

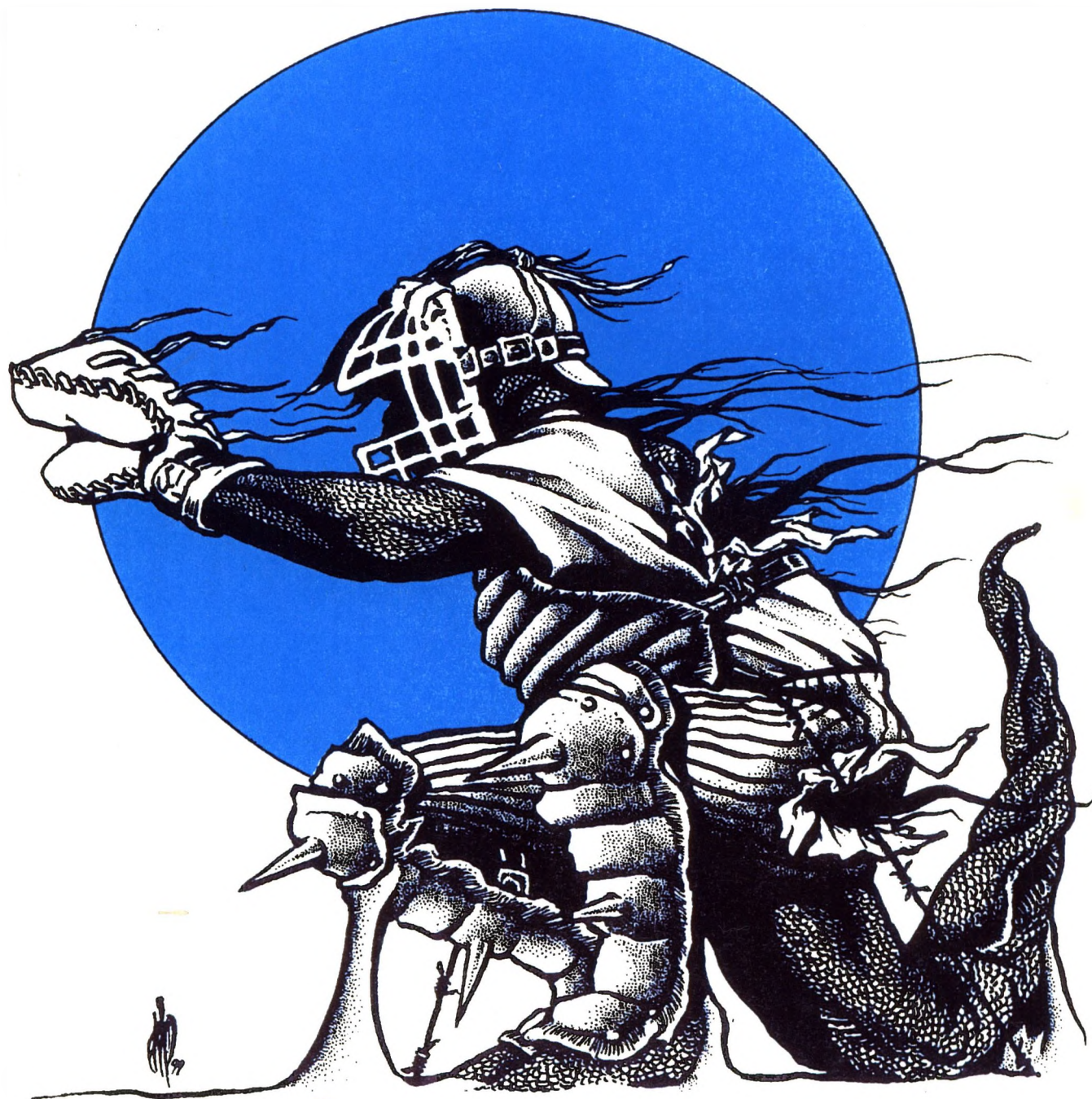
NIEKAS

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

Number 46

Strange Sports Stories

\$4.95



NIEKAS

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY

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bumbejimas,

a column by Ed Meskys

ABOUT NIEKAS & SPORTS

Fred Lerner has provided many excellent ideas for NIEKAS over the years. Several times he saw an article intended for NIEKAS and suggested building it up into a special focus section or special issue. Such articles inspired the focus sections on religion in SF in #25 and on Kipling's influence on our field in #44. He also came up with and edited the focus on *Islandia* and the special *Silverlock* issue, #36B of NIEKAS, and collected the contributors. Later he suggested making a long Moskowitz manuscript into a single issue of NIEKAS, #43A. (Others have also contributed ideas. Mike Bastraw: the Barbarian focus in #31, the 100-word short short story issue (#30B), and the Bradbury and Obsessions chapbooks (#s 41A & B); Anne Braude: the Norton issue (#40) and the dragon focus in #30; Charles Brown the focus on George Heyer in #20; Joe Christopher the special issue on Dark Fantasy, #45; and I myself the focuses on laws of magic in fantasy (#33), on Dr. Who, and the special Arthurian fantasy issue, #38.)

When Fred saw the Nan Scott manuscript commenting on the lack of overlap between SF fan and sports enthusiasts, but going on to review three baseball fantasy novels, Fred immediately suggested a fourth book for her to find and review and I remembered a fifth. Fred wrote on the parallels of baseball and SF fandom and suggested other possible contributors but none worked out. I asked Don D'Amassa to devote his column to the theme. Dan Hicks pointed me to the information on the unsold Resnick/Dozois anthology. We found two more books which Nan reviewed as supplements. Finally, Anne Braude came up with an excellent concluding piece, and Jane Sibley revived her comic strip, "Varlac."

Earlier this century the United States had a sports ethic traceable back to the British "playing fields of Eton" about winning and fair play. Anne says that Red Grange, (aka The Galloping Ghost), the West Point football hero of the 20's or 30's, was a national icon, considered the ideal sports hero, and wonders how this influenced pulp fiction, especially S.F., heroes of the time.

Anne was concerned with early pulp fiction like "Frank Merriwell" created by William Gilbert Patten and Burt L. Standish. Patten presented Merriwell as an athletic hero at Yale. He had so many virtues that he seemed a caricature, and indeed became a comic strip character in 1931. The series, the most extended in all juvenile literature, sold more than 125 million copies. Another writer of school sports stories was Owen Johnson. Anne feels these heroes influenced other authors of popular fiction including early SF. I remember kids' radio shows of the '40s like "Jack Armstrong, the All American Boy" and comics like *Blue Bolt*, about two West Point students, which carried on this tradition. Today the tradition is gone and now "winning isn't the most important thing, it is the ONLY thing." How was this reflected in the SF of the '30s, and how does modern SF reflect its loss? In a recent letter Nan Scott mentioned that John Tunis's sports novels of the '40s are being reissued in paperback today, and wondered how modern kids are responding to the sports ethics of that bygone day.

I brought up this focus in the con suite of the 1998 "Ditto" fanzine convention and many SF, fantasy, and horror stories were named which had a sports motif. Right now I can only remember the novel *The Year the Yankees Lost the Pennant* by Douglas Wallop, later made into the play and movie DAMN YANKEES, and the Anderson-Dickson "Hoka" story parodying "Casey at the Bat."



It is interesting that on TV pro football is the most popular sport, and college football the second most popular. However football does not seem to inspire the myths that baseball does. Ty Cobb, Lou Gehrig, and Babe Ruth are still legends today. The Washington Senators and Brooklyn Dodgers in my youth, and today the Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox, seem to inspire an emotional loyalty despite losing ("wait until next year!") that I could never imagine for a football team. (I could be totally wrong here, as I do NOT follow any sport, but this is my impression.)

I think of baseball fantasies as very rare, but now that I am looking I keep finding more of them. I read in the July 1999 *Locus* a review by Gary Wolfe of Rick Wolbum's *Where Garagiola Waits and Other Baseball Stories*. The review, on pages 19 and 58, made the book sound interesting and I considered asking for permission to reprint the review, but decided to merely refer you to the review or the book. It was published in June 1999 by the University of Tampa Press (158 pp., \$24.95 plus \$2.50 handling, order from UoT Press, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd., Tampa FL 33606).

In the early 1950s I read Scott Meredith's handbook for commercial authors, *Writing to Sell*, and in his chapter on titling your story he mentioned a juvenile baseball fantasy his agency had handled. The book was about a player who could hit well, but could not run at all. If he hit anything short of a home run he was tagged out before he could get to first base. Meredith complained that the author's title, *Wings for Leadfoot McGuire*, gave away the conclusion, and he had the author come up with a new title, unmentioned in the book. About this time my high school library acquired *The Kid Who Batted 1,000* and I vaguely wondered if this was the book Meredith mentioned, but I wasn't interested enough to read it.

As Don D'Amassa says in his column, there are few fantasy stories dealing with sports other than baseball. I remember a delightful short by L. Sprague de Camp in *Unknown*, "Nothing in the Rules," about a competitive swimming team which acquires a mermaid. Also, a very early issue of *Galaxy* had an SF story about golf (title and author forgotten) where the hero wins a tournament against a robot by substituting better golf balls in the robot's bag: the robot could not compensate for the changed behavior of the ball.

I developed like the typical SF fan in Nan's article, neither playing in nor watching sports. I don't know how much was due to my extreme near-sightedness (which only corrected to 20/50 with very thick glasses) and how much to intrinsic interests in other directions. But even though I grew up in Brooklyn and hoped the Dodgers would win the World Series, I never listened to a game on the radio or attended one. Around 1948 I did watch one game on a neighbor's TV but only because my friend wanted to watch it. I don't remember whether he was a Yankees or Giants enthusiast. Anyhow, when the Dodgers left Brooklyn I lost my last vestige of interest in baseball. Now I have

come to despise all professional sports because of the selfishness of the team owners who will only stay in a city if the taxpayers will foot the bill for a billion dollar sports complex with luxury sky boxes. I did attend about 15 high school football games and two college basketball games, but only because of pressure by the administration to go and support the school. I have never attended or watched on TV any other sporting event. I do get interested in historical or theoretical pieces, like the PBS TV series on baseball, and the articles in this. (Coeditor Todd is the exact opposite. He watches all kinds of athletics enthusiastically. However Anne Braude has yet to figure out the rules of any team sport.)

Nan Scott and I have continued to correspond about the nature of interest in sports, and her most recent letter gave me a feeling for why people follow sports teams. I found her arguments very powerful and want to quote them here:

I was never keen on playing sports. I had no natural talent or co-ordination, and it wasn't especially encouraged of girls in the 1940s anyway. There were no formal Little Leagues. Who would have volunteered to coach? There was a war on! So we boys and girls (mostly girls on my block) played some casual pick-up softball in vacant lots in spring and summer. Except for horse riding and swimming that was it for me, but I was always a passionate baseball fan, probably because my parents, my aunts, my grandparents, my great aunts, all followed the game, and going to triple-A high minor league professional baseball games to see the Toledo Mudhens was one of a number of things we did as a family on a summer night or a Sunday afternoon. In later years I sometimes asked myself why I cared so much, and reminded myself that it was only a game.

But apart from the aesthetic aspect and the history of baseball, I think it, and college basketball, have a capacity to fuse and unify an otherwise disparate community. One of the books in the college correspondence course on children's lit that I teach for The University of Kansas is Betty Bao Lord's *In the Year of the Boar and Jackie Robinson*, which treats this theme, though its main theme is duality, the delicate balance between blending into the American melting pot and retaining one's root culture. In this children's novel, which seems very light and playful on the surface, easy and fun to read, but which is also rich in theme and symbols, a little Chinese-American girl in 1947 Brooklyn grapples with the dual goals of becoming an American and part of the group while remaining herself within her family's own ethnic traditions and customs. Meanwhile, Jackie Robinson, grandson of a slave, and a member of a minority group still not "melted," is inspiring and unifying Dodger fans of all colors and ethnic backgrounds as he also brings African-Americans into a cultural and financial mainstream of U.S. life in his integration of major league baseball. I happened to be teaching this novel on campus in 1988 the week the K.U. Jayhawks won the National Championship in basketball, and that too was a very unifying experience as Greeks and independents, faculty and students, grad students, undergrads, traditionalists, bohemians, all shared in a mutual joy. It is, I guess, that capacity to unify and to supply joy, often sudden and unexpected, that attracts me to sports, mainly baseball and college hoops. I liked high school football but barely follow the college and pro games, dislike pro basketball, and pretty much ignore hockey. As for soccer, a game in which you may not use your hands, but you are allowed to butt the ball with your head??? Forget it!

When I was growing up SF was a literature for male nerds. SF was rare and that "crazy Buck Rogers stuff" to the general public.

Many other fen, like me, were misfits and huddled to contemplate our "sense of wonder" and fit Nan's description. Tolkien and Spock on STAR TREK brought women into fandom, and then STAR WARS and other major movies and TV shows brought in the general public. Today *everyone* watches SF but most still do not read it. But isn't that true concerning all forms of literature? I just saw in *SF Chronicle* a list of all the major best seller novels ever published in the U.S., and perhaps only six or eight ever topped one million copies. When you think that there are about two hundred million adults here, what does this say about readership in general? One author commented that the Danish translation of his novel sold as many copies as the U.S. edition. Think what this says about the relative literacy of the two countries.

Anyhow, a few media fen do begin to read tie-in novels, move on to the more sophisticated general SF, and into fandom. I understand that both Jacqueline Lichtenberg and C.J. Cherryh came to us via STAR TREK. Among younger fen I find far more interest in sports than I did when I first entered the field.

MORE ABOUT NIEKAS

Some random short thoughts on NIEKAS, its past and its future....

Todd, Anne, and I publish NIEKAS as a hobby. We send many copies to contributors and in trade for other fanzines, but try to sell some copies and subscriptions for two reasons. We feel what we publish and write has value and want to bring it to more readers, and we need the cash to help pay for printing and postage. Getting copies to con dealers and to bookstores will expose them to more potential readers and further both goals. I was especially proud of the Dark Fantasy issue and had hoped it would have wide distribution. However as Todd and I took copies around to dealers at Bucconeer we met extreme resistance...because the layout of the cover made it look like a magazine rather than the trade paperback book we were trying to market it as, and because of its page size.

I appear to have extreme difficulty conveying my needs to the people who help produce the magazine and often I do not realize that the wrong thing was done until it is too late. For example, I believe the artists who illustrate the articles and who provide spot filler illos should get full credit for their work. I wanted a list of artists with the page numbers of their contributions, but did not convey this clearly to Jim Reynolds who merely listed the artists' names. Also, we accidentally left out the name of the artist who had more interior illos than anyone else, Larry Dickison. I still did not realize that page numbers were missing from the list so I prepared sticky labels to add to the bottom of the list with Larry's name and the locations of the illos. More to the point, I wanted to market the Dark Fantasy ish as a trade paperback as it was an anthology of articles on that one subject and did not have a lettercol. I wanted to make the cover look like a book cover by having the NIEKAS logo and issue number a small emblem on the top left corner of the cover the way I remember paperback books did when I was sighted. (I do not know if this is still done, but for instance Ballantine, Ace, etc., had their logo, book number, and price on the top left corner of the cover.) I wanted the title and editor to be predominant on the cover. I did not convey this clearly to Bob Knox who put NIEKAS in great big letters across the top, emphasizing a magazine appearance. I do hope I will convey this clearly to the cover artist of #47, which will be a revised and expanded version of #38, *Once & Future Arthur*.

At a recent NESFA meeting I asked the NESFA Press people for advice on what I could do to be more successful in marketing #47. They said I should drop the quarto size (8.5 x 11) and go to octavo (5.5 x 8.5 or a little larger), and stick to perfect binding instead of saddle stapling it like this and those before 45. I still need a bit of advice—can I get away with our usual 2-color cover or will I have to go to the expense of a full color process separation and printing?

When I started NIEKAS as an APazine in 1962 I had not intended to circulate it outside the amateur press association for which it was intended. I called it NIEKAS because that is the Lithuanian word for "nothing" and this was my "little nothing" for the APA. I used the Lith word for reply to head my mailing comments, and the word for "muttering and complaining under your breath" for the editorial. When I started sending a few copies to friends outside the APA I added the word for "letters" for the regular lettercol and the word for "argument" for the letter excerpts by topic. As time went on these cutenesses bugged me and with this I am dropping the Lithuanian words except for NIEKAS and "Bumbejimas."

As I said last issue, I have had to abandon what could have been NIEKAS #43-B, *Attack of the Fifty Extremely Short SF Stories*, because my former co-editor lost part of the manuscript and I have not been able to reconstruct it.

Starting with this issue, if we have holes to fill we will use stories and art intended for the original project.

Early drafts or incomplete versions of some of my pieces in Bumbejimas and in Review & Comment first ran in my APA-Q zine, *The View from Entropy Hall*. All 27 issues of *Entropy* can be found at a website maintained for me by Brian Thurston:

<www.angelfire.com/nh/entropy-hall/>. My son Stanley is building a NIEKAS website which will have contents of back issues, excerpts from some articles, and previews of future issues. Its address is: <<http://home.twcny.rr.com/meskys/niekas/niekas.html>>.

OF DITTO AND HUGOS

I was invited to be fan guest of honor at the 1998 Ditto fanzine convention in Newport RI. This was my second Ditto which is a very enjoyable con despite its low attendance...well under 30!

Programming was light, as is traditional for Ditto—a total of three hours if I remember. There was an interesting panel on libel laws as they would apply to fanzines, and my bit was an interview by Tony Lewis. We covered a lot of fan history of the 60s and I have to find my tape to send a copy to the oral history organization. The con had a wonderful surprise for me...a replacement copy of my 1967 fanzine Hugo. Back then only one copy was given for collaborative winners. (I believe it was Noreascon I in 1971 which was the first to give copies to each co-editor) and after I kept it for many years I passed it on to then co-editor Felice Rolfe Maxim. A few years later I had paid for a second copy, but the order got lost. Every year a couple of extras are available in case of tie vote or collaboration, and MCFI acquired one of these, and prepared a simple base with a plaque, clearly labeling it as a duplicate Hugo. I noticed that over the years the design changed from that of Ben Jason which had been the standard. (Only the first Hugos, from Philly in 1953 and from NY in 1956, were drastically different—a baroque rocket about five inches high made by a con member in his workshop, and an Oldsmobile hood ornament.) Current ones are about 1.5 times as tall as the Jason originals. I thank MCFI for coming up with this wonderful surprise!

Ditto, like any con put on by Boston fandom, was very enjoyable. A year later MCFI put on the World Fantasy Con which also was

excellent. I am looking forward to the next MCFI con, whether it be a Worldcon, Mythcon, or anything. The Boston hotel situation has changed and MCFI is bidding for "Noreascon 4 in '04" and I support the bid with great enthusiasm. MCFI's other hat put on excellent Boskones through the mid-80s but they grew too large (past 4000 if I remember) with many fringe fen and non-fen attending, and the situation imploded. NESFA overreacted and it took several years for the con to get back on its feet, but it is one of my "must" cons today. (Actually, I understand, about half the membership of MCFI is made up of NESFen.)

EXPLOITATION

I received a review copy of *Abduction: Human Encounters With Aliens* by Dr. John E. Mack abridged onto two audio tapes from

Simon & Schuster Audio, \$17, 1994. The book is sick. It takes as real the wet dreams of adolescents with hangups. All of these dreams, whether by males or females, involve sexual encounters with the aliens. The author used hypnotic regression on his patients to get their stories and use on court witnesses has revealed that such regression brings out false memories wanted by the therapist. He admitted that many of his patients had lonely childhoods and resultant dysfunctions.

What I find most upsetting is that it was published by a major publisher, and not some small press run by a Flying Saucer true believer. This is sheer exploitation of the sickies who are desperately in need of angels from space who will help solve all mankind's problems. Instead of the Virgin

Mary they see Flying Saucers whose inhabitants sexually exploit them and then deliver a message that mankind must repent of its sins.

Unfortunately publishers are not the idealists striving to free and educate mankind we would like them to be but are businesspersons who are out for the fast buck. The wonderfully exotic gives every reader a thrill and unscrupulous (or deluded) authors and publishers have exploited this from Bridey Murphy to *Worlds in Collision* to ancient astronauts to the Bermuda Triangle. This phenomenon is not new with the gobbling up of publishers by international conglomerates. The exploitation of the marvelous vision is as old as mankind.

PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

Fen have always been time-binders, concerned about our history. Jack Speer compiled the first Fancyclopedia ages ago, before WWII I believe. In analogy with Stapledon's novel *Last and First Men* he developed a history of fandom, dividing it into periods. He noted that fan interests, activities, and modes of communication went through periods which he and successors numbered from First Fandom through Sixth Fandom. In 1953 two young, brash fen, Harlan Ellison and Bob Silverberg, decided to start Seventh Fandom by themselves. (Memory can play strange tricks. I could have sworn that I had read somewhere that they did it at the famous party in room 770 at Nolacon in 1951, that room having been selected because the hotel did not have a room 777, but I just checked *Fancyclopedia II* and found the party totally



unrelated to Seventh Fandom.) Since then there has been no agreement as to when one "Fandom" ended and another began, or what Fandom we are in now. Around 1961 Dick Lupoff tried to launch a new Fandom. Ninth I think, in the pages of his fanzine *Xero*, centering on nostalgia. In 1962 Robert Bloch called his collection of fanzine writings *The Eighth Stage of Fandom* (Advent: Publishers). I guess there is even controversy as to whether Seventh Fandom did start in 1953. Sharon McCrumb, in her novel *Zombies of the Gene Pool* referred to events occurring in 1954, as taking place in Sixth Fandom. I didn't come into the fringes of fandom until a year later and did not become aware of its traditions for another five years, so I cannot speak from experience. Did McCrumb make a mistake, or did some fen in 1964 still consider themselves in Sixth Fandom?

Sam Moskowitz wrote a history of the fandom of the '30s, *The Immortal Storm*, and Harry Warner wrote histories of the '40s, *All Our Yesterdays*, and the '50s, *A Wealth of Fable*. Dick & Nicki Lynch are working on a history of the '60s. Thus at least single persons' overviews are available for the first three decades of science fiction fandom, and presumably before too long the fourth. No one volume can contain every detail of a decade, and each represents only one person's view of what happened. How will independent researchers of the future verify these events, and explore others not covered? Only a few of the participants of early fandom, like Damon Knight, Fred Pohl, and Jack Speer, are still alive, and how long will they be around to answer questions? I know that the Science Fiction Oral History Association in Michigan is preserving interviews and reminiscences, which will help. But what of original documentation?

What is being done to preserve original fanzines, correspondence, photographs, wire and tape recordings, etc? What will happen to these when owners die? What can be done to preserve them from deterioration? In May 1994 Peggy Rae Pavlat put on the first "Fanhistoricon" to worry about just these things, and the 1995 Boskone had a panel on this with Bruce Pelz, Joe Siclari, Lori Mann, and Peggy Rae Pavlat. Moshe Feder was supposed to participate but was sick. An informal group has come out of this and they are continuing the discussion by E-Mail in the "Timebinders" and "Memory Hole" listservs. Joe Siclari is archiving old fanzines and putting items of interest on the "Fanac" website.

How long a fanzine will last is a function of its method of reproduction and the type of paper it is on. Early fanzines were mostly hectographed or printed from hand-set type on a letter-press, with a few mimeographed zines. A hectograph master is a sheet of paper prepared as a positive image done with a special typewriter ribbon, carbon paper, or pencil. The master was laid face down on a sheet of gelatin and wet, so the image would transfer to the gelatin. Clean paper would be laid down on the gelatin one sheet at a time and take a copy of the image until the dye was gone. After a while the remaining dye would sink to the bottom of the gelatin and it could be used for a new image. In principle a hundred copies could be obtained, hence the metric prefix "hect" as in hectare. The dye would drift and later copies would get blurrier and blurrier. Handling the ribbons, carbon paper, or masters was invariably messy and you turned purple all over. While other colors existed, purple gave the best results, as in Ditto or spirit duplicating. Hence in faanish mythology purple was the color of the "ghods." When I first got into APAs in the late '50s I occasionally received a hectoed fanzine as a novelty. They were VERY popular in the '30s when most fen were young kids and we were still in the Depression, and a hectoed fanzine could be produced at very little cost. Unfortunately the dyes used in hecto, like those in spirit duplicating, fade with time even if kept in a closed space. Direct sunlight will wipe an image in a very short time.

Mimeography gives the best results on fuzzy paper, a major brand of which was "Twiltone." This paper, like newsprint, turns brittle with age and will eventually crumble. In recent times this paper has become

hard to find, if not totally unavailable.

Letterpress and offset fanzines, like NIEKAS, have permanent ink and can be done on good paper which will last.

A major fanzine of Sixth Fandom was Lee Hoffman's *Quandry* which was mimeographed on very poor paper. About 30 years ago Bob Lichtman published a "best of..." collection, but he used spirit duplication. In his introduction he lamented that while the paper was good and would last a long time, the image would fade in a few years.

Today's fan prejudices say that a fanzine mimeographed on Twiltone is the most "faanish"—captures the spirit of true fandom. It is amusing to see how different publishers have cross-bred mimeography with modern technology. Terry Carr put his last fanzines on mimeo stencil and ran off a single copy, which he then mass-produced on a copying machine. Jerry Kaufman produces his master copy by desk-top publishing methods, but then puts the pages on mimeograph stencils by electrostencilling (a fax-like process which burns holes in a rubber stencil) which he runs off on a mimeograph.

Everything will deteriorate with time, as in the library scene in George Pal's movie of Wells's *The Time Machine*. For now, hectoed, spirit duplicated, and mimeographed fanzines are in the greatest danger of being lost. I had hoped that copies made on an office copier would have a long shelf life, but learned at the Boskone panel that after about ten years the electrostatic process that binds the toner to the paper lets go, and parts of the image are transferred to the next page. This happens even when the toner is melted onto the paper.

In early 2000 participants of the Trufen listserv discussed the ephemeral nature of inkjet printing. The shelflife of color inkjet printers is even shorter than that of Ditto. The acid in most papers will slowly bleach the inks used, not to say anything about the effects of sunlight.

The Boskone panel felt that scanning the text onto a CD-ROM disk is the best hope for preserving the content. At that time a scanner with OCR cost about \$1000, a disk burner about \$4000, and a personal computer capable of driving them about \$3000, so for a \$8000 grant from a Worldcon the hardware needed for such a project could be procured. Since then prices have dropped and I wonder whether some worldcon did make such a grant to Fanac. The question remains as to how long such a disk would survive.

Many fen are working on partial fanzine indices and they should co-ordinate to avoid duplication, and repositories should be established for collections whose locations are known and whose contents are accessible. Siclari's "Fanac" is a good start. Some universities have partial collections which should be cataloged. (In Timebinders they say that it is a bad idea to sell or give fanzines to a university library. One librarian was very interested, acquired a good collection, properly sorted and filed it. Then, after he left, the next librarian had no interest and just jumbled everything together into boxes and buried them in the basement.)

I suppose fan historians are interested in everything because something might later turn out to be the early writings of an important person. I was surprised to hear of the preservation of computer bulletin board contents, which I thought were as ephemeral as APA mailing comments. I suppose even some of this is already of historical interest, such as the "science fiction lovers" forum on the ARPA Net, the first computerized discussion of our field.

For more information on how to help preserve our heritage contact Joe Siclari at <jsiclari@bellsouth.net> or 4599 NW 5 Ave., Boca Raton FL 33431.

OF AGE AND LIBRARIES

This is a logical extension of the last section.

While 64 is not THAT old, I do feel things closing in and worry about what to do with my books, magazines, fanzines, and other stuff.

I started reading S.F. from the library in 1950, buying magazines in 1951, and books shortly after that. At one point I tried collecting magazines and paperback books as one would collect coins or postage stamps, getting variant editions. When a book would be reissued with a new cover I would pick it up. Same with *Fantasy Book* magazine which had published some issues with variant covers. I collected mainly magazines and paperback books at that time, but had to give up on trying to be a completist in the mid-'60s. As my collection grew I added bookcases and even built a new library/office in 1971. I never threw out a fanzine, and bought some other collections, and now have perhaps 50 boxes of them in the attic, the basement, the garage, and even on the side of the stairway. While I was sighted I kept the zines in file folders filed by title, but that has broken down long ago.

Now I cannot access the items I would like to find, even the properly filed ones because the boxes are buried under others and scattered in random order. For instance, I never read Archie Mercer's mimeographed novel, *The Meadows of Fantasy*, and now want to do so. It would probably be easier to find and buy a replacement copy than find my old one.

The SF/Fsy books I am not worried about. Sandy is not interested in any except those she might want to re-read. Many she has never read and is not interested in trying to read. However Stanley likes the idea of eventually inheriting the book collection and I hope he will have his own home and the space to store it by when both Sandy and I are gone. I have kept alternate editions on some books and older fragile copies are stored on rather inaccessible shelves high in the stairwell to the second floor. I might consider selling these though few if any are very valuable.

Magazines are another matter. Originally I only collected digests and not pulps, though I did get a few of the latter. I do NOT have the really rare digests like *Marvel Tales* from before WWII, but have most post war digests through around 1970. I had concentrated on *Astounding* and *Unknown*, and have all but two dozen Campbell ASFs and about half the *Unknowns*. I have a very few *Weirds* from the '20s and the first issue of *Amazing* inscribed to me by Hugo Gernsback and Frank R. Paul. I have other scattered pulps...not more than two or three dozen, and a score or two of *Argosys* from before WWII. Lately I have acquired only semi-prozines like MZB's *Fantasy*, *Tomorrow*, *Harsh Mistress*, *Amazing* until it folded a few years ago (not the recently revived media tie-in zine), etc. I have a few early Ackerman *Famous Monsters* and *Spacemen* just because they were by Forry. I have many post-war British prozines, including some short-lived ones, again to about 1970. And then there are a few real oddballs like an issue of the Argentinian *Urania*, *La Revista del Año 2000*. Their condition is not pristine. I did read the magazines and while I was careful, they do show signs of wear. Some paper is yellowing, and something really strange happened to my *Galaxys*. Either mice or insects loved the glue and many of the spines are gone.

Neither Sandy nor Stanley have any interest in any of these. Sandy does not like short stories and Stanley is afraid the magazines would fall apart if he tried to read them. This is the first thing I will sell, and plan to start in the near future. I think I will only keep the MZBs and *Tomorrows* because friends are involved in these zines. I am reluctant to let go of the collection but realize I will never be able to use it, nor will anyone in my family, so it should eventually find its way into the hands of those who will appreciate it. (Recently Curt Phillips suggested I send some of my magazines to Pulpcon where they would be auctioned to pulp collectors and I would get a cut of the profit. Sounds like an excellent idea!)

Fanzines are a much more difficult matter. As I said, I have at least 50 boxes of them, and new ones accumulate at a rate of 2 or 3 feet a year. I love fanzines but get only a small portion of what is published today, and even then get to have read to me only about half of what comes in. Favorites include *File 770*, *Mimosa*, *Challenger*, *SFC*, *Locus*, *Twink*, and *Erg*, though I enjoy many others, like *Fantasy Commentator*, too.

I felt that I must do something about these before I pass on just to be sure that they will be preserved. I have found a home for them, and most will be gone by when you read this. At the Nielsen-Haydens' suggestion I contacted NESFA and they suggested Joe Siclari's

"Fanac" organization. In June 2000 Joe is driving up with his van to help sort the zines, and he will take away all that will fit in the van. Illogical as it seems, it still hurts and feels like I am disposing of my children. Joe said he drove his van up to Howard Devore's a couple of times and took away many of his fanzines, and has more trips to make. Funding is a problem but the ideal is to make several fanzine collections available for reading and research in different parts of the country and to sell off surplus copies to help fund the project. They would also like to expand it to include prozines since they are so important to the early history of our microcosm.

I will keep a few fanzines of special interest around for reference, and do hope to read more of them myself now that my

Arkenstone Reading Machine is working properly. I would see to it that any I did keep would eventually go to Joe and his project.

I also collect books about SF including histories, autobiographies, studies, etc., and have some 200-300 titles. I want to keep these for now but provide for their care in my will. I thought I might leave them to the High Halleck writer's retreat, which Andre Norton is setting up but Joe said that that project seems to be falling apart. Anyhow, I am making my intent public so people would know what to do if something sudden happens to me, and I will listen to suggestions and keep my plans flexible.

Finally there is correspondence. I have letters from J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and a number of now deceased authors in our field. Many are properly stored in a filing cabinet and I have no thoughts about what to do about them. Some are quite valuable and of real historic interest. I have not discussed this with Stanley who would have first call on them.

I have other, non-stfnal, items to dispose of eventually. Another interest of mine is subway and elevated railroad lines and I have a few books and many years of E.R.A. *Electric Railroaders' Association Headlights*, and an almost complete run of *Transit Magazine* published for NY Transit Authority employees in the '50s. The latter had an interesting historical piece or one on a system in another city every ish. I have offered these to Moshe Feder who will try to come up when Joe Siclari does. He will help sort the fanzines and at the same time find and take my transit stuff.

From my teaching days I have many physics, math, and astronomy textbooks. Stanley will never be interested in these and library and charitable book sales do not want old textbooks. I want to keep some as references to look something up if necessary, or if I end up helping or tutoring someone again. Some have historical interest like an astronomy book from 1900 or *The Atomic Theory* published in the 1880s. It is amazing to read these today and see how our knowledge has changed. But the dozens of college texts have no value to anyone and except for a few favorite titles I will probably just have to dump them.



(Curt Phillips says some of the math texts probably retain value.) I have already given part of my stamp collection, which I have had no interest in since I left high school in 1954, to NIEKAS co-editor Todd Frazier who *does* collect stamps. I am giving away my Lithuanian books to individuals and institutions which might be interested as I find them. And that leaves my thousands of cassettes and other recordings. I have runs of *Galaxy* and *Analog* on 8-1/3 R.P.M. phonograph records, hundreds of SF books on special format audio cassettes (to play six hours on a c-90), and blind-related books and magazines. I expect when I am gone they will be simply dumped. Maybe Stanley will want my 50 or so filk tapes, many pirate copies but some purchased originals. I do not want to leave an impossible mess for Stanley to clear up when I am gone, and am in a house-cleaning mood. If anything can be used or appreciated by anyone else it should go there.

JOHN BRUNNER

It was ironic that I met Waldemar Kumming for the first time in many years and he gave me a copy of his fanzine *Munich Round-Up* #163 at Intersection, the con at which John Brunner died. This excellent issue (available from Engadiner Strasse 24, 81475-Munich, Germany) contained Brunner's guest-of-honor speech from Helicon 1993. It was quite long and told a miserable tale of woe.

He started by thanking the concon for bringing him to Germany, and said that this might have to be his last con ever, not because of illness but because he is broke and unable to sell enough to survive on and pay off his debts. I was shocked to read this from a man who had published 90 books including such major works as *Stand on Zanzibar*, *The Shockwave Rider*, and *The Sheep Look Up*.

I guess that the situation is not unique. A correspondent recently mentioned that a successful British SF writer of the '40s and '50s, William F. Temple, ended his days "selling notions from a tray in the lobby of a London railroad terminal." But still, while Temple was a good writer and his novel *Four Sided Triangle* had been made into a movie, he just wasn't in the same league as John Brunner.

After adjusting for inflation, Brunner hit his financial peak in the early '70s. Even then he had to sell his home in London to get out from an intolerable mortgage and buy a more economical home in the hinterlands. Then disaster hit in the form of high blood pressure. He was put on medication which totally changed his personality and made him extremely unpleasant, and also incapable of concentrating on his writing. For over a year he was incapable of completing a single manuscript.

His problems continued with an inability to sell many of his ideas, but then he got his best advance ever. Six months into the book his wife Marjorie had a stroke, was hospitalized for a few months, and died. He was unable to finish the book, had to renegotiate the advance, and return part of it. He had other contractual disasters, had some books rejected, and had bad luck with publication schedules on others. If *Tooth and Claw* had been published when completed it would have hit a peak in interest in Rottweiler dogs but coming out well after the panic the book was dismissed as an exploitation novel. His life took an upswing after he married his second wife, Lily, and was able to get settled again. (He had much bureaucratic red tape to go through since she was from Mainland China.) In his happiness he was able to write the farcical *Muddle Earth*.

His life continued, however, in a downward spiral after that brief respite. He lost productive time on uncompletable novels or ones he couldn't sell, and slowly sold off prized possessions in order to survive. He had to give up his two-hour-a-week secretary and vices like cigars. His dedicated word processor was dying and was going to have to be replaced with a computer, and the disks transferred to new format. He was afraid he was going to have to sell his house.

I wonder how he did during the two years between the speech and his death. Fortunately I didn't see him during his bad phase but I always found him delightful at cons. The last time I saw him was as a surprise at a recent Lunacon when he was a last-minute replacement GoH. I remember having a delightful meal with him and John Boardman. He had interesting LoCs in the NIEKAS lettercol and I reprinted several of his con speeches. I was very sorry to learn that his later years were so tormented.



OF MAORI AND SERBS

On March 14, 1999, we attended a Tom Paxton concert in Middlebury, Vermont, and on the same day I started to re-read Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, And Steel*. One song Paxton performed was "The Road from Srebrenice" (the name sounded like "Shebernitzka" but John Boardman told me he thought this was the correct spelling) about the Serbian massacre of every male Muslim in that city, six thousand in all. Diamond wrote of the Maori massacre in December 1835 of the entire population of the just rediscovered Chatham islands, about two thousand in all.

The Chatham Islands are farther south than most Pacific islands and were settled by New Zealanders a couple of centuries after New Zealand itself. N.Z.'s North Island was lush and could support a dense population. Many competing tribes developed and constantly had fierce battles against each other. The Chatham Islands were off the trade routes and were forgotten soon after discovery and colonization. There were no trees so the islanders could not build replacement canoes and became isolated. The food crops they brought with them could not prosper in the colder climate and soon they were down to seafood for survival. Lack of supplies forced them to limit their population and develop a peaceful society. They practiced population control by castrating some infants at birth and developed a system of peaceful mediation for resolving all disputes. By our standards it was an ideal society.

Then a European ship stumbled on the island and the crew casually reported their find at their next port of call, on New Zealand. A group of Maoris immediately went to their war canoes and invaded the islands. A few weeks a second load of Maoris followed. They purposely killed all but a few inhabitants. They had no interest in negotiating with the natives or sharing the new land with them. They simply wanted the islands and their seafood resources for themselves. Initially they took a very few prisoners, but at whim a Maori would kill one of them. When asked why they did that, they asked why shouldn't they kill them? Anyhow, in a very short time the last Chatham Islander was exterminated.

Is there any difference between this and what the Serbs did in Srebrenice? This brings two further thoughts to mind.

While the Serbs are not the only villains in the former Yugoslavia, they are by far the worst. I do find them comparable to the Germans under Hitler. However the world is an awful place, considering the

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SHARING A WORLD WITH MARION ZIMMER BRADLEY

Diana L. Paxson

Actually, it's all Ed's fault.

Way back in the mists of antiquity (somewhere around the Paleolithic) when Ed was still living in the Bay Area and I had just discovered fandom, he used to take me around to meet all the famous writers he knew. In this way I actually got to speak to the elusive Phil Dick, and hang out with the Andersons, and meet Marion. At that point I had not yet read the Darkover books, but the idea that a woman could actually write and sell science fiction was sufficiently novel to make my encounter with this rather dumpy woman with long blonde hair memorable. Not that she took any particular notice of me. As I was later to learn, a lifetime of poor eyesight had led her to remember people more by their voices than appearance, and more by their ideas than either, so that she often did not recognize people to whom she had been introduced several times.

Still she knew me well enough so that when I invited her to the first tournament of what was to become the Society for Creative Anachronism the following year, she brought her family. She was dressed in a bodice and skirt over a white chemise, and wore a lace veil, and called herself Dona Ximena— she had always been fascinated by medieval Spain, and one of her most regretted unwritten novels was to have been about El Cid.

A week before the tournament, her brother Paul Edwin Zimmer had also moved to California, with Jon DeCles, whom the family had adopted when he was sixteen. They immediately became part of the core group which put on the second tournament, and Marion quickly became involved as well. According to some stories, she was the one who actually came up with a name for the organization when the Park Service wanted something to write down on the reservation form.

In 1967, the SCA held a tournament at Westercon, in a park across the street from the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel. The guest of honor was Marion, who allowed a whole gang of us to use her suite as crash space. It was my first convention, and I did not yet realize that Marion was one of the very few female writers who had become sufficiently established to receive such an honor. But the Darkover books, with their unique blend of space opera, character development, and not quite magic, were being published as fast as she could write them, appealing to a rapidly growing audience which had also just discovered *The Lord of the Rings*, which Marion had loved since it was first published in the fifties.

That fall, she and Walter Breen, her husband, moved back to New York to edit *Sybil Leek's Astrology Magazine*. The rest of us continued to develop the SCA in California, and as soon as Marion was settled in Staten Island, she started recruiting local fans for what became the East Kingdom. This made sense, since the group had originally arisen from the group of young fans, most of them students at local colleges, that Ed had gathered to help put out NIEKAS.

Marion herself was one of the crop of major science fiction writers who emerged from the fandom of the forties and fifties. She had met both her first husband, Robert Bradley, and her second, Walter Breen, through fannish correspondence, and put out a fanzine called *Astra's Tower* which included some material that eventually became part of the Darkover saga. Unlike some, she never rejected this fannish background, and continued to encourage fanac— that compulsive need to continue interacting with a fictional world beyond simply reading, throughout her life.

She loved conventions, and in her earlier years was a regular participant in the costume contests. Jon DeCles remembers first meeting her at Chicon as Galadriel. As the East Kingdom grew, she mastered medieval costume, and later, worked with me to develop a costume book for Darkover. In earlier days she had written fan fiction connecting Middle Earth with Darkover, as well as settings for some of Tolkien's songs (later recorded by Margaret Davis and Kristoff Klover).

Costume, after all, was only a peripheral interest compared to music, especially opera, which Marion had loved as long as she had reading. She had a lovely lyric soprano, and as a young woman she studied voice. It was lack of the physical stamina and inability to keep late hours, rather than lack of talent, that prevented her from pursuing a musical career. She attended the opera whenever she could, and in later years donated generously to the Merola Foundation in San Francisco, which trains young singers.

My real friendship with Marion began in 1973, when she and Walter moved back to the Bay Area. By this time I was married to Jon DeCles, and living at Greyhaven with Paul Edwin Zimmer and his wife Tracy, our children, and Paul and Marion's mother, known to the SCA as "Lady Mom". Marion and Walter bought a house about five minutes away which they called Greenwalls, and our two households began to function as an extended family.

Seen up close, Marion's career was even more remarkable. Every year or so she would pay a visit to New York and come back with a couple of novel contracts in her pocket. She was writing one or two books a year, getting up well before dawn when the house was quiet and producing, when the juices were flowing, up to sixty pages a day. As the Darkover novels increased in popularity and Don Wollheim persuaded her that they really were a series, the proportion of Darkover novels increased, though Marion never stopped producing the odd Gothic, fantasy, or science fiction set elsewhere. Shifting universes kept her from feeling too hemmed in by the need for consistency within a series. For years, she resisted allowing a map to be drawn of Darkover because, as she said, "In the next book I might need Carcosa to be somewhere else."

By the mid-seventies, Walter was making enough money as an expert in ancient coinage to support the family. For the first time, Marion could afford to catch her breath and write a book as long as it needed, rather than rushing it out to keep the wolf from the door. When we saw *Heritage of Hastur*, which came out in 1975, it was clear that Marion had made a break-through.

The Darkover novels that followed were both longer and deeper. From the first, Marion had treated psychic experience as paranormal rather than abnormal, thus saving the sanity of a number of readers. Now she began to write about homosexual relationships — the first major science fiction writer to treat them in a positive way — with similar positive results for another group of readers. In 1979 her first mainstream novel, *The Catch Trap*, was published, and became a gay classic. It is also one of the best circus novels ever written, based on her experiences working with carnivals as a young woman and more research than she ever lavished on any other work.

In the later seventies, she developed the Free Amazons, which gave fictional representation to many of the issues and conflicts of the growing feminist (a term Marion hated) movement. Eventually, women in some parts of the country actually formed "Free Amazon" groups, combining fanac with feminist solidarity. Those of us who live in more liberal parts of the country found this hard to understand, but after talking with women from places like Texas or Tennessee, it has become clear to me that the need for a "spiritual home" whose emotional tone and ethical principles are more attractive than those of Women's Lib. is still very real.

In order to interact with the many fans of her work, Marion and her household had started the "Friends of Darkover", which published

monographs on costume, cooking, etc. by Marion and others, and put out a new letter and literary fanzine. By the beginning of the eighties, the quality of the Darkovan fan fiction being submitted was good enough that Marion persuaded DAW to let her edit a series of shared-world anthologies, twelve of which appeared between 1980 and 1994, and saw the first appearance of a number of writers who are established names today. In the mid-eighties, she began to edit the *Sword and Sorceress* anthologies, which have been even more successful (number XVI came out last year). Having come out of fandom herself with the encouragement of earlier writers, Marion always believed in "paying forward" by helping newcomers.



She taught writers' workshops and was generous with her time in reading, and critiquing, manuscripts. She was the first, and most demanding, reader for all my early work, but I was by no means the only one, and if a piece showed talent, she would give her time to help the author whether she knew him or her or not. It did, I must admit, require a certain thickness of hide to survive Marion's criticism. She had learned her trade in a hard commercial school, and had no patience with literary posing. She was fond of quoting Don Wollheim's recipe for a good story—"How Joe gets his fanny in a bear trap and then gets it out again. . . ."

By the beginning of the eighties, Marion was well-established. Her science fiction was selling well, and it was time to look for new worlds to conquer. She had always loved the Arthurian legend, and Judy-Lynn Del Rey, who had published *Catch Trap*, encouraged her to take the time to tackle the subject. Once more, Marion had found a way to say, at just the right time, something that people really needed to hear. But this time, the audience, reflecting the emerging interest in Women's Spirituality, was immense. Judy Lynn made her revise and rewrite it, which Marion had rarely had to do before, but the result, *Mists of Avalon*, made her world-famous.

The money was welcome, but the publicity was a mixed blessing. Marion had been quite comfortable as a Big Name Writer in the world of science fiction. She never really learned how to cope with the status of mainstream literary superstar. Science fiction fans are as likely to point out one's mistakes as to offer praise. Mainstream fans gushed, or expected her to be Morgaine in the flesh and their personal guru.

Marion continued to write, but she withdrew from some of the activities which had fed her creativity. She looked for new inspiration in opera, and began to re-work older material, which now appeared as books such as *The Inheritor* and *Web of Light and Darkness*. *The Firebrand*, her novel of the fall of Troy, received a record advance, but had a disappointing reception, partly because there is no other theme in English-language literature which has the appeal of the Arthurian story, and partly (at least in my opinion) because it lacks the sense of spiritual contact which enlivened *Mists of Avalon*.

By now, Marion's health was beginning to suffer. She had always had heart trouble, but now she developed diabetes, and then a series of strokes which eventually affected her ability to write long fiction. From then on, her novels were written as collaborations. Marion herself was always very willing to share credit, but in some cases the publishers preferred to have her name alone for marketing reasons, and so her acknowledgement of her co-authors is usually to be found somewhere in the dedication.

I collaborated with her on the later Avalon books. Adrienne Martine-Barnes deserves credit for the last three Darkover novels, Elizabeth Waters worked on the Trillium collaborations, and Eluki Bes-Shahar on the "light" Occult novels. It is a measure of Marion's adaptability and productivity that it has taken four people to get out as much as she used to do alone!

She was still writing short stories, but gradually, her focus shifted to editing. Not only did she put together a *Sword and Sorceress* anthology each year, but in 1988 she started *Marion Zimmer Bradley's FANTASY Magazine*, which filled an empty niche in the market and also saw the first sales of a number of new writers.

Despite its excellence, the magazine was very much a labor of love that

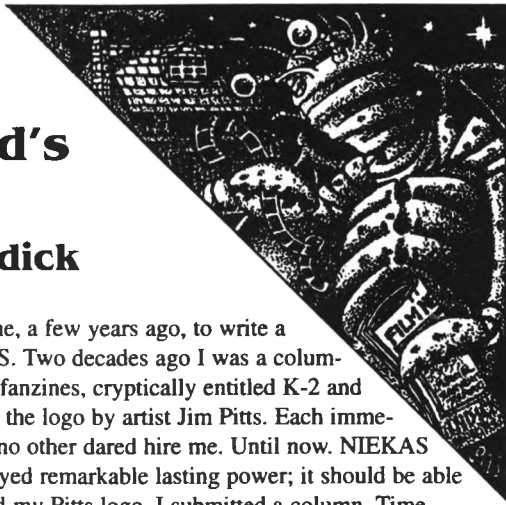
never quite broke even, and Marion's continuing willingness to support it must be considered yet another contribution to the sf/fantasy community.

Marion was wonderful, but she was not perfect. I know she was fond of me, but she could be astonishingly tactless to me as well as to others she knew less well. It was sometimes disconcerting, especially early in the morning, to hear the internal monologue in which we all engage coming out aloud. I think that her inner life was so vivid that she sometimes had difficulty distinguishing real life from first draft. There were occasions, certainly, when her accounts of past events seemed to be undergoing revision.

