porter's Algol which Porter (and later Locus) refused to print, but which Geis took for SFR. This is to demonstrate Geis's sturdy demand for freedom for the fanzine. It may be noted that Ben Bova entered the discussion in a letter to Geis which began with the statement that he ignored fanzines but that this was different. For the second part, James Burk annihilated the Niven-Pournelle Mote in God's Eye for Delap's F&SF which Geis lauded in SFR. The last issue of SFR contains a letter of apology, somewhat ambiguous, to Niven, Pournelle, Porter and others from Burk in which he agrees (Burk says) with Geis's review. Geis is a great commentator but on this letter he did not commentate, silent as an owl on a rainy night. In due course, no doubt, the Hinterlanders will receive several versions of the off-stage action--who pressured whom to do what--and can puzzle out a version of some reliability.

With due respect to Joe Christopher, Heinlein's Time Enough for Love is idiotic nonsense, non sense. It is not only internally inconsistent, but it is self-contradictory, so that when Ole Laz says "yes" he also says "no," not means "no" but says "no" at the same time he says "yes." Here is an analogy, not immediately applicable to TEL, but in the same vein. Suppose that RAH invented a world on which 1 = 2. Then, deductively, 0 = 1, 0 = 2...0 = 100. Now water freezes at 0^0 and boils at 100^0 so that on this world water is simultaneously solid and gaseous. The same reasoning applies to any element or compound, so everything is simultaneously solid and gaseous, including the world itself. Otherwise, one can argue so: $H_2O = H_2O$ (because 1 = 2), but also $H_2O = H$ (same reasoning) so hydrogen is also oxygen, palpable nonsense. Getting back to TEL, one can show that time travel implies that 1 = 2 (a note of mine in Denis Quane's Notes / over / a year ago).

Very cordially yours,

Alexander D. Wallace

Geis simply doesn't want to offend anybody he thinks can help or hurt him. // The list is ill-chosen (Gothic Nurse romances, e.g., hardly belonging in the same class as Charlie Chaplin movies), but if lectures on The Phantom can be given at the Sorbonne, then none of the courses cited above seems too much out of line. // TEL may be nonsense but not idiotic nonsense, since Dr. Wallace's comments apply not especially to this work, but to the entire genre of Time Travel.

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RQ MISCELLANY (continued from page 264)

ROUND TWO

This issue's Selected Letters is severely truncated, not because mail wasn't received but because much of it concerned the Roger Elwood controversy, a subject I've decided to drop because it's now Ancient History, over a year having lapsed since RQ's last issue, and because I'm told by a patent attorney that the disputed actions, if not ethical, were entirely legal. I wish to thank all those professionals--including Joe Green, Jim Gunn, Damon Knight, Ursula LeGuinn, Dick Lupoff, Kris Neville, and A.E. van Vogt--who took time to write me all those encouraging and discouraging words; and I'm also grateful to fans like Larry Downes, Rick Norwood, and Ed Wood, who had the courage to support publicly an unpopular cause. I must also thank Robert Briggs, Frank Catalano, Casey Fredericks, Randall Larson, Shayne McCormack and those other readers and writers who gave me encouragement.

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WING 76