But if this flexibility of imagination was a weakness in mundane life, it provided her with an endless supply of plots and characters. The pain of her difficult childhood and troubled marriages gave her an understanding of how people can hurt each other or create their own suffering as well as joy that makes for gripping stories. In Marion's books, no one is perfect, and no one is totally bad. Characters struggle with their own flaws, seeking conflicting goods, and learn from their mistakes until they achieve, if not triumph, at least a measure of wisdom. Though Marion herself is no longer with us, her literary legacy remains. Darkover and Avalon still live in the imagination, and because she shared her worlds with others so generously while she was still living, it seems probable that books in those settings will continue to be published, at least for a while. I just turned in the next Avalon book, *Priestess of Avalon*, which connects Helena, the mother of Constantine, to Avalon. Without the halo effect of Marion's name they will have to stand or fall on their own merits, and we shall see whether the worlds she created are strong enough to survive without her unique perception of them. By the terms of Marion's will the magazine will be funded for another year, so even after death, she will fulfill her commitment to publish the stories she bought for it. If a buyer can be found to take it over, *MZB's FANTASY Magazine* will continue as well. For updates on progress, you can check their website at <www.MZBFM.com>. Marion Zimmer Bradley never won a major award in our field, was never made a Grand Master. Her work was too "commercial", too emotional, lacked the pretensions which even those of us who have rejected the claims of literary fiction look for when it comes time to nominate for awards. And yet few writers in our field have so consistently produced books which are loved. Marion had the gift of creating successful escape fiction which, if it did not always stimulate the mind, spoke deeply to the soul. Her goal was to produce "a good read". For over thirty years she did so, and while the books of many award-winners gather dust, Marion's novels are selling still.

The Redhead's Corner

By Ben Indick



Ed Meskys asked me, a few years ago, to write a column for NIEKAS. Two decades ago I was a columnist for two British fanzines, cryptically entitled K-2 and SPI-6, each bearing the logo by artist Jim Pitts. Each immediately folded, and no other dared hire me. Until now. NIEKAS has, after all, displayed remarkable lasting power; it should be able to overcome me and my Pitts logo. I submitted a column. Time passed, and, even before it appeared, I seemed about to shut a magazine down again. However, I did not take into account Ed's inordinate patience, and the magazine's leisurely schedule-ignoring publishing habit. A dark fantasy issue finally appeared. With any luck the next is in sight and my column will not be a posthumous swan song. But I wouldn't bet on it.

Inspired by our litigious era, my column concerned my legal action against Sam Moskowitz. Sam, one of the brightest lights in the science-fiction firmament, and, if truth be told, a fine friend of mine for years, has since then passed on, but the hard facts must be told. I miss you, Sam, sorely, sincerely, but I demand my day in court!

THE GREAT LIBEL SUIT: Indick Vs. Moskowitz

PLAINTIFF'S STATEMENT

For some years, Sam Moskowitz and I have maintained a friendly feud over M.P. Shiel's novel, *The Lord of the Sea* (1901, abridged edition, 1924). It stems from our individual essays in the Reynolds Morse Foundation book, *Shiel in Diverse Hands* (1983). My essay, "Villain, Vaudevillian, and Saint," referred to the attitudes of the Gentile world toward the Jews, as expressed in fantasy literature over the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, with special emphasis on Shiel. I acknowledged that the novel had virulently anti-Semitic scenes and characters, but was not, I concluded, anti-Semitic in intent, and, indeed, concluded on a high moral note.

Sam's essay, "The Dark Plots of One Shiel," is a thorough condemnation of the man and the racism Sam believes is inherent in all his books. My defense has been in that in revising the lengthy novel after twenty years, for brevity's sake, Shiel mistakenly excised all the mitigating pages. The latter was the version I first read, I later told Sam, and was myself infuriated; not until I read the first edition, did I realize the difference. Sam was unmollified; the first, he said, was even more culpable.

Later, when E.F. Bleiler published his massive thousand-page study, *Science Fiction: the Early Years* (Kent State Univ. Press, 1990), he wrote about the Shiel novel, that it "is a controversial work because of its treatment of Judaism. Some readers, like Sam Moskowitz, have considered it violently anti-Semitic; others, like Ben Indick, have defended the book." He concludes that "it is somewhat offensive, but it is silly to consider Shiel a monster of hatred or a proto-Nazi." Meanwhile, I had sent a copy of my essay plus a copy of Shiel's novel (the revised form, my only duplicate) to my daughter, thinking she might find the contretemps amusing and provocative. The latter it surely was. She got no further than the second chapter before hurling the book down in fury and refusing even to read my essay.

Thus, the background. Years later I became a member of a small group, sardonically labeled by Helen de la Ree as 'The Old Farts Club,' which meets monthly at artist Steve Fabian's home to discuss science-fiction and anything else before getting to the serious business of enjoying the cakes and coffee that Steve's gracious wife Dot provides. I no sooner appear for the first time than Sam, with the joyful anticipation of the hunter after the prey, resumed the feud. However, graceful as a fox escaping the hound, I parried him. It would on all occasions be the pattern and became a cherished custom for us to tear each other down, in perfect amiability and friendship. Neither of us ever gave an inch, and frequently brought in material as 'evidence.' However, on one fateful occasion, I told him of the episode with my daughter. Sam triumphantly boomed his hearty laughter (which I heard only in my mind's ear, as his throat operation had deprived him of his voice). I did not give in, but I admitted that, unfortunately, it made me sound like an anti-Semitic Jew, a 'self-hater,' as some people refer, unfairly, to a certain comic actor/director and a certain writer.

The situation might well have continued in harmless banter except that Sam went one step too far. In NIEKAS #44 (1994) he reviewed Bleiler's book, in such terms that I had no recourse except legal action to save my good name.

Sam wrote there, "Bleiler becomes a lengthy apologist...citing Ben Indick, a Jew, as defending the book. He apparently does not know that when Indick loaned the book to his daughter to read, she figuratively hurled the book back at him in absolute horror, forcing Indick to characterize himself in chagrin as an 'anti-Semitic Jew'." The magazine would be widely distributed, in commercial bookstores as well.

I was shocked, to the very core! Never would I have so blatantly labeled myself. What I had said was "It makes me sound like..."—a world of difference. I am a proud Jew, have lived my life as one, have brought up my children in full consciousness of their own Jewishness, of which they too are proud. How does this make me look? I come off a 'self-hater'! Just like the accursed Woody Allen and Philip Roth!

I called my brother, an attorney, and discussed bringing a libel action. He studied the case and suggested I could demand damages to one-third of the defendant's property. On a selfish level, this was interesting. Sam has an humongous collection, and one-third could fill many holes in my own modest collection. However, for old times sake, I decided before proceeding on a higher venue, I would seek an informal action, and the Old Farts' Club appeared to be the perfect site.

There were on hand, the usual, Steve, Helen, Bill Benthake (veteran SF autograph hound, deceased since then), Joe Wrzos (former teacher and editor of *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic*, more recently of several Arkham House books), Sam and myself. Truly, a group of my peers. Dot Fabian was there, but, like my wife, she tended to eschew science-fiction talk and busied herself making coffee. I promptly announced to the group that I was requesting they constitute themselves a court of inquiry; inasmuch as Steve was our host, I requested he be judge.

"Not me!" he said, "ask Helen!" Helen shook her head. "Oh. No, I like you both," she said, "Sam and you. I won't be judge." Joe antici-pated me. His is a questioning mind. So he began asking without donning the figurative judge's robe. Sam and I reiterated our positions. Steve had a query about Shiel's personal attitudes. The others joined in. What we had was essentially a grand jury now.

Sam stated that he had not intended insult, and that by using the word "chagrin" had inferred humor on my part. I strenuously objected that this was mere obfuscation on the part of the defendant and Helen agreed that the word did not mean that at all.

Then came a damaging admission from the defendant. Sam said: "I didn't have a tape recorder in my pocket. Maybe I got it wrong. Maybe you did not say it that way."

Continued on page 64

I Hear Amerika Singing . . . (No. 1)

A column by Joe R. Christopher

(1) Induction

Come, let us sing together:

America!

America!

God shed Her grace on thee!

And crown thy good

With sisterhood,

From sea to shining sea!

There, doesn't that make you feel patriotic and ready for the Millennium? But it is not just patriotic songs we must sing—there are many more, many of them appropriate for NIEKAS.

I suppose I should say something about who I am and why I am writing this column. The second part is easy to answer: I was foolish enough to suggest it, and Ed Meskys was foolish enough to accept it. But who I am is more of a bother. I am not greatly musical, but I have been an English teacher for all too many years—only two more to retirement as I write this! I greatly enjoy the words to songs, and I enjoy listening to them sung. So my comments in this column will be biased towards the words—but that allows the readers to offer letters on the music!

What sort of things will I cover? Anything fantasy or SF related that catches my fancy, basically. Sometimes very marginally related, no doubt. Sometimes filksongs, perhaps—I have been guilty of writing a few lyrics in that field. But not only that.

I started out to write on four tapes/CDs this time, but I ended up only writing about the first. Oh well, maybe I can be brief next time.

(2) John the Balladeer

A number of years ago I had a letter published in NIEKAS in which I rather wistfully said that I wished Manly Wade Wellman had recorded the songs in his John the Ballad Singer stories and that someone would release the tape, if he had. That hasn't happened, but something almost as delightful has. Joe Bethancourt produced a tape of a number of those songs: *Who Fears the Devil?* (1994), from White Tree Productions, P. O. Box 35190, Phoenix, Arizona. (White Tree Productions is listed on the Internet also—although my machine insisted on giving me a list of its mistakes in Java before I got to it.) Those who know the stories will remember that *Who Fears the Devil?* was the title of the first collection of stories about John.

But maybe I'd better give some background for the newer fans who may have missed Wellman's series. In 1951 Wellman began a series of stories about John (no last name ever given) who wandered through the North Carolina mountains (and over state lines often enough), carrying and playing a silver-strung guitar, and meeting with various supernatural adventures. (I think John should be classed with the occult detectives in genre, but the stories are not very like the others in details.) The stories started in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and the first eleven were collected in *Who Fears the Devil?* from Arkham House in 1963. A poor movie was made of two of them. Wellman went on to write more stories and five novels: *The Old Gods Waken* (1979), *After Dark* (1980), *The Lost and the Lurking* (1981), *The Hanging Stones* (1982), and *The Voice of the Mountain* (1984). I have all but the last of the novels, but I think most readers would

agree that the short stories were better. The complete collection of stories was *John the Balladeer*, edited and introduced by Karl Edward Wagner (1988). I would put that complete collection on my basic list of fantasy fiction.

What Joe Bethancourt has done is take the songs from the stories and add tunes—but most of the time he believes he is (and he probably really is) adding the original tunes to which Wellman wrote the songs. Bethancourt writes in his liner notes:

When I first read the series of short stories called *Who Fears the Devil* I read it in one sitting, completely entranced. . . . I read the lyrics to the songs within the tales; the songs that Silver John would sing, and I heard the melodies . . . because I recognized the original songs that Mr. Wellman had used as models. I sang them quietly to myself, there in the dark of my bedroom . . . and swore that if I ever made it as a musician, I'd record them. (I'll raise a question about "Silver John" later.)

One of the minor things I find frustrating is that Bethancourt does not give the tunes' names. I'd like to be able to run down the tunes and see what their original lyrics are like.

At this point, I think I'd like to go through the tape, song by song.

(A1) "Silver John" (4:08). This is the song which begins:

You ask me what my name is,
And what I'm a-doing here—
They call me John the Wanderer
Or John the Balladeer.

Bethancourt sings nine verses to the song (or ten, if you count the repetition of the above stanza at the end). From *After Dark*, Ch. 1, comes stanzas 1, 3, 4, 6, and 8; from *The Lost and the Lurking*, Ch. 14, comes stanzas 7 and 9 (in *The Lost and the Lurking*, they are printed as one eight-line stanza); and from a short story "Where Did She Wander?" comes stanzas 2 and 5. They work well together, in Bethancourt's sequence, but Wellman obviously did not intend them as a sequence of quite this sort. (Bethancourt has instrumental passages after stanza 5 ["Play it, Jimmy"] and after stanza 9, so there are some built-in pauses.)

The second stanza in *After Dark* and the third one in Bethancourt's version goes this way:

I've sung at shows and parties,
I've sung at them near and far,
All up and down and to and fro,
With my silver-strung guitar.

Bethancourt in his notes mentions, "We tried to use as near to the actual instruments as possible. Thus, you will hear . . . a guitar (Martin New Yorker) that I outfitted with real silver strings, of the type most often found in the hills in the 1940's. . . ."

I've already said that the tunes are not identified on the tape. In *After Dark* John says, "I tried some chords; something a-sounding like maybe 'Rebel Soldier,' though not much"—which isn't the most useful statement ever made! I've tried to figure out what the form of this song is, and it seem to be what is called in hymnology the Short Meter (6686). (The numbers refer to the basic syllables, although this song is often 7686.) In English-teaching terms, a poem in iambic meter, with three feet in the first, second, and fourth lines, and four in the third; the last foot in the first line has a feminine ending. I will not

try to describe every song in full detail like this. But the basic point is that this is a not unusual meter, so the words should fit a number of tunes. I assume the words are close to those of some other song, and that is how Bethancourt identified the tune to be used.

Now, about that title. So far as I know, Wellman never, in any story, referred to, or had a character refer to, John as "Silver John." That seems to have been entirely an invention of a writer of cover blurbs at Doubleday, for the novels. ("The First Silver John Novel" reads a line under *The Old Ones Waken* on the dust jacket; it does not appear on the title page.) It even appears on the back of the paperback edition of *John the Balladeer*: "The only complete collection of Silver John!" Am I wrong? Did Wellman use this term somewhere, and I just read over it? Anyway, since I believe that Wellman did not authorize the term in his text, I regret Bethancourt's use of it for a song title. But the song itself has authentic texts. (By the way, yes, I am aware that *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy* in its article on Wellman refers to "Silver John"; I think it also is wrong.)

(A2) "Becky Til Hoppard" (2:05). There are two stanzas of what is called "the Becky Til Hoppard song" in "Where Did She Wander?"; Bethancourt's notes refer to three, but that is because he repeats the first at the end. This is the song that begins:

Becky Til Hoppard, as sweet as a dove,
Where did she wander, and who did she love?
Becky Til Hoppard, and where can she be?
Rope round her neck, swung up high on the tree.

(An interesting meter: headless anapestic tetrameter.)

Bethancourt's arrangement has a banjo for a lively tune.

(A3) "Nine Yards of Other Cloth" (2:05) is from the story of that title. Actually, in the story, two stanzas are sung by the villain and two (or actually more than that) by John—and these singers are very different in tone. The first stanza goes:

I wove this suit and I cut this suit,
And I put this suit right on,
And I'll weave nine yards of other cloth
To make a suit for John.

(That's a standard Ballad Stanza, or in hymnology Common Meter.) John's two stanzas begin:

I came to where the pilgrim lay,
Though he was dead and gone,
And I could hear his comrade say,
He rests in peace alone.

What Bethancourt does with these is interesting, for he plays up the Gothic tone of the villain's song (the "nine yards" is a shroud)—and the song has a low tone played throughout in the background. (It sounds to me like a synthesizer, but I may be wrong.) Further, to continue the sinister tone, Bethancourt writes two stanzas to go between the two units of the story, which more closely tie to the villain's statement than to John's reply. I think it's quite effective.

However, there's a complication. The following stanza (sung by John) is also identified in the story as having the same tune:

My pretty little pink, I once did think
That you and I would marry,
But now I've lost all hope of you,
And I've not time to tarry.

(It certainly has a couple of extra syllables in that first half line.) There are three other stanzas matching this in the story (and all of them have those feminine endings for the second and fourth lines), but obviously Bethancourt does not use these in his song—they have completely the wrong tone. I'll come back to this song when I discuss "Eva Dare's Song" below; I suspect partly the difference is in the speed with which stanzas are played.

(A4) "Mole in the Ground" (2:14). I mentioned a minor irritation above; another one is that Bethancourt introduces some non-Wellman folksongs onto his tape. There's nothing wrong with this

banjoed song, except that it has nothing to do with John. I will discuss later some of the songs in the stories that Bethancourt didn't touch, which could have been substituted for this.

(A5) "Oh Ugly Bird" (2:02). For some reason Bethancourt does not use the vocative form of "O" that Wellman uses in "O Ugly Bird!" In the story, there are four stanzas about the Ugly Bird, with which Bethancourt starts, and there are two stanzas sung earlier in the story that Bethancourt uses next; Bethancourt ends with a stanza of his own. (At least, I assume it's his own; I can't find it elsewhere, but it could be from that fifth novel.) This is the opening:

You all have heard of the Ugly Bird
So curious and queer,
That flies its flight by day and night
And fills folks' hearts with fear.

(Another example of the Ballad Stanza.) The first of the two earlier stanza is this:

I had been in Georgia
Not many more weeks than three,
When I fell in love with a pretty fair girl,
And she fell in love with me.

Talk about tonal incompatibility! The stanza Bethancourt contributes is this:

As through this world I ramble,
As through this world I roam,
It's nothing but the wanderlust
That makes me leave my home.

(I realize that the last two stanzas I have quoted seem to be 7686, but of course in singing they can be drawn out into the equivalent of 8686. The second stanza about the Georgia girl, not quoted here, is more clearly 8686.) I suppose Bethancourt's stanza about roaming can tie together visits to the Ugly Bird and to Georgia, but basically this is a very disjointed song.

By the way, although I'm dubious about Bethancourt's stanza creating unity here, I am not complaining about his adding stanzas here or elsewhere—folksongs (or semi-folksongs like these) are supposed to vary from singer to singer.

(A6) "Pretty Polly" (5:29). This is another folk song that Bethancourt adds, but at least it is mentioned in the stories. In fact, in "Nine Yards of Other Cloth," there's this reference:

Obray Ramsey picked his banjo and sang
O where is pretty Polly, O yonder she stands,
with rings on the fingers of her lily-white hands,
on to the last line that's near about the frighteningest
last line ary song had.

(Obray Ramsey of Madison County, North Carolina, was a real man and a friend of Wellman.) "Pretty Polly" has what I think of as a blues structure to its lyrics: a line (usually pentameter but here tetrameter, with a strong caesura) sung and repeated, and then a rhyming line of the same length added. I assume the quotation above is the opening (leaving out the repeated second line) as Ramsey sang it; Bethancourt, however, starts with the action (the dialogue), which was probably Ramsey's second stanza:

Polly, pretty Polly, won't you come along with me,
Polly, pretty Polly, won't you come along with me,
Before we get married some pleasure to see?

The reason that John calls the ending frightening is that, after Polly is killed by her lover, she returns: this is the way Bethancourt ends it, echoing what was probably Ramsey's opening:

Polly, pretty Polly, yonder she stands—
Polly, pretty Polly, yonder she stands—
Rings on her fingers, and lily-white hands.

Of course, it is possible that Wellman knew a different ending, but this one is very effective.

(A7) "Little Black Train" (2:03). In the story "The Little

Black Train." Wellman has four stanzas of eight lines each. Here's the first:

I heard a voice of warning,
A message from on high.
"Go put your house in order
For thou shalt surely die.
Tell all your friends a long farewell
And get your business right—
The little black train is rolling in
To call for you tonight."

(The first four lines seem to be 7676 and the second four 8686; there's not a great consistency between 7 and 8 throughout the lyric in the first and third lines of each quatrain.) Bethancourt uses all four stanzas, and his commentary says that the music is his own. Actually, the lyrics are almost handled as a recitative with a glide in tone in the last word of the last line of each stanza (once a glide up, three times down). Anyone who knows the story knows that the shift in tone ties to the shift in the train's whistle there—although in the story each stanza went up or down, presumably line by line, throughout the stanza. I think this is a very successful song, although the shifts in tone are exactly opposite of those in the story, where the first three go up and the fourth goes down. (The story also has a mouth harp played to get the train whistles.)

(B1) "Old Devlins" (2:17). In "Old Devlins Was A-Waiting," there are seven stanzas. Here is the first as the example:

Old Devlins was a-waiting
By the lonesome river ford,
When he spied the Mackey captain
With a pistol and a sword.

(This seems to be sevens and sixes, in hymn terminology—although one stanza runs one 7 line to 8.) Bethancourt goes straight through the seven stanzas.

(B2) "Hark Mountain" (4:19). There are three stanzas about Hark Mountain in "One Other"; here's the first:

Way up on Hark Mountain
I climb all alone,
Where the trail is untravelled,
The top is unknown.

(Anapestic rhythm; sevens and sixes in hymnology.) Bethancourt sings the three stanzas, but he adds four others (six, if one counts two repeats at the end). The first of the additions begins "I'll eat when I'm hungry"; the second and third are a related love-problem, beginning "Your parents don't like me" and "They say I am reckless" (these seem to be traditional, if my memory serves, probably from Wellman's source); but the interesting one is the fourth:

There's a desrick on Yandro,
It's down in the pines,
Where a lady is waiting,
Where the sun never shines.

(Since Yandro is a hill, shouldn't that be "up in the pines"?) I assume this is Bethancourt's verse, because in the short story "The Desrick on Yandro" the two stanzas are different in form. Here's the first:

I'll build me a desrick on Yandro's high hill,
Where the wild beasts can't reach me or hear my sad cry,
For he's gone, he's gone away, to stay a little while,
But he'll come back if he comes ten thousand miles.

Well, I said that was different, but actually the first two lines could be treated exactly like what Bethancourt sings:

I'll build me a desrick
On Yandro's high hill.
Where the wild beast can't reach me
Or hear my sad cry.

(The rhyme is not good, but that's Wellman's fault. I wonder if he

held the "high" when singing the song, thus forcing the rhyme on the off syllable?) The last two lines can also be forced into this pattern, with a number of unaccented syllables:

For he's gŪne, he's gone aw-y,
To st-y a little whĭle,
But hĒ'll come b-ck
If he cŪmes ten thousand mĭles.

That's certainly a batch of extra syllables in the middle of the last line, with a tendency for an accent on the first syllable of "thousand." (I don't think "a little" is quite as bad, although it is also three syllables, for the open vowel of "stay" tends to pick up the "a" as a diphthong. The "he's gone a-" in the first line, like the three in the fourth, is more likely to pick up an accent than the syllables in the second. Or so it seems to me.)

I haven't written about the second stanza of the Yandro song in "The Desrick on Yandro," for it seems to be in a different rhythm together—the standard Ballad Stanza. Perhaps the reason Bethancourt didn't touch the Yandro song proper was this irregularity of stanzas.

By the way, I appreciate the fact that Bethancourt did not turn "Hark Mountain" into a sing-along "On Top of Old Smokey," as the verse form would have allowed. He sings it to a slower rhythm with musical passages between most of the stanzas.

(B3) "Vandy, Vandy" (2:00). One of my favorite songs of the series—Manly Wade Wellman and Frances Wellman sang the opening to me at a dinner at the World Fantasy Convention that met in Fort Worth years ago. Alas, I can't say for certain that Bethancourt has their tune—it has been too long—but I think he does. There are five stanzas in the story; here is the first (and the first in Bethancourt's version):

Vandy, Vandy, I've come to court you,
Be you rich or be you poor,
And if you'll kindly entertain me,
I will love you forever more.

This is the only lyric for which the second and fourth lines—or any lines—are indented in *John the Balladeer*. (The length of the lines, however, is not that different: an iambic 9898 pattern.) Bethancourt uses the five stanzas as the first through the fourth, and then the sixth, of his song. I assume he makes up the fifth (again, unless it's in that novel I don't have, or unless it's traditional in the source); Vandy sings:

I will wait for my true lover,
Though he's gone away from me,
Over mountains, over rivers,
Over foreign lands and seas.

(All headless lines if they are considered iambic, but in singing it doesn't matter.) If this is a song about the American Revolution, as the story suggests, then those "foreign lands" have to be the separate states—but I suspect Bethancourt was thinking of a later war.

A comment about organization: the last stanza—beginning "Wake up, wake up! The dawn is breaking"—although the last, for a special reason, in the story, is surely the first in the chronology of events; I would suggest it should be sung first, with an instrumental passage after it, before the refused courtship sequence begins.

The fiddle backup to the guitar in "Vandy, Vandy" works very well.

(B4) "Eva Dare's Song" (1:19). Let's start with the problem of the name: in the fiction, the woman is named Evadare (one word)—she's the one that follows John and marries him.

Bethancourt doesn't list a source for this song in the stories and novels, saying just "from various stories." That's because Evadare doesn't just appear in one story. Bethancourt seems to be mainly following the form in "Trill Coster's Burden" (the middle three stanzas) and "Nine Yards of Other Cloth" (not the stanza of about the "pretty little pink" I quoted above, but another, from the end of the story, used in Bethancourt's version as a frame for the other three stanzas).

Now then, we're back to the problem of tone in connection with the song in "Nine Yards of Other Cloth." But despite the story saying that the two songs are the same, the feminine endings of the second and fourth lines give a different effect—and Bethancourt handles them differently; for one thing, "Evadare's Song" has a banjo's liveliness. By the way, this is a song for which Wellman gives the tune title; in Ch. 10 of *The Hanging Stones* he calls it "Dream True."

In that chapter of *The Hanging Stones*, "And don't you think she's a pretty little pink" is called "the last verse" of the song. This is confusing, because there are two different stanzas that have "pretty little pink" in the first line. Above, in my discussion of "Nine Yards of Other Cloth," I quoted one of them, that started the love sequence in that story. The one that comes at the end of that story (that Bethancourt uses as his frame) and that also appears as the last stanza only of the version in the novel is this:

And don't you think she's a pretty little pink,
And don't you think she's clever,
And don't you think that she and I
Could make a match forever?

Certainly this is appropriate for the love that develops between John and Evadare. In *The Hanging Stones*, Evadare joins with John in singing this stanza.

The song in the novel opens this way:

I dreamt last night of my true love,
All in my arms I had her,
And her locks of hair, so long and fair,
Fell round me like a shadow.

However, in "Nine Yards of Other Cloth," that stanza, with some minor variations in wording, is said to be invented by John on the spot, to go with two other stanzas he's sung.

This is getting confusing. Let me just give the opening lines of stanza sequences. In "Nine Yards of Other Cloth," if one keeps to "The Evadare Song," there are these:

My pretty little pink, I once did think ...
I'll take my sack upon my back ...
I dreamed last night of my true love ...

And at the end of the story:

And don't you think she's a pretty little pink ...

In "Trill Coster's Burden," there are these:

And she's my love, my star above ...
The needle's eye that doth supply ...
And many a dark and stormy night ...

Bethancourt puts the first one last, but these are his central stanzas. And then in *The Hanging Stones* the song is said to go this way:

I dreamt last night of my true love ...
When I awoke I was mistook ...
The door was locked with locks of steel ...
And don't you think she's a pretty little pink ...

What conclusion do I reach about these various stanzas?

Simply that there's no authoritative way a non-narrative folk song should go. John sang this song in various ways, and Bethancourt's version is quite acceptable.

(B5) "I'll Fly Away/I Saw the Light" (3:53).

This medley of a folk hymn and a Hank Williams religious song is certainly lively, but (like the "Mole in the Ground" on the first side) it doesn't have anything to do with John. I think "Go Tell It on the Mountain," which John sings in the story "On the Hills and Everywhere," would have been more appropriate.

(B6) "Lonesome Water" (5:31). This is an odd song, which Bethancourt says is a traditional mountain piece. It begins with the plucking of strings (with a bit of an echo) to suggest drops of

water, and it seems to be arranged in four line units. The first four lines (except for two words that are hard to understand in the fourth line) are these:

I drank lonesome water, I was a child then,
Up in the willow brake, hunting for a sign;
Came on a place where the rocks was made hollow,
And the waters in a [dream?] rippled and [rhymed?]

Bethancourt says this work "probably encapsulates the whole feel of Mr. Wellman's stories the best of any song I know." Well, different views, and I'll give Bethancourt the benefit of the doubt. It doesn't sound like a folksong to me, nor does it seem to sum up Wellman's series, but it may speak in other ways to other listeners.

That's the end of the tape. I have mentioned a couple of songs that could have been included, and there are a lot of fragments of traditional songs here and there in the stories. John sings what he calls "the Last Judgment Song" several times, but only in "One Other" does he sing more than the first verse. In "Call Me from the Valley," he has a three-line fragment:

In the pines, in the pines,
Where the sun never shines,
And I shiver where the wind blows cold!

Those lines also appear, with other fragments, in the fourth chapter of *The Lost and the Lurking*; but they are the last three lines of a six-line stanza about mining in "Shiver in the Pines." There are a number of stanzas here and there (two lines from "Greensleeves" in *The Hanging Stones*, Ch. 2, and two stanzas of what may be called "Lonesome River" in "Walk like a Mountain"), but there's a complete song of eleven stanzas, "Murder Bull," in the first chapter of *After Dark*. (Why didn't Bethancourt include it? Perhaps because it's set in East Texas, not in North Carolina. Of course, East Texas is the most Southern part of the state, but still . . .) My readers get the idea—there are lots of fragments of traditional songs, and a person who knows the songs could have included them. There are also what are mentioned as nonce songs—stanzas that John makes up, such as the three quatrains of a "Stonehenge song" that he sings in Ch. 2 of *The Hanging Stones*. In these cases, Wellman probably never wrote any more to them.

Bethancourt does a good job, overall, of choosing the mountain songs for his collection. I would have preferred that, in filling out his album, he had stuck with songs that John refers to or sings a bit of, but I mustn't be too picky—his is the only album available, and it is a good one. For any reader of Wellman, it's a delight.

(3) In Memoriam: Buck Coulson

This song is reprinted from Outworlds No. 71. The "Hark Mountain" tune would be appropriate.

Out climbing up Yandro,
With wind in the pines—
A song in the breezes,
And lyrics so fine.

Out climbing up Yandro,
With wind blowing fair,
In the dusk of the evening,
With pleasure to spare.

Out climbing up Yandro,
To a cabin on top,
A fire for your comfort,
A good place to stop.

For those of you who didn't know Robert ("Buck") Coulson, let me explain that he edited a fanzine named *Yandro* from 1953 to 1986 (259 issues). It is listed in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* since it won the 1965 Hugo for Best Fanzine. (Yes, it was named after Wellman's *Yandro*.) Both Buck and his wife, Juanita, are separately listed in *The Encyclopedia* as authors. I was a contributor to *Yandro* in its final years, with notes on Robert A. Heinlein, L. Sprague de Camp, and more esoteric things ("Flautists of the World, Unite!"). My thanks to Bill Bowers for accepting my verses for *Outworlds*: I'd give the precise citation, but the issue is not out as I write—however, it should be out a goodly while before this issue of NIEKAS.

I said "cabin" and not "desrick" in the third verse because, in Wellman's "The Desrick on *Yandro*," there's a witch woman waiting in the desrick for the grandson of the man who left her, and I didn't want the wrong connotations in a memorial verse. But anyone who wants to sing "desrick," without worrying about the story, is welcome to.

Ave atque vale, Buck



LE MOTE JUST by Philip Hughes

(reprinted with permission from *Nut and Wit*)

Twinkle, twinkle, little quark.
Like a road sign in le dark,
Deep within the atom's core,
Substance, erg, or metaphor.

Legions of you, charmed, discrete,
Mini-lego's snap-locked neat.
At times we see you quite distinct.
Unless we sneeze, or doubt, or blink.

There you flicker, fond device.
Now we spot you. How precise.
There you go...en route
.....oh shoot.

ODE TO THREE MILE ISLAND

Spring has sprung
The grass ariz
Fallout's killed by hedges
And impregnated sister Liz.

So lofty are my hedges green
And Elizabeth so huge
The atmosphere so hazy seems
I wonder where the birdies is.

Another *Extremely Short SF Story*

The Thirty-Ninth Princess

Suzanne Burgoyne Dieckman

Art by Richard Smith

The thirty-ninth princess stamped her foot.

"Why don't I rate like my sisters?" she
snarled at her long-suffering father.

"Not a dragon left in the kingdom,"
he sighed.

"But—"

"Ogres are on the endangered-species list."

"The fairy godmother's union is on strike."

"So—?"

Well, I do know this frog..."



Between the Lines, a column by Tamar Lindsay

Arabian Knight - the PG movie

I want to buy the video when it comes out. I liked it. It's about 75 minutes long. It says it's about the first Arabian knight. Strictly, becoming an Arab prince has nothing to do with the concept of knighthood, but the First Arabian Night should technically refer to the first story in *The Thousand Nights And A Night*. Suppose they had to call it something. This "labor of love" that (rumor has it) was hurriedly finished by a cheaper outfit was started in the sixties, and it does show in places. On the other hand, the combination of the Thief's continuing monologue and the op art visuals makes it worth the price of admission.

Although there are plenty of howlers for the nitpickers, such as misplacing Baghdad in Arabia instead of Persia and miscalling the perfectly genuine Hand of Fatima a Hand of Glory, there was obviously some effort put into getting some of it right. I liked the use of genuine Moorish patterns in the palace windows. Once the serious action started, it was a visual feast of the sort that could lead to increased sales of headache preparations, and a whole new generation may yet learn the power of the name, Rube Goldberg.

I could have done without the Princess's dance routine, which was merely bearable. To my intense relief, there was only a slight Monty Python influence. The plot has some problems, but some explanatory material may have been lost in the rush to get some money out of it, maybe in the unmade 15 minutes that would have made it a standard-length film. Fan writers could start a contest for the best explanation of various mysterious details, such as the Vizier's fingers, the polo ball, the file, and the warning sign at the idol. In spite of these flaws, I believe this one has a chance to become a minor cult video. It is a nostalgia trip for my generation, and offers some offbeat comedy and neat visuals for the rest of the audience. And the Cobbler is cute.

I'm told that both the Thief and the Cobbler were originally entirely mute. I have also heard that Jonathan Winters ad-libbed all the Thief's lines, but I really doubt that. Although the film would be seriously hurt by the loss of the Thief's voice track, I can believe that the original idea was to make a cartoon movie that was almost entirely music and visuals. I feel sure that it was not intended to be entirely silent, because the Grand Vizier's voice is done by the late great Vincent Price, and his lines could not have been ad-libbed: they are rhymed couplets.

The concept may have been affected by the 2001 phenomenon. Younger readers may not be aware that before *2001: A Space Odyssey* came out in 1968, it was unusual to see a movie more than once. Drug users would repeatedly get stoned and go watch the interesting visuals near the end, which created a major money-maker out of an over-budget science fiction movie. As it stands, although it has sound effects, *Arabian Knight* doesn't have a musical soundtrack except for a few songs; it is a long cartoon rather than an animated film. This may be the singular case of a movie whose owners spent money to hire more actors and include more dialogue in order to avoid the cost of music.

An advantage for parents: this film was obviously designed before movie merchandising was developed. Although the Grand Vizier has an ugly pet vulture, there is no significant cute fuzzy animal to make into toys. The only way I can think of merchandising it would be to make a pop-up book of the story.

written September 5, 1995

Linkages, a column by Patricia Shaw Mathews

WOLF

(Plot summary of Jack Nicholson's WOLF)
Patricia Mathews
to the tune of SPACE HERO by Leslie Fish
taken from XENOFILKIA #38, p. 759

Are you over 55 and on the skids?
Are you over 55 and on the skids?
Try a werewolf bite today;
See those lupine hormones play—
And you'll soon be acting just like modern kids.

Do you think you're losing all your teeth and hair?
Do you think you're losing all your teeth and hair?
When you get that werewolf bite.
Teeth and hair will be all right.
There'll be more than plenty—You won't even care!

Are you just too nice and decent for these times?
Are you just too nice and decent for these times?
When you run with wolves, you'll find
That you'll get a modern mind,
In the spirit of the nineties and its crimes.

Do you want to know who drinks at half-past ten?
Do you want to know who drinks at half-past ten?
With a werewolf's nose you'll know
If they're drunk—and it won't show!
Tell the world and mystify your drinking friends.

Does your lover have a lover on the side?
Does your lover have a lover on the side?
Smell her clothes and you'll know
To which buddy's house to go,
and which couple should be taken for a ride!

Is there someone who has pissed you off somehow?
Is there someone who has pissed you off somehow?
When a werewolf takes a stand
Over property or land,
what he marks his turf with isn't just a plow!

You don't need a licence when you kill a deer.
You don't need a licence when you kill a deer.
Just have dinner on the spot,
Venison that's good and hot.
It's the Animal Control you have to fear!

Oh, a werewolf's life is wild and brave and free.
Oh, a werewolf's life is wild and brave and free.
Why be saddled with your spouse
And a boss who is a louse
When you could be running with the wolves—like me!

On Liking Clark Ashton Smith ★ FAY NELSON★



When you love something your parents, your teachers, your friends, and all the highest authorities in your society hate, you have a choice. You can abandon what you love and pretend to love what you are supposed to love instead, or you can stubbornly cling to the thing you love and shake your fist at the world. Most people cave in and throw in their lot with the majority.

I did not.

Even before kindergarten I gradually developed a taste for a certain artistic, philosophical flavor which, during my childhood, no one around me shared. I never had a name for that flavor. I do not have a name for it today. But I can recognize it instantly whenever I encounter it.

However, when you love something others hate, you find you must, in self-defense, develop some sort of ideas about it, some way of explaining your prejudices to others and to yourself. Otherwise the world may grow too strong for you.

What I love has certain qualities.

The most important is imagination.

Because of the way I have lived, I have learned to supply from my imagination many of the things others regard as their needs. Beginning with an imaginary playmate, I have learned to reward myself with imaginary fame and fortune, imaginary power, whole imaginary universes to rule over.

Therefore I am impatient with all arts whose aim is merely to somehow "tell the truth" about reality. Such arts do not meet my emotional needs. I know all too well how short life is, how stupid and brutal people can be, how futile and meaningless each day can be as experienced by most of my neighbors. I don't want to hear about this again. I have no use for it, no matter how respectable it is, no matter how my neighbors preach it to me for the good of my soul.

I have never developed a taste for the mundane, and I probably never will.

Instead, what I crave is what Poe hesitantly called "fancy." Instead I long for a world in which what is is awash with what might be, a world in which the filth around me is transformed by the gleam of distant glows, of unearthly colors from other universes, a world in which the now is an island in an infinite sea of thens.

I knew, in my teens, in the first few paragraphs of my first story by Clark Ashton Smith, that he could supply my needs. A glimpse at the grand suggestive unknown or invented words he used was enough. A glimpse of his uncompromisingly convoluted sentence structure was enough. I did not need to know his subject was holes in reality through which other realities might slip through, but imagine my delight when I found out!

How gladly I fled from the Dick and Jane vocabulary of Hemingway my teachers were forcing down my throat. How gladly I fled the social realism of Studs Lonigan! How gladly I fled everything that passed for serious literature in my youth! I knew, as if by instinct, that life was bigger than Hemingway's world.

And I knew, at first sight, that the poetry of George Sterling was for me. I had actually stopped writing and reading poetry altogether when, in the course of some historical research, I happened upon Sterling's "Wine of Wizardry" and caught fire, writing more poetry in the following three weeks than I had in the previous three decades.

I knew at first sight that Charles Fort was for me, and Colin Wilson, David Lindsay, Alan Watts, Henry Thoreau, Henry Miller, Issa, Basho, Edmond Hamilton, Ray Bradbury, H.P.

Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, William Blake, Ambrose Bierce, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. I knew at first sight that the pre-Raphaelites were for me, and art nouveau, and the psychedelic style, and art deco. All were illuminated by the clear white light of imagination.

I have tried to be open-minded and tolerant of unimaginative people, particularly of unimaginative people who were writers and who were my friends, yet the older I grow the more these people drive me up the walls. I find myself, little by little, separating myself from them, avoiding those encounters that so often leave me seething with rage and frustration, wanting to shake them by the lapels and shout, "Wake up, wake up!"

The second most important element in the flavor I love is multiculturalism. I could have lived almost anywhere in the world, but I chose to live in the San Francisco Bay Area because here, more than anywhere else, the three races and the thousand cultures of humanity meet and blend and breed an endless stream of creative hybrids. Here, more than anywhere else, I can walk from one neighborhood to another and cover more cultural distance than the usual American tourist does on a world tour. On foot I can trudge from Mexico to China to Japan to Norway. By turning my radio or television dial, I can tune in completely different cultures.

SEN.
ALBERT
'SLOUCHY'
MCGOON:

THIS SMITH WACKO IS ON
DRUGS!! IF IT WUZ UP TA
ME, YOU'D BE READIN' EVEN
LESS OF HIS PINKO MANURE!
AND THAT GOES DOUBLE
FOR ANTI-AMERICANS
LIKE NELSON!!



A friend of mine once boasted that he had in his collection any kind of music I could ask for. I asked, "How about a Norwegian Accordion Waltz?"

He didn't have it.

How about a non-Norwegian Accordion Waltz?

No.

Anything on an accordion?

No.

Anything Norwegian?

No.

Forget it.

Citizens of these United States have an ignorance of the cultures of other nations that is only exceeded by their lack of interest. They don't know. They don't want to know.

I can't live like that.

I'd die of claustrophobia.

The third most important element in the flavor I love is participation.

When I hear a beautiful song, I want to write a beautiful song. When I read a beautiful story, I want to write a beautiful story. When I see a beautiful picture, I want to paint a beautiful picture.

I can't sit still for hours in front of the television set. I don't understand how anyone can. Simply because it costs so damn much money to make a TV show, TV is by nature a one-way medium. You can watch, but you can't participate.

The only arts for me are the cheap arts.

In poverty I can still sing, dance, write and draw, but I don't see how I will ever get rich enough to make a television show and make it my way. In order for an art to be alive, it must be within the financial reach of poor people, and I mean not just to consume art but to produce art as well.

I can't watch television for another reason: it pins me to a chair like a butterfly in a butterfly collection. I can't do anything while it's yammering away there. When the radio plays, I can listen and go about my chores, but TV brings me to a dead halt.

(Yet once in a great while television does something imaginative, so I can't bring myself to cart the set off to the dump.)

I will not watch a comedy series with two settings and one situation. I will not watch a drama which is actually a trick car show. I don't mind sex and violence. The more the merrier! What offends me is idiocy. What offends me is jokes based on the taken-for-granted stupidity of foreigners or outsiders. What offends me is men putting on women's clothes and expecting me to laugh one more time. My neighbors are eating this stuff up, loving every minute of it, while meantime nobody has heard of Clark Ashton Smith, George Sterling, Issa, Basho, or Rossetti.

I want everyone to be an artist, but clearly very few people want to. Most of my neighbors would rather die than try to create something and take a chance on being laughed at by the uncreative majority. Most of my neighbors have been brainwashed to think that Hemingway is a writer and Picasso an artist, and if they can't write or draw that way, they'd better keep out of it.

I think Picasso had moments, but after awhile contented himself with selling his autograph on any old thing. I think Hemingway never had an inspired moment in his life, but sure knew what would sell. Most people, deep down, know this, but the schools have brainwashed them to pretend to like what they ought to like.

More than that, beyond being artists, I want people to treat life as an art. I want people to shape their own lives as an artist shapes a clay statue. But my neighbors don't seem to want that. Ask what they believe and they answer with a denomination. Ask their political philosophy and they answer with a party. And if they aren't getting what they want out of life, they can always find someone else to blame...their parents, their spouses, their society, their bosses. They can never see that if they knew which direction they wanted to go, they could take some kind of step in that direction today. (Often handicapped people know this better than the rest of us and shame us by their amazing accomplishments in the face of overwhelming odds.) I can't live that way. More and more I find myself withdrawing from the company of passive people, of professional victims, shutting my doors on their whining and complaining, walking away from their pleas for pity. Can't they become artists? Or if not artists, at least philosophers? Or if not philosophers, at least catatonics? When a herd of cats meows at my heels, I can feed them and they'll shut up, but nothing will shut up the professional complainers.

I have a Jewish friend who thinks about all his relatives gassed by the Nazis and wails "Why couldn't it have been me? Why couldn't it have been me?"

Finally I feel like turning on him and shouting, "That can be arranged!"

There is a way to live that is better than my neighbors' way.

That is the way of imagination, multiculturalism, and participation.

With these three things you can be pretty damn poor before you're really in poverty, and pretty damn rich before you start feeling fashionably guilty. There are things inside you waiting to come out. There are things within walking distance of you waiting to connect you to the whole human race. There are roads leading from where you are to everywhere else.

You're not interested, are you?

You'd rather be just like everyone else.

Or maybe not.

Maybe not.

NIGHTMARE

by Gregory W. Cross

My bed, it shook
On a cold winter's night
My thoughts, they book
Shrouds of nightmare's fright

They laughed, then came
to dance beside my bed
They clawed like flame
From many wounds I bled

Quickly, I glanced
About the darkness awed
My eyes, they chanced
On figures devil spawned

But light, day's dare
Dispersed the things that creep
Now gone, nightmare
I settled back to sleep



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The Sports Section

If You Write it, They Will Read

(five baseball fantasies)

reviewed by Nan C. Scott

Shoeless Joe, W.P. Kinsella. Ballantine Books, NY, 1982, 224 pp.

The Iowa Baseball Confederacy, W.P. Kinsella. Ballantine Books, NY, 1986, 293pp.

If I Never Get Back, Darryl Brock. Ballantine Books, NY, 1991.

Things Invisible to See, Nancy Willard. Bantam Books, NY, 1986, 262pp.

The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop., Robert Coover. New American Library, NY, 1968, 242pp.

On first consideration, lovers of fantasy and sports fans would seem to be unlikely bedfellows. A devotion to the game and the capacity to suspend one's disbelief and enter wholeheartedly into a Secondary World do not often go hand in hand. Those who spend their Sunday afternoons and Monday nights glued to the tube throughout the NFL season have little patience with or interest in dragons and magical swords; conversely, many travelers in Faerie and Middle-earth care not at all who will make up the Final Four of March's annual "Madness," the NCAA basketball tournament. If your passion comes in trilogy form, complete with appendices of ruling houses, you probably won't have an opinion on the DH or the appropriateness of wild card teams in the playoffs. And if you're still upset about Al Rosen's having been robbed of the triple crown in 1953 and cry every time you see a replay of Willie Mays catching Vic Wertz's long drive, the chances are small that you're a fluent and first-rate Elvish scholar.

Yet as J.R.R. Tolkien himself says, in his essay "On Fairy-Stories," "A real enthusiast for cricket is in the enchanted state: Secondary Belief," although Tolkien added that the most he himself could "achieve [was] (more or less) willing suspension of disbelief...held there and supported by some other motive...: for instance, a wild, heraldic, preference for dark blue rather than light."

Nowhere is the "enchanted state" of the true believer more authentic than in the country of baseball, the most mythic of our sports. Here indeed is a complete Secondary World, providing annals of its dense and complex history; its own Valhalla of Cooperstown, wherein heroes of its past are enshrined; and each spring the renewal of a challenge. The 162-game season is a quest, the most severely testing one in any sport (not a sprint, not even a marathon, but an epic journey with its own internal geography—the oasis of the All-Star break on our map; the dog days of August—a wasteland to be traversed, in which mere pretenders falter; here be dragons). There is an enormous cast of heroes and villains to be kept straight, enough for five or six appendices. And the possibilities for eucatastrophe are boundless: it ain't over till it's over.

For those of us fortunate enough to be in that "enchanted state," to love baseball with all our hearts and to have minds flexible enough to allow fantasy to enter, W.P. Kinsella has written two novels, the splendid *Shoeless Joe* (better known as the source of the film FIELD OF

DREAMS) and the brilliant *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy*. *Shoeless Joe* is a richer experience than its cinematic offspring, which jettisoned such important characters as Kid Scissons, a former minor league ball player who has created his own personal myth of himself as the Oldest Living Chicago Cub, and the hero's twin brother Richard, who travels with a carnival. Moreover, in the film Ray, the Iowa farmer who hears a compelling celestial voice that directs him to plow under a field of corn and build a baseball diamond on part of his acreage, follows a further command to "ease the pain" of a burnt-out black '60s writer-activist by kidnapping him and taking him to a Red Sox game at Fenway Park. In the novel, however, the writer who is the involuntary and largely unwilling object of Ray's assistance is J.D. Salinger!

Some readers may deem that being made into a character in someone else's book is an invasion of Salinger's privacy and that the movie's substitution of a wholly fictional writer character is actually preferable, and most film-goers will value James Earl Jones's finely tuned performance as the disillusioned '60s writer who's distanced himself from the hurly-burly; but the overall effect is a simplification of the book and a reduction of Kinsella's original vision into a warm, fuzzy hymn of praise for warmly fuzzy tame hippies and other '60s idealists following their own stars and ignoring practical and material concerns.

Time travel and the ability to transcend one's own lifetime and even one's death are the principal supernatural components of *Shoeless Joe*, a less extravagant, more nearly realistic, creation than its successor, *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy*. Ray Kinsella—that his surname is the same as the author's is surely no accident—heeds the voice that tells him, "If you build it, he will come." "He" is apparently Shoeless Joe Jackson, left fielder for the infamous Chicago Black Sox team that tanked the 1919 World Series—and perhaps "he" is someone else as well, although Ray will not realize that until the story is nearly over.

The ongoing great central question of all fantasy is, "What if...?" and Ray's decision to put his farm at risk by substituting a diamond for part of his corn crop and his compliance with the voice's subsequent commands spawn further questions. Will Shoeless Joe Jackson come? And will he bring his friends and teammates along to play ball? (A jarring thought intrudes unpleasantly here: I don't really want Chick Gandil, architect of the fix, in my north forty!) How will Salinger respond to being kidnapped? And what role will be played by Moonlight Graham, who played one inning (in the field only) for the New York Giants in 1905, before becoming a beloved small-town doctor in Minnesota? Has he really been brought forward decades in time and transcended death, become a youth again, merely to have that one at-bat against major-league pitching?

Graham will have to make a decision before the end. Ray must make a number of difficult choices. Salinger must acknowledge a memory. And one more player must appear from the past before the team on the cornfield diamond can be complete.

In *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy* the canvas is larger and more highly colored, and the demands made on our ability to suspend our disbelief are greater as Kinsella's invention swoops and soars and we are spectators at an apocalyptic ballgame of more than 2000 innings played mostly in the pouring rain in Iowa in 1908.

What really happened in Big Inning, Iowa, on July 4, 1908? (And for forty days—and nights—thereafter?) The question gnaws at Gideon Clarke, a legacy of obsession passed on by his father, who died unfulfilled (when he was hit by a foul ball in Milwaukee County Stadium), without completing his quest to force the world to remember and recognize the existence of the Iowa Baseball Confederacy and the exhibition game an all-star aggregation from this gifted amateur league played against the Chicago Cubs. Not only has the game itself been lost in time, its very occurrence repudiated by the Cubs organization, but even the town of Big Inning has vanished from human memory, swept away by a flood or perhaps willed into non-being by the Indian, Drifting Away, a powerful and enigmatic figure.

Late one night Gideon and his friend Stan Rogalski, an aging triple-A outfielder who still dreams of making it to the Bigs, follow the "Baseball Spur," an abandoned stretch of railroad track with a name as least as romantic and evocative as the Great East Road, and they slip through a crack in time from 1978 to July 3, 1908, on the eve of the exhibition game against the Cubs.

These are the Cubs of Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance fame (with Harry Steinfeldt at 3rd), managed by Frank Chance. Mordecai Three-Finger Brown will pitch for the visitors, who have brought along a mascot, Little Walter, a hunchbacked midget. The IBC All-Stars, fascinated with Gideon's nearly albino coloring, make a mascot of him in turn, and Stan talks his way onto the home team's bench. He will be needed before this game ends.

The past holds temptations for both Gideon, who meets Sarah, a 1908 beauty who is far more loving than his driven and inconstant wife Sunny, and Stan, who finally has his chance to shine as a ballplayer but whose doggedly loyal wife Gloria waits seven decades in the future for him to come home. Why not stay in Big Inning? Especially as the game, originally intended as a pleasant and simple exhibition, ends in a tie that neither manager will accept—and goes on and on for forty days as the river rises hard by the Twelve-Hour Church of Time Immemorial. The IBC could use Stan; so could the Cubs as the game becomes a war of attrition. Indeed, after the Confederacy's right fielder is struck by lightning, the marble statue of the Black Angel of Death descends from her perch in the Iowa City cemetery and replaces him in the outfield in the 2026th inning. (She isn't bad—bats almost .300 and makes only one error as the rainy days pass.)

Still another baseball fantasy relying on time travel, Darryl Brock's *If I Never Get Back*, takes its protagonist into the sweetly nostalgic past of an earlier America, to the relative innocence of 1869 and the Cincinnati Red Stockings, baseball's first fully professional team; but in Brock's case the element of fantasy is employed solely for the purpose of transporting Sam Fowler back in time. The book it most nearly resembles is Jack Finney's *Time and Again* with nothing supernatural to be swallowed (or savored) beyond the initial premise. Sam finds himself in a realistic 1869 of post-Civil War greed and politics (Mark Twain's Gilded Age) as he travels with the ball team.

Not so in the case of *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy*, which requires its readers to feel a tenderness for a turn-of-the-century America of small midwestern towns, railroads, and baseball "when it was a game" and to be equally ready to accept a roller coaster ride of extraordinary events: the forty days (and nights) of rain; the intervention of President Teddy Roosevelt, as back in Chicago, deprived of their main stars, the Cubs begin a serious losing streak; the arrival of Leonardo da Vinci in a hot-air balloon; a left fielder chasing a fly ball from Iowa to New Mexico (the foul lines extend to forever and beyond).

If you don't care much about baseball for its own sake, or for American history, *If I Never Get Back* won't be your cup of tea, and you may not find much to sustain you in *Shoeless Joe* either. If, however, you are fortunate to have been indoctrinated young by wise

parents and/or grandparents, and to have invested your heart in the national pastime, you will discover lyrical surprises and heart-lifting moments of genuine magic in both. *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy* is inventive and extraordinary enough to give any lover of fantasy an amazing and phantasmagoric journey into the past; but the reader who is steeped in baseball lore will experience what happened in Big Inning, Iowa, more fully, more richly, than the casual fan with a ticket to ride on any old Magical Mystery tour.

Somewhat different and special cases are Nancy Willard's *Things Invisible to See* and *The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.* by Robert Coover. Willard's poignant and numinous story of love and life and death in WWII Michigan reaches its climax in a supernatural baseball game for all the marbles, and baseball's pre-eminent status in American sports in the 1940s strongly colors the world of the protagonists; but it would be possible for a reader with no particular background in baseball to be charmed and moved by *Things Invisible to See*. *The Universal Baseball Association...*, on the other hand, is not itself really a fantasy at all but rather an unnerving plunge into the cauldron of Secondary Creation, a look at the myth-making mentality and what total immersion in the process may do to the creator. It would be impossible for anyone indifferent to or unfamiliar with baseball to become involved in this sub-creation forged at J. Henry Waugh's kitchen table; moreover, Coover's repellent but brilliant creation demands a special breed of fantasy enthusiast as well.

It would be fatally easy to write the words fan, fantasy lover, and fantasy reader and assume that they share a common meaning for all of us. If any piece of fiction dealing with events and things that are not empirically so is fantasy, then the spectrum stretches from the talking toys of Winnie the Pooh, through the dragons of Tolkien through science fiction adventures that offer no supernatural element whatever but present speculations about probable, credible futures based on premises drawn from presently known scientific fact. The reader who is charmed by talking moles or moved to tears when the Rohirrim ride to the aid of Gondor at cock-crow wants one thing from his or her fantasies; the war-gamer, who moves his own micro-armies around—on a table-top map or a VDT—wants something else perhaps: the power of creation and command, the opportunity to impose strategy on his creation. There is today a substantial industry devoted to serving "Fantasy Baseball," an activity involving the establishment of leagues, teams and competition based on the computer-generated statistics of live contemporary athletes. Here fantasy does not mean magic or the supernatural, but rather, let's pretend. Let's pretend that you are the manager of a team composed of these real ball players; and indeed thousands of participants now engage in season-long fantasy play. Some find it sharpens their knowledge of real baseball, while some concede that the computer leaves out character and leadership and under-represents the importance of defensive play, hardest to quantify statistically. But some come to prefer the fantasy version, in which they are the generals in the dugouts, to the real thing on the green field.

J. Henry Waugh, the protagonist of Coover's novel, is a numbers-cruncher by profession as well as avocation, an accountant at Dunkelmann, Zauber, and Zifferblatt; but it's the numbers he juggles at home that excite him. He is the proprietor of an entire fantasy baseball league, and he is its creator as well. No computer statistics of mere mortals for Henry: he has invented a complete world of players, managers, commissioners, eras, politicians, ballads, and records—and every night, fueled by beer and pastrami from the neighborhood deli, he rolls the dice that set that world turning on its axis. The density of Coover's creation—or rather Henry's, but Coover created Henry!—cannot be too strongly emphasized. In the rich minutiae of details and texture and thoroughness, it is almost comparable to Middle-earth, a tour de force of creative passion. But the U.B.A. is devouring Henry, seeking to take on a life of its own and wrest control from its master. A promising young pitcher—the son of an historic U.B.A. ace—throws a

no-hitter but in his next game is beamed and killed while at bat, an astronomically improbable event by the throw of the dice. Obsessed and yet despairing, Henry finds his life in the Primary World teetering towards collapse. He concocts elaborate stories about a dead relative for a sympathetic co-worker and a hostile supervisor at work. He couples with a neighborhood B-girl and spins her tall tales about fictitious ball players even as they writhe beneath the sheets. All he can really think about is his game, which has become more authentic to him than his daily life and yet has also reached an unsatisfying over-ripeness that leaves him thinking of shutting down the league for ever.

If you like baseball and war gaming and statistics, you may well be enthralled by *The Universal Baseball Association*.... At the very least you will feel required to respect and admire the richness and lushly realized three-dimensionality of Coover's creation. That being acknowledged, a disclaimer is in order: many women will probably not enjoy a book whose outlook is one of exclusively masculine locker-room sensibility. Those few women in the book are there only as sex objects, and then only in the coarsest sense of that term: a woman's purpose is to be gang-banged at a wake, to be "seeded...well, ...stuffed...so full it was coming out her ears, it was a Goddamn inundation," or to be the ribald subject-matter of a long ballad commemorating the vigorous deflowering of a manager's virgin daughter on the bench in a dugout after a game. One need not be a prude or a doctrinaire feminist to find this disagreeable. I am impressed, ever awed, by the scope of Coover's creativity, but I do not want to spend time in the world he has made in *The Universal Baseball Association*....

Nancy Willard's *Things Invisible to See*, however, takes place in a world that I recall with the ache of nostalgia for times past and lost beyond retrieval. At the time of Ben and Clare's star-crossed love affair in Ann Arbor on the eve of the Second World War, I would have been a young child in Toledo, Ohio, an hour away. I recognize with the intensity of personal memory the primary truth of the physical details and the social milieu of Willard's story.

Here baseball is the ground-bass, an underlying structural element of the society into which the Esau and Jacob twins, Ben and Willie Harkissian, are born in 1923, just as it was a more dominant element of American social life in the years before the NFL, the NBA, and television. It is a thrown baseball that brings Ben and Clare together, and a difference in baseball skills and attitudes towards the game that helps to define the real gulf between the twins; the resolution of the novel turns on a very special ball game between two very special handpicked teams.

Yet a reader need not know much about baseball to be able to monitor Ben's (and Willie's) progress or to join Clare as she follows the Ancestress on nightly out-of-body journeys after her accident and paralysis. He or she won't need a scorecard to figure out who is leading in the battle for Ben's soul—Clare or the truly terrible Marsha. And baseball is secondary—for a while—to the Big Game: the USA and the Allies vs. Hitler and Japan and Mussolini. The members of

Ben's old sandlot team, the South Avenue Rovers, are scattered from North Africa to the Coral Sea to the Solomons to England, until they are mysteriously reunited in Michigan, for three agreed-upon innings, in June, 1942.

Clare's own individual miracle, played out in a richly evoked homefront setting of ration books, ladies' volunteer war work, and the childhood wartime fears of her little cousin Davy, depends not on baseball at all but on Cold Friday, the "root doctor," the Black conjure woman of Catherine Street.

Like the film *GHOST*, *Things Invisible to See* celebrates the triumph of life and love over greed and selfishness and death, but on a much higher level in every aspect of characterization, plot, setting, and style. Baseball, the great American game, is less the substance of the story here than an appropriately elevated metaphor for a cosmic game of creation, love, life, and death. I can't imagine anyone's not loving this book. If you don't, don't call me.

Another *Extremely Short SF Story*

Malacandra

Joe R. Christopher

Art by Margaret Simon

Exploring the martian canals, Elwin Ransom came upon a fourth rational species, shaped like blue pigs.

"Why didn't the other *hnau* mention you?"

"They're embarrassed by our trough feeding."

"What---"

"It's their own trough luck."

Ransom exclaimed, "I'm encouraged in my journey, knowing Where there's a swill, there's a way."



Across the River The City and the Stars by Fred Lerner

Father Capon once remarked that the true baseball fan does not merely watch baseball games—he “keeps the city of baseball.” Surely he is right.

Watching an individual game can be a pleasant way to spend a summer afternoon.

It can offer the aesthetic pleasure of watching the most cerebral of American sports well played. It can provide a range of sensual pleasures: the warmth of sunlight, the brilliant green of the field, the sounds of the crowd, the smell of hot dogs and peanuts. It can even afford, on rare occasions, the sense of being present when history is made. When Jackie Robinson first took the field for the Brooklyn Dodgers, when Don Larsen pitched his perfect game in the 1956 World Series, when Mark McGuire hit that 70th home run—anyone who was in the ballpark on that day came away with a story to tell his grandchildren.

But these occasional pleasures are magnified by the underlying knowledge that every major league game takes its place in a pageant more than a century in the making. No matter how unimportant a particular game might be in determining the outcome of a pennant race, it makes its contribution to Father Capon's mystical city. A stolen base might have no effect whatever on the result of the game. But it will make its minuscule contribution to the infrastructure of records and statistics on which the true enjoyment of baseball is built.

So, too, with science fiction. When we read a story in *Analog* or *Asimov's*, when we read a new novel from Tor or Avon, we read it in the context of a literary conversation that began well before Hugo Gernsback got into the publishing business. In addition to whatever particular pleasure we receive from the author's ingenuity in world-building or technological extrapolation, from the tautness of her plot or the subtleties of his characterization, we derive an added satisfaction from considering the story in the context of the genre as a whole. How does this story's vision of lunar life compare with Heinlein's or Bova's? How does the author's narrative voice compare with Zelazny's

or Le Guin's? We may ask ourselves these questions unconsciously, but ask them we do. And it is in this way of reading science fiction, I am sure, that we can find the appeal that SF continues to have for those of us who have been reading it for decades.

This explains why we are less interested than perhaps we ought to be in the science fiction written by people we regard as outsiders. For all the intrinsic merit of their stories, they are outside the conversation. *The Handmaid's Tale* has been widely praised by mainstream critics; but I haven't read it, and I can't summon up much interest in doing so. Why is this? Margaret Atwood is a gifted writer, and I've read with profit other feminist dystopias. But *The Handmaid's Tale* isn't a contribution to *our* science fiction. Ms Atwood has made it plain that she does not want it to be read as a contribution to our extended conversation. Very well; but if I am meant to read it instead as an example of Canadian feminist fiction, I'm in the habit of looking to Alice Munro for that.

So, too, with baseball. I haven't seen a baseball game in years. But some afternoon, perhaps next summer, I mean to meet my brother and my father at Fenway Park and watch the Red Sox play. My family's devotion to the Red Sox goes back long before any of us ever set foot in Massachusetts. Though I grew up in the New York area, and I count among the cherished memories of my childhood the games we saw in Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds, and Ebbets Field, my father was always a Red Sox fan. I'm not sure why, but that hardly matters. In my family the city of baseball was Boston.

Like any real baseball fan, I deplore the rule changes and reorganizations that have come into the game. Misguided attempts at urban renewal have diminished many an American metropolis, not least the city of baseball. Continuity is its lifeblood, and continuity is what renders Organized Baseball (do sportswriters still call it that?) immune from external competition. No matter if some entrepreneur assembled the greatest baseball talents into a dazzling new league: whatever its merits, it would not tie into the web of tradition that baseball represents. Who would bother to record its records, to compile its statistics? What future could it have, without a past?

Many within Fandom have remarked on the attraction of baseball to science fiction fans. To me, the explanation is simple. Both baseball and science fiction derive much of their entertainment value from their time-binding nature.

Is it surprising that readers used to thinking on a millennial scale love a sport whose every contest forms a link in a great chain of being?



Another *Extremely Short SF Story*

Rommel Plays Chess on Mars

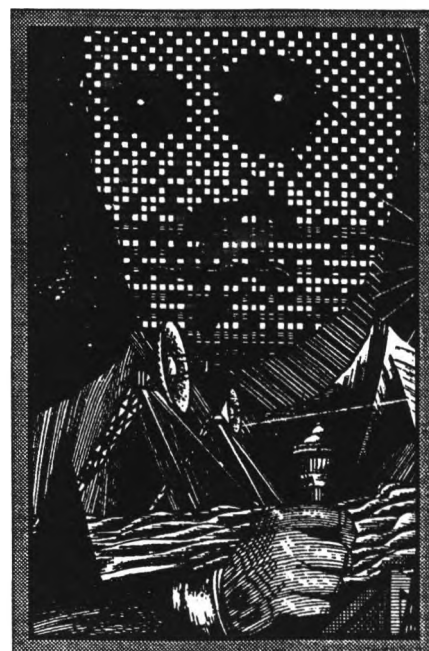
Eric Morlin
Art by Robert H. Knox

Rommel and a Roman god of war.

All night long they'll glare at a chessboard.
Rommel will lose by a queen, two bishops and a castle.

Not to mention his King.

Then again, who really expects to win against a war god when you're playing on his home field...?



Brittle Innings

Michael Bishop, New York, Bantam Books, 1994, \$21.95, 502pp.

reviewed by Nan Scott

FORREST GUMP having pre-empted the candy-box metaphor, one might call Michael Bishop's *Brittle Innings* a plum pudding of a book, a not completely digestible treat stuffed with a variety of good things. It is, to begin with, a satisfying journey through a minor-league baseball season (the Class C Highbridge Hellbenders' pursuit of the Chattahoochie Valley League pennant); and it is, moreover, another (yes, yet another!) baseball novel with a strong supernatural element. But it is a more ambitious undertaking than either baseball or fantasy, alone or in tandem, would account for.

Bishop places the drama of young Danny Boles' rookie season as the Hellbenders' starting shortstop on a canvas of the American South in 1943, a milieu that requires the reader to think about racial relationships in a society that trained African-American GIs in segregated units and sent them to die for a country that would not allow them to play in the organized national pastime of baseball. While Danny and his mysterious roommate Jumbo Hank Clerval (sure, you've heard that name before: try the works of Mary Shelley) stand in the story's spotlight, illuminated by lightning crackling around the ballpark, Darius Satterfield, the illegitimate mulatto son of the team's owner, Mister JayMac, serves as the novel's conscience and keeps the reader from sliding into a comfortable nostalgia trip. Darius can flat play, but in the America of 1943, where?

Brittle Innings is also a coming-of-age story; and Bishop's decision to cast it as the recollections of an aged Danny Boles, an "as told to" book produced in 1992 by a journalist who really wants to write about Boles' later career as a super-scout but pays the price of first bringing out a very different story in return for the interviews he seeks, works as an effective remedy against a naive or sentimental picture of 1943. The Danny Boles of the late 1980s knows and understands things about himself and America and life in general that the skinny seventeen-year-old out of Tenkiller, Oklahoma, would not have comprehended. The memories of innocence are leavened with wisdom gained through hard experience.

Fathers and sons, men and women, soldiers and pacifists—Bishop dares to take on just about every big theme available to fiction, and given the scope of his ambitions, it is surprising how well he handles them. One more theme is that of enduring friendship: the bonding that hot Georgia summer between Danny Boles and Hank Clerval. Danny is little and sharp and on the basepaths fast enough to "outrun the word God": Jumbo is big, extraordinarily ugly, and awkward (though with soft hands at first base), but he is definitely not Steinbeck's Lenny. Indeed, he speaks in the measured and elegant prose of nineteenth-century British novels, an enigma to his teammates, and truly a gentleman and a scholar, whose "Second Life" has been dedicated to a trinity composed of "atonement, human companionship, and baseball."

The fusing of the fantasy element of the story with the account of the Hellbenders' season is not altogether seamless. When half way through this 502-page novel (it's a big plum pudding) Danny snoops under his roommate's bed and reads Jumbo's "log," the reader is suddenly required to grant an enormous suspension of his or her disbelief—but then, so is Danny! In the long run it is worth it, for him and for us.

The Haunted Library, a column by Don d'Ammassa

SPORTING BLOOD

Science fiction and fantasy have occasionally made use of sports themes. Jack Haldeman wrote a series of short pieces about various sports. Jack Vance created Hussade, an entirely new sport, in one of his books, and several young adult novels have involved sporting events—like *Stadium Beyond The Stars* by Milton Lesser and *Space Olympics* by A.M. Lightner. Baseball fantasies like *FIELD OF DREAMS* pop up every once in a while. So I decided to see if horror fiction used the theme and was surprised to discover that it did.

Perhaps the earliest blend of baseball and the supernatural was *The Year The Yankees Lost The Pennant* by Douglas Wallop (basis for DAMN YANKEES), in which the devil helps out a professional team. More humor than horror there, but it's a theme that pops up again in *Child's Play* by Sal Conte, in which a mad scientist uses a unique form of mind control to turn the local Little League players into super athletes completely devoted to the game. Frank King did it even better in *Southpaw*, the aptly named thriller about a team whose excellent win loss record is owed partly to the presence of supernatural beings among its players. And Les Logan reprised the plot again in *Unnatural Talent*, aimed at young adults. Another novel that mixed baseball with horror (or at least a horror trope) is the superb *Brittle Innings* by Michael Bishop, in which Frankenstein's monster turns up during World War II, playing first base for a minor league baseball team. Other sports haven't fared as well. In *Reckless* by Michael Bates, a variety of athletes are turned into ravening monsters by a new chemical that is supposed to make them better players but actually changes their bodies and personalities. A dead prizefighter returns as a zombie in *Caravan Of Shadows* by Richard Lee Byers, a World of Darkness novel, seeking revenge on those who wronged him during life. Various athletes get their comeuppance in *Die Laughing* by Vincent Courtney. The oddball whom they have tormented in the past is possessed by a demon, who rewards its host with an orgy of vengeance. The gymnastics team in *Blood Sport* by R.C. Scott all turn out to be vampires, to the chagrin of the newest recruit, who would prefer to remain alive. *Play To Live* by Charles Veley has a very similar plot. An Olympic athlete is troubled by the re-emergence of a previous incarnation of himself in *The Reincarnation Of Reece Ericson* by Raymond Obstfeld.

Finally we have the marginal ones. If hunting is a sport, we might include *Shaitan* by Max Ehrlich and *Where The Chill Waits* by T. Chris Martindale. Skateboarding leads to *The Skeleton On The Skateboard* by Tom B. Stone, which is exactly what it sounds like. And last, but not least, on the very fringes of the subject, we have *Curse Of The Cheerleaders* by M.T. Coffin. Looks to me like there's a lot of room left for writers to explore. Demonic quarterbacks, serpentine diving enthusiasts, ghoulish golfers, bestial basketball players, and hockey players from Hell. I can hardly wait.

[Nan Scott mentions, "One of John Bellairs's horror stories for children, *The Eyes of the Killer Robot*, was also a baseball story."]

Idle Pleasures

by George Alec Effinger,
Berkley Science Fiction, 1983.
Reviewed by Nan Scott

From time to time when reacting to the outcome of a ball-game (always in response to a loss, never in the midst of elation), I have stopped short and asked myself why I should care so much. They are, after all, only games. George Alec Effinger, in his collection of short science-fiction stories about sports, has provided me with an acceptable rationale when he interprets his own devotion: "I am attracted to sports," he says, "because I love excellence. I have a hunger to see anyone do anything well. A superior athlete is a joy to watch, even if his or her particular sport doesn't interest me very much." (Of course, that doesn't explain why we desire passionately to have our teams win!)

Combining his previous work as a science-fiction author with his love for sporting play, Effinger has gathered together eight short stories, most of which blend science-fiction (or fantasy) with a more or less athletic milieu. I say "more or less" because there is no way I can accept a definition of chess—and not only chess but a particularly arcane form of it known as "fairy chess"—as a sport. Consequently, I will not include "Heart-Stop" in this review. Two of the other seven stories—"The Exempt" and "The Horse with One Leg"—are marginal as well. Certainly competitive running is a sport; not everyone will agree that running for exercise and fitness (alone, except for a small annoying Greek god perched on one's shoulder) is a sport. "The Exempt" is an interesting story, though, whether or not the reader decides that Hanson's experiences are genuine science-fiction alternatives available exclusively in New Orleans or hallucinations brought on by his pushing his body to its limits and beyond. "The Horse with One Leg" is less a real horseracing story than it is a parody of the sentimental racing story (or movie) about the plucky steed that wins the big one out of love for a child owner, and it is scarcely science fiction.

That leaves five stories that one can take seriously as being science fiction and about sports: one football, one ice hockey, one basketball, and two baseball, the sport Effinger concedes to be his first love. Three of these generate some honest excitement and emotion, one plays with dark comedy, and one begins with an excellent shivery notion but collapses in the details.

The football entry, "25 Crunch Split Right on Two," takes us into the mind of Eldon MacDay, an aging running back. Are his visions of his dead wife Louvina truly supernatural, or are they the results of an altered mental state engendered by intense pain in on-field situations? Heaven? Hell? Is God really such "a bad dude" as MacDay concludes? Perhaps it doesn't really matter as the reader is moved by the extremity of this athlete's experience.

"Breakaway," an ice-hockey story, also deals with physical pain and mental stress, in this case a struggle for the hero's life; but it is more clearly traditional science-fiction. Vaclav Zajac is a veteran player for the Condors of the Havoc Force amateur league, an organization created to prevent depression and claustrophobia for the workers at a harsh and lonely space station. Played on Niflhel, an ice planet whose name evokes Niflheim, the underworld of Norse mythology, the games are truly dangerous. The pitting of Zajac's skill as a hockey player and his competitive athlete's drive against the unforgiving environment of Niflhel, creates a classic s-f life-or-death confrontation. The premise works.

"From Downtown at the Buzzer," Effinger's nod to basketball, offers the ingredients of the almost obligatory science-fiction dark comedy: aliens—the sharp-shooting blue Cobae—who are vaguely funny

but vaguely threatening, and a surprise ending. Not bad, but it's a Fredric Brown story, and although the Chicago Tribune has described Effinger as "one of SF's distinctly nutty voices!" he doesn't quite have Fredric Brown's specially skewed take on reality.

Finally, the baseball stories—"The Pinch Hitters" and "Naked to the Invisible Eye"—split a double-header. "The Pinch Hitters," more a story about fandom than baseball itself, opens effectively when its narrator awakens to find himself inhabiting the body of someone else; instead of his own persona, a science-fiction author, he is now a utility infielder for the 1954 Boston Red Sox (while retaining his own awareness of self). It may not be Kafka, but it's still eerie and unsettling; it becomes more amusing and less scary when he finds that three of his fellow fen from a convention hall have been similarly transplanted. But the story breaks down when thoughtlessness in regard to details distracts the reader who is a serious baseball fan. First a racist teammate of the narrator's makes a disparaging remark about the gutlessness of National Leaguers in accepting the presence of Jackie Robinson. Whoa! The American League integrated only a few weeks after Brooklyn brought Robinson to the majors (even if Boston held out until 1959, last of the last): what about Larry Doby? Satchel Paige? Luke Easter? Even Harry Simpson? And there is worse to come. If Effinger had used only fictitious names for the players in his story, it might have worked as an alternate reality. There is no "Ellard MacIver" in any of my reference books. But Effinger's four transmigrated writers share bench space with Ted Williams and Lou Boudreau, and one of them is described as "Marv Croxton," center fielder for the Cleveland Indians. This, in 1954—the year that Larry Doby of Cleveland led the AL in homeruns and RBIs, the career year of a man whom was to become a Hall-of-Famer as well as a racial pioneer! The erasure is egregious. There is no way that this particular detail can be accepted or swallowed. By this time the reader who is a serious baseball historian has spat out the story in disgust. It could have been a good one.

"Naked to the Invisible Eye" is a good one, the best in the collection. Beginning in the low minor leagues, it follows the progress of a uniquely gifted Venezuelan rookie pitcher—unique not in the speed of his fastball or the quality of his curve but in his ability to find and freeze the mind of the man in the batter's box, to prevent his even swinging. It's mind control again, a "wild talent," with no suggestion of an alien on the mound; but the result is the same; an unnatural component that could undermine the very basis of the game—fair competition. How Ramirez and his handlers—a canny minor-league manager and catcher) deal with this creates an intriguing and thoughtful story.



OUR UNSOLD ANTHOLOGY

by Mike Resnick

Gardner Dozois and I tried to sell a reprint anthology of sf sports stories 2 or 3 years ago, but could elicit no interest. We didn't buy or commission any stories, and our proposal listed some 50 to 70 that were available and from which we'd choose. It's a dead dog, and was never an explicit dog at any point. It's just another anthology proposal that couldn't find a buyer...the graveyards are littered with them.

The following is taken from a post to "SF-Lit"

Sports stories you want? Sports stories we got. Here's the table of contents for a proposed anthology of sf sports stories that Gardner Dozois and I were, surprisingly, never able to sell.

Baseball:

- "The Celebrated No-Hit Inning", by Frederik Pohl
- "Joy in Mudville", by Poul Anderson & Gordon Dickson
- "The Franchise," by John Kessel
- "Southpaw," by Bruce McAllister
- "Streak," by Andrew Weiner
- "The Mayan Variation," by Gardner Dozois

Football:

- "Monsters of the Midway", by Mike Resnick
- "Run to Starlight," by George R. R. Martin

Basketball:

- "From Downtown at the Buzzer", by George Alec Effinger
- "Vanilla Dunk," by Jonathan Lethem

Horse-Racing:

- "One-ten-three", by Barry Malzberg
- "Malish", by Mike Resnick

Chess:

- "The 64-Square Madhouse", by Fritz Leiber
- "Closed Sicilian", by Barry Malzberg
- "Unicorn Variations," by Roger Zelazny

Hockey:

- "Breakaway", by George Alec Effinger

Boxing:

- "Mwalimu in the Squared Circle", by Mike Resnick
- "The Beast of the Heartland," by Lucius Shepard

Writing:

- "Prose Bowl", by Bill Pronzini & Barry Malzberg

Pool:

- "The Hungarian Cinch", by Bill Pronzini

Golf:

- "Open Warfare", by James Gunn

Polo:

- "Mr. Meek Plays Polo", by Clifford D. Simak

Rollerball:

- "The Rollerball Murders," by William Harrison (Esquire mag)

Hunting:

- "Death of a Hunter", by Michael Shaara
- "Poor Little Warrior," by Brian Aldiss

Swimming:

- "The Great Atlantic Swimming Race," by Ian Watson

Hang-gliding:

- "Kites," by Maureen McHugh

Monster truck rallies:

- "Mudzilla's Last Stand," by Allen Steele

Continued on Page 63

The View from Mole End

by Anne Braude

The Playing Fields of Which?

The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton.

—Attributed (disputedly) to the Duke of Wellington.

There is a complex interrelationship connecting the images of sports hero, military hero, and science fiction hero. Ed alludes in his column to the quotation which I cite in full above. The Duke presumably meant to imply that the same qualities that made for a good cricketer made for a good officer; the truth, however, may have been somewhat different, if one consults the accounts of life at Eton at the time as depicted in the writings of such social historians and biographers as Henry Blyth, which describe, among other less than genteel events, food riots which evolved into pitched battles between scholars and staff. The preparation for war received at Eton may have been more along the lines of Darwinian survival of the fittest.

Wellington's views, unfortunately for subsequent British military history, were informed more by snobbery than by professional judgement. He believed that officers should be drawn from the aristocracy, whom he regarded as having "a proper stake in the country." Consequently he only ever mentioned in dispatches his staff officers, almost universally sprigs of the nobility, never the less highly born line officers who did most of the fighting. As for the common soldiers, he regarded them as mere cannon fodder and described them variously as "the scum of the earth" and "an infamous army" (the latter used by Georgette Heyer as the title of her definitive novel of Waterloo). This didn't make much difference during the Napoleonic wars. (He said of Waterloo: "It has been . . . the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life . . . By God! I don't think it would have done if I had not been there.") Let's face it, his military genius was such that had he cared to, he could have conquered all Europe with an army composed entirely of cocker spaniels. But his legacy, in the hands of lesser commanders, was disastrous. The British army in the Crimea was commanded not by experienced and competent career officers from the Indian army, who were drawn mainly from the middle and upper-middle classes (like Kipling's officer heroes), but by well-bred "Hyde Park soldiers" who had more often than not acquired their commissions by purchase rather than by earned promotion. For a detailed description of the events surrounding the Charge of the Light Brigade, see Cecil Woodham-Smith's riveting *The Reason Why*. The disasters waiting (but not for long) to happen included a commanding general who hadn't seen action since Waterloo and had to be reminded at every staff meeting that this time out the French were allies and the Russians the enemy, instead of the other way around; a cavalry commander who was to all intents and purposes barking mad; and the commander of the Light Brigade and his immediate superior, who were not only brothers-in-law but were not on speaking terms. Massive reforms were instituted subsequent to a Parliamentary inquiry. The army was reformed, but the idealized image, with a life of its own, survived, only to perish miserably in the trenches of World War I, along with scads of Old Etonians and Harrovians and the unfortunates under their command.

Rudyard Kipling made his own contribution to the tradition. In the stories collected in *Stalky & Co.* and in many of the other short stories of young empire-builders, he continued the concept of the public-school boy as the ideal officer, with the best preparation for command being having been the captain of the First Eleven. Ironically, Stalky himself, notorious for his subversiveness to school discipline and mad-

cap ploys, never fitted the image but wound up a general anyway. (I refer of course to his real-life prototype.)

On the other side of the Atlantic, popular fiction kept the schoolboy athlete as ideal hero prototype alive without the military connection, with such popular pulp figures as Owen Johnson's Dink Stover, of a prep school modeled on Lawrenceville and subsequently of Yale, and the utterly impeccable Frank Merriwell, creation of dime novelist William Gilbert Patten, who wrote as Burt L. Standish. This Yale athletic hero first appeared in 1896; Patten wrote weekly stories about him for eighteen years. The stories were later collected in 208 volumes from 1900 to 1933. The series was revived in 1933; Merriwell had become, appropriately enough for such a caricature of all the virtues, a comic strip character in 1931. According to Benet's *Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature*, my source for the above data, the Frank Merriwell series is the most extended in all juvenile literature and has sold over 125 million copies.

An exception to my assertion above that the sports hero was strictly a civilian phenomenon was a series that I myself was devoted to in my youth. The books belonged to my grandfather, a retired Army officer who knew the author—whose name I unfortunately cannot recall, as I last read them half a century ago, as devoutly as my peers devoured SF magazines (which I did not encounter until I hit graduate school). The first volume, *Winning His Way to West Point*, featured young Douglas Atwell, whose bravery during the Philippine Insurrection in 1898 won him a battlefield appointment to West Point. Subsequent volumes traced his academic and athletic career in *A West Point Plebe*, *A West Point Yearling* (first and second years), *A West Point Cadet*, and the final volume, *A West Point Lieutenant*. I still remember Douglas's prowess on the football field, his academic successes and failures (conic sections nearly cost him his career), his friends and rivals (with one of whom he fought a duel), and his seemingly hopeless love for the debutante sister of an aristocratic classmate. (He eventually won her hand by heroically saving her life and that of her father in the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.) These books had special appeal to me as a second-generation army brat: I never even considered reading the popular boys' sports stories that filled my junior high and high school libraries.

What all these books had in common was the assumption that school team sports were the best way to inculcate moral values and leadership qualities in young boys. In English popular culture the sports hero/ideal warrior figure was a popular icon in real life as well as in fiction, as can be seen in the enthusiasm of young men signing up to serve in the Great War. (Viewers of the PBS series *UPSTAIRS, DOWNSTAIRS* will remember young master James's fear that the war would be over in a few months, before he could even get to the front.) Rudyard Kipling's only son John, always anxious to live up to his father's ideals, also hurried to enlist, only to die a couple of months later; Kipling never got over his death. The reality of modern war, as experienced by so many and recounted by some of the writers who served (Robert Graves' *Goodbye to All That* is perhaps the most memorable), pretty much put an end to the romantic myth.

In America, which had lots of hero stories and few wars to correct the image, it lasted a lot longer. Remember Teddy Roosevelt's "splendid little war" in Cuba? It was one front of the Spanish-American War, whose Pacific front, AKA the Philippine Insurrection (mounted by native Filipinos suffering from the curious belief that they themselves, not the Spanish or the Americans, should govern the Philippines), was where Douglas Atwell won his appointment to West Point. There was no shortage of fiction and reportage about the realities of war, from Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, an authentic depiction of the Civil War despite the fact that the author was too young to have served in it, to Richard Harding Davis's dispatches from Cuba. Davis was the most famous war correspondent of his time: it was said that you couldn't have a war without him. He wrote a great deal of

romantic fiction, often featuring heroic Ivy League types; but his actual reportage did not gloss over the mud, gore, disease, and command disasters that were the underside of the 'splendid little war.'

Despite the opportunities to know better, the myth hung on over here, probably for two reasons. One was that there was a lot more fiction than fact around: the aforementioned stories and the radio shows discussed by Ed. Another was the existence of real life sports heroes from the military academies, such as Roger Staubach of Annapolis and the Dallas Cowboys, as well as other sports heroes whose behavior was such as to make them truly admirable role models: Red Grange, Joe DiMaggio, and above all Jackie Robinson. Therefore, when it came time to choose the original astronauts, the model once again came into play. Military test pilots, combining the hero's drive to excel individually with the soldier's training to be part of a team, were the chosen ones. Or at least, that was the image that NASA publicists put out. Even before then, the early SF heroes, the ones who led the Space Patrol against the alien invaders and the pirates of the spaceways, were stern-jawed military types with First Eleven ethics even when they were dyed-in-the-wool Yanks.

Some of these types in the early years of SF included the protagonists of the radio series *SPACE PATROL*, the TV series *TOM CORBETT*, *SPACE CADET*, and of course the movie-serial and comic-strip heroes Buck Rogers and 'Flash' Gordon (who earned his nickname on the college football field). In print, they would include the heroes of such series as Jack Williamson's *Legion of Space* and E. E. 'Doc' Smith's *Lensman* series. Heinlein's story 'The Long Watch' and novel *Space Cadet* also fit the paradigm. (I should note here that I haven't read a lot of this stuff and am relying on the opinions of those who have, notably Ed, Bruce Arthurs, and Rick Cook.)

Intermediate between these exempla and the more realistic modern fiction are stories featuring heroes who have been described to me by more than one person as "Horatio Hornblower in space"; "Stalky in space" might also apply. The protagonists of these tales are members in good standing (more or less) of a military unit, with a strong code of honor not necessarily derived from public-school athletics, but they are lateral thinkers and innovators, and the harsh realities of war are not scanted. Characters fitting this pattern are David Weber's Honor Harrington, Lois McMaster Bujold's Miles Vorkosigan, and David Feintuch's "Hope" series. A fan of Elizabeth Moon's Paksenarrion books, a fantasy series by an ex-Marine about an honorable heroine experiencing the brutal realities of war from a grunt's point of view, suggests that they also fit in here. Gordon R. Dickson's *Dorsai* series is a special instance, since the code of honor is more that of medieval chivalry than public school athletics; war is portrayed in a good deal of its ugliness and all of its relentlessness. Honor itself can be equally relentless, as in the tale of Jacques Chretien. The books are an interesting combination of a fierce code of honor like that of the Highland clansmen the *Dorsai* so strongly resemble, a commitment to the career of professional mercenary soldier, and strong personal honor and group loyalty, rather than loyalty to the institution one is employed to serve.

More recent military SF (again, so I am told) is less oriented towards the play-up-and-play-the-game style of hero: no doubt in large part because many of the writers (male and female) have first-hand experience from Vietnam. They portray war's bloody brutality, which is often also characteristic of their protagonists. Series that fit in this category would include David Drake's *Hammer's Slammers* and Glen Cook's *Black Company*. I've had mixed reports on S. M. Stirling's *Drakon* series; I gather they share the grim perspective of more recent military SF but reflect the code of values of the Old South of the Confederacy, which were derived from a novelist of an earlier era: the medievalism of Sir Walter Scott. I would be interested to hear from those who have read it (not being one of their number) how, if at

all, Heinlein's much-debated *Starship Troopers* fits into this paradigm. Sandy Meskys pointed out to me an interesting example of the pattern coming full circle: Michael Jordan, a team player and role model as an athlete, starred as a team player and role model battling nasty aliens on the basketball court in *SPACE JAM*.

So, is the era of sports hero as model for military/SF hero over? That depends on how you see it. If the contemporary military leader is now more of an antihero, that fits right in with modern athletes, who these days seem more notorious for their rap sheets than famous for their lifetime averages. Remember when Charles Barkley announced that he was not a role model? He was wrong; it's not up to him whether young people choose to model themselves after him. He *is* a role model—just not a good one. I'm not going to try to analyze the factors that have led to the paradigm shift in the image of the athlete; I'll just mention a few of the more obvious ones. The earliest that showed up was the corruption in college athletic recruiting, with prospects and players given money and gifts under the table. Along with this was the well known (to anyone who went to a college that had a competitive team) fact that athletes could get away with bending the rules to the breaking point—having other, brighter students write their papers and take their exams for them. For example, even at my own dear alma mater, DePauw, not a major powerhouse in the athletic world, my French tutor was pressured to raise the grade of a football player. She was a gentle Southern lady, in tears at being nagged by the athletic department to do something both dishonest and dishonorable—but she had the backbone of a steel magnolia and didn't cave worth a damn. (Did I mention that she was a role model of mine?) What also cropped up from time to time, and was *not* tolerated by the schools, was involvement with gambling, including betting and accepting bribes for point shaving and throwing games. What the athletes have been learning in school—even as early as middle school—has been that the adults who were making the rules were condoning the breaking of them, and even breaking them themselves. (Can this be unrelated to the fact that the members of the Nixon administration seemed to communicate entirely in football metaphors?) Witness the increased violence of the fans, from deliberately making noise to prevent a visiting football team from hearing their signals called to throwing things onto the field to spitting on players to throwing dangerous objects at them.

The motto of today's athletes, both amateur and professional, seems to have shifted from Grantland Rice's "For when the One Great Scorer comes/To write against your name/He marks—not that you won or lost—/But how you played the game" to Knute Rockne's "Winning is the only thing"; and, in the words of the old wedding rhyme: "Change the name and not the letter, change for the worse and not the better." Resulting phenomena include, in order of worse coming to worst, the prevalence of 'trash talk'; the increased incidence of—and tolerance for—violence on the field, even in such supposedly non-contact sports as basketball and hockey, and the frequency with which college and pro athletes are being arrested for felonies ranging from breaking and entering through drunk driving and drug abuse all the way to first degree murder. Just a few weeks ago, as I write, a Carolina Panthers football player was arrested for the drive-by shooting of his pregnant girlfriend. Several years ago, a Phoenix Suns basketball player's cousin was convicted of murdering the player's pregnant girlfriend; the player is believed to have instigated the murder but has yet to be charged. I have to keep updating this: just a brief while ago, after the Super Bowl, a Baltimore Ravens player allegedly stabbed two men to death at a party. None of this explains either hockey or Dennis Rodman—but then, what does?

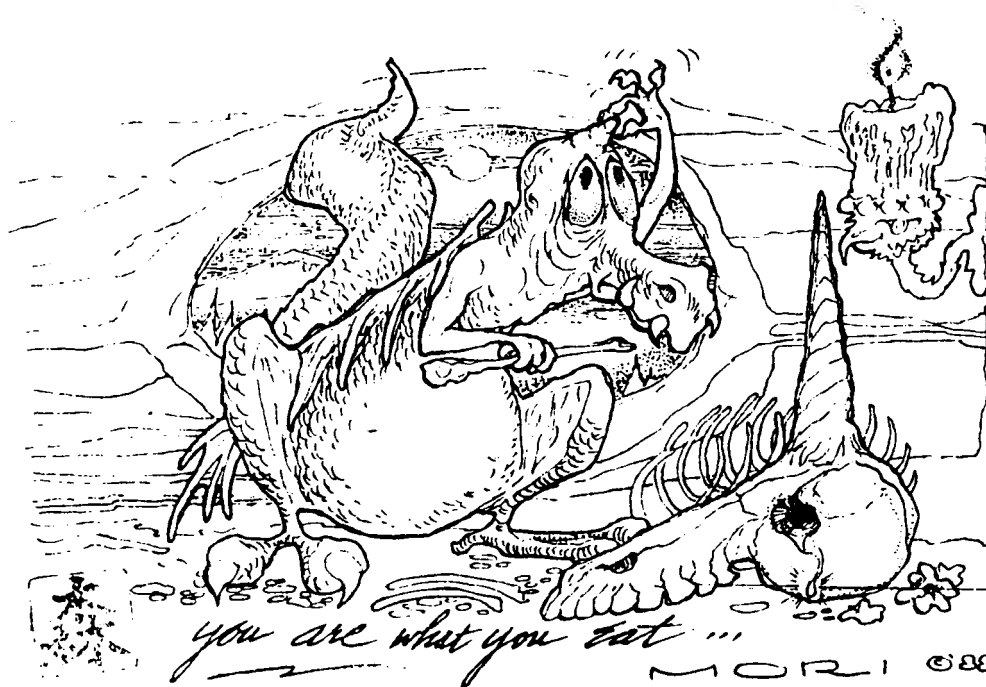
A welcome too to our new sports master, Mr. Ifor Bradlofrudd, from Llamedos, who will be taking over responsibility for Sport and Hand-to-Hand Combat and will, I understand, be introducing a tribal Game which neatly combines both.

—Head Master's Address

Discworld Assassins' Guild Yearbook and Diary 2000

—Terry Pratchett and Stephen Briggs

This may, however, be a chicken-and-the-egg deal. Is the moral corruption of athletics, the departure from the playing-fields-of-Eton paradigm, a cause or result of the behavior of the audience? It was the alumni boosters and professional gamblers who introduced dishonesty into supposedly pristine college sports; and it is the audience who cheers when the fights break out or the quarterback is sacked. When Ross Perot, described by columnist Molly Ivins as one of the better wacky right-wing Dallas billionaires, was put in charge of a commission to reform and improve Texas secondary education, his first suggestion was that football should be de-emphasized, and a C average should be required for a student to be eligible to play.



They nearly lynched him. The public at large seems to collude with the morality (or lack of it) of pro athletes. The country is littered with the illegitimate offspring of NBA players, a situation detrimental both to the children themselves and to the society which must take responsibility for them; but these absentee fathers are subject to no stronger sanctions than being the butt of jokes on THE TONIGHT SHOW. And the athletes show their gratitude by charging their fans, even youngsters, \$50 for an autograph. To get personal again, in the mid 1950s, when my father was stationed at Fort Monroe, Virginia, we spent one Easter vacation driving down to Key West and back. While in Florida we took in a Grapefruit League game (still the only pro sports event, except for the Indianapolis 500, that I have ever attended), because one of the teams playing was the St. Louis Cardinals, of whom we had been fans since 1948. After the game, I got my program autographed by both Red Schoendienst and Stan Musial—and I pity the fool who has never heard of them. Not only did they not ask me to pay them; *they* thanked *me* for coming out to support the team. Elsewhere in this issue at least one person talks about sports bringing a community together. This can be a negative as well as a positive—as when fans riot in the streets after their team wins the championship. Bad behavior by fans and by players seems to feed into one another, as no less an authority than Miss Manners has complained. And as sportsmanship, so called, becomes increasingly poor, nasty, brutish, and not nearly short enough, the sports hero seems to be aspiring to emulate the hero of the brutally realistic type of SF, the kind that can hardly be told from the villain. (I remind you yet again that in most instances where I discuss that type of hero, I'm relying on the opinions of others.) The wheel, it would seem, has come full circle.

The Frank Merriwell/Douglas Atwell type of hero may have been unrealistic, but surely it is better to aim at a star than at a mud puddle. We really need better heroes for role models; but it is unlikely we will find them in athletics—at least until hobbits grow tall enough to play professional basketball.

Vitai Lampada

THERE'S a breathless hush in the Close to-night —
Ten to make and the match to win —
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his Captain's hand on his shoulder smote
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

The sand of the desert is sodden red, —
Red with the wreck of a square that broke; —
The Gatling's jammed and the colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honor a name,
But the voice of a schoolboy rallies the ranks,
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

This is the word that year by year
While in her place the School is set
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind —
"Play up! play up! and play the game!"

— Sir Henry Newbolt

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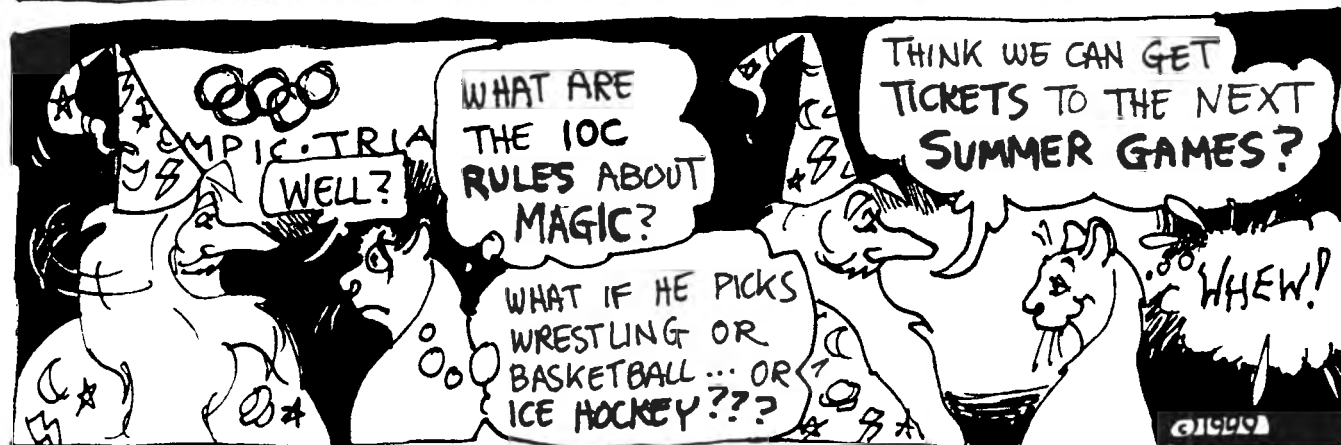
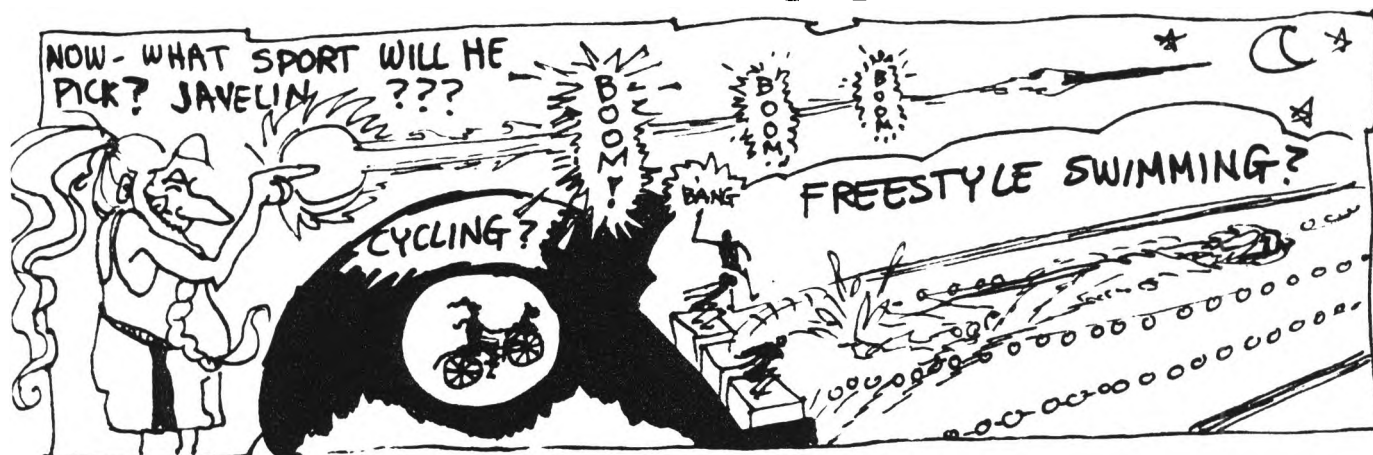
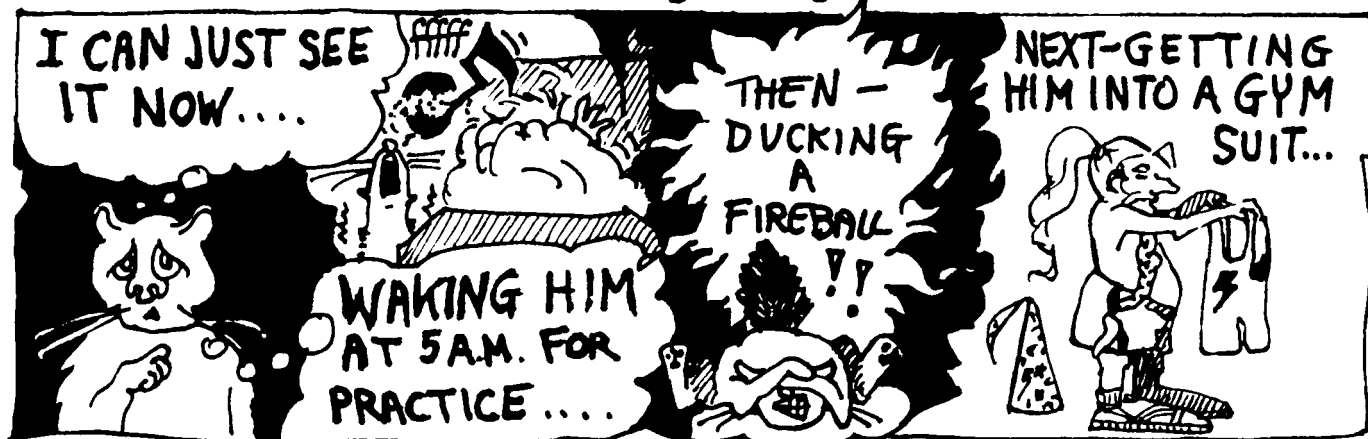
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Brave New World: Technology for the Blind in the 21st Century

by Raymond Kurzweil, Ph.D.

It's a great pleasure to be here at the headquarters of the National Federation of the Blind, which I would honestly say is my favorite organization, and I see many of my favorite people here, whom I have kept running into over the past quarter century. This is a very rewarding field of work, and I think people who discover it never leave. So it's always the same group of people.

It started about a quarter century ago when I met Jim Gashel—who hasn't changed a bit—and he introduced me to Dr. Jernigan. We had this little project of a reading machine for the blind, which we were trying to interest people in, and a lot of people were interested in it and wished us well. But Dr. Jernigan, being the visionary and entrepreneurial person that he was, wanted to get involved and help us—help us in ways we hadn't expected, including helping us design the reading machine. We didn't realize we needed that help, but we did. Dr. Jernigan and Mr. Gashel organized a whole team of blind engineers and helped insure that the reading machine would be really useful to blind people. In my first session with Dr. Jernigan I didn't know a lot about blindness—I'm still learning, though I know more than I did a quarter of a century ago. He said that blindness could be just a characteristic, just a minor inconvenience, and that blind people could accomplish anything they wanted to, just like sighted people. At the time I wondered to myself to what extent that was really true—was this a goal or a political statement, or was it a reality? I want to come back to that as I talk about the role of technology because I think technology has one small part to play in realizing Dr. Jernigan's vision. I very quickly came to recognize that Dr. Jernigan's statement was a plain, realistic assessment, provided that you had an organization like the National Federation of the Blind to make some prerequisites of the vision a reality. Those prerequisites include training in the skills and knowledge to accomplish the things desired.

The right attitudes about what blind people can accomplish are important for blind and sighted people alike. And information accessibility in all forms must be encouraged at every level. Technology has one role to play, but the technology needs to be useful to blind people. It needs to have the right features. Blind people must be involved in its development. The technology and the skills needed to use it effectively must be available.

I want to come back to those issues, and I want to talk about how, in my view, technology will develop in general over the next century. I think we will be hearing a good bit about technology issues in the very near term at this conference. So I think it's appropriate to start out

[Dr. Kurzweil just received the National Medal for Technology awarded by President Clinton for developing several totally new computer based industries. His achievements cited in the award presentation include the first typeface-independent optical character recognition scanner and software, realistic computer emulation of musical instruments, and computer understanding of human speech. This is an edited version of his keynote address at the 4th US/Canada [blind] Technology Seminar, reprinted from the January, 2000, *Braille Monitor*. The technology achieved today and that seen for the near future arouses in me a sense of wonder that rivals that of Sam Moskowitz! — ERM]

with a little more expansive view about where technology will go over the next several decades and how that will affect technology for the disabled, with particular regard to the visually impaired.

I would like to start with some contemporary technology. This is technology circa 1999—actually I should probably say circa 2001. I had to decide whether to show you some bullet-proof technology that would be reliable or share with you some really cutting-edge technology that's not so bullet-proof. I opted for the latter, so I hope you'll bear with me. This is a rather complicated assemblage of software components, which usually work well together, but this is only the second time I have given this demonstration. I gave it in a private meeting with Bill Gates about ten days ago because he likes to stay on the cutting edge. It actually worked pretty well. It did make one mistake, which I will share with you after I give you this demo.

[Dr. Kurzweil began by calibrating the system for the acoustical environment in which it would be working. He then said three times in a clear voice, "It is very good to be here comma." After a pause a female voice repeated the words in extremely understandable German. Speaking in short, clear phrases, he went on to say that this was a demonstration of a prototype of a translating telephone and that in several years anyone would be able to speak to anyone else regardless of the languages spoken by the parties. Each phrase was faithfully translated into excellently accented German.

After making a small alteration in his equipment, Dr. Kurzweil spoke again, and after one patch of gobbledy-gook, French replaced the German. The same female voice spoke just as acceptable French as it had German. Then Dr. Kurzweil spoke in French, and the system produced unaccented English. In fairness one should point out that the machine's French pronunciation was considerably better than the human being's; yet the machine understood it and did its job.]

This was a combination of three technologies running on a notebook computer: speech recognition (Version 4 of Voice Express, the Kurzweil voice-to-text technology I sold to Lernout & Hauspie two years ago), language translation, which can go back and forth in sixteen languages, and RealSpeak, which is a new speech synthesizer. This system uses a new version of Voice Express. I have another one which I used to dictate my book, but this is a fresh one that has only heard me for about ten minutes, so you can see that it is quite accurate.

As for RealSpeak, I've been watching speech synthesis for twenty-five years, since we developed the first full text-to-speech twenty-five years ago in the Kurzweil Reading Machine. The early text-to-speech required some getting used to. Over time speech synthesis has gotten more understandable, but it has still sounded synthetic. RealSpeak is new technology. It's not quite out as a product, but it is coming out. That was not recorded speech; it was text-to-speech. [He then typed a sentence into the computer for the system to read back, proving that it really was producing high-quality synthetic speech.] The speed can be varied.

This full text-to-speech system will be in our reading machine anyway, along with the language translation, so that you can read something in French and hear it translated in a human-sounding voice. A lot of the technology is actually devoted to the prosodics,

understanding at least the grammar of the speech, so the inflection is fairly reasonable—not as intelligent as a human reading it, but pretty good. There will be other voices, and next year you will be able to record a sample of your own voice and have the machine speak in your voice or maybe someone else's voice that you like to listen to.

Let me now talk about where technology is going. We will be hearing a lot about the next few years, so I'll concentrate on the more distant future, as is, perhaps, fitting for a keynote. Then I will come back and address what the implications are for technology for blindness, which is something that has been important to me for twenty-five years, and I'm sure to all of you. How many people here are familiar with Moore's law? [Virtually every hand went up.] I always ask that question, but now it is sometimes almost insulting to do so. It's like asking if you have heard of computers. But only two or three years ago relatively few hands went up in most audiences, even among people in the computer industry. So Moore's law has become more and more noticeable.

What is Moore's law? It says that transistors on an integrated circuit get smaller—take up about half as much space—every two years. This means that you can put twice as many transistors on an integrated circuit. And, because they are smaller and the electrons don't have to travel as far, they run twice as fast. That's actually a quadrupling of computer power for the same unit cost every two years. That's been going on for quite some time. Gordon Moore first noticed it in the 1960s. At first he said it was every twelve months; then he revised it to every twenty-four months in the 1970s. Where does Moore's Law come from? Why is this happening? Randy Isaacs from IBM Research says it's just a basic set of industry expectations, that it's been going on, so we know where we need to be at particular times in the future, and we target our research to be there. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But in examining where technology will go in the twenty-first century, it's important to understand this phenomenon in greater depth because that paradigm of the shrinking transistors is going to come to an end. There is some controversy as to whether it is in ten years or twenty years, but sometime during the teen years, 2010 to 2019, the key features of transistors will be so small that they will be only a few atoms in width, and we won't be able to shrink them any more. So is that the end of Moore's Law? Well yes, but is it the end of the acceleration of computer power, the exponential growth of computing that we have seen in recent decades?

That is a very important question to answer because, depending on the outcome, either computer technology will continue to become more and more profound, or it will level off. So I have spent a lot of time examining that issue. Relatively little has been written about it. The first thing I did was to consider all of the computers over the past hundred years—forty-nine machines going back to 1900. I started with the computer that did the 1890 U.S. census and ran up to the Turing Robinson machine built out of telephone relays that cracked the German Enigma code.

That's actually an interesting story. A Polish spy had stolen the German Enigma machine, which had three coding wheels, and they figured out how it coded. But they needed a computer to figure out every combination of the coding wheels in order to decode messages. The only problem was that they didn't have a computer. So Turing invented the computer and built the first functioning computer in 1942. It succeeded in breaking the German code, and Churchill had a complete transcription of all the German military messages.

He knew when the Nazis were going to bomb various English cities. He was under great pressure to warn city officials so that they could take necessary precautions, and he refused to do that because he figured that, if the Germans saw these precautions, they would realize that their code had been broken. He didn't really use this information until the Battle of Britain when suddenly the English planes just seemed to know at every moment where the German planes would

be. Despite the fact that they were outnumbered, they won the Battle of Britain. And if it hadn't been for that, we wouldn't have had a place from which to launch our D-Day invasion.

Anyway, I have that machine on the chart in the early '40s. Then there was the vacuum-tube computer that CBS used to predict the election of Eisenhower in 1952. The notebook computer you bought your daughter for Christmas last year is on the chart also. I put the computers on an exponential graph, in which a straight line would mean exponential growth. The first thing I noticed was that the exponential growth of computers goes back a hundred years, long before we had any integrated circuits, long before Moore's Law was feasible. So it turns out that Moore's Law is not the first but the fifth paradigm to project exponential growth in computing, starting with the relay-based electro-mechanical calculators, then relay-based computers, then vacuum-based computers, then transistor-based computers, and finally integrated-circuit computers.

The other thing I noticed is that it's actually not a straight line. That graph is another exponential; the rate of exponential growth in computing has actually been growing exponentially. We doubled computing power every three years at the beginning of the century, every two years in the middle of the century; and now we are doubling it every year. So that rate continues to accelerate. One of the predictions that this suggests is that, when Moore's Law dies, there'll be another, a sixth paradigm to continue the exponential growth of computing.

We don't have to look far to figure out what that is. Despite the fact that they are very dense, integrated circuits are built in two dimensions; they're flat. Our brains, by contrast, are built in three dimensions. We live in a three-dimensional world; why not use the third dimension? That obviously will be the sixth paradigm. There are already chips with dozens of layers of circuitry; they are building some now with hundreds of layers of circuitry. And there is a new technology called nanotubes, which are basically pentagonal tubes of carbon atoms, and researchers have been able to arrange them in such a way that they can do every kind of electrical manipulation—emulate transistors and other types of electrical components. So they can actually build three-dimensional computing circuits at the atomic level using these molecular structures that are extremely strong and impervious to heat, which is the main problem in building two-dimensional circuits.

They have built small-scale circuits; they haven't yet built a full nanotube-based computer, but this is technology that we can touch and feel. We know that it works. A one-inch cube of nanotube circuitry would be a million times more powerful than the human brain. There are probably a dozen different three-dimensional types of circuitry being developed. We can't be sure which one will prevail, but I think we can have confidence that a sixth paradigm will be there when this fifth paradigm of Moore's Law runs out of steam just as in the 1950s, when they were building vacuum-tube-based computers. They kept shrinking the vacuum tubes and making them smaller and smaller. They finally came to a fundamental limit where they just couldn't make them any smaller; then transistors came along. Transistors are not small tubes; it's a completely different paradigm.

As we look at the history of technology, we see that this exponential growth of a technical process is inherent in all of technology. Moore's Law is not the only example of exponential growth. Take the human genome scans, a completely different issue. We can sequence DNA at a certain speed. Twelve years ago the human genome project was announced, and it was greeted with a lot of skepticism because people pointed out that at the speed with which we could then scan the human genome, it would take 10,000 years to finish the project. Proponents of the project said, "Well, technology accelerates, so we'll figure out how to make this fast." And indeed, if you plot genome sequencing speeds, they have accelerated in the same way that computing speeds have. We are now going to finish that

project on time, in a fifteen-year period. In fact, it is going to finish years early.

Brain scanning used to be very crude, low-resolution, and slow, but it has also accelerated in the same way. We can make this basic observation about technology in general. Technology is an evolutionary process, and it accelerates. The first steps in technology took tens of thousands of years. It took thousands of years to figure out that, if you sharpened both sides of a stone, you created a sharp edge which made a useful tool. It also took tens of thousands of years to develop the other early steps in technology such as the wheel and using fire. But a key difference between the human species and other species is that we remembered these innovations. There are many examples of other species using tools, but they don't have a species-wide knowledge base that they pass down from generation to generation and to which they add on layers of innovation.

Humans, in contrast, have used the tools from one generation to create the tools of the next. So a thousand years ago paradigm shifts took only a few hundred years rather than tens of thousands of years. We accomplished more in the nineteenth century than in the ten centuries before it. We accomplished more in the first twenty years of the twentieth century than we did in all of the nineteenth. Today paradigm shifts take only a few years. The World Wide Web didn't exist in anything like its current form just a few years ago. So technology accelerates.

If we take an even broader view, we can say that any evolutionary process accelerates. Technology is just one example of that. Take the evolution of life forms. It took billions of years for the first cells to form. Then in the Cambrian explosion paradigm shifts took only tens of millions of years. Later on humanoids would evolve in only a few million years, then *homo sapiens* in only a few hundred thousand years. At that point the accelerating pace of the evolution of life forms became too fast for DNA-guided protein synthesis to keep up with it, and the cutting edge of evolution on Earth migrated from the evolution of life forms, changed from evolution of DNA-guided protein synthesis to the evolution of technology.

Obviously DNA-guided biological evolution continues, but it is at such a slow pace that it is insignificant compared to the accelerating pace of technology. The key point is that technology in the twenty-first century will become so powerful that it will provide the next step in evolution.

If we view Moore's Law in this perspective, it's just one example of an accelerating technological process. It took us ninety years to achieve the first MIPS (million instructions per second) per thousand dollars. Now we add a MIPS per thousand dollars every day. So that process is accelerating. It is one of many accelerating processes in technology. Any particular innovation allows us to grow exponentially for a while, but then the paradigm eventually ends, and it's taken over by some other innovation. It is basically the process of human innovation and creativity that allows the exponential growth of a technology to continue. We can view the exponential growth of computing as an example of the exponential growth of any evolutionary process, and it goes back to the evolution of life on Earth. It's a multi-billion-year process which is now getting faster and faster.

There are many technologies waiting in the wings which will continue that process. Where will this take us in the twenty-first century? The human brain is immensely powerful in one way. It's remarkable that such an intricate, complex, rich, and deep-thinking entity could evolve through natural selection. On the other hand its design is limited and crude in certain respects. The tremendous power of the human brain comes from its massively parallel organization. We have a hundred billion neurons. Each of them has a thousand connections to other neurons. That's a hundred trillion connections. The calculations take place in the connections, so that's a hundred-trillion-fold parallelism.

This notebook computer I have up here does one thing at a time, and it does it very quickly. The human brain, by contrast, does a hundred trillion things at a time. That's a very different type of organization. On the other hand, the circuitry it uses is an electro-chemical form of information-processing. It's both analog and digital. We can do analog processing with electronics—there's nothing unique there. But it's very slow. The human brain interneural connections calculate at about two hundred calculations per second, which is at least ten million times slower than electronic circuits. Neurons are quite big, clumsy objects compared to electronic circuits. Most of their complexity is devoted to maintaining their life processes and reproduction, not their information-processing capabilities. If we take that hundred trillion connections and multiply it by two hundred calculations per second, we get a capacity of about twenty billion million calculations per second, or about twenty billion MIPS, which is on the order of a million times more powerful than notebook computers today.

But, as I mentioned, electronics and computing is growing exponentially; human thinking is not. It is relatively fixed. Our human thinking is constrained to a mere hundred trillion calculations at a time. Nonbiological intelligence has no such constraint. I have developed a mathematical model of this double exponential growth, which matches different technological processes. (Another one, by the way, is miniaturization. You have certainly noticed in your lifetime how technology gets smaller and smaller. That's actually another predictable exponential process. Right now we are shrinking technology at a rate of 5.6 per linear dimension per decade.) So we can project where technology will be, at least in these types of quantitative terms, at different points in time. By 2019 a thousand-dollar computer—and they won't look like this rectangular box I have on the podium—will match that twenty billion million calculations per second. By 2030 a thousand-dollar computer will be a thousand times more powerful than the human brain. By 2050 a thousand dollars of computation will equal the thinking capacity of ten billion brains. I might be off a year or two on that. I did actually predict in a book I wrote in the 1980's that by 1998 a computer would take the world chess championship, based on how many moves ahead I thought the computer would need to look to match the playing of a human grand master or chess champion. That was actually off by a year because it happened in 1997.

But by 2019 we will have the basic capacity of human thinking in nonbiological form. That's a necessary but not sufficient condition to recreate human intelligence. We could have a machine that's a million times more powerful than the human brain and have merely a very fast calculator that could calculate your spreadsheet in a billionth of a second. But we wouldn't necessarily have the richness, subtlety, suppleness, and flexibility of human intelligence. We wouldn't have the endearing qualities of human thought. How are we going to achieve that, which I would call the software of human intelligence: the knowledge, the skills of human intelligence?

Before I address that question, let me say that, once nonbiological intelligence achieves the richness and capabilities of human intelligence and all the diverse ways that humans excel in thinking, it will necessarily soar past it for several reasons. For one thing machines can share their knowledge. If I spend years learning French, I can't download that knowledge to you. Humans can communicate, something that other species have not been able to do, in the way of building up a species-wide dialogue and cultural knowledge base and technological knowledge base, but we don't have quick downloading ports on our neurotransmitter concentrations.

If I learn French, where is that knowledge; what is it; what represents all of my knowledge and skills and personality and capabilities? It's a pattern of information; it's a pattern of interneuronal connections. Our brains do grow new connections between neurons. That's part of our skill and knowledge. It's a vast, intricate pattern of

information that's in my brain—in everyone's brain—representing memories, knowledge, and skill. And we don't have a way of taking that pattern and quickly instantiating it into someone else's brain.

Machines do have that. Take this system I just demonstrated to you. We spent years teaching several research computers how to recognize human speech. We started with certain methods which were imperfect. We had tens of thousands of hours of recorded human speech, which is annotated with the accurate transcription. We had the speech-recognition system try to recognize it, and when it made mistakes, we corrected it. We've automated that teaching process, and patiently we have taught it to correct its errors. It adjusts its pattern of information to be able to do a better job. But after years we have a system in our laboratory which does a very good job of recognizing human speech.

Now, if you want your notebook computer to recognize human speech, you don't have to go through those years of training. You can quickly load the program, which is the pattern of information that we've evolved over a couple of decades of research, and you can load it in a matter of seconds. So computers can share their knowledge; they do have the means of loading these patterns quickly. As we build these nonbiological equivalents of our thinking process, we are not going to leave out quick downloading ports for interneuronal connection patterns and neuro-transmission concentration patterns.

Another advantage is that electronics is inherently faster—ten million times faster right now and continuing to get faster. As we can build structures that are equivalent in three dimensions to the massively parallel processing of the human brain, they will be inherently faster than human thinking.

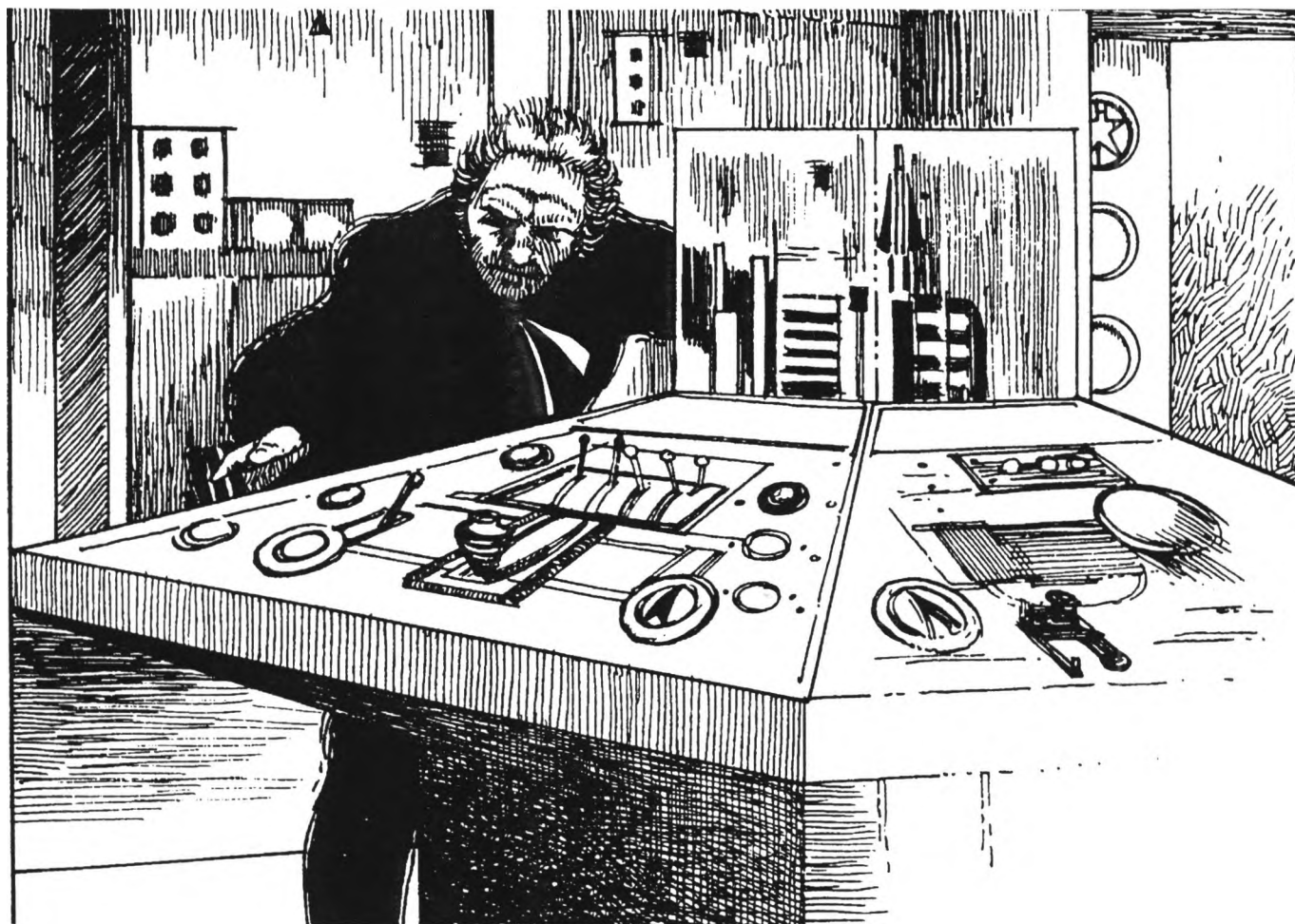
Machines have more accurate memories. We are all hard-pressed to remember a handful of phone numbers. Machines can remember billions of facts accurately and recall them very quickly. So, if we combine the subtlety and richness of human thinking with some of

these advantages of knowledge-sharing, speed, and accuracy of memory, it will be a formidable combination. And the nonbiological forms of intelligence will continue to grow exponentially.

But how are we going to achieve that software of intelligence? All of this speed is just brute force, crunching of information. It's not the subtlety and richness of human intelligence. In my book *The Age of Spiritual Machines* I talk about a number of different scenarios, but I'll just address one, which I think is the most compelling. We have an example of an entity that has human-level intelligence: the human brain. We have several dozen examples in this room. It's not hidden from us.

It's not impossible to access that information. In fact, we are well down that path. We've been scanning the human brain, and, as I mentioned earlier, the speed and resolution of our ability to do that is continuing to accelerate as well. We have the ability today actually to scan the human brain with sufficient resolution and fineness of detail to see every single detail, all the neurotransmitter concentrations, the interneuronal connections, provided that the scanning tip is in close physical proximity to those neural features. So we take that scanning tip and move it around in the brain so that it's near every single interneuronal connection, every neurotransmitter concentration, every detail. How are we going to do that without making a mess of things? We are going to do it in the following way. This is a scenario that we can touch and feel today.

Everything I am going to describe is feasible today, except for cost and size. But those are aspects that we can readily predict because of the ongoing trends of the accelerating price performance of computing and diminishing size or miniaturization. We simply develop what I call little nanobots, nano-robots, the size of blood cells, which are little computers with some robotic and scanning capability, and send them through the bloodstream. By the way, we already have early prototypes



of nanobots, something called smart dust, which is extremely tiny specks that actually have computers in them, scanning devices, communication devices. They can actually fly; they have little wings. So we are already building little tiny devices.

By 2030 we will be able to send billions of these little nanobots through the bloodstream. They will travel through every capillary in the brain and get into close physical proximity to every neural feature and build up a big database of exactly how that human brain is organized. The results will at least be a data dump of the organization of a human brain. What are we going to do with that information? One thing is that we are going to learn how the human brain works and understand how those massively parallel analog algorithms work. That's already underway. We actually already have maps of the early auditory and visual cortex. This speech-recognition, for example, has built into it the transformations that the human brain does on sound information. Without that speech recognition wouldn't work very well. So we are already applying our insights into the human brain from these scanning projects to the design of intelligent software.

Another application of this kind of intelligent software is that we could reinstantiate the whole database into a neural computer of sufficient capacity. That wouldn't necessarily require us to understand all the methods. We would need to understand local brain processes, but not necessarily global brain processes. So if you scan my brain and reinstantiate it into a computer, you'd have a new Ray Kurzweil, and he would claim to have grown up in Queens, New York, and have gone to Massachusetts to go to MIT, and then he met Dr. Jernigan and developed a relationship with the National Federation of the Blind and was involved with reading machines for a few decades. He would say, "I walked into the scanner over there and woke up in the machine here. This technology really works." He will have a memory of having been Ray Kurzweil and will believe that he is Ray Kurzweil.

Of course I'll still be here in my old carbon-cell-based body and brain, and I'll probably end up jealous of the new Ray Kurzweil because he'll be capable of things I could only dream of. Sometimes this scenario is presented as a road to immortality, but there are some philosophical issues that one has to contend with. For example, you could scan my brain while I am sleeping and reinstantiate. I wouldn't even necessarily know about it. If you came to me in the morning and said, "Hey Ray, good news—we've successfully scanned and reinstantiated your brain; we don't need your old carbon-cell-based body and brain anymore," I might discover a flaw in that philosophical perspective.

We could talk for a long time about the philosophical conundrums of what consciousness is and whether these entities are conscious at all. I will say that these entities will certainly seem conscious; they will claim to be human even though they are based on nonbiological thinking processes. They will seem very human, and they will be very intelligent, so they will succeed in convincing us that they are intelligent. We will come to believe them; they will get mad if we don't believe them. Some philosophers will say, no, you cannot be conscious unless you squirt neurotransmitters, or you can't be conscious unless you are based on DNA-guided protein synthesis. Yes, they seem very conscious and they're compelling and they are funny and they get the joke and are emotional and they are very clever, but they don't squirt neurotransmitters, so they aren't conscious. At that point the nonbiological intelligence will crack a joke and will complain about being misunderstood, so we will come to accept that these are conscious entities.

But the more practical scenario we will see is that we will expand our own human intelligence through combining with this nonbiological intelligence. One way we will do this is with these nanobots. Today we have something called neuron transistors. These are little electrical devices, which, if they are in close physical proximity to a neuron, can communicate in both directions with that neuron. They can detect the

firing of a neuron and can also cause that neuron to fire or suppress it from firing. That is two-way communication noninvasively—it doesn't have to stick a wire into the neuron; it just has to be next to it. This technology is being used today. The whole era of neuroimplants has already started. I have a deaf friend who, before he got his cochlear implant, was profoundly deaf. I can now talk to him on the telephone because of his neural implant. There are neural implants for people with Parkinson's Disease—Parkinson's scrambles a certain locus of cells—and this neural implant replaces that neural module with an electronic equivalent and communicates through this type of noninvasive, electronic interface. This was first developed about three years ago. In a dramatic demonstration of the technology, patients with advanced Parkinson's so that they were completely rigid were wheeled into the room. The doctor, who was controlling them noninvasively through wireless radio control—which is a little scary—flipped the switch, and suddenly they came alive. Their Parkinson's symptoms were eliminated as he activated their neural implants.

In my book I talk about an era of neural implants in which we will all use them to expand our thinking capability, not just to reverse diseases such as Parkinson's. People have challenged that, asking how many people are going to want to get a neural implant? Brain surgery is a pretty big step, a pretty formidable obstacle. The response is that we will be able to do this noninvasively. I just wrote a paper called "The Noninvasive, Surgery-Free, Reversible, Programmable, Distributed Neural Implant." It again uses these nanobots.

Remember that already today we have the means for electronic devices to communicate in both directions in the brain, to detect what is going on in the neural biological circuits and also to control them. So these nanobots go through the blood stream and take up positions in millions or billions of different locations; they can basically expand the brain. They can create new interneural connections because they will all be on a wireless area network. They will also all be plugged into the World Wide Web wirelessly, so they can expand all of our biological networks, or memory, learning capability. We will be able to download knowledge and skills. This will really happen. It will be gradually introduced in different ways. But as we go through the twenty-first century, we will be expanding our thinking capability through this intimate connection with nonbiological intelligence.

So let me come back to technology for the blind and just mention what we'll see as a few milestones. The very early part of the twenty-first century, the next several years, will see a rapid evolution of reading machines. They will take on new capabilities. They will sound human. They will translate languages. This is technology that will be introduced very soon. They will also get smaller. I have talked about my vision of hand-held reading machines for many years. We are really very close to having the technical means to have a digital camera that you can hold in the palm of your hand and instantly snap pages with sufficient resolution. We are also close to providing a pocket-sized reading machine that you can hold up to printed information in the real world, not necessarily on paper, like road signs, LTD displays, or other examples of real-world text. If we look out ten to twenty years from now, computers as we know them are essentially going to disappear. They are not going to be in little boxes and palmtops that you can put into your pocket. They are going to become very small and discrete and be built into our clothing and into other little devices that we can carry around on our bodies. This again is all technology that we can touch and feel today. There are already tiny visual sensors the size of pins that provide very high-resolution imaging. In fact, the smart dust that I talked about has visual sensors. Part of the application for that is spying. One version of this is being developed by the U.S. military so that they can just drop millions of these in enemy territory. These tiny little visual sensors will be flying around and sending back reports on what they see.

But we can also apply this type of technology to the visually impaired. We will have the means constantly to interpret that visual information and present it through other modalities such as whispering in your ear or providing tactile information or combinations thereof. There will be plenty of opportunity to develop the most appropriate means of doing that. It's probably something we can't fully describe today. But information can be presented in many different forms. The reading machine is one example of that.

These visual sensors, which will be looking around in all directions, will be interpreting that information and providing a constant stream of information for a visually impaired person. This would include reading. Any kind of printed information could be spoken or translated by using reading machines, but they will also provide other interpretations of the visual world. That's the scenario for 2010 to 2020. These devices will also be plugged into the World Wide Web through wireless communication. Everyone is going to walk around plugged into the World Wide Web at all times. Going to a Web site will mean entering a virtual-reality environment. We'll have the means of communicating with other people through that type of wireless communication at all times. These computing devices will be in and around our bodies and clothing within ten years. That's the scenario for between 2010 and 2020.

As we go out to 2030 and beyond, the type of technology I described, which can be introduced inside our bodies and brains, will become a reality. Like every other type of technology, they won't provide every capability that one could imagine initially, but the technology will continue to evolve. The power of the computing substrate will continue to grow exponentially, so we will have the means of introducing knowledge and information into our brains in a more intimate way. This is a vision for everyone. Ultimately that will mean that we will have many different ways of experiencing the world and expanding our knowledge.

Of course it will be important to develop and design this technology in ways that provide equal access for people with disabilities to overcome the disabilities and overcome the handicaps associated with disabilities. One lesson I have learned is the difference between the words "disability" and "handicap."

Visual impairment, blindness, is a disability, and it may or may not be a handicap, depending on whether that person has the right set of skills and access to the right kind of technology. That's why organizations like the National Federation of the Blind and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind are vital, so that the power of this technology is applied to overcoming those handicaps.

One handicap is the inability to access ordinary print for material that isn't readily available in Braille or Talking Book form. Reading machines have the potential of overcoming that, provided that they are designed in the right way and that people have access to them and that they are affordable and distributed and that people learn how to use them. That's true for all technology.

Overcoming handicaps is not necessarily an issue of technology. Sometimes simple technical solutions such as the fiberglass cane can overcome limitations in travel. But that's a matter of having the right set of skills, and again we need organizations like the NFB to make sure that they are available.

We will have many new tools in the future. These will provide opportunity, but there will also be challenges as we saw with the graphical user interface, which was a new technology that suddenly made visual information from the computer harder to access. With concerted efforts over the past five to ten years, we've made great progress in making GUI information available. But we are going to continue to have those kinds of challenges when new technologies that create new sources of information are introduced. It's important that we keep in mind accessibility and make sure that blind people have access to the information. But I think the technical tools will be there,

provided that we develop them in the right way.

That's really the purpose of this conference, to deal with some of the near-term issues of new technology. That will continue to be the case as we go forward. But I think we will have the tools, provided that we develop them in the right ways to continue the vision that Dr. Jernigan articulated, which I quickly decided back twenty-five years ago was true for all the people I met coming out of the Iowa Commission and from the National Federation of the Blind, but wasn't true for every blind person. Some didn't have the access, the training, and really the attitude that information is available in many different forms and that there is nothing that a blind person is unable to accomplish if there is access to the information and skills. That is the purpose of this conference. Technology has one role to play. I look forward to continuing to work on this. I've been involved with this field for twenty-five years, and I look forward to working with Dr. Maurer and Dr. Herie and other leaders of this field to continue that progress.

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Poems by G.N. Gabbard

Psarcophaggai

(a vision in a dream, after dining upon three quarts of ice cream, of twenty-eight different flavors.)

Endlessly down those eldritch stairs I went
Toward things no gentleman would care to meet,
Shoes squishing half-impalpable cement,
Black panic clutching at my trousers-seat.
I glimpsed a morbid, noisome cabaret,
Above the open door, a sign said HADES.
At some dark jest, two sailors swooned away
and a woman had a baby in the Ladies!

The doorman draped in skulls said "Farther down."
Ghoul-driven in a black-and-white, past swarms
Of tainted bats I sank, through air turned brown.
To earth's last fungoid cellar then I came
And, greeting me with open squamous arms,
Saw all the nameless horrors you could name!

After-dinner Esbat

Regurgitating air, the stomach groans.
Taste of metal, mould; a dead man's. Through
The ruined church (your head), a rendezvous
For imps with rag-and-boney hair-hank crones,
Rush fetid winds, unutterably flown
With phantoms dragging chains, tin cans, old shoes.
Hecate grins, squat by the fire where stews
a black and bubbling pot, ingredients unknown.

Slither of clods! The mustard-yellow ground
emits a sugar-white bishop's
skeleton, complete with shovel hat.
Its empty jaws fall open. All around,
Snakes hiss, the owlet hoots, toad hops
For joy. Witches await with bated bat.

In Memoriam R.E.H.

There was a young man of Hyboria
Whose writings grew gorier and gorier
Till his mother's last pains
Made him blow out his brains:
Sic, sic, sic transit mundi gloria.



THE ORIGIN OF DRAGON BELIEFS

Mark Sunlin

Dragon beliefs occurred in many diverse cultures throughout the world ranging back to prehistoric times. Actual written or artistic records of dragon lore is usually coincident with the earliest surviving profuse written or artistic artifacts of a culture, indicating that the actual origin of dragon beliefs is rooted in prehistory, with surviving dragon records being merely one sample of a culture's earliest extant records.

These dragons were remarkably similar from Chinese artwork thousands of years ago to Scandanavian Viking ships of 1000 years ago with carved dragon-head prows. Physically, dragons were depicted as reptilian or snake-like, with scales and prominently displayed, long tongue, and poisonous or firey breath. Yet they also had mammalian features, such as four fangs (as opposed to the mere two of poisonous snakes), frontal incisor teeth, and grasping, cat-like claws.

Although dragons were believed to have existed as real creatures by a variety of cultures around the world over vast periods of time, the foundation for such beliefs has not been established. However, the wide diffusion of such legends has sometimes been assumed to be result of dragon legends having been passed from culture to culture until they became spread worldwide. But this is unlikely: we should not expect any such legends to be accepted and devoutly retained by one culture merely because they were related by another culture unless there was some strong, undelying, implicit human tendency catalyzing people to believe in such creatures. And with such an underlying tendency, there is no need to evoke migrating dragon legends as the cause of such universal beliefs—it is more plausible to assume that dragon beliefs would have sprung up spontaneously and independently in different parts of the world (as they certainly must have done at one initial starting-point, anyway). In any case, this brings us back to the question of the actual origin of dragon lore.

Searches for the foundations of dragon beliefs have often focused on similar-appearing real creatures or natural phenomena. In China, professor Huang Neng-Fu, of the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, observes that "there are various guesses about the origin of the dragon. Some say that dragons stemmed from the crocodile, the boa, the pig, while some say that it developed from the snail, the silkworm, or the horse. Others feel that lightning and thunder produced the dragon. Actually, none of these hypotheses has any scientific foundation."

Fossil finds of animals ranging from Mammoths to Ice Age cave bears to hominids have also been nominated as the basis for dragon beliefs, such as by Katherine Briggs, former president of the English Folklore Society, who commented that, "it seems as if the model of which they are founded is the fossilized remains of prehistoric monsters." Indeed, such fossils, discovered in Asian and European caves where dragons were believed to have made their lair, were often believed to have been dragon remains in past centuries (even until the 1930s in China). But such fossil bones alone could never have suggested such distinctive dragon features as firey breath, flickering tongue, scales, and so on. Instead, these mysterious bones would only have stimulated and perpetuated *pre-existing* dragon beliefs, since their suggestively draconian appearance triggered in the *believing* mind the pre-existing image of a dragon, much as mysterious flickering

marsh-lights perpetuated, rather than originated, beliefs in elves, ghosts, and UFOs.

The distinctiveness with which dragon features such as serpentine form, scales, firey breath, flickering tongue, and prominent claws occur from European to Asian cultures indicates that these are not casual attributes, but features having deep, trans-cultural meaning. The actual explanation for the origin of dragon beliefs may therefore lie in a closer look at the anatomy and habits of the dragon from a psychological standpoint.

On the other hand, dragons were widely believed and depicted as snake-like (as seen in their serpentine form, scales, and flickering tongue), while on the other hand they also had mammalian, or, specifically, feline features (i.e., four visible fangs and legs with grasping claws). As such, dragons call to mind a composite image of humans' most anciently and instinctively feared predators: poisonous snakes and large felines such as the saber-toothed tiger, lion, and leopard.

Humans have an inherent dread of both snake-like impressions and fanged, clawed images. And for good reason: poisonous snakes and large felines had been the main predatory threat of human and pre-human ancestors for millions of years. Primitive human ancestors were unlikely to survive a learn-by-experience lessons in the dangers presented by such predators, and humans had no language until relatively recently to enable those who did survive such near-death experiences to relate these risks. Even today, in India alone, over 10,000 people are killed every year by poisonous snakes—one every 90 minutes. (Many of them die of *fright* before the poison sets in: "Nearly all deaths that follow the bite within a few minutes are the result of fear-produced shock," says American herpetologist Clifford Pope of the Museum of Natural History.) The death-rate from venomous snake bites would be much higher without verbal warnings, and higher still if humans did not already possess innate, psychological warnings in the form of an inborn fear of snakes. And it would be even higher if humans were hunting small, snake-size prey without such an inborn fear.

For uncounted centuries the death-rate from snake bites must have *been* as the hominid ancestors of modern humans were foraging and hunting through woods and bush in search of an exotic zoology ranging from termites to turtles to elephants where poisonous snakes also lived. These hominids had no language, and were unable to learn of the dangers of snake-venom by experience, since one rarely survived the first encounter. The snakes, however, took care of it for them: By defensively biting and killing those individuals who grabbed them, poisonous snakes inadvertently eliminated individuals who had no fear of their snake-like forms. The hominids who survived did so because they were the ones who looked upon the slithering, tongue-flicking, scaly images of snakes with enough inborn dread to give them a very wide berth. This snake-shunning "serpentophobia" would be passed on to their descendants, who would in turn be better equipped to survive because of it, and they in turn would pass it on to their offspring until it became a pervasive human trait.

The other predatory threat faced by human ancestors was the large felines, such as lions, leopards, and saber-toothed tigers. As hunters themselves, prehistoric humans had to be able to distinguish their threatening predators from similar-sized prey animals at a safe distance, and so had at least as much selective pressure as other prey animals to be able to distinguish such felines as a threat. Those who fearfully heeded the tell-tale danger-signals of claw and fangs (which were visibly displayed at all times in the saber-toothed tiger, and upon frequent stretching and yawning—and of course in threatening postures—among other felines) were more likely to survive to pass their fearfulness on to future generations.

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TOPIX

(excerpts from letters arranged by subject)

DO YOU KIPPLE?

MIKE ASHLEY

How excellent to have a Focus on Kipling. I'm not so sure I'd go so far as to credit him with being the true father of science fiction. Perhaps an uncle—I was going to say a friendly uncle, but in fact he would have been somewhat strange and daunting, but all the more fascinating for that. Fred Lerner makes a most odd statement by asking where do we see the influence of Wells and others on SF today, and if their books vanished from the shelves would the SF of the future be any poorer. If he believes it wouldn't, how would he prove that? The influence of Wells, in particular, has been incalculable on SF (certainly less so for Poe and Shelley, where the influence was more on the horror field), and I cannot believe that his works do not continue to enthrall and influence fledgling writers. You might equally argue what influence Heinlein will have on future SF. It's difficult to see what influence Kipling had directly on SF, whereas I can wholly support the argument that he has been a strong influence on writing and storytelling. Anne's arguments in "The Kipling Legacy" are most fascinating, especially the idea of "An Habitation Enforced" as a First Contact story. I hadn't looked at it like that, but I can see the logic.

It seems that after years in the wilderness Kipling is at last coming back into fashion, though I don't know how much of that is linked to him having come out of copyright.

JOHN BAXTER

I wish I could say I liked Kipling, but he is so tarred with the brush of Empire that, as an Australian raised under the Imperial Yoke, I can't think about his work except as a sort of propaganda. He worked his way into the grain of my childhood rather the way Norman Rockwell did for Americans. "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din" was a catchphrase of my father's generation, and we grew up with "If" and terms like "White Man's Burden" as common parlance.

One of my favourite books does have a Kipling title, however. Does anyone read *The Road to En-Dor* these days? It's a true-life account written in 1919 by E.H. Jones of how he and an Australian almost bluffed their way out of a Turkish prison camp by convincing the guards the place was haunted. They built a ouija board and developed a mentalist word code which had even the commandant digging in a local graveyard for imaginary buried gold. The idea was to take surreptitious photographs of them doing so with a camera made from a cheese box, then blackmail them. It all ended very oddly.

A producer in Australia commissioned me to do a screenplay from the book years ago, but like most screenplays it never saw the light of day. It took forever to find out where the title came from, since Jones doesn't mention Kipling's poem, based on his own scepticism about spiritism. After that, I just had to get it into the story somewhere, so I made the head of the British contingent a Kipling fan and had him quote it.

Interestingly, Spielberg has probably been influenced more by Kipling than any director

working today. The Spencer Tracy movie of *Captains Courageous*—he hasn't read the book, as far as I can discover; he doesn't read much—inspired many of his movies. He cited it to Tom Stoppard when they were writing *Empire of the Sun*, and the surrogate father figures in films like *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* spring from the same model. The opening of the same film on a giant gong is also copied from George Stevens's film of *Gunga Din*. Maybe the Kipling spirit is entering the popular consciousness by a route Fred Lerner never thought of.

[from a later letter]

I'm sorry the Kipling references were confusing. "If" is the title of what I've always supposed to be Kipling's most famous poem: certainly the mostly widely read aloud, unfortunately. This is the one that begins,

"If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you..."
and ends:

"If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run
Yours is the earth and everything that's in it
And—what is more—you'll be a man, my son!"

Awful tosh, really, but it has a certain stirring certainty.

The book I mentioned that I adapted for a film, *The Road to En-Dor*, took its title from Kipling's poem "En-Dor", which is in itself a reference (are you following this? there will be a test afterwards) to Saul in the Bible who was nervous about a battle with the Philistines and asked his people if they knew someone who told fortunes.

"And his servants said to him, 'Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor' ". And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night."
(1 Samuel 28. 7) I liked this so much I put it in as a voice-over as the camera craned down to the building when the prisoners were huddled round the ouija board. I should have made it a space ship, and the thing might have got made.

Anyway, when Kipling's sister Trix became involved, unhappily, with spiritualists after her son died in 1915, he wrote "The Road to En-Dor," which is an attack on fake mediums.

"Oh, the road to En-dor is the oldest road
And the craziest road of all!
Straight it runs to the Witch's abode
As it did in the days of Saul,
And nothing has changed of the sorrow in
store

For such as go down on the road to En-dor."

The other Kipling references are clearer, I hope. "The white man's burden" is both the title and most of the first line of perhaps Kipling's most incendiary poem, with its reference to "Your new-caught, sullen peoples/Half-devil and half-child." And "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din" is the ending of the poem about the Indian water-carrier who saves the lives of his English soldier masters, and gets shot for his pains.

Actually, I wonder if one of your Kipling fanatics can track down a line that has been irritating me for decades. In, I think, an *Amazing* of the 'seventies, Poul Anderson had a story called "No Truce With Kings." The epigraph is the verse of a poem which contains the title phrase and which sounds like Kipling, but I've never

rediscovered the story or the poem. Any ideas?

Of course it could be someone like Henry Newbolt, who was the acceptable face of imperial verse when I was a kid, Kipling being thought a bit common. We had Newbolt's "Vitae Lampada" drummed into us ad nauseam. This was a poem that developed the remark of the Duke of Wellington (subsequently denied, by the way) that "The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton." It compares a game of cricket to a battle in the desert. I know the whole thing by heart, while I still have to look up Shakespeare's sonnets. A sad commentary on the Australian educational system.

RUTH BERMAN

One author I don't think got mentioned as an example of Kipling's influence on modern fantasy, and who really should be, is Salman Rushdie. In *Midnight's Children* and the children's book, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, especially, Kipling's influence is visible, and the first reacting to Kipling's stories about "exotic" India (but for Rushdie it is not the exoticism of India's many cultural groups as seen by the English, but the exoticism of the groups as seen by one another), and the second sort of modern "Just So" story explaining how stories get created. He tends to get commented on nowadays only in terms of the horrendous evil of those who are trying to kill him for writing *Satanic Verses*, but it should also be remembered that he is a magnificent writer. (And a fantasy writer, most of the time.)

JOHN BRUNNER

I am greatly obliged by the notice of my RK collections. Anne, you're quite right about my intentions being to impress new readers; this is one of the reasons why I didn't include "The Phantom Rickshaw," it being almost the only one of his fantasies that's been widely anthologised. I ought to announce (before someone else does) a mistake in the notes to ".007." My father was a keen model-maker, especially of steam locos and boats—at one time I had an O-gauge steam train running around my bedroom, using the bed for a tunnel, which fired its boiler with methylated spirit—and it was from him that I gained the impression that a naphtha launch was steam powered. It wasn't. It was driven by an internal-combustion engine based on those using town gas (from coal; I think you say illuminating gas). If I get the chance I'll publish a corrigenda list in due course. By the way, the launch was almost certainly built by the Gas Engine & Power Co of New York to the design of F.W. Ofeldt—he discovers belatedly and by chance.

Thanks for the information concerning granger. None of my dictionaries glosses the term in that way. As to Taffy: well, the guy's Welshness didn't strike me as essential to understanding the story. I tried to confine myself to generally necessary data. (Another instance: I didn't define Fastnet in *With the Night Mail* because it's clear from the context and doesn't relate to the course they are following). But I am especially proud of one thing. I doubt there are many people in this country who, needing to explain "In the Days of Old Ramses," could have given an exact page reference for it, tune included, from his/her own library...

By the way, I find "The Mark of the Beast" repugnant. Heating those gun-barrels...?

DAVID A. DRAKE

I can't think of much to say about the review of Sandra and my Kipling anthologies, save that amateur reviewers are so apt to blame authors, in this case editors, for cover copy as amateur writers are to ask authors where they get their ideas. [And editors seem quite unable to tell when reviewers are making a joke about the cover copy.—AJB]

THOMAS M. EGAN

His *Jungle Book* is still a better interpretation of India and its strange spirit of nature gods and demons than many professional sociological studies (but try Alberuni's *India of Eleventh Century A.D.*, Norton Paperbacks). *Kim*, the poem "Gunga Din," the grand short stories of curses and strange karmic fates. Kipling was a man who defended his country's empire, "The White Man's Burden", and the strange link of Freemasonry to his life ("The Man Who Would Be King"?). Yet he believed there was more to History than "East is east and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." His stories ultimately show it, while keeping the mystery of human cultural identities alive as the paths of the human soul.

By the way, could you connect Freemasonry with conspiracy and the occult (e.g., Mozart's *Magic Flute* to the Illuminati concept of Peter Anson Wilson to the Masonic emblems on our US dollar bills)? I believe Freemasonry is part of the secret history of the west since the French Revolution. (The first "third party" movement in the USA in the 1830s was an anti-Freemasonry party!) Or that Masonry is part and parcel of the Gnostic tradition.

GRACE FUNK

Kipling has long been one of my favorite authors. At one time I could quote most of *Kim* by heart.

TEDDY HARVIA

Your arguments fail to convince me that Rudyard Kipling is the father of science fiction. The presumption that a single individual had a dominating influence belittles the diversity and complexity of the genre.

BEN INDICK

I appreciate the Kipling section, an author ignored by the SF genre and by literature itself because he is perceived as being a jingoist racist. Fans who have never seen his "With the Night Mail" in its original printing have missed an extraordinary and beautiful book.

MARGARET LAMBERT

I've loved Rudyard Kipling for so many years—got hooked on *Just So Stories* and *Kim*, then *Puck of Pook's Hill*, *Rewards and Fairies* and the *Jungle Book*, and then I read everything else of his I could find. I did have a big clean-out years ago and most of my Kipling went, but I've replaced quite a few of them again. These days I try to sublimate such urges to clean out by digging a big hole in the garden instead.

ETHEL LINDSAY

The Kipling portion will send me back to his work, just as soon as I have time. One writer

who is obviously an admirer of Kipling is the mystery writer, Anthony Price. Apart from often quoting Kipling he has his major character base his life on Kipling's ethos.



DAVID PALTER

Anne Braude states that he cannot be proven to be a racist, even though he did consider the white race to be superior, and other races to be child-like at best. Kipling is redeemed by the fact that some of his most noble characters belong to these non-white races. In fact, that does not exculpate him from the charge of racism. The belief that non-white races are still capable of nobility, provided that they remain properly subservient to their natural master, the white Anglo-Saxon race, is itself a racist view. Admittedly, as racists go, one could do a lot worse than Kipling. Certainly he did not advocate murder or slavery on racial grounds, as others have. But anything short of full equality is still racism.

Despite my my moral qualms about Kipling, it is clear that he was a great writer and very major influence on the evolution of the SF genre, as you have so clearly demonstrated in this series of articles. I would not go quite as far as Fred Lerner, who calls Kipling the greatest influence on SF that there is (I'd still choose H.G. Wells for that position) but clearly he is of prime importance to the field. [The non-white protagonists of the stories I cited are by no means subservient to whites and are shown as more capable of love, courage, and sacrifice than the WASPs they contend with. Do you consider the Bosnian Serbs, for example, your moral equals, David?—AJB]

ROGER WADDINGTON

Your feature on Kipling leaves me in some awe and ignorance of the knowledge and

scholarship shown here; mine has always been an acquaintance with the author, chance encounters rather than a full-blown expertise. As one of my father's favorite quotes had it, "When the Rudyard cease from Kipling, and the Haggards ride no more;" and must admit, that the *She* and the film version of *King Solomon's Mines*, have always tended to prefer the latter. Though there was one childhood Christmas with the present of *The Jungle Book*; and I've lately come back to re-read *Puck of Pook's Hill* with a deeper appreciation than that given at school. Also in his later life, I've been able to add John Huston's *The Man Who Would Be King* to the list of my all time favorites: I don't know how Kipling purists would regard it—a travesty? An insult?—but from my untutored view, a marvelous adaption.

Also to his credit, there is also what must have been one of the most emotive hymns ever (for a Brit) to be sung at school assembly, with Kipling's words set to music; as the first verse goes,

Land of our birth, we pledge to thee
Our love and toil through the years to be;
When we are grown, and take our place
As men and women of our race.

So I can concur that he made exceedingly good songs.

Which is the only place I myself might be able to shed some light, i.e. on the title of that Peter Bellamy tape; as with the example in Anne Braude's review of the Brunner-edited anthologies, it's another trans-Atlanticism that might not have survived the journey. There is a cake manufacturer over here who's producing one of their lines under the title of Mr. Kipling's Cakes, the name intended to give a quintessential image of England. The TV adverts are equally so, and each ends with the words, "Mr. Kipling does make exceedingly good cakes!" Oh, he just might be revolving in his grave; more likely, he's chuckling over it in writers' heaven.

MIKE WHALEN

When I got to the salute to Rudyard Kipling I think my mind froze up. Unfortunately, most of this missed me entirely. Though I did read every article. I just hadn't heard about him before (talk about unenlightened, eh?) but at least I can still look him up. Making a quick check here at the Dodge City Public Library, I find that they have several titles. Now if I wind up becoming a resident of Kansas, I'll get a library card and start checking out some of his books to see what all the furor is about. Then the articles will start to make some sense.

WALTER A. WILLIS

The "Focus on Kipling" was readable and contained much of value, but nothing to convince me that Kipling really wrote anything that I would categorise as science fiction.

FUNNY STUFF

JOHN BRUNNER

In passing: funny SF? (p. 77)
The funniest I recall is Chester Anderson's *The Butterfly Kid*, too often overlooked, I suspect because he wasn't a "regular" SF author. And doesn't anyone read Brunner any more? Terry

Pratchett wrote to assure me that *Muddle Earth* made him laugh, so I feel it deserves a mention, at least....

BUCK COULSON

I think the books by Gene DeWeese and myself were funny, though probably the first "Man From UNCLE" book we did was the funniest. And also science fiction—we had a more or less scientific explanation for our invisible dirigible.

A lot of de Camp is humorous; both his science fiction and fantasy. Avram Davidson wrote humorous science fiction and fantasy both. Kim Newman's *The Night Mayor* is a hysterically funny cybernetic novel. And of course A.E. van Vogt's *The Secret Galactics* is one of the funniest books I've ever read, though not intentionally so. (In the matter of unintentional humor, there's the book done by John Coleman Burroughs, *Treasure of the Black Falcon*, which is theoretically science fiction.) Nearly all of Eric Frank Russell's science fiction output is humorous (and very good, if one can find it.)

ROGER WADDINGTON

I can perhaps claim to be an expert on humor in SF and fantasy; though always with the proviso, as they say in France, that one man's poison. (Which maybe shows my level of humor.) In fact as far as fantasy goes, for anything longer than short-story length and outside the magazines, I tend to avoid anything that isn't humorous, or that needs to be taken seriously. If there isn't the latest Holt or Pratchett in the local library, I'll cheerfully pass by the Eddings and the Jordans, the Kerrs and the Coopers, and find my reading elsewhere with never a thought of what I might be missing. To use Nan Scott's useful phrase, I am fantasy-impaired; for which *Lord of the Rings* must take all the blame. It was coming across at first, at a young and impressionable age, with the result that everything I read later in the way of swords-and-sorcery has seemed the merest hack-work (to coin a phrase).

But for humour (or humor) that's specifically SFional; you mention Harry Harrison's *Star Smashers of the Galaxy Rangers*, but what about the original *Bill, The Galactic Hero*? The later series of sequels farmed out to various authors has its moments; but the original was joy unconfined. And there's also his *Technicolor Time Machine*, isn't there? And I fully expect that others will mention Eric Frank Russell; I've got *The Great Explosion* in my collection in hardback immortality, with a permanent look-out manned for his other titles. Murray Leinster had his moments as well; I am particularly fond of *The Pirates of Zan* (and can still remember its original appearance as a serial in *Astounding* with the cover depicting a buccaneer boarding a ship with a slide-rule clenched between his teeth, instead of a cutlass).

[The illo was used as the logo of the Baltimore in 98 bid. ERM]

I suppose the supreme comic-smith of *Astounding*/*Analog* was Christopher Anvil, as mentioned elsewhere; though either his humor didn't travel or it wasn't commercially viable, as I can only remember one story that made it into paperback.

Though the great problem with all of these, as you might point out, is being able to find them on the shelves.

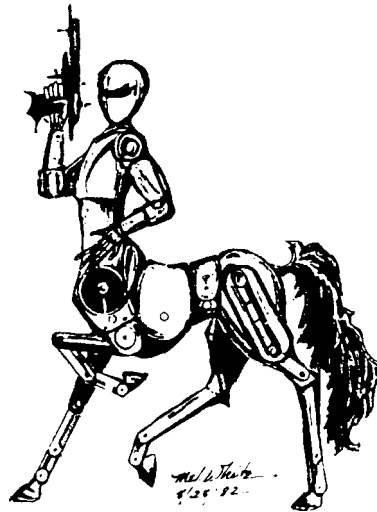
Sam

MIKE ASHLEY

Sam's review of EFB's *SF: The Early Years* and RB's *Index to Adventure* are fascinating articles in themselves. I have both these volumes and can attest to their painstaking thoroughness. When SaM makes corrections in his reviews, I always wish he'd get his data out into print himself quicker. He has had the *Weird Tales* payment records for years, but apart from the article he did for the 1983 World Fantasy Convention booklet on the most popular stories in WT he's written nothing else extensive on the magazine, yet he must have enough data to do an entire book, and I think I'd rather he was writing things like that than an 80,000 word "Return of Hugo Gernsback" or even the 6,000 word "Derleth's Lament to Love." albeit I don't doubt that those will be as absorbing and interesting as all of his work.

ED O'BRIEN

I was glad to see the column by Sam Moskowitz and the letters concerning him. Sam



and I and Bob Price, editor of *Crypt*, went up to the Lovecraft con in Providence in 1990. While there he lent me funds so I could stay the last two nights at a hotel, and he hardly knew me then. One of your LoCs states that Sam's writing style is ponderous. I disagree. I find it clear and easy to read.

MIKE WHALEN

I tend to get fascinated by old publications. I like newspapers, books, and booklets of all types and flavors. I am a student of layout artistry, so the old methods really grab my attention, and reading old published is a lot of fun, too. I read Sam Moskowitz' "What Is Past" column with great interest. Many of the publications discussed in those reference works are ones that I've never seen...and would like to. It sounds like both of the books that SaM reviewed are well worth the price put on them, especially if they give some plot synopses. They seem like something I would like to sit down with for a few days and peruse. I did wonder, though, where there were any pictures of the older covers? Sometimes you would find comic price guides, and I always thought it was a neat visual aid.

WALTER A. WILLIS

The real meat of this issue is Sam Moskowitz's review of the Bleiler opus...scholarly, restrained but devastating, it is a model of what such reviews should be.

NOTE: See also editor's comments in "Bumbejimas" and Ben Indick's column.

HORRORS!

NED BROOKS

Enjoyed the zine, though I already told Lerner that I don't quite follow his reasoning in trying to exclude "horror" from the SF-fantasy genre, because the distinction between 'horror' and 'weird fantasy' is too subtle to be useful. Take Kornbluth's *Words of Guru*—whether this is horror or weird fantasy depends on the age and personality of the reader, or perhaps even on what he had for breakfast. I remember when Fred was horrified (hee hee!) at the existence of a sub-genre called "young adult horror", but just as the Golden Age of Science Fiction is 12, these have always been the years when people become fascinated with Frightful Tales. I have wondered if the recent rash of shootings by children were not related to the popularity of movies where the frightfulness is set in a local mall or city street rather than in Oz or Atlantis.

JOE R. CHRISTOPHER

I have been meaning to write since the Dark Fantasy issue of NIEKAS came out and say "Thank you" for turning the editorial reins over to me. Admittedly, I got overly enthusiastic and a large issue was the result. But I, at least, am happy with the result.

I want to thank the various contributors. It was fun working with them. They were patient with the delays, and I hope they are satisfied with the results. The artists were largely your doing, but let me thank at least the artists who illustrated my pieces: Jim Reynolds, who did the heading for "Welcome to Our Chamber of Horrors" (with NIEKAS as a bait for the unwary reader), whoever did the one for the interview of Darrell Schweitzer (no initials on the art that I can find) (who picked up Darrell's phrase about the issues of *Weird Tales* he has edited going into his death-boat), Marge Simon for the heading for "A Gothic and Dark Fantasy Checklist" (if monsters read fantasy do they consider it realism?), and especially for Teddy Harvia for the four drawings to illustrate my play (which take the southwestern setting one step further!). I'm happy you were able to get Nancy-Lou Patterson to illustrate her own essay.

I only noticed one misprint in any of my pieces that might cause confusion. In my introduction—"Welcome"—in writing about Nancy-Lou Patterson, I said that her first book of fiction was an imitation *Marchen* (that is, a work in the tradition of the Brothers Grimm); that came out "an imitation Machen." Well, Arthur Machen is important in the fantasy field, and I can see how the mistake happened. I am sorry that I was busy being program chairman of a Mythcon when the proofing had to be done, and I think those doing the job managed very well despite my vanishing

on them. I will let the other contributors make any corrections they think necessary.

Again, thank you, Anne, Todd, Jim, and the rest of the crew, and all the contributors and artists, for supporting my Dark Fantasy interests.

What fun! What sinister fun . . .

BUCK COULSON

I disagree with Marion about *Dracula*. I read the book with more or less interest until I reached the part where the good doctor is pumping blood into the woman, not the heroine as I recall, but my recollection isn't too good, every morning, and *Dracula* is sucking it out every night. It kept going on and on. I decided it would be much simpler to cut out the middle woman, put the book down, and never opened it again. And never will. A classic it may be. Dull it certainly is. At half the length or a bit more than the various movies cover it might well be interesting. At full length it is boring.

Of course I'm not much of a fan of horror fiction. Perhaps trying to read *Dracula* soured me on the whole genre. Funny parodies of horror fiction are something else again. I agree pretty fully with Anne Braude on Florence Stevenson. Juanita and I have six books in the Kitty Tully Fair(?) series: *The Witching Hour*, *Where Satan Dwells*, *Altar of Evil*, *Mistress of Devil's Manor*, *The Sorcerer of the Castle*, and *The Silent Watcher*. There may be more, but we've kept our eyes out for Stevenson books ever since we read one. *Curse of the Concullans* and *Ophelia* are better than any of Kitty, but they're all enjoyable. They're also filed with the general fantasy collection, not with the romances-westerns-history. Bob Briney might know of more. He was also a Stevenson fan.

We haven't read a lot of the authors mentioned. I got out of the habit of buying books of fantasy and sf when I was getting more free for review than I could read. And the influx continues, having decreased only to the point where I can now get in more of the history volumes that I purchased or were gifts. Going out and buying a book for myself has become a foreign idea, at least as far as fantasy is concerned. While I'm now receiving fewer books from publishers, I still have stacks of sf and history to read.

E.B. FROHNET

I will dutifully refrain from quibbling with Darrell Schweitzer over the definition of horror and dark fantasy, knowing that no one can propose a definition to which someone cannot cite an exception. I agree that Schweitzer's own *The Shattered Goddess* is dark fantasy and Gene Wolfe's *Book of the New Sun* is SF, even though the four volumes of the latter were published, at least in the pocket paperback edition, as "science fantasy," "fantasy," "sf," and "sf" respectively.

I found Nancy Lou Patterson's "Death by Landscape" a thoughtful discussion of use of setting as evocation in fantasy/horror, though her system of footnoting dating is not especially logical and seems confusing in places.

Your article on the ecology of vampires proves interesting also, though I was somewhat surprised that no mention was made of Jacqueline Lichtenberg's Sime/Gen universe, arguably SF but with definite horror overtones. In the Sime/Gen system the problem is called "Zelerod's Doom" after the mathematician who proposed it, in short,

a parasitic economy is not viable over the long haul.

Joe Christopher quotes Tamar Lindsay as saying that the only good thing about icy Maryland winters is that one can't shovel ice, so one doesn't have to. I am forced to disagree with that statement on all three counts.

I am not unsympathetic to Katherine Wilderding's revisionist take on *Frankenstein*. I merely wonder if she has considered the possibility that Mary Shelly's modest self-deprecating introduction, in particular, may be less a feminist disguise and more of a fair self-assessment, since everything else that Mary Shelly wrote beyond *Frankenstein* was derivative hackwork. I hastily deny any sexist attribution here. H.G. Wells is remembered now chiefly from the SF novels of his youth. That he wrote thirty or more later mainstream books, now forgotten and out of print, could also be fairly called derivative hackwork.

NOLA FRAME GRAY

I really got a thrill out of your all supernatural issue of NIEKAS. My favorite hits are about *Dracula*—the book (guess that old Van Helsing is an earthier, more down-to-earth fellow than he is depicted in the movies) and the side bar about one of my favorite movies, SILENCE OF THE LAMBS. Loved the analogies which the writer came up with, though the parallel between Clarice Sterling's lambs on the farm and the Christ/sacrificial lamb went right over my head. I guess the fact that I am not a good Christian may have something to do with this.

What really floored me was the highly complex mental hoops the fan writer went through to explain the end of the movie, comparing it with post-feminism. I am referring to the (surprise) phone call Clarice receives from Hannibal Lecter near the conclusion of her FBI graduation ceremony. (Good point about how Lecter must have researched Clarice's life meticulously to have called at such an opportune moment.)

Me, I just assumed that the reason why the screen-writer had Lecter call when he did was so that Clarice would not become too proud of her success with the "Buffalo Bill" murders—pride goeth before a fall and all that. Thus, Lecter and Clarice's knowledge that he is free to run around on the island would help Clarice in the long run, make her a better agent because Lecter was "one of the ones who got away."

BEN INDICK

I am amazed! It hardly looks like it was so long a-borning. It seems fresh. The articles are literate and on good subjects. Congratulations to you and special kudos to Joe Christopher whose careful work was obviously not for nothing.

I do not mind the emphasis on the title NIEKAS. After all, Dark Fantasy is a defining label but scarcely anything new, whereas NIEKAS makes it stand out. [I had written Ben that I had intended NIEKAS to be a small logo on the upper left, like a book publisher's imprint, so I could market it as a trade paperback, but the cover artist had misunderstood me and nobody mentioned the large logo to me until after it was printed and some copies bound.—ERM] Believe me, it is attractive. Bob Knox and all the other artists have done nobly for the magazine.

RODNEY LEIGHTON

I do enjoy Horror, or some types...the psychological stuff is my preference. I found the long list by Joe Christopher and friends to be intriguing...*Wuthering Heights*???...as much for what was missing as what was there. I am currently a big fan of John Saul and also Koontz.

What is what genre has always been somewhat confusing to me. Many stories contain many elements of different styles. As you may know, I am not a fan of science fiction. Some say SF used to be part of Fantasy; some say Fantasy is part of SF. I recently read a quote by George Laskowski, in which he mentioned one of his students said that she liked science fiction, but not the spaceship kind, just the dragon kind.

[Originally SF was considered to be a branch of fantasy, hence early fanzine titles like *Fantasy Times* and *Fantasy Commentator*. In the '50s SaMoskowitz wrote for a major dictionary (New World?) a definition of SF which ran something like, "that branch of fantasy which aids the willing suspension of disbelief by using scientific or pseudo-scientific explanations." Today in popular usage the reverse is true. Even around 1960 Judy Merril said that in the popular mind all these, SF, fantasy, horror, fairy tales, etc., were all considered parts of "ess-eff"...or in today's usage, skiffy. Then there are stories by McCaffrey and Bradley which are technically SF but when read taste like fantasy. I refer to Pern and Darkover. ERM]

DAVID PALTER

It will be a tremendously valuable reference work for students of dark fantasy. As for myself, my concerns are not that scholarly. However, a number of features did entertain me, particularly Joe Christopher's witty play.

Although S.T. Joshi is impressed by the sense of horror created in the passage he cites from *The Killing Bottle* by Hartley I am more impressed by Hartley's ignorance of insect physiology. The passage describes a butterfly making an effort to suck in a breath of living air which no butterfly can do. Butterflies do not have lungs. They have spiracles which admit air but do not suck it in.

John Boardman makes a valid point about persistence in the SF and fantasy genres of an outmoded model of stellar evolution in which we see the earth in the far future growing cold as the sun's fuel is exhausted and the sun slowly gutters out like an exhausted bonfire. But in fact the sun first expands to a red giant and in doing so incinerates the earth before it shrinks into a white dwarf. However John's description of why the sun can be expected to do this is wrong. He states that as fuel runs out the sun cools and the cooling causes it to expand, and the expansion gives the sun a greater surface area which causes greater heat radiation and thus the destruction of earth.

The reality is much more complicated. In fact, you, Ed, probably know more than I do about physics and could give a better description of stellar evolution than I could, but let me give it a try.

As the sun's hydrogen fuses into helium the sun's core becomes more dense (helium is denser than hydrogen) and the concentration of mass in the core causes the gravitational field to become more intense. The core therefore contracts.

This compression increases the temperature and pressure in the core which in turn causes the remaining supply of hydrogen to fuse more rapidly and makes possible other nuclear reactions as well. This produces even more pressure which can then overcome the more intense gravitational field and causes the star to expand. Once it has expanded the expansion causes the star to cool thus becoming more reddish in color. But the expansion is caused by heating, not, as John asserts, by cooling. Cooling is the result, not the cause. And of course once the sun has cooled sufficiently the nuclear reactions fall off, the internal pressure declines, and the sun contracts again. This is a somewhat simplified description but basically the correct one. I know this is going out on a tangent from the subject of dark fantasy but still the correction is necessary.

There is one important aspect of dark fantasy or horror fiction which is not adequately discussed or appreciated in this issue. More often than not the author's objective is not actually to inspire horror or fear in the reader but rather to use horror as a device to put the characters under very abnormal pressures in order to elicit interesting and revealing responses which are different from the behavior of characters in more normal situations. In particular, Stephen King, the foremost practitioner of the genre, is primarily engaged in an observation and critique of contemporary America. Horror is a sort of psychological dissecting instrument which peels back any mental defences and reveals hidden layers of the mind. Merely to horrify the reader is not a very satisfying accomplishment. Lovecraft was much more concerned with horror for the sake of horror than King has been. But even he had other concerns. Historically Lovecraft's greatest contribution to SF was to break the habit of anthropomorphism. He impressed upon the genre the fact that aliens are likely to be truly alien, not just funny looking people. Ultimately every great writer of horror fiction is not remembered for how horrifying they were but for other literary objectives which they accomplished by way of horror. That's what horror is really about. Actually I think that Darrell Schweitzer understands the point but Fred Lerner and J. Jordan Cannady, both of whom seem to be rather unhappy with the horror genre, seem to have missed it. Horror is, in fact, a very rich and productive genre, while Sturgeon's law does apply. People who particularly dislike dark fantasy probably have read the wrong books.

KARL ROULSTON

I was delighted to receive the issues of NIEKAS. Though not a graphic artist myself, I've crossed paths with several of the contributing illustrators. As editor of *Starline*, Marge Simon published one or two of my prose-poems a while back. Marge was always very encouraging and supportive, so I'm ashamed to say that I've lost touch with her in recent years. I've also had pieces in *Midnight Zoo*, *Blue Light/Red Light*, and other small literary and "speculative fiction" magazines. For the past two years, I've been taxed to the limit making my first—and I hope not last—film, *CREATURE OF THE MIST*, now in post-production. After reading your essay on the Horror genre, I hesitate to mention that this is a monster movie. I say "is", but I think that until a film is edited and seen by an audience, it neither is nor isn't, something like the famous cat in the quantum thought experiment.

As for conventions, I only recently have attended any. Several months ago, I was doing advance promotion for my movie at the "Chiller Theater Expo", where I finally met Forrest J. Ackerman.

Let me say that I find NIEKAS very stimulating. I especially appreciate the articles by Sam Moskowitz, since my favorite SF is the old stuff—from the Nineteenth Century up to the Thirties and Forties. I've always been a die-hard antiquarian.

[from a later letter]

I have to admit, some of the B movies of the '50s hold a special place in my heart. They were what they were, whereas it seems to me that many of today's Horror and SF movies have B movie scripts, but with big stars and huge budgets. It's very seldom that something really fresh and challenging comes along, but this is true of movies in general.

This, by the way, is not to claim that my little film is going to turn a page of History. Inspired by Celtic folklore, it deals with a lake monster which assumes the form of a beautiful woman to lure its victims and feed on their psychic energies, a sort of mental succubus. I have no killing or blood of any sort in the story, so I'm counting on the weirdly erotic flavor of the piece to sell it. (The pressure to make back the money spent on a film is enormous, even on this level.)

By the way, I agree with you—most Horror isn't terribly scary. The key to its fascination must lie elsewhere. I'm reminded of a boyhood friend of mine who was obsessed with the Marx Brothers, memorized their dialogue and knew every detail of their work inside and out—but never laughed at them. I always felt they were teaching him something, some special kind of absurd wisdom on which he thrived.

Both Horror and SF present alternatives to the everyday world we know, and maybe it's this glimpse of expanded possibilities that attracts us.

NAN SCOTT

I have long adored Shirley Jackson, liked lots of Peter Straub, Stephen King. John Bellairs is an especial favorite of the nine-year-old grandson I am raising.

MILT STEVENS

I have picked up copies of other special issues of NIEKAS as I've encountered them in the

fanzine lounges at worldcons. It did seem to me that NIEKAS had evolved beyond being a fanzine although not into being a semi-prozine. NIEKAS seemed like an anthology series and a quite good one. It didn't seem as if NIEKAS should still be available for the usual, although I notice you say it is. Since I entered the ranks of the semi-retired last year, I've become fairly active at letterhacking again. So I would probably have written a letter even if NIEKAS weren't available for the usual.

My exposure to dark fantasy is quite limited. I read all of the *Avon Fantasy Readers* a long time ago. It was a good magazine and included much of what would be considered classic short horror fiction. Aside from that, my reading of dark fantasy has been limited to whatever may have appeared in *F&SF* or in general anthologies. Like Fred Lerner, I've never really been a fan of horror fiction. As part of my career as a crime analyst, I've seen presentations at crime analysis conferences concerning crimes which involved cannibalism, drinking of human blood, satanic rites, and necrophilia. None of these presentations encouraged me to include these topics in my recreational reading. Truth to tell, I'm not much of a market for crime fiction either.

What I consider to be the best short horror story I've ever encountered was left out of Don D'Amassa's list of best short horror stories. That would be "A Rose For Emily" by William Faulkner. The story hit me as something that could actually happen. That makes it a whole bunch more unsettling than a whole regiment of the usual shambling horrors.

Before reading "Death By Landscape" by Nancy-Lou Patterson, I never thought much about ghost stories usually occurring in large remote houses. I figured zoning regulations didn't allow ghosts to conduct business in multi-unit structures and most R-1 neighborhoods. This pretty much restricts them to remote dwellings whether large or small. Their prime business season also seems to be during times which produce cold and dreary weather. This is sort of unfair when you think about it. Zombies get to run amok all over the Caribbean while poor old ghosts have to stick it out where it's cold and lonely. Definitely discriminatory.

Thinking about weather and horror led me to thinking about spaceships as a venue for horror stories. Space doesn't have any weather or seasons, but absolute nothingness can be pretty scary in its fashion. I don't know whether anyone has ever set a ghost story on board a spaceship, but they have been used as the locale for an entire sub-genre of claustrophobic horror stories.

My memory of *I Am Legend* is hazy at best, but I seem to recall that the mutants were not true vampires. They were simply light-sensitive and couldn't go out in daylight. That made normal humans a menace to them, and they were trying to eliminate the last menace.

Ben Indick did something I don't think I would want to do. He watched the movie *FREAKS*. I have always heard of *FREAKS* as the horror movie that went TOO FAR. Even after reading his description, I still don't think I would care to watch it.

Continued on Page 63



REVIEW & COMMENT

Editor's note: I, like some other people, do not read books as they come out, but when I come across them and have time to read them. Today almost any book, in print or out, can be found with the help of the Internet. Many, many used book dealers list the contents of their stores on web sites like Bibliofind. When I wanted to get a copy of Robert Bloch's Lefty Feep collection Sandy checked and found several copies at widely varying prices and state of repair. Browsing the Amazon.com and Eastbay auction sites I have made impulse decisions to go after a book I had not even known existed. The comments here are on books of widely varying age, and some are classics. Therefore I feel these discussions of largely old titles are still worth publishing and reading. ERM



Review by W. Richie Benedict:

Ash Ock (the Paratwa Saga, book #2)
by Christopher Hinz. St. Martin's. 1989. 308 pp., \$18.95

You seldom see examples of the sub-genre of SF known as "space opera" any more. Even the movie saga of STAR WARS is largely moribund. The Star Trek films do not really fall into this category—opera by its very composition meaning flamboyant and epic in scope. Literary works these days tend to be sober-sided extrapolations of political and scientific trends—a far cry from the lurid pulps of the 1920s and '30s where science fiction had its origins.

I have not read the first book of this set (dare one say trilogy?), but a glance at just the opening paragraphs immediately told me this book is in the grand tradition. Its time of origin is 2363. Sometime in the preceding centuries the dreaded nuclear holocaust has been triggered. Genetically-engineered warriors were created—artificial twins linked together telepathically. The 68 year old patriarch of a band of space pirates was saved when a boy by a more benign pair of hunters. The lion of Alexander knows that the only way to stop the lunatics who are launching attacks on colony space terminals and wiping out computer databases with a powerful virus is to revive Nick and Gillian from hibernation where they have been for fifty-six years. The problem is, if they are brought back, can they be persuaded to fight the threat, or will they join forces with the new Ash Ock assassins?

To the surprise of those who never knew Nick and Gillian when they were put into stasis, it turns out that they are not part of a Paratwa. Instead, Nick is a midget and was one of the top-notch computer experts of his time. He has a stubbornly independent turn of mind, and has been known to not follow orders when those orders do not serve his purposes. Gillian's linked twin Catharine has been long since dead, and that fact is still creating problems for the survivor.

Meanwhile, a young executive, Susan Quint

(who has connections with the founding families), is a witness to a massacre on an orbiting space city that was engineered by surviving Paratwa assassins. She is on the run, and both sides must attempt to find her first. An ironically named brigand called Ghandi appears to be in charge of the assassins and he has an affair going with the female half of a Paratwa known as Colette. He is intensely jealous when the male counterpart shows up after twenty-five years of having her all to himself.

Susan is not all she appears to be, and although not a Paratwa herself, she is part of a genetically engineered conspiracy that was planned before her birth. No one is entirely certain if Gillian can be trusted—what if he is lured back to an alliance with those who are admittedly more his people than ordinary humans? Paratwas have the ability to create intense desire in individuals, which no doubt explains some of the hold Colette has on Ghandi. To complicate matters further, a mystery ship is returning from the stars and it appears that the chief Paratwa killer is something unheard of until now—a triplet complex. The ending is somewhat inconclusive, but as this is merely the middle book of a planned trilogy, it is understandable that the author does not wish to give away all of the twists and turns.

There are hints that the triplet has been produced by alien sources beyond Earth technology. As that idea is not really resolved, I expect it is a foreshadowing of things to come.

The plot is swift and fast-moving, so it is not hard to follow even if you missed the original book. As mentioned in the opening lines of this review, it is a pleasure to see the return of the space opera on a grand scale, especially when it is mixed in with the conventions of the pulp detective genre. By this I mean there is an immense conspiracy and the hero must thwart it by any means possible (the Ash Ock have a master race psychology and plan to take-over that would leave ordinary humans as their slaves forever).

The book does what it sets out to do—entertain in the manner of a good made-for-TV SF movie and at the same time whet your appetite for more.

Solid craftsmanship and well-drawn characters. Get it—you won't be sorry you did.

Review by John Boardman

The Forever War Joe W. Haldeman,
St. Martin's Press, NY, 1975

Forever Peace Joe W. Haldeman,
Ace Books, NY, 1997. 326 pp., \$21.95

I WILL FIGHT NO MORE FOREVER

"I would have you note that your warlike heroes who trudge in the rear of conquerors are generally of that illustrious class of gentlemen who are equal candidates for the army or the bridewell, the halberds or the whipping-post,—for whom Dame Fortune has cast an even die, whether they shall make their exit by the sword or the halter, and whose deaths shall, at all events, be a lofty example to their countrymen."

— Washington Irving, *Knickerbocker's History of New York*

This should probably start with Sarge Smith, whom I encountered during the 1960s, when both of us were letter-hacking to Ted Paul's pace-setting fanzine *Kipple*. While I was in the middle of writing this review, I received the news that Ted had just died of the effects of a brain stroke. He had been in a coma for nearly a month. Ted was a seminal figure in the fanzine fandom of the 1960s, wrote numerous reviews for Dick Geis's Hugo-winning fanzine *Science Fiction Review*, and conducted lively debates in *Kipple's* letter column. As you might expect during that period, the American intervention into the Vietnamese Civil War was a major topic of conversation. Ted and I argued strongly against it, while it was supported by L. Sprague de Camp, Poul Anderson, George Price, Dick Eney, Martin Heigesen, Chay Borsella, and Sarge Smith. (De Camp has since repudiated his views of that time.) People on both sides argued eloquently and vehemently for their positions—except for Smith. He was well on in years, and still stuck in an earlier era, when any

military action taken by one's government was automatically right and therefore did not have to be supported by rational argument.

Smith and Heinlein were apparently old acquaintances, and it was from Smith that Heinlein took the fundamental concept of his 1959 science-fiction novel *Starship Troopers*—that the privileges of citizenship, and the right to vote, should belong only to veterans of the armed forces. Heinlein accordingly dedicated the book to Smith. There was some difference of opinion between them, though. Smith believed that it is proper to force men to join the armed forces, while Heinlein always favored an all-volunteer army, of men and women. At one point in the debate, Smith used the unfamiliar term “sheriff’s volunteer,” and then had to explain it to the rest of us.

A “sheriff’s volunteer,” it seems, was a potential soldier brought in by the sheriff and forced to enlist. It is uncertain whether he meant by this the military draft as we have come to know it in the 20th century, or just giving a petty criminal the “choice” between enlistment and a prison sentence. Smith died sometime around 1970, before he had the chance to see the U. S. government abandon the draft not because it wanted to, but because it had to.

Most of the devotees of “military futurism” seem to regard Heinlein as their founding father, and *Starship Troopers* as the book that began the craze for Rambo science fiction. But the assumptions that war is an inevitable part of human existence, and should be carried into space, and that warriors should be the heroes of science fiction, go back far beyond this book. Indeed, H. Beam Piper gave us in his stories the basics of Rambo science fiction years before *Starship Troopers* was written. He presented us with a future of perpetual war, and the notion that any problem can be solved by killing people. Indeed, he not only said it but did it; in 1964 he killed himself.

Political tracts like *Starship Troopers* demanded both satire and serious rebuttal, and Heinlein got both. The best satire was Harry Harrison’s *Bill the Galactic Hero* and its sequels, one of which lampooned the excuses we were given for getting into the Gulf War. But the serious side was addressed by Haldeman, out of bitter personal experience, in *The Forever War*. Haldeman had been conscripted into the army, and decided not to resist. As it turned out, the U. S. armed forces made a major mistake in conscripting him and sending him into combat in Vietnam. With all due respect to Harrison, Haldeman makes a more powerful case against war than any other science-fiction author.

The interstellar conflict in *The Forever War* began with a situation common in militaristic science fiction novels—an alien race that, upon first contact, instantly attacks humanity, and with whom there “must” be a war of annihilation. Heinlein’s “Bugs,” David Gerrold’s Chtorr worms, and David Feintuch’s virus blobs that travel faster than light are typical examples; indeed, the alien enemy gets more and more alien and implausible as “military futurism” continues to trickle down the drain. In real life or in s-f novels, nobody ever tries to give reasonable answers to the question “Who is the enemy and what does he want?”

Haldeman took this situation and turned it upside down. About a thousand years after the war

with the “Taurans” begins, the hero (who has lasted this long owing to the relativistic time dilation of his many travels on campaign) discovers that the whole war started out of culture shock, kept going first as an economic “necessity” to Earth’s rulers and then on sheer inertia, and didn’t have to be fought at all. And, incidentally, what horrible effects did a Communist victory in Vietnam have on the United States of America? (Check the pro-war speeches made at the time before you try to come up with an answer.)

Like the American invasion of Vietnam, the Human-Tauran War is fought with minimal effect on the “home front”. Five generations have gone by since Americans have experienced the full effect of war on our own soil. For us, war is something in which American soldiers go somewhere else and most of them eventually return, while civilians get rich manufacturing weapons, interrupted only by the occasional bomb shelter drill that nobody takes seriously. This was particularly true for the war with Vietnam, in which America most nearly approached what Fletcher Pratt once characterized as the German attitude towards war—fight it so that the civilian population is not even aware that a war is going on. (This has not worked out too well in practice.)

Haldeman’s hero William Mandella has an M. S. in physics, but was nevertheless inducted by an “elite draft.” This must have been Haldeman’s reaction to a wacky notion that made the rounds after Colonel Henderson, Captain Medina, and Lieutenant Calley turned out to be the officers who ordered the Mylai Massacre. We Pacifists were solemnly told that the massacre was really our fault, because the army “had to” use such poor officer material as these men. And why did they “have to?” Because all those bright college kids had refused to go to war, either through outright defiance or emigration, or through pulling strings or juggling deferments the way Bill Clinton, Dan Quayle, and Rudy Giuliani did. Therefore, you effete peaceniks, the Mylai Massacre wasn’t the work of some soldier who held a pistol to a little boy’s head so he would get oral sex from his mother—you are really responsible for killing all those women and children.

So in the war against the “Taurans,” Earth’s government makes sure that the world’s brightest and most highly and expensively educated young men and women get conscripted into the armed forces, and sent off into environments where a small rip in a protective suit is instantly fatal. And, since Pacifists know as well as militarists that wars are won only by warriors who go somewhere on foot with hand-held weapons, and kill other warriors who are on foot with hand-held weapons, Mandella and his mates are landed on contested planets and then slog over the terrain with their lasers, stasis grenades, and sometimes even spears.

And we see, here and in *Forever Peace*, a situation that is common in military s-f, and which is certain to be tried in real-life warfare as soon as a few “Bugs” are worked out—the combat armor suit with built-in high-tech weapons. A draftee who puts this on after a few weeks of training will become, at least in s-f novels, a sort of human tank, invulnerably blasting everything in sight. Indeed, in *Forever Peace* they don’t even need a human being in the combat suit, or “soldierboy” as it is called. It is operated by remote control, by somebody sitting safely in a

bunker several kilometers away. (Safely, that is, except for grueling mental strains that frequently drive these operators nuts, kill them, or make them commit suicide.)

This is part of the “super-soldier” dream that has tempted militarists for centuries. First it was “elite” troops, and then it was “elite” people. The Confederates and the Nazis went to war realizing that the enemy had more people, better access to natural resources, and a superior industrial base. But this didn’t bother the Confederates or the Nazis because they felt themselves to be a superior sort of human being, and therefore certain to win against these relatively minor disadvantages.

Several s-f authors have put genetically engineered “super-soldiers” into their stories, and found them wanting. Niven and Pournelle refer to the defeat of the “Sauron Supermen” in their “Motie” novels, and Bujold explores the notion and concludes in “Labyrinth” that it would be disastrous. Bargain-basement versions of these ideas surfaced last year in several lame-brained comments about the cloning of a sheep in Scotland.

Meanwhile Earth society changes profoundly during *The Forever War*, as Mandella gets to see during infrequent furloughs home. At one point the UN decides to try to reduce Earth’s overpopulation by making homosexuality the socially sanctioned sexual orientation, and stigmatizing heterosexuality. As a result, Lieutenant Mandella finds himself in charge of a platoon of soldiers who all think he’s a pervert.

The question of whether to bring women into the armed forces in all roles and levels was just beginning to be discussed when *The Forever War* was written. Haldeman meets an obvious question straight-on; female soldiers are “compliant and promiscuous by military custom (and law).” I wonder if this is quite what the National Organization for Women, or the Sergeant-Major of the Army, have in mind. Besides, the dirty little secret of female enlistment is, that there are simply not enough male volunteers to keep an all-volunteer army up to the strength that the Pentagon considers desirable for the two simultaneous wars it is planning to fight. So the choice is between enlisting women or drafting men. And a military draft would quickly collapse if tried, particularly in this Age of the Hacker.

In the twenty years since it was written, *The Forever War* has become a classic and a standard of science fiction, and the best-known rebuttal to the flood-tide of so-called “military futurism” that has disfigured our favorite form of literature in recent years. However, nobody in Washington, or in several other capitals, seems to have learned a thing from the failure of the American invasion of Vietnam, and so the job has to be done all over again. This time, in *Forever Peace*, the war is right here on Earth, between in effect the “Haves” and the “Have-Nots.”

This novel is written in a rather confusing style, jumping back and forth between first-person and third-person accounts of the adventures of Julian Cross, commander of a platoon of soldierboys in a jungle campaign in Costa Rica. Cross, like Mandella, is a physicist, who would much rather be working on the frontier research project for which he was trained. (Imagine a particle accelerator so big that it occupies the orbit of Io around Jupiter!) The war is between “the Alliance”

and "the Ngumi." The Alliance, the "Haves," seems to be the present-day "Group of Seven" advanced industrial nations, with the addition or co-optation of Mexico, Taiwan, and possibly Russia and China. The "Have-Nots" are the Ngumi, which seems to be a loose and frequently contentious alliance of mainly African, South Asian, and South American nations.

The two big technical innovations of this novel, which begins in 2043, are nanoforges and jacks. Nanoforges can make anything, from airplanes to jewelry, if they are provided with the right raw materials; transmutation of elements seems to be the only thing beyond them. Obviously, they must consume enormous amounts of energy, so their use is limited to the high-tech nations of the Alliance.

As a consequence, nanoforges widen the technological, social, political, and psychological gap between the Alliance and the Ngumi. And jacks, or "mental bridges," can be implanted right in the skulls, permitting everything from vicarious experiences as a medium of entertainment, to really great sex if the participants are jacked to each other. Jacking also makes possible a sort of telepathy, and the editing of memories.

American nanoforges are so productive that they have destroyed the ancient linkage between work and income. Unless they are impelled to do creative work in the sciences or arts, most Americans are content to live on a generous basic living allowance made possible by the nanoforges. The only social obligation is three years of National Service, which is how Julian and a good many other people got into the armed forces, and have to have jacks installed in an operation which is 90% successful. (Please don't ask what happens to the other 10%.) As the book begins, Julian and his platoon of "mechanics" are about to relieve another platoon, in a bunker from which they operate by remote control a gang of soldierboys which are currently rampaging through the jungle shooting anything from howler monkeys to the peasant guerrillas, to whom the mechanics contemptuously refer as "pedros." ("We did it with their governments' foreknowledge and permission, of course—and there were no civilian casualties...Once they're dead they're rebels." This was done in Vietnam too.)

Whenever a nuclear power has gone to war, there has been concern that nuclear weapons would be used. In the Alliance-Ngumi War, three have been set off so far, and everyone is nervous that more might be used. About a year earlier, one had destroyed Atlanta, and when the Ngumi denied responsibility the Alliance nuked two of their cities. ("Ngumi contended that the Alliance had cynically sacrificed one non-strategic city so it could have an excuse to destroy two important ones. Julian suspected they might be right.") So would I: events of this sort have already been reported from the Yugoslavian Civil War.)

The situation is further complicated by religious fanatics who not only believe that the world is about to come to an end, but feel that it is their sacred duty to bring that end about. And there aren't just street-corner orators, either; highly placed military and political figures are involved.

Then Julian and a few others learn that a slight modification of jack technology would make people incapable of killing. They make contact with a group of nominally-hospitalized cases of jack failure who have also realized this, and they

set out to capture a headquarters building on the Costa Rican front, give this treatment to the generals there, and then have them order in other soldiers, and Ngumi POWs, and give them the treatment also. (The process is called, appropriately, "humanizing") The seizure of the headquarters building sounds a bit like a high-tech version of General Olbricht's seizure of the War Ministry during the attempted 1944 coup against Hitler. And the whole thing is planned to culminate with an anti-war coup in Washington during the next Armed Forces Day Parade.

Naturally, it doesn't come easily. In the course of resolving the crisis, we learn that the American government has been practicing elaborate deceptions to bend the public to its will, and sends out highly trained assassins to deal with any danger of exposure. However, this has been a feature of so many novels, s-f and mainstream, that we are inured to it by now. Until they are willing to tell us the whole truth about Operations Iran-Contra and October Surprise, the government and its defenders have no grounds on which to protest such a portrayal of their policies.

The success of Haldeman's novels reveals to us that there is no longer one science-fiction fandom, but two. Using the names of the most famous books in each field, we can call them "*Starship Troopers* fandom" and "*Forever War* fandom." These two fandoms are virtually unable even to communicate with each other, because their basic assumptions about the nature and future of humanity differ so widely. I do not propose to address the question of which fandom outnumbered the other. This is an issue not of more and less, but of right and wrong.

At one point in *Forever Peace*, Julian tells a captured assassin:

"You're a throwback...You want to smear yourself with woad and go bash people's brains out."

It's about time somebody said this to Pournelle, Baldwin, Weber, Feintuch, and a few other authors and fans of "military futurism." How can they reply? Will they tell us

"War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy, and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it."

I have heard variations on this theme from many defenders of Rambo science fiction. These words originally come from an article written in 1935 for the *Enciclopedia Italiana* by Benito Mussolini.

The schism is even moving into fantasy fandom, to judge from Mary Gentle's most un-gentle anti-war satire *Grunts*. Indeed, many fantasy novels seem to be war novels with slightly different weaponry, but with the same attitude towards the mass murder racket.

With the coincidental releases of *Forever Peace* and a film based on *Starship Troopers*, we have returned to the starting point of this review. Even though it has an "R" rating, this new film is clearly designed to appeal mainly to teen-agers, although they allegedly can't get in to see it "without the required parent or guardian." (Jack Mathews, *Newsday*, 7 November 1997) Indeed, many reviewers treat it as a comedy. Mathews entitled

his review "Space Bugs vs. Archie and Jughead." Its "ad copy could boast 'Co-ed Showers!' 'Exploding Bugs!' and 'Human Decapitation!'" ...[It] is such a glorious goof, the violence so cartoonish, and the nudity so nonsexual and matter-of-fact, that the movie is going to give the kids more good ideas than bad." Among the bad ideas it apparently will not give them is the notion, originally the very foundation of the book, that only veterans should be citizens. Mind you, citizenship for veterans only is mentioned in the movie, in a high-school "class on 'the failure of democracy'", but nobody is going to be persuaded by this film that it is a good idea, or even that it is an idea at all.

Thelma Adams, one of the prudes at *The New York Post*, gave the film a "Not Recommended" verdict, even though it falls right in with the *Post*'s confrontational view of the world. (In many publications it sometimes seems that the editors and the reviewers are pulling at cross purposes.) "This cartoony battle against alien insects is fought by the cream of BEVERLY HILLS 90210 and PARTY OF FIVE...A co-ed shower scene is beyond G. I. JANE." The *Post*, which should have been promoting the film as an ideological comrade-in-arms, instead complained on 11 November 1997 about the ease with which teenagers can get in to see it despite its "R" rating. They sent in a 12-year-old boy and a 13-year-old girl as undercover agents at various theaters, and found they had no trouble getting in to see *STARSHIP TROOPERS*, two times out of three. ("If they ask where your mom is, just say she's over there, and point to a stranger.") We are carefully informed that these impressionable young people did not actually stay to see the film.

In *The Village Voice* of 11 November 1997, J. Hoberman calls the war "an intergalactic Raid campaign," full of "goofy macho." Indeed, the widely sold insecticide Raid is frequently mentioned in these reviews. And, "Somewhere beyond irony, *STARSHIP TROOPERS*'s clever opener dares the viewer to position the movie as kissing cousin to a Hitler Youth recruitment ad." Leni Riefenstahl, call your office.

Hoberman's review is the only one obviously written by someone who has read the book. "*Starship Troopers* was written during the period of Sputnik anxiety to protest a partial suspension of nuclear testing...it sounds like a straight-arrow precursor of William S. Burroughs's *Nova Express*." True to the spirit of Heinlein's novels, "The movie has no difficulty conceptualizing the human race as fundamentally American." Furthermore, "The atmosphere of steroid-pumped survivalism seems extrapolated from Desert Storm U.S.A....[T]he movie has no more depth than the early '80s video games that were based on Heinlein's novel."

Matt Zoller Seitz was no kinder in *The Voice*'s bitter rival, *The New York Press*. (5 November 1997) "In essence, it's a deeply silly, deeply stupid film...watching it, you can almost feel yourself getting dumber." Director Paul Verhoeven, also responsible for the mega-flop *SHOWGIRLS*, "is a filmmaker of nearly poetic bloodlust, and the last hour of *STARSHIP TROOPERS* is *The Iliad* with insects." The battle scenes look as if "Ray Harryhausen had decided to make a snuff film." Like Mathews, Seitz compares the film's characters with those in Archie Comics, and concludes that it

is "a sly and very funny critique of both nationalism and militarism."

Meanwhile, *Newsday* on 15 November 1997 had a lead editorial which tied together the film *STARSHIP TROOPERS* and President Clinton's private war against Iraq. Although *Newsday* loudly salivated for an American military attack on Iraq, it claimed that "it's not necessarily helpful that this is the No. 1 movie in the country." It was feared that we will "let popular passions sway politico-military calculations," as if this weren't already happening without regard for a ludicrous s-f film. The editorial complained, quite rightly, that "martial spirit is bubbling up. Violent video games are more popular than ever...Paintball, in which adults run around the woods 'killing' each other with dye, is big, as are all manner of 'extreme' sports. And there's always football. Now comes *STARSHIP TROOPER*, a World War II movie disguised as a sci-fi flick, in which 'kill the whole bleeping race' is the dominant ethos."

Yet in this same editorial, *Newsday* issued President Clinton a blank check for any killing he wants to do in the Muddle East. I should like to hear Anthony Marro, who as editor is responsible for this editorial, explain what he means here—preferably at a war crimes trial.

It is a delicious irony that *STARSHIP TROOPERS* was released for Veterans' Day. I am only sorry that Smith and Heinlein are no longer with us, to see this film, read the reviews, and get apoplectic fits. Or maybe apocalyptic.

[Joe Haldeman has just published a third volume, *Forever Free*, Ace, NY, 1999, 277 pp., \$21.95. John will review this volume at a later date. —ERM]

Reviews by Thomas Egan

Hunter of the Light, Risa Aratyr
Harper Prism, 1995, 626 pp., \$5.99

Ancient Ireland calls to us in this modern retelling of its strange myths and folklore. But there is a problem in this first novel by its new budding author. Books of fantasy depend not only on the power of their plots, but, more importantly on how well "atmosphere" of faerie is constructed.

Natural skepticism on the reader's part will make it very hard to accept concepts of magic and creatures of the supernatural—even if they come out of a "Celtic Twilight"! The author does try her best, and the result is mixed.

Risa Aratyr has made *Hunter of the Light* the center of her Celtic Irish enthusiasm. Born in Chicago in 1953, she moved permanently to California to gain a Berkeley degree in the Dramatic Arts and then worked for some years in Los Angeles in theater management and even sung professionally. (Her book shows this influence in the stage quality of many of her chapter scenes.) She still pursues her interests in folklore and Irish traditional music. Her current opus is due in large part to the academic writers' group she belongs to ("the Melville Nine").

Her background gives her real advantages in the careful depiction of the Irish culture she delves into. It's a time before recorded history when all we know of prehistoric Eire comes from archaeology and the old myths. The author's devotion to the Celtic culture shows up in the romantic "poeticism" of her prose, and in the appendices of names and places, the excellent glossary, and bibliography. The constant use of old Irish poetry and chants (and folklore sayings) gives a rich believable atmosphere from the "mighty of Eirinn" grouping to the primitive tribal village society she puts her characters into.

Her chief hero, oddly enough, is given an Anglo-Saxon name, "Blackthorn," while all other characters and places are given Irish names. The sense of jamming too much material together (too many fairy-folk, gods, heroes, monsters, and supernatural centers of power here) weakens the plot's power itself. Blackthorn himself is a "bard" who follows the ancient tradition of serving the goddess Eirinn. For her he must seek out and slay the fabled white stag on Beltaine feast day. Nine years he had to wait to accomplish his task with the sacred spear. If he fails the balance of the universe between light /creation and chaos/ demonic anarchy will shift disastrously. The chase is on!

The plot is anarchic enough as it is. Risa Aratyr adds a good dose of modern feminist mythology to her Irish folklore. All power stems from the feminine—from the goddesses who rule Ireland to the chieftains of tiny villages. Under the gods, of course, are the powerful "mothers," real queens with terrible, awesome might. And of course the pagan sexual code is elastic enough to allow our

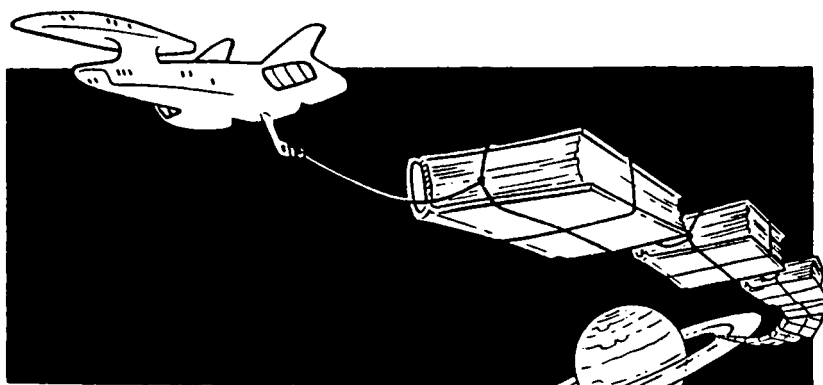
hero Blackthorn to "enjoy" himself even as he also seeks to rescue a beautiful doomed maiden captured by witchcraft, *Roisin Dubh*. But no Druid male priests are present; this despite the fact they historically dominated Ireland and the keeping of its national myths until St. Patrick's time (as the sympathetic treatment of Morgan Llewelyn's famed novel, *Druids*, under its recent Ballantine imprint shows so well). Feminist ideology rules (with a touch of Wicca?), and the plot suffers for it.

Battles between human warriors and the Faerie Otherworld are handled well: exciting and fierce, revelling in the glory of war. The Seasons-of-the-Year under Time's "wheel" see the fierce *Scaileanna* struggle to conquer the benign elves of the *Sidhe*. The Eater of Souls awaits all—the evil red-eyed goblins and monstrous *Grugach* lurk to destroy the unwary. There's humor and trickery, too, from the *puca* to some grand verse. Character development is vitally non-existent, but there are compensations. Some readers will love the book overall, others will hate it! "The luck of the Irish" here—take a chance.

Fantastic Voyage II: Destination Brain,
Isaac Asimov.
Doubleday, 1987 hc \$18.95, 332 pp. hc
Bantam, 1988, \$2.95, pb

"Pardon me. Do you speak Russian?" said the low voice, definitely contralto, in his ear." With these words the reader is catapulted into a richly detailed plot of ideas and scientific breakthroughs in the Soviet Union of the future. When Asimov had novelized the script of a movie, he had tried to write around the stupid scientific impossibilities and errors of the original, but had never been really satisfied with the results. Finally he wrote this second novel to tell the story *his* way. He still considered the premise impossible, like FTL starships or time machines, but if we accept the impossible premise this is the way it *could* be done.

This was the first work of fiction by a prominent writer to probe one important angle of the new era of perestroika and glasnost via the genre of science-fiction. The novel is well written (as nearly all Asimov novels are): with clear well-chosen prose that carries the reader in rapid movements from one evocative scene to another. No scenes of sex or graphic violence here. Nothing must distract from the fantastic surface adventure of tomorrow's possible scientific wonders—with the not-so-subtle hints by Asimov that these same wonders will force into being a pragmatic but real peace between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A., and of course, for the rest of the world too. It's all in everyone's self-interest to ignore the pull of nationalism and ideology, is it not? So Asimov prods his protagonists, American and Russian, to proclaim. The author was himself born in the Soviet Union in 1922 of Jewish parents but was soon thereafter brought by his emigrating family to America. By 1939, he began to distinguish himself in the fields of biology and chemistry through a career of teaching/research. From the 1940s on, he has shown an equal genius in writing works of popular science, mystery fiction, and especially science fiction. In the dozens of his published works in the latter genre he stresses always a judicious use of logic and paradox for his human



heroes problems—and exudes always, again, a basic optimism and faith in individuals to save humanity from itself. The original *Fantastic Voyage* was a 1966 novelization by Asimov of a SF movie (starring Raquel Welch, Donald Pleasance and Steven Boyd). Its original script (and plot of miniaturizing human beings inside a human body) was written by others but Asimov has taken it over. He has taken the themes and reshaped them in his own image. The setting is the world of the mid-21st century, far enough in time to give Asimov considerable freedom of plot movement and near enough, he had hoped in vain, that most things we know today will remain the same.

The chief protagonist is one Albert Jonas Morrison, an American scientist with some brilliant but revolutionary ideas of brain wave analysis. His fellow scientists consider him a crank and an embarrassment. At 40 he is a total failure—divorced and isolated from his whole family, soon to be unemployed, scorned by all. But the Russians want him enough to kidnap him. And American intelligence is hot on his track to persuade him to get the Communist plans for miniaturization. The contest is on! For this is a world where the Cold War has "cooled" down into something like real peace—yet each side still competes against the other for prestige and power. As the cynical American agent, Francis Rodano, explains to Morrison (who is, for all his decency and idealism, a basic coward): "The name of the game in this good new world of ours is technological advance: the prestige, the influence, the abilities that come with being able to do what other powers cannot. The game is between the chief contestants and their respective allies: we and they, the U.S. and the S.U. For all our circumspect friendship, we still compete. The counters in the game are scientists and engineers and any disgruntled counter might conceivably be used by the other side. You are a disgruntled counter. Dr. Morrison. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

The Soviet scientist who developed the theory and power of miniaturizing living beings, Pyotr Shapiro, is a solitary genius who has fallen into a coma, lying at death's door. The Soviets feel that only with Morrison's new untried computer for brain analysis can they hope to wrest vital secrets about the perfection of this miniaturization. They want Morrison in effect to read the last dying thoughts of Shapiro. To do this, a "fantastic voyage" is needed—to send Morrison and selected Soviet scientists to enter a ship at normal size, be miniaturized and enter Shapiro's bloodstream sailing on to the region of the brain itself. Asimov is a good scientist and makes us believe such a journey can be possible. The dangers of such a voyage to and from the human body defending itself are well done. The miniaturized humans are the size of atoms inside a ship the size of a glucose molecule. The human body is like a universe, alien and wonderful at the same time. It's grand to be reading such an adventure with the scientific background so competently prepared by one like Asimov. The human characters as miniaturized beings act and react believably and sympathetically to dangers and challenges. Our imaginations are the richer for this tale of tomorrow. But there is a basic problem. The author is more than a little like Morrison, his hero. He tends to believe too much in the final power of scientific pragmatism to so easily overcome the

horrors of human evil. The Soviets are really only seen through the eyes of their privileged elite, the scientists: so cool, so detached, so confident their society has overcome the cruelty of "the bad old days." There are certain unpleasant aspects Asimov has them admit to: the use of force on Morrison, the restrictions everywhere, the implied brutality of the guards, the clinical "efficiency" of their conduct which makes their humanness a trifle suspect. Asimov doesn't seem to really understand the nature of a totalitarian state. His Soviet Union seems to lack the kind of social and economic problems that it admitted when he wrote this book have existed over many decades. His 21st century Russia is a shade too rational, too confident in its socialist premises. Something is wrong here. It is not his patriotism that is doubtful. Or making the Soviet officials intelligent enemies. It is his understanding of what makes human societies fight each other as embodiments of what they believe and disbelieve in. Asimov had not imagined the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Empire but had naively assumed that it would reform a bit and yet remain a strong competitor for hegemony. Political structures change almost annually now, and one can wonder what they will be in the mid-21st century.

Still River by Hal Clement
del Rey-Ballantine, 1989, \$16.95, 280 pp. hc,
\$3.95, 272 pp., pb

The time is the far distant future. The place is among the farthest reaches of "our" galaxy where the astronauts of today would be as children playing with toys. The plot? Alas, the perennial one of students facing the final exams—but with a difference, for only one is human, a quite mature female only too aware of her (our?) situation:

The orders were not repeated, giving Molly for the first time in several days a sharp awareness that she was not among human beings. This was re-enforced by the absence of chatter among the students in the conning room. A few quick, short sentences from senior team members...and a cloud of weirdly shaped forms had pushed away from their stools, chairs, wrapping posts, couches, and other stations and were floating rapidly toward the room's dozen exits. In the dusky, rubrous light of the place, the human student was reminded of a picture she had once seen of a stream of bats entering a cave on the home world she had never visited.

In the coming era of space travel, testing the abilities and character of the new breed of star explorers will become all-important. What better way to probe the possibilities here than through science fiction, and Hal Clement is certainly qualified to give us some fine writing on the topic. The response of potential readers, though, will depend on *how* they react to the sub-genre of "hard" science fiction, for such is the forte of our author.

Born in 1922 Hal Clement Stubbs lives his life on two levels. A native-born New Englander he has always kept to his home-state of Massachusetts for his prosaic life career of raising a family and earning his daily bread as a teacher of the sciences at a local academy. His adventurous side or "level"

blossomed forth in the 1950s with his classic SF novel, *Mission of Gravity*. So far, he has given the public some ten novels in his specialty (all Ballantine reprints, the best of which are *Iceworld* and *Starlight*). They all, including this work, show a faithful devotion to scientific detail and the physical laws of nature as currently understood—or at least speculated on by reputable thinkers.

The above is the key to the success or failure of "hard" science fiction for the ordinary reader. The central thesis of books of authors like Hal Clement is to unlock mysteries of speculative science. They are set in the far future and/or distant worlds when anything is possible—and the human imagination can work its magic to set our natural skepticism aside. To work its power to fascinate our minds, hard science fiction must adhere rigidly to logic and the many different facets of the problem or problems to be probed. That, and not character development or exciting action scenes, will be the basis of reader interest. Hal Clement is undoubtedly a master of this.

His love for science dates from early childhood and certainly shows on every level in *Still River*. Clement's expertise in teaching chemistry and astronomy is reflected in the classroom atmosphere of his student protagonists as they struggle to understand an alien planet. There are no apocalyptic conflicts or "war of the worlds" here. The reader gets no bug-eyed-monsters threatening innocent humans. He *does* get some weird aliens operating side-by-side with the human protagonist, Molly.

On a galactic super-university centuries from now five doctoral students get their last examination for their degrees: to form a team to examine the strange planet of Enigma and discover its secrets. Why does it have an atmosphere? Why and how can it sustain life?

The five characters involved in the exploration team are deliberately chosen by Clement to emphasize how radically different physical natures can yet cooperate for a rational end. So we get two spheroid beings, "Joe" and "Charly" (Molly has to understand other beings' names based on human language needs) who have no need to breathe due to body chemistry; a fur-covered humanoid the size of a doll ("Carol"); and finally "Jenny," a gigantic centipede with the intellect of an Einstein and some 18 pairs of limbs so useful in team exploration. Clement seems to have fascination with ammonia since all his non-human actors have body systems based on it, and the endless underground rivers of Enigma are ammonia in content. Molly, as the sole human around, is more independent in nature than the others, a young wife with a baby son far away—touches off the feminist in her reactions, but even more, of subtle hints of a deeper "soul" than the story-line will allow.

The latter is logically developed, the situations and planet character gradually unfolded and then enmeshed into the different attitudes of the five students. The scientific obsession with discovery carries the story well, but it has its price in isolating individuals from the deeper questions of existence:

Well as the two knew each other, Molly realized that their attitudes toward death were still hidden. She knew nothing whatever of the customs or religious beliefs of a single one of the school species.

not even the Nethneen. It occurred to her that in an institution of several tens of thousands of beings, most of them as far as she had heard with lifespans comparable to the human one, there must have been numerous deaths since she and Rovor had arrived; but she had not been aware of a single one of them.

Still River carries itself well as an SF novel, honing our minds to the endless possibilities of truly alien environments, testing our sense of reason on incomprehensible problems. But those not "into" its genre will wish its hints of a more profound side to life had been carried further.

Dealing in Futures by Joe Haldeman
Viking Penguin, \$16.95

The first tale starts: "Forty-one is too young to die. I was never trained to be a soldier. Trained to survive, yes, but not to kill or be killed."

In a primary sense, this is the philosophy of all stories in this collection, for the author has been making his experiences in the Vietnam war permeate his literary avocation via the genre of science fiction. (Everything was written between 1975 and 1985.)

He's superb at handling his prose and even his verse. The book is a combination of two novellas, nine short stories, and three poems. His dialogue is believable and varied to each context of character and time/place. He interweaves his plots of the far-future with constant surprises of incident that probe at the human character. But, it's the situation that gives the story its real power to attract our interest, not his character building. And it's the age-old nemesis of war that pervades his situations—terrible in its power to shock and repel, yet it reels us back in like some helpless fish before the hook. He won them all—the Hugo, Nebula, Ditmar, and Galaxy—the finest and most prestigious awards in science fiction. Critics note the excellent educational background which allows him to handle the "hard" science, so easily assumed in all his novels and short stories.

His pride as an author is shown by the wide-open commentary he gives as "afterwords" following each story. He explores the background for each tale and links up with a new theme that appears in the introduction of the following story. The sense of continuum for the whole book is helped enormously by the gossipy and witty accounts of his life to date which he integrates with literary points.

But it's *The Forever War* (1976) that hammered him down for his success in the eyes of critics and public alike. It's represented here as the heretofore unpublished middle-section of that book. He acknowledges the direct and painful influences of his experiences of the Vietnam war that made him write of a gloomy future-age America waging endless war in distant solar systems.

"You Can Never Go Back" is powerful as it stands but it's a letdown for any intelligent reader. The Army life-style gets its worst lumps in this segment—but even in this labyrinthine world of future war, Haldeman shows civilian life as far worse in its Orwellian character and in its

mindless violence. The Army bureaucratic society is real at least for the two disillusioned lovers:

"It's so dirty." I shrugged. "It's so army."
But I couldn't shake the feeling that
we were going home.

The sense of endless war is seen in different ways. "Seasons" shows us, via diary, the approach of a group of decent but helpless scientists on a strange planet struggling against the Stone-Age barbarism of a heretofore gentle but alien, Plathys people.

Be rational. This ferocity is just another change of state. They don't know what they are doing. Like the sex and birth phases. Tomorrow they may go back to being bovine sweet things or artisans again. Or maybe they'll discover the wheel for a week.

Alas, scientists indeed cannot "think straight" in their view of human nature. The shocker comes when civilization doesn't either—as the last entry shows.

There are a good number of horror tales here. "More Than the Sum of his Parts" gives us a man at war with his human world as he slowly makes himself into a machine. "Blood Sisters" shows us how some "clone"-terrorists mix with the Mafia on an alien world for "big business" deals on future armies. "Lindsay and the Red City Blues" is current-day Morocco (which the author intensely dislikes) in a grimy realism that tears down human dignity itself. The war of one man against an alien environment is "survival of the fittest" Darwinism at its worst. Even the three poems are grim war-like pieces.

Still, Haldeman knows the value of humor in war. His "Mexican War of 1846-48" shows several young American ne'er-do-wells out to make their fortunes against the forces of "Manifest Destiny." The wit is relatively gentle here, but there's a bit of witchcraft, too. "Blood Brothers" gives us Haldeman's sole contribution to Sword & Sorcery fiction as he introduces one delightfully, totally evil tavern-keeper, by the name of One-Thumb, who lives in the *Thieves World* of Sanctuary created by author Robert Asprin. The Poesque flavor is great as villains get a unique comeuppance.

Authors shouldn't be exempt from their own tonic. Haldeman believes this as well. "Seven and the Stars" starts with a cocktail party and ends up with a delightful satire of TV interviewers and the smart set—and the ambitions of SF writers trying to make it to success.

Right now I have the reputation of having produced the most imaginative science fiction ever—from the "Thoughts Eaters of PRNR" to the "Sensuous Siblings of Sirius VI"—and sooner or later the whole world will know that it wasn't fiction at all. So I'll have to return all the Hugos and Nebulas and stumble back into obscurity, with nothing to comfort me but a brilliant and beautiful wife—and the largest residuals in the history of television. Nobody ever said a writer's life was easy.

An Exchange of Gifts by Anne McCaffrey
ROC/Penguin USA: illus by Patricia Morrissey.
NY, Nov. 1995, \$12.95, 94 pp. Children's fantasy,
hardcover; 8" x 8" size.

Anne McCaffrey's writing career stretches back to the early 1950s when she broke into the SF magazines with a short-short in *Science Fiction* +. Her fame began to spread in the late 1960s when she published the first "Pern" novel, assembled from two *Analog* stories fleshed out with new material. Thanks to the Pern books she became, within a few years, the most successful female writer of commercial science fiction ever. Fourteen million or more books have been sold, in English-language editions alone. (She has also received the major awards of the field, the Hugo and Nebula.) Her triumph allowed her in the early 1970s to move back to her ancestral homeland of Eire in County Wicklow, there to create a ranch for raising horses which she loved (suitably named "Dragonhold-Underhill"!). There also, she has stayed ever since, gaining the peace and security she yearned for after her troubled marriage broke down. She writes with an Irish cultural background to influence her continuing array of books, on Pern and other SF themes. This is her first book in a new genre—children's fantasy. She wrote it admittedly for her small grand-daughter, Ceara Rose McCaffrey.

It's a little book, written with love and a simple style and language and not with any sign of condescension. It's set not in the far-future like her SF books, but in a vaguely medieval era where many individuals, good and evil alike, have been born with special "gifts," psychic powers over nature and their fellow man. These they can use or abuse at will. There is no true magic here, or mystic monsters to conquer. This is part of her "message" to children and adults. Just intelligence and common-sense using human talents developed to an extraordinary degree. God-given talents (the heroine admits once), but ones we have to explore and take delight in—and take responsibility for.

There is much here that recalls her SF series of writings. Her dozen novels on the distant planet of dragon-haunted Pern portrayed a far-future gallant band of human colonists (many of Irish descent in the various tales) trying to survive in a hostile environment of deadly virus-invasions called "the threads." They reshaped their world with the partnership of the local breed of giant intelligent reptiles whose anatomy projected fire and allowed flight. Human science faded over the centuries, and became legends and folklore. Thus the lizards became naturally benevolent, but "real," dragons. The opposite occurs in *An Exchange of Gifts*: the magic is opened for the reader to see, but his reason will gradually "see" it has nature's potential for wisdom to plumb.

McCaffrey's varied SF-series like Pern (the best of which include titles like *Dragonsdown* and *The Renegades of Pern*, all Ballantine Books releases. Doona (Ace-Berkley releases), and "The Rowan/Damia" trilogy (Ace-Berkley) all portray feminine heroes who are properly independent and self-reliant—and use their talents to the fullest. They are not radical feminists, but respect family and tradition (even if they have sometimes to work "around" these!—quite like the fugitive princess in *An Exchange of Gifts*).

The latter shows us the attempts of Meanne princess Anastasia de Saumur to find her own

ability to grow the plant "kingdom" for food and healing potions. To do this (and escape a brutal forced marriage to a powerful baron), she must defy her father's exploitation and her new step-mother's subtle jealousy. She flees to an isolated cottage in the woods, and finds a vagrant boy called "Wisp," who has his gift for making folk see what he wants them to. The delightful idyll of growing and building, and creating their own little world, is a grand morsel of reading. No violence or raw bitterness here. No easy family re-unions either. The author knows her medieval plant lore too, and the rich culture of the local fair. There is a bit of romance mixed with compassion: the couple enter naively into rites-of-exchange that will bind them into the joys and pains of ordinary life.

The Magic and the Healing,
by Nick O'Donohoe

Ace, 1994, 326pp., \$5.99

Deeds of medicine are the major thrust of adventure here instead of the struggles of brawny heroes and great armies. The treated are creatures of myth and legend existing in a very special corner of our world—a kind of limbo of the lost whose sanctuary offers great gifts of discovery to the stranger and great dangers as well.

The Magic and the Healing is a book of whimsy that recalls in themes James Herron's *All Creatures Great and Small*, Lewis Carroll and Lord Dunsany. The point of view is that of a young university student wondering if life is worth living faced with inevitable suffering and failure. The author uses fantasy to probe the question and his answers—on the whole, quite effectively done.

Nick O'Donohoe is a young second-generation Irish-American whose writing career goes back to the early 1980s. He has produced several mystery novels (*April Snow* is one of his best) and a number of short stories in the fantasy genre. His literary citations here and a very deft use of satire echo a background of a Ph.D. in the humanities and a college teaching past. His Irish roots (his family comes from Limerick) show forth in the current plot in several ways, but most notably in the contrast between the two worlds of "reality" our protagonists struggle through.

The need to make his "Crossroads" world unique and yet believable allows O'Donohoe to make effective use of his current vocation as a surveyor. The country atmosphere of a Virginia university easily slips into the wild woodland of valleys and mountains where magic abounds, and time and space intersect in very strange ways. It invites a neighborly approach to veterinary medicine, whose expertise the author freely admits to have culled from his wife's experience in veterinary school.

Crossroads is very well sketched in its rural—but not threatening—atmosphere. It's like a piece of Celtic folklore modernized for late 20th century America. It's so easy to slip into—if you hit the right "road." A Roman Legion can (and did) invade it some 2,000 years ago (and disappeared). St. Brendan, the Irish monk-traveler, preached there, but with what effect? Refugees of all kinds found their way into it for peace and the Good Life. It's the last hope for the dying species of fable—the great Roc of Arabian tales, the mighty Griffins that enact harsh justice, magic cats and beasts of all kinds, centaurs and fauns.

the devious pookah of ancient Ireland, etc. All try to live in peace—but are really held together by their very human High King, Brandal by name, whose origin and work are allowed by the author to be shrouded in mystery. He is warrior and prophet like any proper mythic figure, but with more than his share of humor, too.

The catalyst for the plot is the terminally-ill girl, B.J. Vaughan, whose vet education is used by one of her wiser professors, "Sugar," to aid in a secret project to medicate the growing ills among Crossroads' mythic denizens. The anarchic violence that grows ever wider in that magic realm centers on another woman who embodies the opposite qualities of greed and lust for power, "Morgan."

Her origins are hidden by the author, too, but she, with her fierce physical beauty and terrible moral cruelty mixed with occult abilities, may well be the ancient Arthurian figure of Morgan Le Fay.

There is a mini-apocalypse of death and destruction for the climax, but it is the teasing quality of O'Donohoe's narration that makes the book so readable. He never gives full answers to anything. We are left wondering about so much of the causation and character of mythic folk and beasts. But just relax like B.J., and dream of the unicorns in flight across ancient forests. Our imagination deserves a treat—indulge it here.

[Editor's note: Mr. O'Donohoe has written two sequels, which really are sequels complete in themselves and not parts of another dismal trilogy. Each book comes to a satisfying conclusion and I was very pleasantly surprised when another volume came out. Each was excellent and seemed to draw the story to a close. This was especially true of the second volume. The routine treatment of mythical creatures plays a smaller role in the sequels, which deal more with the healing and survival of the land and the heroine. Now the author has gone off in a totally new direction for his next novel. The sequels are:

Under the Healing Sign,

Ace, 1995, 379 pp., \$4.99

The Healing Crossroads,

1996, 321 pp., \$5.99

Review by Tamar Lindsay

Feline Detectives Across the Water

SPOILER WARNING. Mystery solutions given.

Felidae on the Road (a sequel to *Felidae*, which I have not read), by a Turk living in Germany, whose name I forget. A best seller in Europe, translated from German into English. Murder mystery. Themes: animal rights and ecology.

The Nine Lives of Catseve Gomez by Simon Hawke. Murder mystery. Theme: animal rights.

Cats in detective fiction are nothing new. There is a long-running series of mysteries by Lilian Braun with titles beginning *The Cat Who* ... In each book, the cats help the detective find clues but are not considered sapient. Lydia Adamson uses *A Cat In* ... to title her series. In the *Bunnicula* children's series by James Howe, the stories are told by the family dog, playing Watson to the cat's rather scatty Holmes. Although the cat is the detective, it is not the narrator and the story

is a comedy.

Unlike those books, both *Felidae On The Road* and *Catseve Gomez* have as the viewpoint character a humanized cat that is consciously a detective and that narrates the action. Both are murder mysteries with a theme of animal rights.

Felidae... is a nasty book. *Felidae* is the name of a computer program in the first book; I forgot the cat's name, so for convenience I'll call him *Felidae*. I can't look it up because I threw away the book; it wasn't worth hauling home. The Turkish author has written a vicious ecology polemic against all Western society, symbolized by German society at its worst. Bitter speeches addressed to the reader expand the book to twice its natural length. They are unnecessary because the plot is built around an ecological situation, a misguided attempt to reintroduce the European wild cat to an area near a city where there isn't enough wild prey for them to survive. *Felidae* meets the starving wild cats after he runs away from his loving master's new lady friend who wants to have the cat neutered. In the sewers, *Felidae* observes a mutilated cat body and hears a feral cat legend about an insane black cat that made a pact with a vicious black dog and left the sewers for the woods. Dead cats, mutilated in a specific pattern, float into the sewers; the cats believe that the insane pair are the serial killers. *Felidae* makes his way to the local woods despite being shot at, and encounters an escaped panther and a European wild cat. Finally he solves the mystery, and since I don't recommend the book anyway, SPOILER WARNING, I am going to reveal the details. The official villain is a female European wild cat, but the greater villain is the entire colony, which has been killing domestic cats because they are starving; they don't eat the entire body because they feel guilty. An unexpectedly literate pet cat dyes himself black with water soluble ink and rides a local black sheep at night, using the mythos of the insane cat-dog partnership to hide the real situation from the local farm cats.

In *Felidae on the Road* (note the title allusion to the dead cat standard), the detective cat is primarily an unfeeling, hedonistic user of his owner, but he claims to love him. All the cats have politically correct ecology beliefs and the sewer cats rescue kittens that survive being flushed (apparently standard procedure in Germany for unwanted kittens). The detective's owner is a nerd who has no life beyond a job that pays for cat food. The woman is his first-ever female companion. She dies in a fall the night the cat runs away, by slipping on spilled cat food in a *deus ex machina* created so the author could end the story without having to write the rest of the book. The book would have been better if the author had written the scene where the owner, perhaps less besotted over time, chooses between his miraculously returned cat and his overbearing new companion.

By comparison, *The Nine Lives of Catseve Gomez* by Simon Hawke is pleasant and amusing. This cat is also a free-lance detective, but in a future in which magic works. The intelligent and literate cat is a typical American construct of a small human being with fur; he can even speak English. In an expository chapter he explains that he is a magical mutant, one of many, and his style of narration comes from his fondness for Mickey Spillane detective stories. The story involves a

group of animal rights activists, who have more of a point in a world where some animals really are sapient, speaking beings. The author includes a few lectures as the characters explain their positions, but the cat as viewpoint character points out that the whole animal rights concept is likely to cause as much trouble for animals as it would prevent. Gomez, in partnership with a human detective, does solve the murder. SPOILER WARNING: The mastermind behind the murder is again a female cat. In this case the murderer cat is a pampered magical mutant pet and the detective cat is the feral example.

These two authors use the idea of a cat detective in very different ways. Both authors propose that freedom and wildness are happy ideals while admitting that the domestic cat doesn't do very well on its own. The European author uses it as a base for an ecology and animal rights polemic, using the standard gimmick of making the cats sapient beings who don't talk to humans. The American author uses it to play with the myths of Mickey Spillane, setting up a world in which certain special cats are sapient and can talk, and others are not. While both viewpoint cats speak directly to the reader, the American cat does not lecture. Instead, major points are made in dialogue, and opposing viewpoints are also explored. The larger issue of ecology is sidestepped by having it cleaned up by magic, but the issue of animal rights is explored with some humor and understanding.

I admit that two books is a very small sample. I still feel that these two books demonstrate a current difference between techniques used by European authors and American (and some British) authors. The American technique used here is to distance a topic by transporting it into a far future, make the characters inform the reader by arguing with each other, and lighten the story with humor. In contrast, the Turko-European example is set in the present, filled with direct lectures, and made as grim as possible. The plot carries the message and the incident of the feral cats reiterates it; the lectures are overkill.

Perhaps that level of lecturing is needed to get through to a European audience: I recall some heavy-handed polemics in the US a decade or so ago. To compare a similar situation, I am told that many Europeans still don't understand our objection to smoking in public places, and I noticed how many more people were smokers at the convention in Glasgow than at similar conventions over here. It's been a long time since I smelled cigar smoke coming from a book dealer in an American huckster room. Perhaps I am comparing decades of experience rather than unchanging cultural differences.

[written September, 1995]

Reviews by Ed Meskys

The Princess and the Lord of Night
by Emma Bull

a Jane Yolen book from Harcourt Brace, 1994,
\$14.95, unnumbered oversize pages.

This fairy tale seems to be intended for reading aloud to a 5-year old child. When the Princess was born the Lord of the Night had put a terrible curse on her so that if she ever wanted something she did not get her parents would die

and their kingdom would be destroyed. Over the years she had acquired a number of marvelous possessions, a super-fast horse, an understanding dog, a talking crow, an intelligent cat, and a cloak of invisibility. The story tells how, on her 13th birthday, she used the gifts to help a number of people, and how she broke the magician's spell. The book has lovely (says Sandy) full-page color pictures by Susan Gaber. These appear on alternate pages, and there are color spot illos scattered through the text. The book can be read aloud in about 15 minutes and has the repeating litanies which delight a small child, but perhaps not quite enough of them. The dust jacket shows her wearing her cloak but in the story she carries it in a bag. However the effect of the picture conveys the feeling of the tale.

CAMELOT 30K

by Robert L. Forward

TOR, 1993, 304 pp.

SPOILER WARNING--I GIVE AWAY MANY
ESSENTIAL AND SURPRISING PLOT
ELEMENTS.

This is the third novel by Forward that I have read, the others being his first, *Dragon's Egg* and *Roche World*, as serialized in *Analog*. Like Hal Clement he takes joy in exploring an astronomical body with exotic conditions and speculating on what sort of life could evolve there.

Like *Dragon's Egg*, this starts with a bleak picture of a decaying space program. We have abandoned our telepresence on Mars and are slowly shutting down our base on the moon. We do have a high tech launch facility in orbit—a 4000 km cable along which electromagnetic carts can accelerate small probes at up to 3000 gravities and larger ones at lower rates. A fly-by probe is sent to an interesting newly discovered body in the Kuiper belt just outside Neptune's orbit, and its pictures show definite signs of intelligent life at a temperature of 30 Kelvin. There is utter amazement that any form of life, much less intelligent life, can exist that far from the sun, and limited money is pumped into the space program to investigate further. A cable facility is shipped there to catch probes and launch return samples, and a lander with two-way video communication is sent. The probe establishes communication with a "wizard" or town scholar of a near-by community. The creatures are small crayfish-like crustaceans and have a medieval level of technology. Mankind must learn the alien source of life energy which might help solve our energy crisis. The story opens with the arrival of an international crew of six after a protected but dangerous launch at 30 gravities and a two year voyage.

The humans stay in their lander while two tele-robots in the form of the natives are used to communicate and gather samples. The wizard, called Marlene by the humans, gives them a guided tour of her community while they struggle to learn about the source of the life energy, and the dynamics of how evolution can occur when each colony has an immortal equivalent of a "queen bee" who lays all the eggs.

The tour of the city, called "Camelot" by the humans, reminds me of the utopias of a century ago where the majority of the book is spent by natives explaining to the visitor how the civilization works. Even utopias as recent as Skinner's *Walden II* share this format. The humans

have interesting interactions among themselves, and the cat smuggled aboard as a kitten by one of them, as they gather bits of evidence of how the biology of the planetesimal works. The energy is both cosmic ray energy trapped in the snow and nuclear energy. The life forms can separate out not only pure elements, but even isotopes. The life cycle ends in a nuclear explosion which destroys the city but scatters countless seeds into space which can land back on this cometoid (asteroid with a thick coating of frozen volatiles) or another one in the Kuiper belt. Only Marlene survives the explosion that scatters her community's seeds and at the end she is off on a mission to upset the life cycles of the other communities on her world by preventing the nuclear explosions. I suppose life is sufficiently advanced for evolution to stop, as it has for mankind. Because of medicine and civilization natural selection no longer operates to improve the gene pool. Perhaps, as in Kornbluth's "The Marching Morons," it is actually working to diminish our intelligence.

I do find it difficult to imagine that the lone Marlene will be able to have any significant effect on the rigid medieval society of her world. Despite the long tour of the world and the unlikely ending, I enjoyed this novel very much and do recommend it. The solution of the puzzles is well handled and the solutions are worthy of the problems. Also the humans and Marlene are interesting characters and interact in an absorbing manner.

Sherwood by Parke Godwin
Morrow, 1991, 526 pp., \$20.00

Robin and the King by Parke Godwin
Avonova, 1993, 384 pp., \$5.50

Jackaroo by Cynthia Voigt
Fawcett, 1985, x+288 pp., \$2.95

This generation there must have been 50 different retellings of the story of King Arthur. Now authors seeking new legends to conquer are turning to Robin Hood, among others.

I liked very much Parke Godwin's *Sherwood*. In his intro he explained that there were many who got into trouble with the law and hid in the forest. There was no one person who could be named "Robin Hood" but he grew out of an amalgam of popular tales about many such refugees. The final folk version placed him in the time of Richard the Lion Hearted and King John but, like T.H. White, Godwin placed him in the time right after the Norman conquest. (White's story is an alternate history story where Uther Pendragon is the leader of the Norman Conquest, and the young "Wart" [Arthur] runs into Robin one day.)

I am so used to Arthurian fiction where the Saxons are the bad guys that it is disconcerting to have them the good guys suffering under the yoke of the Normans. I had the same problem with the movie BECKET.

Robin's real name is Edward and he is the thane of the village of Denby in Sherwood Forest. Times are very hard and the French are very cruel in trying to pacify a populace unhappy with their foreign overlords. William has deposed most of the local lords and replaced them with camp-followers he had to reward for their support. The sheriff is a real three-dimensional character who admires yet fights Robin. He ends up marrying Robin's cousin, and Robin marries Marion just before fleeing into the forest. She stays home with his mother while he and a handful of friends hide. Later his mother

is appropriated by Queen Maud as a servant where she acts as a spy until she is discovered and put in a dungeon. The classic stories of stealing the bishop's treasure and winning the golden arrow are included but worked into a really plausible account. This is, actually, an excellent historical novel of the post-Conquest period with the legends of Robin worked in in a very plausible way. In the end Robin helps William and is pardoned and given back his lands.

The book has many good touches and succeeds in conveying a reasonable view of what the mind-set was at that time. For instance, Robin had a Welshman and his wife and children as slaves whom he inherited from his father. When the half-dozen of his hand divide the treasure plundered from the bishop each has unimaginable wealth, £3 in silver coins. The value of a slave is £1.5 and Robin is very bent out of shape when his slave uses his share to buy his and his wife's freedom, finding it inconceivable that he would want to do so. In a tiff Robin points out that the Welshman will have come up with £.5 each to free his three children.

The people are Christian on the surface, going to mass every Sunday, going to confession, turning to the village priest for advice, etc., but many pagan practices have survived. Robin and Marion also undergo a pagan wedding in the forest, and there is a old woman in the village who is a diviner. The only touch of magic in the story concerns some of the pagan resonances in the forest and the scrying of the old woman.

In an afterword the author explains much about the culture of the time and gives other background details. If like me you know little of the time this is a very enjoyable novel which will give you a good feel for what did happen and how.

In the sequel, *Robin and the King*, Robin and William, the king's second son, become good companions. Robin gets into trouble again. He has learned to read and write, and is a very clear thinker. He writes a document claiming under Saxon common law that the people have certain rights under the king and this is taken as treason. He is kept as hostage by the two Williams when they return to France, but is helpful in fighting off some French attacks on the king's holdings. The king's older son is rebellious and leads some of the attacks, but when William I dies he leaves his French holdings to the elder and his British holdings to his middle son, William II. On his deathbed he grants Robin a full pardon. The younger William wants Robin to take a position in court and is angry when Robin refuses in order to return to his people and village. A priest who is chancellor plans to plunder the treasure of the local cathedral for the king and Robin leads one last escapade to steal it first and hide it until there is a new bishop who can be entrusted with it. He and Marion are killed while diverting the posse from the trail of those carrying the treasure.

In a postscript we learn that the gay William II has died without having married and his youngest brother is now Henry I. Robin's son, also named Edward, is part of the group who force the weakened king to sign the precursor of the Magna Carta.

I enjoyed both stories very much and am not such a traditionalist as to be bothered by the variations on the traditional Robin Hood legend.

Look at the variations of the Arthur story which have been written, some really playing fast and loose with the traditional tale, and which are very acceptable. I also was very pleased with the vivid picture of the period.

Cynthia Voigt, an excellent writer of contemporary YA tales, has written a pseudo-historical novel about a Robin Hood-like character, *Jackaroo*. The culture is, for the most part, very British but with differences. There are a number of small kingdoms, something like in Lolah Burford's *The Vision of Stephen* (copyright 1972, reissued by Ace 1979). However there are differences. The kingdom of the story is divided into two earldoms and the heroine is the daughter of an innkeeper. The strangest feature of the society is that it is a capital offense for anyone but the nobility to know how to read and write. The heroine has to accompany the young heir to the earldom and his small son on a mapping expedition to the mountain frontier of their land. They are separated in a blizzard and she is isolated in an abandoned house with the young boy. They must stay there for many days and have to overcome their misunderstandings due to different stations in life and experiences. To pass the time he teaches her to fight with a sword, and to read and write which she must keep secret.

The people have a mythical folk hero, Jackaroo, who plays a Robin Hood-like role. While cleaning out a deceased relative's house she finds a Jackaroo costume: silver mask, blue cape, leather boots, and sword. She decides to use it to right some wrongs. She does not want to marry and says she could marry only someone who has her sympathy for the oppressed. She is helped a lot by a young family servant but because of his lower station she does not see his sympathy until it is rubbed in her nose at the end of the book.

Voigt is an excellent writer and I have enjoyed several of her contemporary novels. This is an interesting story about real people in an interesting society.

Voigt seems to be very careful not to specify a particular time and place for the tale, and I must take it for a totally imaginary land. There are two sequels, each involving descendants of the main character taking place two generations after the last story. They are *On Fortune's Wheel* (Atheneum, 1990, xii+276 pp., \$14.95) and *The Wings of a Falcon* (Scholastic, 1993, x+467 pp., \$4.50). In the first book Voigt mentioned potatoes as a staple crop, but in the later ones makes no mention of them. I assume she did not know that potatoes originated in Peru, and tried to forget her error in the later books.

Finally I must mention one more book, though I did not read it yet. It is *Lady of the Forest* by Jennifer Roberson (Zebra Books, 1992, 755 pp., \$5.99). The late Peter Gilman had recommended it to me and I bought a copy in 1994. Vacaville recorded it but damaged their master tapes before I could get a copy, so will eventually have to get it recorded again. Sandy has read it and says it is quite good, dealing with the women in Robin's band, and while the book is VERY long it covers the events of only three days.

Making Book

by Theresa Nielsen Hayden

NESFA, 1994, 158 pp., trade paperback, \$10.

NESFA published this collection on the occasion of Theresa Nielsen Hayden's being the Boskone fan guest of honor. It is a collection of her best fanzine writings plus correspondence. I especially enjoyed her autobiographical pieces.

The lead article, "God and I," tells of her upbringing in the Mormon church, her disillusionment over its fundamentalist theology and anti-feminist policies, and her provocation of the church elders to excommunicate her. I had known a little about the beliefs of the Mormons but this filled in a great many other details. She made the point that up-state New York in the early 1800s was as much a center of religious flakes as southern California a century later. I believe the 7th-Day Adventists originated in the same general time and area as the Mormons. Anyhow, today the Mormon hierarchy takes a funnymentalist view of the literal truth of the Christian bible and its own scriptures. She finally split with the church when it excommunicated a believing woman who was working for the passage of the ERA. She ended the essay by explaining the "holy underwear of the Lord," a strange custom she only understood in part because she had not yet been initiated in the higher mysteries. It looks to me that the Mormon church has degrees of initiation like the Masons, Grange, and other secret societies. In fact, Theresa mentioned that the founder, Joseph Smith, was a Mason himself and she noticed masonic symbolism in the ritual garb of the hierarchy and in the stonework of an abandoned early community in the midwest.

I remember talking with the late Alva Rogers who had been raised Mormon but who had lost his faith while still quite young. He said that *The Book of Mormon* read like a bad sword-and-sorcery novel with continents rising and sinking and tribes migrating here, there, and everywhere. Someone else described it as the "Lin Carter version of the Bible" which was a hurtful comment on Lin, who unfortunately was not a good writer. Anyhow, this one thoughtful, witty, and fascinating essay is worth the price of the book.

Other essays I loved were about the diagnosis and treatment of her narcolepsy, her being taken behind the scenes at Disneyland by a boyfriend who worked there, with valid insights on the stress on families caused by places like this and giant malls, her guide for copy-editors which she wrote while working for TOR, and an excellent review of the book *American Psycho*. Most of the other items I found enjoyable though her stream-of-consciousness reminiscence of Confederation was disconcerting. Perhaps the problem was that I had to listen to a cassette of someone reading it.

As in the case of Mormonism, I was vaguely aware of the existence of the condition of narcolepsy. Here I learned about how it messes up one's social and professional life, and how most doctors are not interested in working with it. Also only powerful prescription and controlled drugs will relieve some of the symptoms so physicians are reluctant to write prescriptions in fear of running afoul of the Feds. She had to spend time at a research facility in Oklahoma which specializes in the condition and verified that she has it, so prescriptions should no longer be a problem. Also they discovered she had another, equally rare,

sleep disorder. The combination is so unlikely that only one person in ten billion would have it!

NIKKAS columnist and friend Marsha Jones does copy editing for DAW books, and has done so for other publishers over the past 25 years. Thus I have heard many tales of problems from the copy editor's viewpoint. Theresa has to supervise many freelance copy editors for TOR and has come up with a manual of dos and don'ts. The rules and their reasons are quite interesting. My only difficulty was with the tape from Volunteers of Vacaville. She discussed right and wrong spellings of several words and the narrator simply read both words without spelling them on the tape. Anyhow, the rules make a lot of sense and give a good insight into the book production process.

Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* achieved considerable notoriety when one publisher, Simon and Schuster, decided to drop it after editing and printing it, and destroyed all copies uncirculated. The book is extremely grisly and demeaning of women.

The protagonist murders a number of women in horrid detail and with great cruelty. Of course another publisher, Vintage, jumped at the chance to clean up on a book which had already achieved so much free publicity. Theresa did an excellent job of analyzing the plot and background. She totally demolished the book without having to refer to its exploitative aspects. She suspects the author was stuck on a deadline and wrote what he knew was garbage, and was surprised when it was published.

All the essays show wit and insight. The book shows how good fanzine writing can be.

Vurt

by Jeff Noon, 1973

Crown Publishers Inc. (201 E 50 St. NY 10022), 342 pp.

This book has the flavor of a cyberpunk novel but is really a story of drugs and reality, something like Phil Dick's *A Scanner Darkly*, or Chester Anderson's *The Butterfly Kid* without the joy. The blurb said it was a first novel and won the Arthur C. Clarke award.

It is set in England in the middle future and is a novel of drugs and reality. Drugs, called feathers, send you physically into other worlds or realities which have much the taste of some of the virtual realities experienced by the denizens of cyberpunk stories. The worlds range from pastoral retreats to sexual fantasies to bizarre experiences akin to a Phil Dick nightmare. The drugs, like those in the light-hearted *The Butterfly Kid*, not only affect the mind but change reality itself. As in the cyberpunk novels I have read, the future is grungy, with cities run down, roads deteriorated, full of violent gangs and bizarre police enforcing bizarre laws. There is some sort of law of conservation of matter or reality. When a person is stranded in another world, something from that world enters ours. The protagonist is a member of a small cell of druggies who take trips together. His primary sex partner and lover is his sister and before the book opened she had used a very dangerous "yellow feather" and is stranded in another reality. Yellow feathers are extremely rare and for most of the book he is looking for another so he could follow and rescue her. They are accompanied by an alien creature which came through in her place. Since it is illegal to have such a creature they are hounded by the police who kill several members of his group and

several of whom are killed. The druggies are totally immoral and think nothing about killing people or their pets or stealing anything they "need" on the spur of the moment.

The book was a strange experience and I am glad I had it, but I do not think I would look for another like it.

Kim Stanley Robinson's Mars trilogy

Red Mars, 1993, xiv+519 pp., \$11.95 Trade PB

Green Mars, 1994, 535pp., \$12.95 Trade PB

Blue Mars, 1996, 609pp., HC, all Bantam

Arthur C. Clarke's *3001*, del Rey, 1997, 263pp.

These tales of the next thousand years make an interesting contrast. Robinson shows man's colonization of the solar system over the next few centuries, to the first tentative steps to the stars, step by step, invention by invention, with a detailed look at the changes in society with time. Clarke uses the old cliché of a man of today abruptly presented with a distant future and then learning the intervening history. Also, Robinson took seven times as many pages as Clarke, so he had more room to go into specifics.

Robinson assumes that the UN makes a commitment to establish a colony on Mars, sends one individual on the first manned reconnaissance and return, and then sends one hundred colonists who are well tested and prepared. There is one disconcerting chapter set on Mars a couple of decades after the initial landing, and then the story starts with the hundred en route. There are a few brief flashbacks to their training in Antarctica but the story is linear after that. That anomalous first chapter shows one of the "first hundred" fomenting a riot in order to kill a rival for leadership. None of this is clear on first reading, but I only became aware of the meaning of the action much later in the story. I guess it was there to start the story with action and to arouse the reader's curiosity as to just what is happening.

I took Robinson's colors to refer to the changing colors of Mars as terraforming progresses, but it also refers to the political movements among the colonists. Robinson shows irony in referring to the ecological conservatives who want to retain the unspoiled beauty of Mars as Reds, and those who will destroy the original environment in order to make Mars livable as Greens. Blues are the final synthesis of these movements.

I admire some other little touches in the Mars books. A space elevator is built on Mars like that first proposed in 1960 by Yuri Artsutanov, a Russian engineer, and then almost simultaneously put into novels by Arthur Clarke (*Fountains of Paradise*, 1978) and Charles Sheffield (*Web Between the Worlds*, 1979). The colonists name the city at the bottom of the elevator "Sheffield" and the one at the top "Clarke." (Clarke, in an open letter to the SFWA, says that there were at least four independent inventions of the idea, including one by John Isaacs in 1966, the one Clarke saw and which inspired *Fountains*.) Another city is named "Burroughs." I can't remember with certainty but I think there was a "Bradbury" too.

The UN's purpose in sending "the first hundred" is never clear to me. Their job is to establish a viable base as nearly self-sufficient as possible, and prepare the way for others. The Earth

is ruled more and more by great international corporations and they see a possible profit in Mars, and send more people. Many come planning to only stay five years and return, and some do that. Then individual nations start sending loads of colonists to establish nationalistic centers.

Over the years much of the leadership comes from the "first hundred," which includes extremist "reds" and "greens" among its ranks. Many of the characters are well drawn and you can understand their drives and needs, their loves and hates, and, for some, the need to lead. A few decades after the initialization of the colony scientists develop a rejuvenation process which, with repeated use, can extend the lifetime to several hundred years.

The mega-corporations on Earth see Mars as a resource and send great numbers of workers to exploit the world. Those already there see this flood as too much too fast, and say that the planet cannot absorb it without problems. To help transport people to Mars and raw materials back to earth the corporations build a space elevator. Finally the Martians are driven to revolution, in the course of which they destroy the elevator, but the revolution is suppressed. Earth sets out to exterminate the "first hundred" as the leaders of a movement for independence.

Slowly the planet is modified and becomes more nearly habitable without artificial means, especially in the lower valleys. Mountains and valleys are so extreme that mountain tops remain totally uninhabitable and retain much of their original appearance. This eventually allows a compromise of sorts between the reds and greens, except for the most extreme.

Perhaps a century later a fusion drive is developed which cuts the Earth-Mars trip to a few weeks and permits permanent bases from Mercury to the moons of Neptune. Between the longevity treatment and the fusion drive, by the end of the series expeditions take off to explore other star systems using hollowed-out asteroids.

Part of the interplanetary politics is driven by the pollution of Earth and natural disasters that occur there, including new volcanic activity on Antarctica which causes a great mass of ice to slide into the sea and raise the sea level by many meters.

The long view is optimistic, but there is no clear sailing. I like this plausible future which leaves mankind occupying the whole solar system and beginning to conquer the stars. I find the characters believable, the future developments of technology plausible, and the outlook optimistic. I have heard discussions in fandom which indicate that the volumes of water moved throughout the series are impossibly large, and the floods could not occur in that manner. If that is true, I am sorry to hear that there is such a major technical flaw in this hard science fiction series.

In *2001* Clarke and Kubrik had the insane computer HAL kill Frank Poole by setting him adrift in space. A thousand years later he is found and revived. Most of the story is about his learning what happened during the thousand years he was dead. Clarke presents many marvels and wonders but without the details of how they were developed bit by bit it is much harder to believe. Here too the space elevators play a major role, and as in *Fountains* and *Web* the tops of several are eventually connected into a globe circling ring.

Continued on Page 64

LETTERS OF COMMENT

[NOTE: address will be withheld on request or if not present at the head of the letter—ERM]

MIKE ASHLEY

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I must say that this issue contains more variety and more of interest than I've seen in any serious magazine in quite a while.

I'm delighted to see David Shea's tribute to Zenna Henderson, a writer I long believed to be ahead of her time. I know I didn't much like her People stories when I first encountered them. At that time I was heavily into Asimov and Clarke and hard SF, and I found Zenna's work dry. But I came back to them some years later only to realize what I was missing. There are scores, probably hundreds, of good writers out there in the darklands waiting to be rediscovered. My particular favorite is Thomas Burnett Swann, who is unforgivably out of print.

Brian Earl Brown raises a number of good points about Hugos in his letter. I know these have been raised time and again, but the one that particularly strikes me is about the artists. Today artists are better acknowledged than previously but still not enough, and I have long felt that they have influenced and contributed to the popularity and advancement of SF far more, by proportion, than most writers. As a result I'd hate to lose the Hugo award for Best Artist, but think that the other for Best Cover or simply Best Artwork of the Year should be included.

In Anne's parenthetical comment to Buck's letter on page 44 she remarks she doesn't think species other than homo saps can contract AIDS. I have to say I don't know as much as I should about AIDS, but I do know that we have had to inject our cats for HIV and I believe there is something similar to AIDS in the cat world. Perhaps someone can enlighten me if I've misunderstood it.

Most of my time recently has been spent on an index to all anthologies of supernatural horror and fantasy fiction. I've done it with Bill Contento, using his excellent program which he used for his own indices to SF anthologies and uses for *Locus*. The *Supernatural Index* indexes almost 2200 anthologies covering around 25,000 stories written by over 8500 writers. It runs to over 900 pages. It should be out from Greenwood Press sometime in 1995.

I've also compiled an anthology of historical detective stories, *The Mammoth Book of Historical Whodunnits*, and it looks like that has sold well enough for a second volume.

Interestingly a Japanese publisher wanted to reprint the introductions only from my four-volume *History of the Science Fiction Magazine*, and to include the intro to the fifth, unpublished volume. I was happy for them to do this, though remarked that it was odd to bring out a book bringing the history of SF up to only 1975, and offered to bring it up to date. They jumped at that. When I settled down to do my revisions for the original introductions I realized that I wanted to add so much more so I'm currently in the process of completely revising and expanding them. Whether these will ever get an English-language publication I don't know.

JOHN BAXTER

18 rue de l'Odeon
75006 Paris, France.

You suggest 5.25 inch floppies, but they are almost totally unknown here. Are they really being used again in the US? This will be bad news for UK suppliers, who dumped their stocks years ago. Still, George Lucas shot *Star Wars* on VistaVision cameras, which were dumped, along with the whole projection system, years ago, so anything is possible. **[I was using an 11 year old XT when I wrote that. I just got a used 386 with high density drives of both sizes and am working on compatability problems between my speech software and DOS 5.0.-ERM]**

Delighted to see *Niekas* again. It's an impressive piece of work. The sort of fanzine one always imagined might be possible when one was producing fanzines, but which always perished in the face of more quotidian problems, like having page 7 follow page 6, and not vice versa.

What book of mine could have been put on tape, I wonder? Isn't a book on movies for the blind likely to be a drug on the market? Though I'm told some blind people go to the cinema. Is it the popcorn? The only taped book ever sent to me—which doesn't mean no others weren't done—was *The Fire Came By*, a science fact book I did with Tom Atkins when I was teaching in the US in the late seventies, and which Isaac Asimov was kind enough to write an introduction for. Probably as a result of that endorsement, it went into a dozen foreign editions and became one of Leonard Nimoy's *Fantastic Mysteries* or whatever that series was called. **[RFB, an agency specializing in putting text and required reading books for college students and professionals, has recorded your *Science Fiction and the Cinema and Hollywood in the '30s*. Blind persons become interested in general cultural phenomena from hearing about it on radio and TV and from friends, and will want to experience what they can by going with a sighted friend who can cue them in on the action. Older movies could be followed from just the dialogue. About 300 movies are available on videotape with voice-over descriptions of the action.—ERM]**



My latest books are biographies of Federico Fellini and Luis Buñuel. I've just about finished a biography of Steven Spielberg, after which I launch into Stanley Kubrick—on whom I'm collecting material now, if you know any stories.

Lerner, by the way, has missed the point of Jan Morris's *Last Letters from Hav*—or one of the more important points anyway. I had a chance to discuss it with her at length a few years ago, and she agreed it had a great deal to do with human sexuality, and her own novel experience as one of the first surgical transsexuals. The mazes and the Roof Race, a paradigm of aimless physical activity, the intricate and highly phallic House of the Chinese Master, described by D.H. Lawrence as, "a hideous thing. Restless, unsatisfied," but on the eighth floor of which Freud lived for a time, commenting "It is as though I have lived within the inmost cavity of a man's mind"... There are all sorts of hints, if you think about.

RUTH BERMAN

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Thomas M. Egan laments that "homosexual cults, flag burning, abortions, are all signs of a lack of real beliefs"—isn't he too young for the classic old-foggy complaint about how Things Aren't What They Used to Be?

Some additional examples of funny SF—Eleanor Arnason's most recent novel, *Ring of Swords*, is a wonderful send-up of military SF, although the humor is a very quiet sort, no satire or farce. (In fact, sometimes I think that one of the most interesting kinds of humor is the kind where the joke is that it *isn't* funny. In the case of *Ring*, it would be giving away too much of the plot to explain how that applies, but a smaller example from her previous book, *A Woman of the Iron People*, is the moment when the frightening persuers who have been getting closer and closer catch up—and turn out to want to hear an explanation before they start swinging their vengeful weapons, and as the explanation turns out to be convincing and satisfactory, they accept it and leave. That's funny, because that's not what the reader expects, but it's also not funny, because it's kept emotionally involving, and the realization that this resolution is more likely than the stereotyped one, is a serious matter. So it's not funny—and that's what's funny about it.)

Most of the *Dr. Who* episodes are funny in various ways (especially in the later Tom Baker sequences, which include some written by Douglas Adams [Douglas Adams never actually wrote for *Dr. Who*. He was story editor—AJB]), and so were some of the *Star Trek* episodes. J.R. Madden (and Anne Braude) are probably right in observing that there are more comic fantasy stories than comic SF. No doubt one reason for the difference is that a basic ingredient in comedy is distortion of the familiar, and fantasy, which is older, is necessarily the more familiar—and, also, to the extent that SF draws from new research, it has to be unfamiliar. A TOR editor at a recent Minicon talked about how the backgrounds of fantasy are in fact *too* familiar to be interesting, and she thinks fantasy now has to draw from Asian, African, or Native American mythologies to be interesting. I think that the assumption that European mythologies can no longer be used interestingly is nonsense, but it's true that having a greater variety

of backgrounds in use is a benefit. Of course, an additional factor there is that what is lumped together as European mythological material includes many cultures, many of them little known. Avram Davidson's wonderful *Adventures of Dr. Eszterhazy* (recently gathered together by Owlswick Press) and his *Peregrine* books drew on a background of Balkan and later-Roman-empire history (and assorted others, tossed into the stew). They're also very funny—I'm not sure what that suggests in terms of comedy-and-the-familiar.

DAINIS BIENIEKAS

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My spies tell of a Russian language sequel to *Lord of the Rings*, *Ring of Darkness* by Nik Perumov, some 1500 pages in two volumes. I do not have more information except that it is said to end in Final Catastrophe, which cannot be since this is Middle-earth and is manifestly still here. Must be some alternate universe. I have some hope of a copy reaching me before Mythcon, but my Russian from college is a trifle rusty.

C.W. NED BROOKS

Don't know whether Zenna Henderson is forgotten or outgrown but I remember reading her "People" stories and have no desire to reread them. The next generation of fans who might have enjoyed them mostly grew up watching TV and read little. One of my sister's kids reads SF. He got through all he could find of Philip Jose Farmer and started on Zelazny. Seems backwards to me.

RICK BROOKS

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Dear Ed: "Haunted Subway" appeared in *Classic Pulp Fiction Stories*, #19, December '96. "First Patrol" appeared in *Super Science Stories*, #5, December '97. The latter is my attempt to do a Doc Smith-type yarn. I have placed over 20 stories with *Classic Pulp Fiction Stories*, *Super Science Stories*, *Weird Stories*, and *Double Danger Tales*. Only get paid in copies. But since a copy costs five bucks plus a dollar postage, I get to read other people's stuff for free. The mags are basically 5.5 by 8.5 inches, sheets of 8.5 by 11 folded once and stapled in the center. Tom and Gordon Johnson have put out nearly 100 issues of *Echoes*, the pulp fiction fanzine. So they understand the finances of small scale publishing.

Glad you liked my diary/reminiscences. Actually I keep a journal and use parts of that for correspondence notes.

The Grub and Stakers mysteries are by Lisa Craig, a pen name of Charlotte MacLeod. I like Georgette Heyer's mysteries.

I am way behind on *Analog* too. The problem is that I have trouble getting into the stories. Can't stay interested in most of them. The last time I tried several issues of *Isaac Asimov's*. I was unable to read any of the stories through. I am afraid that the sf field started diverging from me in the sixties. I still think that sf peaked in the forties and that the 1942 issues of *ASTOUNDING* have more good stories than all the sf mags published in the last ten years.

Gripping Hand was as good as *The Mote in God's Eye*. This one takes us into the space around the Motie world.

My sister Betty and I both enjoy *Diskworld*. Fortunately the Science Fiction Book Club has most of them. The *Hogfather* hardcover is nearly forty dollars, more than we want to pay.

Read NIEKAS 44. AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, and several of the *Entropys*.

Enjoyed the book reviews in NIEKAS, although dated. I found several that I'll keep an eye out for. I quit reading *Locus* mainly because I was unable to read most of the books they praised. They had a guy who reviewed short fiction. He reviewed two issues of *Analog* in which he only liked one story. I read every story in those two issues except the one he liked. I got about half way through it and skipped to the end.

I find Andy Porter's comment that younger readers find sf over 20 years old unreadable interesting. My problem is just the opposite. I find most modern sf unreadable. Very frustrating. I've loved sf all my life and now my love has changed so much that I can no longer see anything in her. Depressing too.

I've ran into a couple members of pulp fandom that duplicate old pulp magazines. I traded a batch of *Captain Future* yarns for *Shadow* stories. One fellow even sells facsimiles of *The Shadow* and *Weird Tales* as well as other magazines. No color covers, but the text is complete.

Almost like old times corresponding with you and Ned Brooks again. Been ages since I heard anything about John Boardman. From what I read in NIEKAS, he's still got the same job and going about his life the same way. Not what I expected after he came out of the closet and revealed himself a right-wing Nixon supporter.

I read about 1000 words a minute. In high school, I was able to peak at 1200. Be a come-down to only get about 200 or 400.

Right now, I probably have more books and mags than I'll ever read. My idea of Social Security.

James Blish and CS Lewis forgotten authors? I am out of touch. How many people remember Arthur J. Burks?

John Boardman's article is already obsolete. I think his fallacy was that he assumed our science is complete or nearly so. There may be a lot of science that we don't know.

I think the main reason people treat Sam Moskowitz as a primary source is that he didn't footnote a lot. If he had though, his books probably wouldn't have been published. Wish I could afford the reference books that Sam Moskowitz mentions. A pity his book on John Campbell was never published. Ditto the one on Gernsback and *SF Plus*.

I wish I knew more about Conrad Ruppert. Sam mentions that he was from Angola, IN, and was a printer who published the Weinbaum memorial volume. Couldn't find any info here on his early days in Angola so far.

Like Arthur Hlavaty. I see no sense in icons. I worked on a Macintosh computer for a few months. I hated having a folder icon for each bit of technical writing instead of a straight forward list.

Funny sf writers: Eric Frank Russell and Chris Anvil come to mind. Jack Sharkey's *It's Magic, You Dope*. I'm reading *Han Solo and the Lost Legacy* by Brian Daley, a Star Wars book. A chase scene early in the book that I laughed out loud at.

Re: *Entropy* 18: *Analog* and *Asimov's* both cut back to 11 issues a year a few months back. At least *Analog* combined July/August as a double size issue.

Your remark in *Entropy* 17 that Mars would be the easiest to terraform may not be true. I read a book on terraforming (not sure of title or author—(*New Earths* by Oberg?) that stated the moon would be. Smaller and can build up an atmosphere easier. Lot of water on Saturn's moons. The author thought that it would take on the order of ten thousand years for the moon to lose its new atmosphere. Easier by far would be the O'Neill cylinders.

Entropy 15: I have a copy of the book on the subway system with the 700 miles in the title. Got it for 50 cents at our Friends of the Library's used book sale. But it is packed away somewhere and will take me a while to find.

I've been in fandom about 40 years. I started as an sf collector by mail, got into fanzines, but don't think I met another fan until the 1960 Pittcon. The Tolkien stuff in *Entropy* 12 brought back memories. I started a Tolkien zine, *Nargothrond*. You and I both got hooked on the history aspect and I wrote an article on it for the first issue. Unfortunately Al Thompson graduated before the second issue. He and his wife published all the issues, and we parted due to major differences on how they handled the next two issues. They wanted a Trekkie zine.

You write about a lots of fans that I hadn't heard of in years. I pretty well became inactive when Father was ill in 1974 and '75, and when Mother died in 1986 and '87. Didn't do a lot in between. Right now, I'm an N3F member and mostly active in pulp mag fandom.

Read *Cold Steel* by Alice Tilton (Phoebe Atwood Taylor), a mystery from 1939. Detective is Leonidas Witherall, an ex-schoolteacher called Bill because he looks like Shakespeare.

Read *Field Trip*, a Star Trek Deep Space Nine book. *Planet Run* by Gordon Dickson and Keith Laumer. *The War with Mr. Wizzle* by Gordon Korman. *The Zucchini Warriors* by Gordon Korman. *Spiderman: the Lizard Sanction* by Diane Duane.

Read *On this Rock* by Ralph McInerney. *Sherlock Holmes and the Golden Bird* by Frank Thomas. *and Passion Play: A Season with the Purdue Boilermakers and Coach Gene Keady* by Mark Montieth.

Read *The Maze in the Heart of the Castle* by Dorothy Gilman, a juvenile fantasy, and *Startling Science Stories* 1 and 3.

I got copies of the November issues of *Classic Pulp Fiction Stories*, *Double Danger Tales*, *Weird Stories*, and *Startling Science Stories*. Each has a story of mine in it.

Read *Every Crooked Nanny* by Kathy Hogan Trochek. *Double Danger Tales* 10, and *Startling Science Stories* 3 & 4.

DR. WHO has been set back from 10 pm Saturday to midnight. A bit hard to watch some nights.

Read *Star Ka'aats and the Plant People* by Andre Norton and Dorothy Madlee. *The Magic Cave* by Ruth Chew, and *Time of the Great Freeze* by Robert Silverberg..

Read *Yon Ill Wind* by Piers Anthony. A good story flawed by bad puns.

Read *Double Danger Tales* 10. *Classic Pulp*

Fiction Stories 30, Weird Stories 14, and Startling Science Stories 4.

Read *Maskerade* by Terry Pratchett.

Read *Death of an Angel* by Richard and Frances Lockridge, a Pam and Jerry North mystery.

Edward R. Hamilton Books has a knitting book: 56849X *Knitting With Dog Hair: A Woof-to-Warp Guide to making Hats, Sweaters, Mittens, and Much More* by K. Crolus and A. B. Montgomery. A creative answer to that vexing canine shedding. Includes instructions on how to collect, clean, and store pooch's fur, how to find an experienced spinner, as well as modify patterns to accommodate pet spun yarn. illus. 101 pages. St. Martins. paperbound. pub at \$9.95. \$4.95.

Maybe all that sitting there knitting does things to some people's minds.

Re-read *Manhattan Transfer* by John E. Suth. He's one of the few writers that came up in the last ten years that I enjoy reading.

Read *The Dagger of Tsiang* by Hugh B. Cave, a collection of pulp adventure stories.

The Harriers: Book One: War and Honor by Gordon Dickson with Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, SN Lewitt, & Steve Perry. *The Listening Ear* by Patricia Wentworth, a Miss Silver mystery.

Having a black cat cross your path is supposed to be bad luck. The other day when I came back from taking out the garbage, a black cat crossed my path 6 or 7 times. Dinah was feeling playful. After dark, I'll be sitting here typing and suddenly realize that about two feet away, a couple of yellow eyes are hanging in space beside my head. Dinah on the dresser on the porch outside the window. Still gives me a bit of a start when I'm concentrating on something else.

Read *Death had Grey Eyes* by Walter Gibson in the April '45 *Shadow Magazine*

Read *Neptune Crossing: Volume One of The Chaos Chronicles* by Jeffrey A. Carver. *The Sword of Samurai Cat* by Mark E. Rogers. *Target* by Janet Morris and David Drake. *Samurai Cat Goes to the Movies* by Mark E. Rogers. *And So To Murder* by Carter Dickson, and *The Gamage Cup* by Carol Kendall.

Read *Niekas 44, After All These Years* by Sam Moskowitz, and part of the January *Analog*

Read *Blue Ghost* and *Blue Ghost Beware* by Myles Hudson. *Pulp Art* by Robert Lesser, and *Echoes #96, Pulp Art* is a great picture book. A lot of those old pulp magazine covers in full color.

BUCK COULSON

Most midwestern used bookstores that I've been in set minimum prices on their books, whatever the original list price was. I do the same thing at my huckster's table, so it seems fair enough to me, and doesn't discriminate against older books. Two facts do discriminate against them, however. First, the older books are skinnier and prospective buyers feel they are getting less for their money. Second, the writers of those books are unknown to modern readers, and I know from experience that today's fans hesitate to take a chance on an author they don't recognize. I suspect that non-fan readers are even less likely to try a "different" author. So the stores that refuse to accept the older, low-priced books may well be acting from strictly commercial motives; they

don't want the older books because they can't sell them, and defining them by list price is an effort to keep things simple for their employees, most of whom don't know or care anything about particular authors.

America's small farmers were driven into bankruptcy, or sold out for what they could get; my father was one of them. But there was nothing deliberate about it, as there was about Soviet collectivization. The Depression wasn't even restricted to the US, though a casual reading of articles about it would lead you to think so. It was world-wide, and the loss of small farms in the US was relatively trivial, compared to the Depression-fueled rise to power of Hitler and Mussolini. I don't know if the depression also brought Stalin to power; I've never read anything specifically about Depression influences in Russia. Certainly it had an effect, but what the effect was, I don't know.

Inflation in Russia may be high, but inflation in Brazil and Argentina has been higher. The US press seldom bothers to report on any western hemisphere country to our south, but we fans have other sources of information. So far, the US government hasn't been very interested in Latin America except when refugees try to come here for a better life and are turned back, but Brazil is a pretty big country to ignore.

Juanita thoroughly enjoyed the Deborah Tannen book and the review of it.

For F. Gwynplaine MacIntyre; bookstores are giving less space to back-issue magazines because they don't sell. I have about three boxes of digest STF mags from the 1950s and 1960s and I'd love to sell, since they're duplicates, but I've long since given up taking them to conventions; nobody ever bought enough of them to pay for the work of hauling them around. The one used-magazine dealer I offered them to hasn't answered. I haven't yet come to the point of bundling them up for paper recycling, but I'm getting there.

Heinlein may have deliberately sold poorer stories to cheaper markets—so have a lot of other authors. But his "Anson MacDonald" pseudonym was for good stories that weren't part of his "future history" series. For some time he restricted his own name to stories in that series. (And judgements of poorer versus good fiction are largely in the eye of the beholder.)

There was one TV movie made from Zenna Henderson's work. I didn't recall the title; Juanita says it was *The People*. Ran in 1971. Kim Darby, Dan O'Herlihy, Diane Varsi, William Shatner. Not a great success, but a good adaption of Henderson's general ideas though not of any particular story. (Once Juanita provided a title, I could find it in Leonard Maltin's *TV-Movie Book*).

THOMAS M. EGAN

The bacover by Robert H. Knox was a fine piece of devilry. It's like a Halloween celebration gone into surrealism. The Horned Goat has a machine quality that makes it even more evil under the "Midnight Sun" and dark goblin-scarecrow figures rising to threaten a very weird landscape. Satisfying to tease our terror of the unknown but not bestial. No Freddy Krueger or Jason of Crystal Lake here

GRACE FUNK

RR #1

Fumby BC V0E 2G0

I am sorry to have been so long in sending you my comments, but the perfect excuse is printed right at the beginning of the issue. Anyone who enjoys reading always has more on hand than he or she can handle. Once a seller of used books pointed out to me a number of recent additions to her shelves and told me that she had the books at home for personal reading but "I'm not going to live long enough." I'm glad to read your opening article, "Efficiency," since it introduces me to your life and circumstances.

I own and enjoy rereading all four of Zenna Henderson's titles and am glad to see her written up.

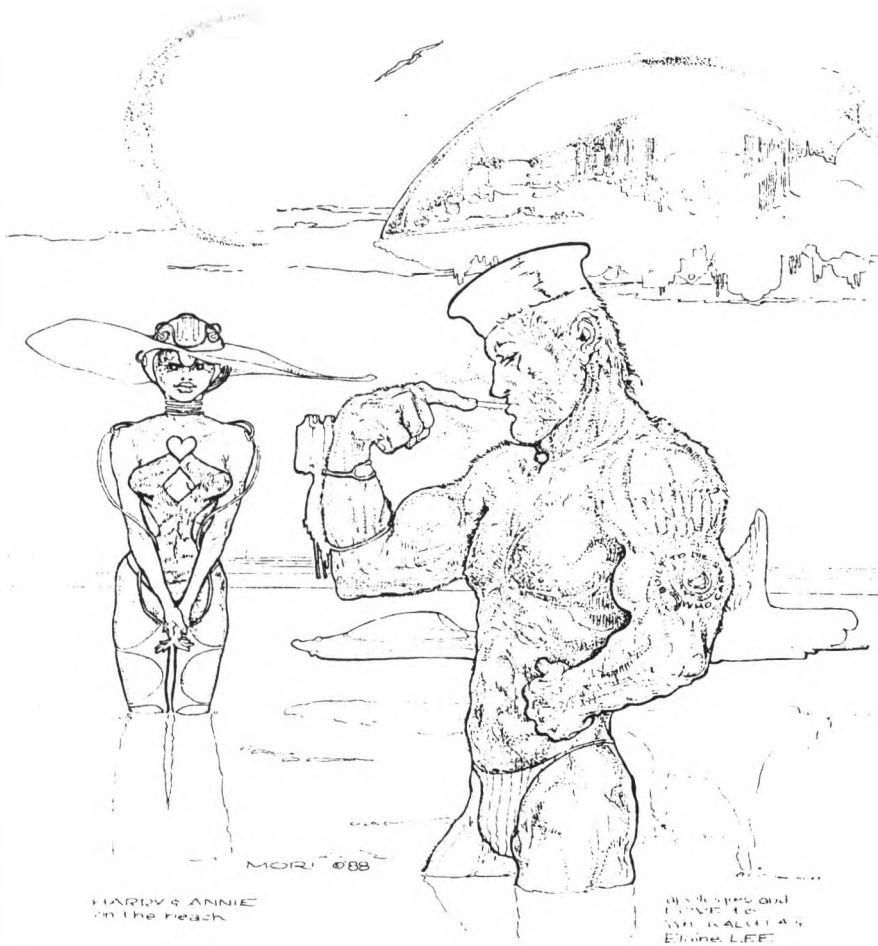
C.S. Lewis is a forgotten author???? [NESFA, the club which puts on Boskone, picked a number of authors who have been dead for over a decade, were once very popular, and who are rarely discussed in science fiction circles today. Lewis is, of course, still a major topic in Mythopoeic and Christian circles. ERM]

I have a habit I acquired during my years as a librarian of photocopying reviews and pasting them into books. This single issue has given me seven such reviews. Never mind that the reviews are a little after the fact. If I've read the book already I can disagree or agree with the reviewer. If I haven't I am informed or reminded that I might do so.

Many of the letters raise interesting points. Some of them read like APAZines, too full of inner circle references to be appreciated by the uninitiated. I do not read horror or dark fantasy nor do I watch science fiction films nor even *Star Trek* so some of the commentaries passed me by.

I attended Conadian, the Worldcon in Winnipeg last September, as I believe you did also. I am curious how you found Conadian. The planning must have been better than at some of the earlier Worldcons, judging by some of the letters in *Niekas*. Perhaps the numbers were not so large. Maybe fans from the U.S. are scared off by the Canadian customs who confiscate their guns. The almost frantic warnings in the advance information to leave guns at home always amuses me. [I guess the fanatical ravings of the National Rifle Association give everyone outside the states the impression that we are all gun-toting cowboys reliving our frontier days. From the ferocity of their attacks the officers of the N.R.A. must be perverts who practice self-abuse while fondling their Uzis and are afraid of losing their stimulation. Canada shared our frontier society so I am mildly surprised that it doesn't share our cowboy ethic. I was amused by Arthur Clark's passing remark about the insane gun craziness present only in the U.S. in his autobiographical *Asounding Days*. ERM]

could easily follow the printed program. I attended every session that I wished to, including the Pern Gather, the awards presentation, and the masquerade. It is true that not all the sessions were worth while when I got to them but that's normal for a big con. Little things impressed me like the yellow rosette hall awards to people in costume, professional photographs of the masquerade costumes available for purchase, the beautiful costumes on display, a twice-daily news sheet, careful monitoring of the far-too-long autograph



HARVEY'S ANNIE
on the beach

unleashed and
LOVE TO
WH. KALUAY
Elaine LEE

lineups, really good things in the dealers' room, admittedly among lots of other junk (some fans like junk). So I stood in line for an hour. Anne McCaffrey did autograph my book. Not everyone was so lucky. After three hours she finally gave out physically.

Conadian was my second worldcon. At its conclusion I decided I am not really a fan, just a reader.

TEDDY HARVIA
701 Regency Dr.
Hurst TX 76054-2307

Some women seem to have a vested interest in perpetuating the lack of communication between the sexes. Not a few have told me that men can never understand or appreciate what it is to be female because they are male. What they ignore is that men and women are not opposites. They have much in common. Mis-communication is part of the human condition. Many factors contribute to it.

Randy Moore's crisp pen-and-ink fillos leap off the page. The ability to visually imply the existence of a whole from a partial rendering is a difficult one to master. Too many artists overdraw.

FRED HERMAN
112-15 72 Rd apt 409
Forest Hills NY 11375

Will the Japanese dominate space colonization? Well, since you posed the question Japanese economic power seems to have evaporated somewhat, so it seems less likely. Then, again, Japan does seem to be the only other high technology nation with a pop culture interest in space. So I'd certainly not find it implausible.

I tend to suspect that space colonies aren't going to be built by anybody until nano-technology makes it significantly easier, despite the efforts of groups like the "First Millennial Foundation" and "National Space Society."

John Boardman's "Nihil Humanum" made an interesting case against the likelihood of interstellar travel in the short term, but seems to end up pointing right at what Charles Pellegrino has been writing about for some time now, antimatter drives. See Pellegrino's *Flying to Valhalla* and *The Killing Star* with George Zebrowski, in which he has been able to make .92c. So I don't know. I kind of like the serendipity of Pellegrino's projection of star travel becoming reasonable around 2050, about 10 to 15 years after Vernor Vinge expects immortality and other forms of nano-tech magic to hit.

BEN INDICK

I was moved by your lead article, so uncomplaining, as I have grown to expect, knowing you. I wish you time and patience to be able to read some of your accumulating books and journals. Fred Lerner's article about Heinlein is also enjoyable, as he saw a quibblesome and self-infatuated man who thought his every word and act important.

My mother passed away in Spring, 1994. My dad had died 27 years ago. She was 15 years his junior, and about 85 or 86 at the time of her death. I think of her frequently. She had fled to Florida on his death and had lived there since, but unwell for some time. To my regret I was unable to convince her to return here.

Now she shares my father's grave site. Many Jews visit the graves of their people annually, at the time of the High Holy Days. I have been slack in this regard, only going to the worn and unattractive cemetery when one of my relations is added to the crowded ranks. I confess I am hard-pressed to remember the row where my father lies, or even the site of my beloved youngest brother, gone but unforgotten these past 51 years. At my mother's funeral, however, I noticed a tall man stared at each other briefly, whom I am certain Philip Roth, the writer. His recent book *Patrimony* was about his father, characteristically unsentimental, yet deeply moving, and their early life in Elizabeth, NJ, my home town also, and the site of the cemetery. He was tending to a grave, surely his father's. I was shamed. My father has been there so long, and, even longer, my brother, another wonderful uncle my children could have had, a father of nephews and nieces I could have had. Roth's father had always defended his brilliant son of a charge common among his Jewish readers, myself included, of his being a "anti-Semitic Jew." They were annoyed over Roth's youthfully caustic views of such gauche practices as the famous wedding table smorgasboard swan made of chopped liver in *Goodbye Columbus*, and the sex-possessed Portnoy, forgotten today but a best-seller a few decades ago, who did not endear himself as an example of enlightened Jewry to co-religionists.

Incidentally, even if the man with whom I exchanged glances that sad day at Gornel Chesed Cemetery was not Philip Roth, his presence helped persuade me that I must visit the cemetery annually at the very least. I believe it was Roth that I saw, and that his was the act of a loving son.

Pride makes me add that my son's new opera, HARVEY MILK, concerning the politician and gay leader who, along with the mayor of San Francisco, was murdered in the latter's office some 15 years ago, will be premiering in Houston in January, 1995, and at New York City Opera Company, Lincoln Center, in April; Michael has used his own strong sense of Jewish identity to better understand the life of his subject.

JACQUELINE LICHTENBERG
Vantage Point
8 Fox Lane
Spring Valley NY 10977

Here's an item I think is important. Four folk albums by Theodore Bikel have recently been re-mastered onto CD and he says that if these sell well the publisher will re-master the rest. Do please help spread the word.

Many *Star Trek* fans don't know that Theodore Bikel is a world famous folk singer with fifteen best-selling record albums to his credit in addition to being one of the most respected actors in TV, theater, and film. His credits include *The Enemy Below*, known to Trekkers as the film echoed by the Trek episode "Balance of Terror." [He also played Teyve in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*.—TF]

He sings in at least fifteen languages, and many dialects. He sings the heart and soul of people and places far away and "alien" to us and makes them real, immediate, and understandable. He says of himself, on the album jacket of *Songs of a Russian Gypsy*, "For me the whole business of folk-business is a very personal matter and if I am to talk about it I can only do so in terms of immediate—sometimes intimate—personal experience." The notes on his album covers reveal more than I think he knows. I have no idea yet if these notes are reprinted with the CDs, or if the CDs have the same pamphlets with the songs translated.

I feel that every science fiction fan should have a deep understanding of Theodore Bikel's work, not just because he played Wort's human father in the next generation *Trek*—or Ivanova's Rabbi uncle in *Babylon 5* come to give her spiritual counseling when her father died, but because these two roles are typical of what science fiction is about—communication across a vast intercultural gulf—and at the same time typical of what Theodore Bikel seems to be about.

Born in Vienna in 1924, he emigrated to Israel (then Palestine) in 1938 to live on a kibbutz. In 1943 he left the kibbutz to join the (now) world famous Habimah Theater and in 1945 became the co-founder of the Tel Aviv Chamber Theater. In '46 he studied at England's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. And in the 49 years following he has appeared on a vast number of top TV shows. Today he is ranked as one of the finest character actors in the business.

He has become a noted scholar of the folksong. The album jacket of *The Best of Bikel* says, "Since the era Bikel began, folksongs in any language are apt to appear in the repertoire of most practicing folksingers." Bikel is a name mentioned in the same breath with Pete Seeger, the Weavers, and Josh White.

Now with the issue of the re-mastered records on CDs, the newest *Star Trek* fans can hear "Wort's human father" sing of humanity as the young Wort must have heard him and maybe come to understand why Wort turned out to be the kind of adult he is. This music may show why Ivanova's personal sensitivity and innate dignity survived the tragedies of her life. In these songs, I hear the strength and vibrant love we need in order to venture "where no man has gone before."

Four of his records have been reissued on CD by Bainbridge Records, 11300 W. Olympic, LA CA 90044. All sell for \$10.98.

Songs of a Russian Gypsy
Theodore Bikel Sings Jewish Folk Songs
Theodore Bikel Sings More Jewish Folk Songs
Theodore Bikel Sings Yiddish Theater and Folk Songs

On a more personal note, I've sold a vampire story (supernatural good-guy, action non-horror) to *Galaxy Magazine*, a revival of the old *Galaxy Magazine*, "Vampire Fast" and it appeared as a

two-part serial in the first two issues, January and March, 1994. It is supposed to also appear in the audio version of excerpts of the magazine. I also sold them a sequel about the same characters, "True Death," slated to appear soon. To subscribe or for single issues write to *Galaxy Magazine*, POB 370, Nevada City CA 95959.

I have contracted for *Galaxy Magazine* to issue two previously unpublished novels to come out as profusely illustrated, numbered, signed limited editions for about \$125 each. The novels are *Boxmaster* and *Boxmaster's Disgrace*. These are galaxy spanning space adventures in my style. The main point of view character is a nonhuman who has joined an all-human guild, the Boxmaster's Guild. He is apprenticed to a human known as the best in the guild, and is immediately entangled in the complexities of intergalactic politics—only to discover that the key to making sense of all that is happening is intergalactic politics. But this is not a political novel—it is the story of a human discovering the humanity within a very non-human person, and discovering just how mind-blinding human sexuality can be.

Also *Galaxy* will issue as an affordable trade paperback *Never Cross a Palm With Silver*. This is a non-fiction work on the Tarot, the first installment in *The Not So Minor Arcana*, the book I have been discussing at many esoteric conventions for ten years. This one is aimed at beginners who know little or nothing about Tarot and are looking for someone to read Tarot for them. It is a very short book, and will form the first part of the longer work on the Tarot.

I have completed the rough draft of a double-length (250,000 words) of the third Boxmaster novel *Boxmaster's Home*. It has a lot more about the domestic life of the Kethsem aliens than is given in the first two books.

My very short story in an early *MZB Fantasy Magazine*, "Aventura," is in *The Best of Marion Zimmer Bradley's Fantasy Magazine* from Warner Books.

I have developed a pen name for a new line of exciting adventure books totally different from anything I have published before. My contract with the publisher does not allow me to reveal the pen

name or book titles to my regular readers. The first book was published in October, 1993 and the second in April, 1994. I have written another novel for that byline in a second universe, with a potential for three sequels. I have finished the first novel in the third universe for that byline which my agent is now marketing. All these titles are action, action, action.

We plan to move one of these years. If ever POB 290 does not answer, try one of my publishers, my agent, Richard Curtis, or ask any member of SFWA to forward mail to me. I don't want to lose touch with anyone.

Jean Lorrain and I both taught in the official writing workshop at Worldcon '93. We continue to do such workshops at the regionals we attend. I am definitely planning on LA in '96.

Enterprising Women, a non-fiction work about Trek and media fandom, mentions me and my circle repeatedly. There is still a chance that my book, *Star Trek Lives!* will be reprinted.

Live long and prosper!

ETHEL LINDSAY

I like the reviews make very rewarding reading. I also enjoyed your opening remarks covering such a period of time and the way you put so many events in real perspective.

John Boardman's article reminded me that at Intersection I was told that the Japanese were planning a rocket ship to take passengers up into orbit and then circle the earth, and that they thought they could make this pay for itself. You could say that's a start.

I am off to attend the Bouchercon Sept. 27. Joseph T. Major's remarks on the organizing of Worldcons lead me to tell you about the city of Nottingham where the Bouchercon is being held. The city has a "Conference Nottingham Ltd.," solely aimed at any group-organizers who would bring a meeting to their city. All joining fees and hotel arrangements are done by them without charge. They have a full-time staff who deliver a marvelous service. I have seen their staff on the registration desks. They lay on busses with attendant staff to any program item outside the con venue. With all this help available why British



fandom are using London Docklands and London Heathrow I cannot imagine.

This year's Bouchercon is only the second big mystery con here. The annual mystery con draws about 200 attendees. This one will have 700. I am avidly watching mystery fandom and comparing it with the growth of SF fandom and wondering if it will end up the same. At least there is no move so far to have costume parades. And long may this continue!

J.R. MADDEN

7515 Sheringham Ave.

Baton Rouge LA 70808-5762

For a while I had two Rex Rotary M4 mimeographs and one A.B. Dick 320 Duplicator offset press in my home office, but the reality of life today made it apparent that I would never run them again. However I was able to find a home for them...Russia. I transported the devices, paper, stencils, and other miscellaneous other items to Shreveport LA and the Broadnoor Methodist Church. That church has a close relationship with the new Methodist congregation in Ekaterinburg, Russia. All the materials were crated up and shipped over for use of the new congregation. I wonder what they will think when they read the little stickers affixed to the mimeograph. One label reads "Ned Brooks Memorial Mimeograph" while the other has a similar inscription.

ANDRE NORTON

I want to thank you for sending the copy of NIEKAS #44 which contained the two excellent reviews of my work. I was especially glad to get that of *Mark of the Cat* since the publishers let that book die a sorry death and were not interested in the sequel which was already in outline. This was a frustrating disappointment, as you may guess, since the sequel now has little chance of ever appearing and the whole difficulty was due to a personal clash which had nothing to do with me except as a bystander.

ED O'BRIEN

68 Hunt Lake Ave.

Titusville NJ 08560

I was impressed by NIEKAS' maturity, balance, and scholarship. Ann Braude's essay, "The Kipling Legacy," is one of the best literary essays I've ever seen in fandom. It should have been published in *The Atlantic Monthly* or *Harper's* for it is a thoroughly enjoyable performance.

Marge Simon's artwork for "The Lonely Witch of the Southwest" was well done. It reminded me of Joe Mugnaini's illos for Ray Bradbury's short stories back in the '60s. The same strange, vaguely disturbing effect with the sun or moon in the sky.

DAVID PALTER

Arthur Hlavaty notes that he has enjoyed the writing of John Dalmas as has been influenced by Rod Martin, and would be interested in reading Don Martin's writing. As it happens I have some acquaintance with Rod Martin and have read some of his self-published writing. Rod does not write fiction (and you should be aware that Martin-Dalmas collaborations are written entirely by John Dalmas, based on Rod Martin's ideas) but is, rather, the chief theorist of a neo-Scientological group known as the Infinity Dynamics Association

(Indyn for short). I last heard from Rod in 1988 so I'm not sure that my address for him is still current but you can try writing to him at P O Box 2993, Hollywood Ca 90078.

J.R. Madden raises the question of humor in SF and its relative scarcity, in comparison with fantasy. Robert Sheekley's novel *Mindswap* is a memorable work of humorous SF (and some of his short fiction is even funnier). Arthur Brian Cover has written some little-known novels, *An East Wind Coming* and *The Platypus of Doom*, which are funny in a very surrealistic way. L. Ron Hubbard's ambitious final work, the ten-volume *Mission Earth* series, is certainly intended to be funny; however, the satire is far too heavy-handed, and reads more like the excessive tirade of a disordered mind than a work of humor (I was able to get through two and a half volumes of it before I had to give up). On the whole SF seems to be a rather serious genre, and yet is a very rich field for parody as well, particularly in the movies. But humor about SF is quite a different subject than humorous SF.

David Travis criticizes Anne Braude for supposedly having said that those who read for plot are the lowest form of reader, and Anne defends herself, but neither of them remembers that it was in fact Jane Yolen who made the comment in question. Specifically she was objecting to my own short article in the Arthurian issue, in which I said that I had read too many Arthurian novels all having the same plot, and I was tired of it; Jane therefore denounced me as the lowest form of reader. I want to mention that although I said in my article that I was not going to read *The Mists of Avalon* by Marion Zimmer Bradley, I did subsequently change my mind and read it, and it turned out to be quite enjoyable despite the very familiar plot. Whether this will redeem me from being, in Jane Yolen's estimation, a literate slime-mold, remains to be seen.

Some of the assertions in this issue are quite bizarre, but the prize goes to Thomas Egan for saying (pg. 54) "homosexual cults, flag burning, abortions, all signs of lack of real beliefs by our people." I don't know of anyone practicing homosexuality for religious reasons, so the reference to homosexual cults is at the very least an imprecise use of language, if not a paranoid delusion. Beyond that, the existence of various types of behavior of which Mr. Egan disapproves hardly demonstrates a lack of real beliefs. It merely demonstrates that some people have beliefs which differ from those of Mr. Egan. Perhaps he thinks his own beliefs are the only ones which are real. If so, he's slipping into a solipsistic fantasy.

Almost as strange is Joseph Major's complaint (pg. 53) that I have "grandly excluded certain areas of knowledge" from the consideration of plausibility in SF." I have no idea where he got this idea, and would like to know just which areas of knowledge he thinks I've excluded. In addition, he appears to be saying that the same standards of plausibility should be applied to all material, regardless of whether it is intended seriously or satirically. (Perhaps humor is the area of knowledge he thinks I'm excluding, although judging by his comments, he is the one who refuses to take humor into account, not myself.) Since I have generally found Mr. Major to write intelligently for fanzines, I am at a loss to explain

why he would make such a ridiculous assertion.

Terry Jeeves feels I am asking too much of writers, and admonishes me "it's only a story, for crying out loud." Of course it's only a story. I understand perfectly well that in a work of fiction one may describe any type of event that one feels inclined to use. That's why I would not accuse any fictional detail of being wrong, merely being implausible. And like it or not, folks, it is implausible to postulate that an alternate universe with major historical changes would nevertheless wind up with exactly the same (or vaguely the same) cast of characters that we have in our own universe. This is a significant philosophical point, not a quibble.

Mike Ashley's point, that fiction should be judged by the state of scientific knowledge at the time the fiction was written, even when later scientific discoveries overturned the earlier beliefs, is correct, and that is exactly how I do judge works of fiction. Any author who makes the best use of knowledge available at the time he or she is writing, is doing a good job, in my estimation. We could hardly demand of SF authors that they accurately predict all of future science, merely in order to write works of SF that will not become outdated (if they could do that, they would have more important things to do). SF must always be read with an understanding of its own historical context.

To the new typesetter: good work, Nancy. I strongly suspect that without your help, NIEKAS really would have been defunct, rather than just hibernating.

I will, of course, be interested in the next issue of NIEKAS when and if it does appear. It amazes me to think of the discussions I have been in in NIEKAS in which quite commonly a year or several years will elapse between the statement and the reply. I think that you have created an adequate simulation of radio communication between people of different star systems separated by light years of space.

There are many excellent articles, reviews, and assorted comments in this issue that I'm not going to comment on specifically. As usual, my letter is mostly devoted to things that I disagree with (wholly or in part). No wonder I get into so many arguments in fanzines, eh?

[from a later letter—ERM]

My first appearance in the pages of NIEKAS was in issue #27, in August 1981, which is now 18 years ago. Among other topics, I wrote about Scientology at some length, defending it from criticisms which appeared in previous issues. I considered myself to be extremely well informed about Scientology at the time, but in fact I wasn't. I have learned a lot more about it over the past 18 years, and I would now like to retract everything I said about it in 1981. My comments then were wrong, foolish, and delusional.

I also regret my harsh criticism of Beverly Kantor, a few issues later. I denounced the use of tranquilizers as nothing more than drug addiction. In fact, I was in no position to judge her medical condition (I've never even met her) and should not have commented on it.

In spite of my occasional blunders, I still feel that on the whole I have made a positive contribution to the pages of NIEKAS (which is now literally the only fanzine for which I still write).

It is now eleven years since the appearance, in issue #37, of my controversial (and generally reviled) proposal to move the state of Israel to New Mexico. I would like to point out that in those eleven years, thousands of people have died (in the Middle East and elsewhere) as a result of the continuing conflict over Israel, which might have been peacefully resolved through the implementation of my proposal. But it is also true that other peace proposals are very slowly moving forward, and may actually succeed, at which point my more radical solution becomes unnecessary. On the whole I think that the New Mexico proposal was a good idea, but its time has now passed. I just thought you should know.

LUCIA ST. CLAIR ROBSON
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I was somewhat confused when NIEKAS arrived addressed to me since my mate, Brian Daley, is the science fiction and fantasy writer in the house, but then I saw your note of explanation. I got a charge out of seeing my historical novel *The Tokaido Road* reviewed, and brilliantly too. Please pass my thanks and this letter to Anne Braude because there's a coincidence involved. I was further confused when I read the opening of her article on *Tokaido*. I thought, at first, that she had gotten a copy of the piece I sent Ballantine's publicity department and quoted from it. She talked about seeing the Japanese movie *Chusingura* in the mid-'60s. I saw it there too. I was in Peace Corps training at U of Cal in Berkeley in the summer of '64. We trainees hadn't much free time but I wandered into the theater alone one afternoon. I knew very little about Japanese culture but I sat through the three and a half hour movie twice, once for pageantry and once for plot. Then I stumbled outside in a daze seven hours later. Darkness had fallen and I have not been the same since. I've also not seen it since though I've tried.

Anyway, Miss Braude is extremely well informed and articulate. I'm sending copies of her review to my agent, editor, Ballantine publicist, and of course my fond parents.

NIEKAS is quite an accomplishment. I was especially impressed with your global readership.



MARGARET SIMON
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The features (and Ed Meskys's column) were excellent, but the complaining and nit-picking in the letters to the editor were rather tedious.

Here's to saying something for the artists who helped out NIEKAS for free: only one letter mentions the fine work of Larry Dickson, who has donated his time and skills to dress NIEKAS with a superior cover for years! Randy Moore's art has continued to appear, thank goodness—again to give quality of his own unique style.

I am glad for the Zenna Henderson feature article, though the use of the word "snotty" twice in the same article (for different references) bothered me a bit. ((And now I can finally say this!)) Harlan Ellison's quote about her shows why he is known for his "Kandor"—I coined that one. I've heard him speak and I've heard reports from others. I have no desire to ever EVER cross his path. But he used to write very good short stories, almost on the level of Beaumont or Matheson and sometimes just as good. I think Harlan just loves to talk, posture, and gesticulate, which he does a very good job of. While I'm told he can be nice enough, he often isn't very nice at all. What the heck, I'm not a feminist. Just love to read articles such as you got in this NIEKAS #44.

JON DOUGLAS SINGER
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I have published a book, *Lost Lands and Cities Beneath the Sea* at Amazon.com for \$15 plus \$3 postage. They have a paperback edition for \$5. It could be a source for Dungeons & Dragons players or fantasy writers. It's about sunken cities in northern Europe. The Tazer Library of Harvard University bought my book!

STEVE SNEYD

found much of great interest in NIEKAS #44 (as well as admiring the production standards of the striking front and back cover artwork).

A small footnote on the *Native Tongue* review: our main library, in its wisdom, ghettoizes SF in a room called "light fiction," unalphabetized, which in itself is maddening enough (though a small consolation is the thought of persons in search of an undemanding read chancing on one of the more densely heretical/speculative of P.K. Dick's novels in the process, and having a settled world view thrown into chaos). But a pleasing irony arose as a result. On one hand, Kirklees Council, who run the library, having a strong Equal Opportunities policy, which includes promotion of feminist ideas/thought wherever possible. On the other, as said, SF is ghettoized by the librarians as "beneath the pale" of the serious readers. Hence a letter of complaint in the local arts magazine that a major feminist work, the aforesaid *Native Tongue*, had been exiled into "light reading," and how on earth could the Council justify this?

They clearly decided silence was the best wisdom, and never replied (at least publicly), and SF is still stuck "in the back room," but it was, as said, an enjoyable cognitive dissonance situation!

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Over here, we haven't yet got a \$2 limit on paperbacks, charity shops and the like are only too happy for whatever you can give them. (Was going to say, no chain of second-hand stores; but I wonder if the popular book centres swap-shops all are still going in London). Though something I have noticed recently is the lack of SF titles from anywhere beyond 1990; there's plenty of general fiction, brought-back holiday reading; but science fiction of any era seems to be jealously hoarded. Then again, it might be that the older paperbacks are becoming collectibles; there's been an upsurge of interest, fueled by a news-stand magazine devoted to book and magazine collecting, with some of the prices within its pages of ridiculous proportions.

Which is why I'll join in the applause for Collier in its efforts to bring back the long-out-of-print at reasonable prices. I might not agree with all of their choices, be able to find worthier candidates of my own (that might lead to some debate; what would you reprint, and why?) but they are in a commercial business, and so more able to gauge the market.

That is, if you hadn't included that quote from Andrew Porter about the younger generation and unreadable SF. Wish I'd seen it in context; my rejoinder might have been that I can find SF up to 30 years ago still readable, but then that's the span of my interest in SF: all the time I've been reading it. Which isn't to say I've found nothing readable beyond that; might cough a bit at Stanton A. Coblenz, but I'm perfectly happy with Murray Leinster and Jack Williamson from the same era; even E.E. Smith. But removing my old fogey disguise, I have to admit that a generation reared on computers, on information technology, might well regard paper and print as incredibly old-fashioned, almost Victorian; with the Internet at their beck and call, and virtual reality, why bother with boring old books? Except, as E.M. Forster has it, when the machine stops....

MIKE WHALEN
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This is my first time reading NIEKAS and in many ways I felt like I was treading into new waters. Yours is a publication of high intellect...the likes of which I encounter rarely. Because of this, I feel a great deal of the content flew over my head, though I was able to read and understand every article, at least on the surface. I do think, however, that this doesn't necessarily come from an inability to comprehend the material, but more due to my unfamiliarity with the subject matter. I am new to science fiction and fantasy literature for the most part.

The first fantasy novel I ever read that I can remember was Lawrence Watt-Evans' *The Misenchanted Sword*. That book prompted me to get into SF, but it wasn't for long because I jumped over to Trek books, then video, movies, etc. I tried to read more general SF from time to time, but since I was so enthralled with Trek, I didn't much

like it. So, I kept to Trek pretty much. Over the last few years my tastes have begun to change and become more coherent and I've developed a taste for a whole slew of genres—including science fiction and fantasy. So, in between finding a job, I've been reading an awful lot: at least a book a week, and that's a pretty big amount for me.

As I continued to read NIEKAS I got a better understanding of the entire fanzine, but I feel like a few more years of reading some of the works described therein will help me to understand even better. Yet! NIEKAS did produce some excitement in different spots along the way and especially whet my appetite for some works that I would like to purchase in the future.

The lettercol is lively and well-edited. I especially liked how some of the comments were branched off into a different section. One letter did strike a chord with me, though I don't know if I'm reading too much into it.

W. Richie Benedict's letter got "yes-nods" from me several times. When talking about computer BBSs, W. Richie says that there's a "undercurrent of superiority," and then goes on to talk about it in other forms and fields. I agree wholeheartedly, but would also say that this is evident in many other areas, though I seem to find it more prevalent in places that are "homes" for people who feel kicked around.

I don't I've ever, in my entire life (all 24 years of it), run across people such as some fans who will sit and argue some points of this character vs. that character, this show vs. that show, etc. Not nearly everyone does this, but those that did always left me flabbergasted.

I have seen someone misquote a book and someone else in this tranquil social setting will look the guy straight in the eye and nearly scream, "NO! He never said that! He said this..." and proceeded to properly quote the character. The person doing the misquoting becomes very embarrassed. I have been in the same situation. I have been nearly accosted by RED DWARF, TREK, and DOCTOR WHO fans, for misquoting a character, or misnaming an actor. I admit that no one should remain ignorant for long, but have they forgotten tact? It's one thing to be a teacher, but they tend to sound like they are purposefully trying to one-up this evil, misquoting demon.

These people are all over the place, but I'd say I've run into more of them in places where the outside world would consider the "inhabitants" a bunch of social misfits for so long that a person feels inadequate. He's mad. Now he's on a field of equals and desperately wants to be better.

I haven't met too many people like this. I've just seen them on the whole in places like BBS and fandom. I steer clear as best I can. It seems to me that these people are the ones who encourage politics because they

are more interested in bettering themselves to the chagrin of others rather than to gather a better understanding of who they are. I hate people like that, but they are all over. I think they get a bigger voice nowadays because it proves to spark controversy.

Moving on to other things—the piece about a talking fanzine intrigued me. I was wondering if anyone had done a talking fanzine or lettercol. I was thinking along the lines of a set of tapes that are mailed to individual members either in some form of circle or brought back to a collector to collate everything onto one single tape and do a mass mailing (kind of like an APA). Would that be of benefit to anyone? [I have engaged in taped round-robin letters where each participant has a set length of time on the tape, and when it comes back to him he records over his prior contribution. There was a talking fanzine in the midwest 10 or 15 years ago, and Terry Jeeves did one talking issue of his fanzine *Erg*. In blind circles many such taped letterzines exist, most notably *Newsreel Club* published in Columbus, OH.—ERM]

WALTER A. WILLIS

This issue of NIEKAS must have some claim to be the best fanzine of its kind ever published. It is purely magnificent. For standard of content and sheer magnificence of presentation, it is hard to see how it could be surpassed.

When, as is clear from your editorial, one realises the difficulties you must surmount to produce it, one can only marvel at the capability of the human spirit to rise above adversity. I am proud to have met you at Magicon, and can only regret not having expressed adequately my admiration at the time. I am only too well aware

that my operation for an aortic aneurysm a few years ago, coupled with hearing difficulties, has left me inadequate socially in some respects.

Fred Lerner's review of Heinlein's travel book was interesting to me because I thought it might be about the time Heinlein visited Europe and arranged to visit us in Belfast, an occasion immortalised in *Hyphen* as "The Night Heinlein Didn't Come." It is clear however from Fred's review that on the 1953 trip the great man never went near Europe.

Patricia Shaw Mathews's comparison of Heinlein's "If This Goes On" with *A Handmaid's Tale* is illuminating, but I don't remember enough about the Heinlein story to decide how valid her conclusions are. It is curious how arbitrary one's memories are. I remember for instance being reminded while watching a workman replacing the concrete rendering on my house and admiring the dexterous flick of the wrist he used, being told the technique was known as "scudding" and being instantly reminded of the Heinlein character called Nehemiah Scudder, who was I think the evangelical villain in "If This Goes On."

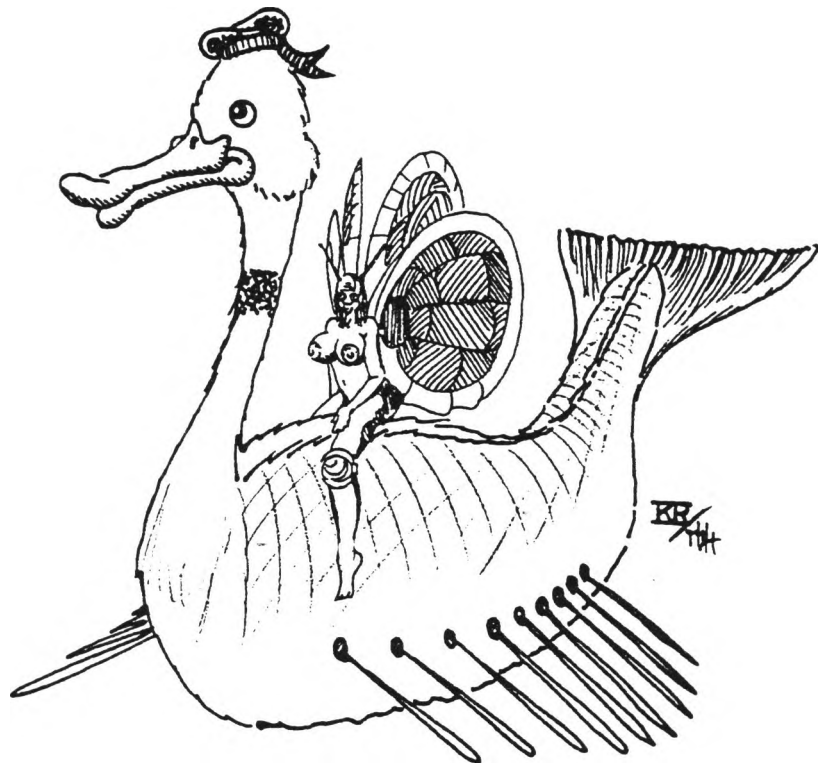
Boardman's article was a long overdue analysis of the impossibility of the FTL drive. It seems depressingly final. All one can put against it is the desperate feeling that if there are intelligent beings in the universe there must be some way we can get together. I fully recognise this may be regarded as a feeble attempt to drag in the concept of God and Purpose, and can only pin my faith to developments in science we cannot even visualise yet, and which as Arthur Clarke pointed out will be regarded by us as magic.

Don D'Amassa said some things that needed saying and Tamar Lindsay's review of *Darkman* was illuminating.

"A Survey of Literature in the Hyborian Age" is presumably be meant to be one of those literary hoaxes. It is quite good of its kind.

The review of *You Just Don't Understand* is illuminating: I am convinced by Tannen's explanation of male reluctance to ask directions. Much of the rest of the reviews also readable and informative.

WAF Sean Donnelly, Bill Donaho, Alex Eisenstein (6208 N. Campbell, Chicago IL 60659 is looking for owners of EMSH original artwork for possible inclusion in a book he is doing about the artist), Dave R. Haugh, Rodney Leighton, Jennifer Mackay, Mike McInerney, Randy Moore, Lucia Robson, Carol Springs, Janice St. Clair, Lisa Star ("I certainly enjoyed the lettercol. It was the best part. I like all your controversies and arguments. I also liked the article on the records of the Hyperborean civilization since I've gotten quite interested in pseudo-scholarship of all kinds.").



Continued from Page 7

religious massacres in India and Sri Lanka, the Communist murders in Russia under Stalin, Cambodia, China during the "Cultural Revolution," the ethnic wars between the Hutus and Tutsis in central Africa, etc. Germany has become a peaceful democracy with no more Nazi fanatics than can be found in the U.S., and perhaps some of these other lands will become truly civilized some day. And look at the absolutely horrible Vikings who murdered and plundered from Constantinople to Ireland. Today they are the Danes, the most civilized people in Europe, and have been that way for many years. And were the Normans or Saxons who invaded the British Isles any better? While modern England is not as civilized as Denmark (look at the horrendous conquests of India and other lands and the concomitant dehumanization of the native populations only last century), they still are far better than their ancestors.

Finally let us look at the very depressing lesson to be learned from the Chatham Islands. I hate this conclusion but I cannot avoid believing that any pacifistic ideal society cannot survive if any aggressive society exists anywhere. Larry Niven made that point in his first published story, "The Warrior," in which humanity has conditioned itself as a whole into a pacifistic society and then runs into the Kzin, a warrior race, for the first time. In this story man learns to fight again only at great psychological cost. Please, can someone convince me that I have drawn the wrong conclusion?

OUTLANDER REVISITED

A few years ago I read Diana Gabaldon's *Voyager*, the third volume in her series on the Scots rising of 1745 and its aftermath.

Spoiler warning—I will reveal many plot turns in the four volumes published to date, including endings.

Her first book, *Outlander* (Delacorte, 1991, xii+627 pp., HC, \$20, *Crossstitch* in England), reviewed in detail in "Bumbejimas" in *Niekas* 44, read like a stand-alone book. In the Autumn of 1945 Claire Randall, a former WWII field or MASH nurse, falls through a time gate 202 years to 1743, is taken prisoner by a group of Scots and for their safety is forced to marry the leader's nephew, Jamie Frazier. She is not a historian but knows that the Rising of '45 will be disastrous and lead to the destruction of most of the Scots Highland clans. She and her new husband come to love each other and there is enough trust for her to tell him the truth about her origins, and to do what she can to get him away from the Rising. She uses her medical knowledge to help him and many others recover from various injuries and wounds. When she has an opportunity to return to the 20th century and her original husband she elects to stay with Jamie. When Jack Randall, an ancestor of her first husband, is killed before having children while Claire is helping Jamie escape from his torture chamber she comes to believe that she *can* change the past and prevent the disaster. At the end of the book they escape to France where Jamie's brother is a successful wine merchant and shipper. They plan to try to prevent Prince Charles from invading England.

The second book, *Dragonfly in Amber* (Delacorte 1992, 743 pp., HC, \$21.50), is a framed story. It opens in 1968 and Claire is telling her 20-year old daughter, Briana, for the first time what had really happened and that Jamie Frazier, not Frank Randall, was her father.

I liked this book very much despite the fact that it is a story line I usually dislike. Claire carries for luck a piece of amber with an imbedded dragonfly. As she and Jamie do everything possible to stop the invasion they are defeated. It is the old time-traveler trying unsuccessfully to change the past plot. The title and talisman emphasize the point. She feels like that dragonfly trying vainly to beat its wings against the amber. The people and

story line are still very interesting. Jamie and Claire arrange to prevent a ship from arriving whose cargo would have paid for the invasion, but Charles gets other funding. Then she finds that Jack Randall is still alive after all and it is only a short time before Frank's ancestor is supposed to be conceived. Then Jamie emasculates Jack in revenge for the torture and buggery Jack had inflicted on him. Finally Jack's brother, a minister, gets a woman pregnant and on his deathbed forces Jack to marry her to legitimize the child. Every time it looks like the past will be changed something happens to undo it. Jamie and Claire return to Scotland to try to save his immediate family from the war by staying clear of it. Charles writes him saying that Jamie forgot to sign Charles's manifesto so he "did him the favor of signing his name for him." Thus Jamie is a traitor in the eyes of the English and has to join the war. Just before the final battle at Culloden his men try to sneak away but are forced back to the battle scene. Jamie knows he is "dead meat" and has no chance of surviving, so he sends the pregnant Claire back to the stone circle to return to her own time. At first her daughter refuses to believe the story, but then comes to accept it. A young historical researcher friend who is with them and who helps Claire prove her story then finds that Jamie didn't die in the battle. The book ends on this note.

In the first part of the third book, *Voyager* (Dell, 1994, 1059 pp., PB, \$5.99), Claire, Briana, and the young historian search for documents to see whether Jamie survived the intervening 20 years. In alternate chapters we see what actually happened to Jamie. We also learn a bit about her unsatisfactory life with Frank, from her return to his death shortly before the opening of the book. He never really believed her, but deluded himself into accepting Briana as his own daughter. They finally find that Jamie is operating a printing business in Edinburgh using two of his middle names as an alias, and she decides to return to him. She acquires antique coins and a period costume (unfortunately with a zipper) and goes through the circle. She had completed med school in the meantime and is a surgeon. She also packs a small med kit which she can hide on her person. Each time she goes through the circle the experience is harder on her, this time leaving her unconscious and frozen. It is a bit like "going in between" in the Perm books but much worse. She realizes that if she does it one more time it will probably kill her. This precludes her returning to the 20th century every time she needs something.

When she walks into his print shop and he recognizes her he faints dead away. She finds that he is still a wanted man because of the Jacobite rising but is living two separate identities, openly as a respectable printer and under another name as a wine and brandy smuggler. He is also clandestinely helping to write, publish, and distribute subversive literature.

In the middle part of the book they re-establish their relationship and struggle with events around them. Both are still madly in love with each other, which I find really hard to believe. Each is uncertain about the other's feelings and they are both somewhat jealous of the other's relationships during their separation. I was annoyed with the author for her going on in such endless and boring detail about their rutting. Circumstances prevented their mating for long periods of time, but when they did manage to get privacy the story really became wearisome.

In the last part Jamie's nephew, Ian, was kidnapped to be an indentured servant or slave in the Caribbean and they go after him. After many adventures on shipboard and the islands of Hispaniola and Jamaica they finally rescue Ian and are assured he will be returned to his family. They must flee and Jamie cannot return to Scotland for the foreseeable future, for all his identities are known and as a six-

foot-four flaming redhead he is too conspicuous to re-establish another secret identity. They are hunted on Jamaica but with the help of a friend in power escape in a small one-masted ship with six of his smugglers and a Jewish naturalist. They are pursued but a great storm sinks the pursuing man o' war and damages their ship, washing Jamie and Claire overboard. They survive clinging to a piece of wood but have to shed their clothes to prevent drowning. She loses all her instruments and he the photographs of Briana and the miniature portrait of his illegitimate son. They and the wrecked boat with crew are washed up on the shore of Georgia and will make a new life in the continental colonies. It is 1767 and I am sure they will play a part in the American rebellion.

The book wraps things up very neatly, making use of all kinds of seemingly pointless events that occurred earlier. These include a skeleton of a beheaded Caucasian woman found in Haiti in the 20th century under very mysterious circumstances, a Jack-the-Ripper type of harlot killer terrorizing Edinburgh, her finding Jamie's grave in Scotland before leaving, etc. There was only one point where the author seems to have slipped. Jamie had become separated from the ship on which they were hunting for Ian. The ship was damaged by a storm and had to be beached on Haiti for repairs. Just as they are ready to launch the ship he shows up in the persona of a French commander with a score of soldiers. The soldiers want to steal the ship and cargo but he tricks them into helping launch it and then being imprisoned on board. It is never explained how he managed to get the uniform and convince the soldiers that he is an officer. Perhaps this was an error made in over-zealous copy-editing of the very long manuscript. The author often moved the story along by skipping the details of a few days and you would wonder how the characters got from point A to point B. It would be explained in passing a few chapters later. Except for this one incident this technique really helped the pacing of the story.

In the fourth book, *Drums of Autumn* (Delacorte, 1997, 880 pp., \$24.95), Jamie and Claire establish themselves as masters over a community of exiled Scots in the mountains of western North Carolina. Meanwhile, back in the 20th century, Briana ("Do you remember Briana?" to paraphrase Anna Russell) and the young historian, Roger McKenzie, have fallen in love but not become lovers. She misses her mother, wants to meet her father, and finds a document that they died in a house fire in the mid-1770s. She has not learned from her mother's experiences with the "rising" and sneaks back in time to try to prevent deaths and see her parents. Only a few with the right ancestry can use the time gate and she has gained the power through her mother. Roger finds out and can take off after her because he is a descendent of a time-traveling witch who played a major role in the previous three books.

There are sex scenes with Claire and Jamie and also Briana and Roger, but they are not the tedious ruttings of the previous volume. There are misunderstandings and Briana is raped by a ship captain who is a former pirate, and becomes pregnant. The captain is almost definitely the father though there is a small chance that it is Roger. No one is ever sure. There are many adventures, and I assume the depiction of life in rural mountain North Carolina and among the Indians is accurate. There are many misunderstandings, adventures, and reconciliations. In the second half of the book the McGuffin is to rescue Roger from slavery among the Indians so he and Briana can return to the 20th century before the baby is born, as the passage through the time gate would be too painful to inflict on an infant. Ian is forced to be adopted into a Mohawk tribe, and is content with his fate, but the rescue is too late and the baby is born. At the end of the fourth book the two couples and baby are settled in Jamie's mountain community, and the young family will not return to our time—at least until the baby, Jeremy, is grown.

There are at least two gates in the Americas that our protagonists have found, one in the Caribbean and one in the Appalachians. The latter had been used by a 20th century Amerind who had gone back trying to organize and unite the various tribes to expel the White Man, but again failed to change the past and had been cruelly murdered by the people he had tried to help. There were



several scenes of extreme brutality of Indian on Indian and Indian on settler, but in retrospect no more brutal than the drawing and quartering in England described in past volumes. The depiction of life style and honor among the Indians was convincing.

Again I enjoyed this volume, and at least for now will continue to read them as they come out. To my taste all four were well worth reading though the first was the best. Sandy holds all four in equally high regard, and has found the Gabaldon web site.

<www.cco.caltech.edu/~gatti/gabaldon/gabaldon.html>, where Diana has excerpts of the next three volumes. She is writing all three simultaneously, doing a scene in one, then a scene in another. Sandy quoted Gabaldon as saying that a whole scene would come into her mind as a block, which she would write down. When she had enough scenes she would write the connecting material. This reminds me of what C.S. Lewis said about his method of writing in the essay "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's To Be Said" (first collected in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Cooper [New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967], which also included scenes from his unfinished novel about the conquest of Troy, *After Ten Years*). Perhaps Gabaldon simply forgot to write the connecting material on how Jamie acquired the uniform and detail of French soldiers. The site also contains extensive reader discussion and background on the series.

At the end of the third volume I wondered how they would eventually get back to Scotland where Claire had seen the tombstone. And what about the origin of the document signed by both, which Claire had found while researching for the return trip. Also what about the ancient prophecy that Jamie's line would take a leadership role at some point?

At the end of the fourth volume we learned that the tombstone was a fake placed there by Claire's original husband after her return. Now the unresolved question is, why did that newspaper story about Claire and Jamie's death say they left no children?

While the first two volumes had a few of the trappings of time travel stories, which I as an SF fan concentrated on, they were in reality excellent historical novels of the Rising of '45 viewed from a 20th century perspective. The third was an adventure novel set in the post-rising devastation, and the fourth of life in rural colonial America. However the last third had plenty of fantasy and fantastic speculation for the fan. There was another 20th century woman who used her knowledge to perform magic-seeming deeds, and she did engage in real magic too. There was a very exciting seance performed by escaped slaves on Jamaica. And there was very interesting speculation on the nature of the time gates. The normal leap was about 200 years. This would explain the stories of fairy mounds where someone entered and woke up 200 years later. There are certain natural spots where these gates occur and the ancient inhabitants had marked them with rings of standing stones. Only certain persons have a natural affinity for the gates and it is strongest at certain times like Samhain. Human sacrifice and the burning of the victims enhance the effect, which is how the "witch" was able to jump 230 years. On return trips an affinity for someone acts something like a magnet to fine-tune the jump time. Jewels and burning diamond dust enhance the effect. Finally, some of the gates might be under water and be for far greater lengths of time. Perhaps there is one under Ness Lake and ichthyosaurs occasionally visit. Thus they are glimpsed on rare occasions but are not there when searched for with modern technology. The fourth volume only uses the gates to get the young couple into the past, and hold out the hope of using the ones in the Americas to return.

I have a feeling that Diana Gabaldon developed some of these concepts while working on the second and especially third volumes. I think that like Lewis writing *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, she simply had an idea or scene. Later she came to rationalize its origins the way Lewis did in *The Magician's Nephew*.

While Sandy and I were in Scotland for Worldcon we spent three days in Inverness ("location at the mouth of the river Ness"). We visited the state museum at the site of the Culloden battlefield and found the film and exhibits

extremely informative. In one room they had a "great kilt" on open display which you could try on. (The modern kilt is a Victorian invention.) The instructions said you had to spread it on the ground, lay down, and roll into it. None of us tried it. The gift shop had copies of the first Gabaldon book on sale. There was also an unofficial guided tour of the battlefield by a private individual which was regularly announced on the PA system. It was excellent! He wore a period costume and carried (and let me handle) a period battle sword. We completely circled the field as he explained what happened where and what errors of command had been made. The worst was that Bonnie Twit Charlie (thanks, Jim Reynolds!) took the command away from his very successful military advisor, Lord George Murray, and gave it to a political crony, John William O'Sullivan, who made many terrible moves. Still Charles belatedly the deposed Murray for his defeat to the end of his days, and even late in life would not "forgive" him or grant him an audience.

After the battle the British soldiers went on a killing frenzy, murdering all wounded and captured Scots, something like the American Marines in My Lai in Vietnam. Later this was regarded as so disgraceful that no regiment which participated in the battle may have a emblem of it on its banner or uniform.

Many victims of the battle were buried in mass graves by clan, but many were unidentified and buried in a separate section. The guide explained that kilts were no help in identifying clans because the tartans are a romantic invention of the Victorian era. (If the guide was correct, Gabaldon made a minor mistake in the third volume when the British commander recognizes the clan of a contraband piece of tartan.) Most kilts of the period were the same muddy red.

Only a few miles from Culloden are the Clava cairns, a set of three burial rock piles with a few isolated standing stones. The only way to see them was to hire a taxi but it was worth it. Archaeologists were working the site and the leader of the dig was there explaining the significance of the site to the owner of the land. We were very glad to listen in, and were able to ask a few questions. I asked whether there had ever been a ring of the standing stones there, or anywhere else in the Inverness area. There weren't so it looks like Gabaldon incorporated this site into her story but invented the associated circle.

There is a circle bus route used by local residents which stops, among other places, at Culloden and two castles open to the public. The bus runs every two hours and you can get off and back on at will. The first of the two castles, Cawdor, is very well worth touring. We visited it twice. It has been in the family for over 500 years and was lived in the whole time. The owner still lives there during non-tourist season. He has a wonderful wit as demonstrated by the signs and the guide book which he wrote himself. "The original hangings on this bed went from a joke to a disgrace and had to be replaced." The many acres of wooded grounds and formal gardens also were very enjoyable. The other castle, Stewart, was not worth the time or admission fee. We passed Frazier Castle but it isn't open to the public. (Sorry, Todd.)

Sam

One of the first people I met and got to know when I joined the NY SF Circle in late 1955 was Sam Moskowitz, who used to sign himself as "SaM" when such contractions were popular in fandom. His booming voice and strong opinions made him memorable and sometimes the butt of scorn. He was always bemoaning the lack of a "sense of wonder" in modern science fiction, which inspired Randall Garrett and Lin Carter to write the satirical "Masters of the Metropolis" for publication in *Inside*, a leading sercon fanzine of the day. A shorter version was later reprinted in *F&SF*, and in Garrett's collection *Take Off* (Norfolk: Donning, 1979, repr. 1986). The story told in a Hugo Gernsbackian voice how "Sam IM4SF+" took the Hudson Tubes from his home in Newark into NYC to attend a meeting of the Circle, marveling at all the advanced engineering and scientific wonders he saw and used.

Also he took criticism, real or implied, personally and

attacked the critic. When Harry Warner had the "effrontery" to announce around 1960 that he was going to write a follow-up to SaM's history of early fandom, *The Immortal Storm*, SaM was incensed and wrote a piece for his friend Taurasi's *Science Fiction Times* saying that Warner was a Communist sympathiser! However, as was said in the *New York Times* obit, quoted in part below, he knew *much* about SF and had a great memory for detail. Probably nobody knew more about obscure pulps which had carried some SF, including magazines in other languages. I remember a talk by him at a Lunacon some 20 years ago about discovering and getting a complete set of a proto-SF mag published in Germany in the '20s or perhaps even earlier. I greatly enjoyed his first two collections of biographical essays and didn't know that there was a third until I saw it mentioned in Glycer's excellent obit in *File 770* #116. I immediately put it on my "must buy" list in my computer. I was very happy to publish his reviews of books about SF in the last few NIEKU and to publish as a chapbook his autobiographical interview, *After All These Years*. Here are excerpts from his *NY Times* obit:

Sam Moskowitz, an unlikely scholar widely regarded as the world's foremost authority on science fiction and by far its most devoted fan, died on April 15, [1997], at a hospital near his home in Newark, N.J. He was 76 and the author or editor of 62 books. His Russian immigrant parents were too poor to send him to college, but Moskowitz, who began his professional life driving a produce truck in the 1930s and ended it in 1985 editing a trade publication known as *Quick Frozen Foods*, couldn't have learned much in college anyway. From the moment he leafed through his first copy of *Astounding Stories* at his father's candy store when he was 12, Moskowitz's main interest in life was science fiction, a subject not offered in college in those days—as indeed it wouldn't be until Moskowitz himself taught the first course, at City College in New York, in 1953. By then Moskowitz had established himself as an authority in a comparatively young field. For although writers like H.G. Wells and Jules Verne had been writing science fiction since the 19th century, it had not been regarded as a separate literary genre, or even given its name, until April 1926, when an immigrant from Luxembourg named Hugo Gernsback published the first issue of *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine devoted exclusively to what Gernsback called "scientifiction."

It was a measure of Moskowitz's standing as a science-fiction scholar that Gernsback hired him off his produce truck in 1952 as an editor of his last magazine, *Science Fiction Plus*. He may not have been the first 12-year-old to become obsessed with science fiction, but none pursued it so single-mindedly as Moskowitz. Like other teen-agers in the 1930s he collected every science-fiction magazine or book he could get his hands on, published his own "fanzines," contributed to others and in 1939 helped organize the first World Science Fiction Convention. Moskowitz wrote few science-fiction stories of his own. From the beginning he was interested in science fiction as a fan, an especially learned fan who plumbed its history and development and wrote about it widely. His first book, *The Immortal Storm* (1954), a collection of magazine articles tracing the development of the science-fiction fan movement, was followed by an outpouring of anthologies, authors' biographies and other works, including *Science Fiction in Old San Francisco* (1980), which rediscovered an early strain of science fiction all but forgotten since the 1906 earthquake. In time his interest and his collection broadened to include the entire range of pulp fiction, including mysteries and westerns, but his chief focus remained on science fiction, which formed the bulk of his collection of more than 40,000 books and magazines, including the full run of most of the more popular publications. A widely read man with an almost photographic memory, he became a walking encyclopedia, a researcher who could, for example,

be counted on to counter a Soviet claim that a Russian author at the turn of the century had been the first to write about a manmade satellite, by pointing out that Edward Everett Hale, the author of *The Man Without a Country*, had envisioned an orbiting, slingshot-launched missile in *The Brick Moon*, published in *The Atlantic* in 1869. Moskowitz lost his larynx to cancer some years ago, but after a period of initial hesitation became a more confident speaker than ever with the use of a voice box. To mainstream literature, science fiction may remain an alien realm, but Moskowitz, who received wide recognition within that field, made a breakthrough of sorts in 1987 when he was inducted into the New Jersey Literary Hall of Fame.

Sam's collection was fabulous not only for its completeness of fan and professionally published magazines and books, but for its correspondence and unique items. I remember Sam talking at a NESFA meeting around 1960 when he was writing biographies of major SF writers and digging up obscure stories by these authors to publish alongside the biographies. He first did a series on already dead authors like Lovecraft and Stapledon, but then went on to still living ones. Since their careers were still in progress the conclusions had to be tentative, and he wrote letters to the authors asking for certain details. He complained that Heinlein sent him a letter several pages long giving a lot of personal information, some of which Sam already knew, and forbidding him to use any of it in his article. I wonder where this and similar letters are.

He visited the editor of *Satellite Science Fiction* right after the publisher had pulled the plug on the mag. Merwin had proof copies of the contents and cover in his office of the next, never published, issue and Sam begged this from him, adding it to his set before binding it. Thus his collection had included what is probably the only extant copy of that last, never-published, issue.

Another example—When Sam reviewed Bleiler's *Science-Fiction, the Early Years* in NIEKAS 44 he generally praised the book but disagreed on some points. In discussing the true identity of an early *Weird Tales* author, Nictzin Dyalhis, Sam cited the *Weird Tales* author payment records which were in his possession (See also Mike Ashley's comments in "Topix" section on Sam.)

I hope and pray that this invaluable document will go to another research scholar or to a library where all scholars will have access to it. (Mr. Bleiler had written a series of three letters to me on the matter of Nictzin Dyalhis, totaling some 8000 words, representing hours of research in back issues of *Weird Tales* and *Adventure*, dictionaries of various Amerind languages from Central America, Mexico, and our Southwest, histories of the region, and sources of family names in the British Isles, all to come to a tentative conclusion about the author's real parentage, history, and name. When Sam died Mr. Bleiler withdrew permission to publish these letters as they were minor points in an out-dated discussion. I do regret that my tardiness in publishing was depriving the readers of this fascinating material. I do hope that Mr. Bleiler re-works some of it and publishes it in a more reliable venue than NIEKAS.)

Speaking of Bleiler, the July 1999 *Locus* reviewed *Science Fiction: The Gernsback Years* by Everett F. Bleiler with help of Richard J. Bleiler (Kent State University Press, September 1998, 730 pp., \$65). This book reviews in detail every story published by Gernsback in *Amazing Stories*, its spinoffs, and its successors. If I were not blind I would buy this book despite its very high price. However, there is no way I could get the book read to me or read it myself with a scanner in a reasonable period of time. The original Bleiler *Checklist of Fantastic Literature* was published fifty years ago for \$6.50, a high price for that time, but allowing for inflation the current \$65 is only slightly higher. These books represent thousands of hours of work to write and proofread, and have a very limited market, so (unfortunately) the \$65 price is not unreasonable. Anyhow, according to the reviewer Bleiler found very little of quality in all these magazines. He even, according to the reviewer, thought

that Weinbaum was not as good as his reputation indicated. I would have loved to see Sam's reaction to this book, since he worshipped Gernsback and was intolerant of divergent opinions. Another early writer Sam seemed to worship was David H. Keller. Sam's only venture into bookpublishing was a collection of Keller shorts. I have read very little Keller and that long ago. Keller was very popular with fans of the '30s, not just Sam, but I feel much of his output is now hopelessly dated.

The obit above referred to his book on SF in SF—in the San Francisco at the last turn of the century. This was one of several volumes of research on early SF by Sam published by Don Grant, and I gather at least one more exists in at least rough draft. Unfortunately the others did not sell well enough for Grant and he dropped the series.

Sam had written much for *Fantasy Commentator*, the fanzine published by his long-term friend A. Langley Searles. He had first published, serially, *The Immortal Storm* here, and was now publishing more material on fan history when he died. He also had the detailed story of how Hugo Gernsback selected him to be editor of *Science Fiction* +, and his work on the magazine. One of my favorite articles in *Fantasy Commentator* was his saga of tracking down an obscure book mentioned in the Bleiler *Checklist*, *The Flying Cows of Biloxi County*. Collectors eagerly sought to find one copy of this book when Bleiler first mentioned it, and it had been a hot topic of discussion for decades. Sam finally found and read a copy, and at his next gathering came gushing about his rare find. He was so disappointed when the other old collectors had lost interest and didn't care.

Speaking of *Science Fiction* +, Sam was especially proud of the fact that every story and article he had purchased for the mag which was orphaned when Gernsback pulled the plug was eventually sold to another magazine. He felt vindicated and said it refuted the accusation of his purchasing out-of-date or bad stories.

These are just some scattered thoughts and memories of Sam. His widow, Chris, had tried to place the collection with a university library but the ones approached wanted her to pay for cataloging and space. The fabulous prices brought by the auction of the collection justified her appreciation of its value to others. It was not something she had to beg a library to accept.

Sam was loved by many, and despised by others. For another example of someone who had loved Sam, see Ben Indick's column in thisish.

Harry Potter's Bidders

Harcourt has been bringing back some marvelous OOP children's and YA fantasy classics. For instance in their "Magic Carpet" paperback series they have brought us Diane Duane's *So You Want to Be a Wizard* and its direct three sequels, *Deep Wizardry*, *High Wizardry*, and *A Wizard Abroad*. I reread the first two and read for the first time the second two right after reading the first Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. While Harry is good the Duane books leave him in the dust! Rowling is good and she has struck a responsive chord with the general public. Feedback from the books taking off, giving rise to publicity in the media, resulting in still better sales, has made this an absolute phenomenon. Rowling is writing totally outside of the fantasy literature tradition and only uses the tropes of comic book and TV/Disney fantasy. One thinks of the "Wendy the Good Little Witch" comics. It does not call upon the readers to know the cliches and tools of fantasy fiction. Her books are very accessible, which is why they have struck such a responsive chord in the general public who would normally not touch fantasy or YA books. Harry Potter is a sensitive, intelligent orphan being raised by very up-tight relatives who neglect him severely and are absolutely horrified by anything out of the ordinary. He is taken away, against his uncle and aunt's wishes, to a special English "public school" which trains young wizards. These public schools have seven grades or forms and there will be a total of seven books, one for each year of his schooling. In school he finds the expected friends, enemies, and unmerciful hazing by other students. Of course he has superior talents, does well or better in most classes, excels at sports, and, in the first volume, wins the great intramural competition for his house in a

sort of polo on broomsticks. He also uncovers and foils a conspiracy by evil wizards to steal a powerful spell secretly stored in the school, and gets hints as to who had murdered his wizard parents and why. The book is fun and I plan to read its sequels. Sandy has read all three and is eagerly awaiting the fourth.

In *So You Want to Be a Wizard*, 12 year old Nita is a misfit in school, intelligent and bookish, not able to mix with the "in" crowd, and is constantly beaten up by the other kids. Despite karate lessons she is psychologically incapable of defending herself. Fleeing from the usual bunch of girl bullies she hides in the library and finds on the shelves the book *So You Want to Be a Wizard* among all the other career books for children. On a lark she takes it home and reads it that night. She takes the wizard's oath, not knowing if it will really work, and finds herself being able to do things. She eventually teams up with Kit, a Hispanic boy a year younger than herself, and a "white hole" or singularity named Fred. This book is very light-hearted and the most fun of the series, but they do have to fight "the Dark One", traveling to alternate timetracks, and at times are in great danger. At the end Fred has to give up his life to save the earth. The next three books are excellent, each in their own way, though without the joy of the first. In the second the Evil One is causing some underwater earthquakes which could eventually cause the destruction of Long Island. They have to change form into whales and join whale wizards and other sea creatures in re-enacting a ritual which will bind the enemy for now and stop the earthquakes. Nita finds herself having to sacrifice her life willingly to bring this about, and only an unexpected substitution at the conclusion of the ritual saves her. She becomes extremely mature for a child of her age. In the third volume her younger sister Dairine becomes a wizard and in her initiation trial she, Nita, and Kit have to teleport across the galaxy and take part in the initial trial of a new sentient species and confront directly the Evil One. This book deals directly with the problem of good and evil, and the possibility of redemption. Some do not care for this book because Dairine is not a likeable character and because they do not like this kind of theological speculation. I do; and I think this was actually the best book. In the fourth book her parents send her to visit an aunt (remarkably like Anne McCaffrey) to get her away from Kit and from magic, but here too she finds a major problem to fix. Diane Duane has written two more books in this universe, but with cat wizards as heroes. In #5, *Book of Night With Moon*, Nita and Kit play a bit part half way through. I have not yet read #6, *To Visit the Queen*—originally published in England as *On Her Majesty's Wizardly Service*, in which the cat wizards from New York visit a London altered by the intervention of the Lone Power and, aided by the Tower of London ravens, the cats of 10 Downing Street and the British Museum, and a youthful E. Wallis Budge, foil the would-be assassin of Queen Victoria and prevent Disraeli from getting his hands on The Bomb. —ajb]



Other wonderful books brought back by Magic Carpet include Meredith Ann Pierce's Darkangel series, Patricia McKillip's *Forgotten Beasts of Eld*, Alan Garner's *Eldor* and *Weirdstone of Brisingamen*, and many others.

Sandy read and recommended Sean Stewart's *Nobody's Son* which she says is a little heavy for a kid. I have yet to get to it, but I wonder if it can be heavier than *Deep Wizardry*. These are standard sized paperbacks, mostly at \$6.00, and printed on good paper which should last.

Harcourt has also introduced a hardcover YA reprint line. *Odyssey*, most titles priced at \$17. I was very glad to see again Carol Kendall's *Gamage Cup* and *Whisper of Glocken*.

[Another fine fantasy reprint series, from Random House (I think their only YA fantasy paperbacks) consists of Tamora Pierce's novels (actually there are two related series here). The Song of the Lioness Quartet is composed of four novels about Alanna, a young girl who longs to be a knight but is being sent off to be trained as a sorceress, and her twin brother, who wants to learn magic but is being sent to court to train as a knight. They switch places, of course, and most of the first two books deals with Alanna's efforts to conceal her sex and keep up with her larger, stronger classmates through sheer hard work and determination as well as natural ability. The latter two books deal with her adventures after she is knighted and leaves Court for various quests. The second series, The Immortals, set in the same world a few years later, with Alanna as a supporting character, consists of four books about Daine, a young girl of mysterious parentage with a gift for communicating with animals, and Numair, the young mage who trains her wild magic, as they defend their country from supernatural enemies and foreign invaders. I notice on Amazon.com that Pierce's third series, Circle of Magic, aimed at slightly younger readers and not related to the first two, is now in paperback also. The titles are as follows:

The Song of the Lioness Quartet--*Alanna: The First Adventure. In the Hand of the Goddess. The Woman Who Rides Like a Man. Lioness Rampant*

The Immortals: *Wild Magic, Wolf-Speaker, Emperor Mage, Realms of the Gods*

Circle of Magic: *Sandry's Book, Tris's Book, Daja's Book, Briar's Book*

She also has two new series starting in hardcover: The Circle Opens, further adventures of the four young mages, in which they will apparently be finding proteges of their own; and Protector of the Small, about the first young girl after Alanna to seek training for knighthood.--ajb]

WRITE FOR NIEKAS AND DIE

I am deeply saddened by the death of so many friends who passed away before I could publish their words. I do plan to maintain an annual schedule after this, and do hope that you will not be hesitant to submit articles, art, and letters.



TOPIX

Continued From Page 41

In "From the Monster's Point of View..." Cynthia Whitney Hallett mentions Dracula (and other monsters) as the personification of evil. I recall Bob Bloch's comment that Dracula had achieved new popularity in the sixties and seventies as a personification of the drug culture. Bob pointed out that Dracula dressed sharp, did most of his business at night, and what could be cooler than being dead? Thinking of Dracula as addiction incarnate isn't really such a far fetched idea. While it is coincidental, heroin addicts do develop an aversion to light second only to vampires.

In "The Black Sorcerer of the Black Castle," Andrew J. Offutt may have misunderstood the theme of the issue. He was supposed to discuss horror not produce it. His contribution is worthy of many groans of almost unendurable agony. Oh, the putridity, the putridity.

JOANNE STIMSON

I was pleasantly surprised at the volume and variety of articles. My only quibble is that some of them appear to have been written more than a year before publication, but I understand that this is probably due to the ups and downs of your publishing schedule. Nevertheless, I enjoyed reading the entire ish.

I was puzzled by one thing. On page 99, there was a sticker with the name "Larry Dickison" and twelve numbers on it. Do I win a prize???? (grin) [This came from miscommunication between me and my sighted helpers. When Todd told me that the art credits for our most prolific contributor were left out I prepared the sticker to correct the matter. Later I found that the other artists only had names, not pages, listed. Sigh!-ERM]

Bruce Byfield's piece on Fritz Leiber was most welcome, as I haven't yet had the chance to read either work discussed. I've been reading Leiber's *Fafhrd and Grey Mouser* tales, though, and am glad to see that White Wolf chose to reprint several of these stories in collections.

My favorite piece of all those offered was Andy Offutt's hilarious take on S&S and my favorite Barbarian in particular. The jokes never got to be too much; because of Mr. Offutt's gifts as a writer, the story maintained its pace and ladled out the lines at just the right points. Thanks, Mr. O, for this little gem!

SUE ZUEGE

All of the essays were interesting, especially the ones concerning vampires (one of my favorite subjects). The only thing missing was a discussion of Laurell K. Hamilton's series. "Anita Blake, Vampire Hunter." Her books feature not only vampires but fairies, lycanthropes, zombies, lamias, and much more.

One genre not covered in that issue of NIEKAS that some of your readers might find interesting is vampire romance. These stories generally take place in a dark, sensuous setting where happiness, if it's found at all, comes only after extreme grief and suffering. For a vampire to find love something must be sacrificed—life, hope, beauty, etc. Should the vampire damn his or her lover for eternity or give up all supernatural powers to become mortal once again? Can the vampire watch

his or her lover age while he or she remains untouched by time? This dark side of love can hold a strong appeal since the vampire hero is often the epitome of the tortured male—mysterious, seductive, lonely, haunted, dangerous, yet irresistible.

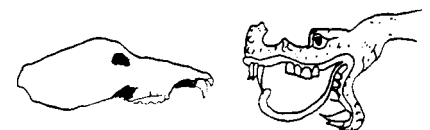
The vampire heroine is usually different from the typical woman of romance novels who tend to be repressed and have yet to experience their own sensuality. Female vampires are frequently sexually passionate and possess supernatural strength and power. Amanda Ashley, Nancy Gideon, Lorie Herter, Caroline Jacques, Linda Lael Miller, Maggie Shayne, and Karen E. Taylor are just a few of the many authors writing vampire romances.

One final tidbit that may be of interest. In the documentary, "Vampires in New England," which aired here on PBS in October, 1998, it was mentioned that Stoker used details from newspaper accounts about New England vampires in his novel, *Dracula*. An example is the blue light reportedly seen hovering above graves containing vampires. These vampire scares were first reported in Vermont in 1793 and ended in Rhode Island in 1892.

The Origin of Dragon Myths

Continued from Page 36

Austrian behaviorist Konrad Lorenz proposed the mechanism whereby instinctive behavior patterns are triggered by outside stimuli in this manner, calling the entire process an "innate release mechanism." In applying this to the survivalist-fears which I propose gave rise to dragon beliefs, the sight of certain distinctive, fear-triggering stimuli, such as the slithering, tongue-flicking, scaly form of a snake, or the sharp, displayed fangs or claws of a saber-toothed tiger, would be known as the "releaser," in the instinctive, fearful aversion which is triggered, or released, by this stimuli is the "fixed-action pattern." This entire instinctive caution or fear-triggering process—the *innate release mechanism*—might also become incidentally released or triggered by the sight of serpent-shaped logs floating in lakes, or otters swimming in a serpentine line, or tornado-type vortices, and subsequently embellished in the eye-witness' "mind's eye" as dragon encounters. (Indeed, dragons in both Europe and Asia were often regarded as aquatic and/or weather-related.) This certainly occurred with less-distinct releasers, such as the ice age, fossil bones uncovered caves which had been interpreted as dragon remains. And since all humans are embodied with the same instinctively haunting fears of nightmarish serpentine, fanged, clawed imagery, resultant dragon of myth and legend drawn from this would strike a chord among the population at large and remain a self-perpetuating belief for millennia until improved communications and science made it apparent that such a large, terrifying race of creatures did not truly exist. And yet even today there is a revival of such dragon beliefs in the form of tales of lake- and sea-serpent legends from around the world.



THE REDHEAD'S CORNER

Continued From Page 10

I leaped upon this admission, one I had not expected so readily. Despite my better, non-acquisitive nature, I already had dreams of a complete collection of *Weird Tale*, a first edition, with dust wrapper, of *Tarzan of the Apes*, and other treasures in my third of Sam's treasures.

I was about to declare my full victory when Dot Fabian came and announced the coffee and cakes were ready. There was a stampede for the dining-room. I was denied a definitive decision.

As we each gobbled down delicious chocolate delicacies, I told Sam what I would settle for. He considered, and agreed he might have erred, but was dubious of my brother's notion of damages. I think he was about to offer me a complete set of the four unwanted Moskowitz edited *Weird Tales*, of which I already had a few sets collecting dust, but the coffee now appeared. The trial was abandoned!

I have brought the case to this wider venue so that more than a half dozen people will be assured of my strong convictions. I have conquered my greed and will settle now for a public confession of error by the defendant.

When I concluded the foregoing, a few years ago, I added the following: "I hereby publicly absolve a very good old friend of any guilt or damage. I want us each to be around a very long time, still disagreeing, then laughing it off." Sam died not long after that, a very young at heart 75, and I miss him as do all of us, deeply. I used the article, in somewhat different form, in my fanzine, but he did not live to see it. He would have enjoyed it, and might have said, "What do you mean, 'unwanted Moskowitz-edited *Weird Tales*'?"

Notes: The title of my column is an inside joke, as I never had red hair. What hair I had left is black (my beard is white). Donn Brazier, editor of the beloved fanzine *Title* gave me the name. When I asked why, he said he'd seen my photo and my head looked red! Artist Jim Pitts has published and illustrated portfolios and books widely in England. The drawing is reproduced from the original in its frame.

After completing my column, I was given a copy of a letter SaM had written to A. Reynolds Morse, publisher of *Shiel in Diverse Hands*, on October 23, 1983. At that time, SaM and I had only met very seldom over many years, although we remembered one another as well as ever. SaM was giving forth his opinion of the newly published book and its contents. SaM never once accused me of ignorance, but his depth of feeling in regard to what he considered my obtuseness or even perfidy is evident.

SaM wrote: "The bits that annoyed me were contained in Ben Indick's piece, where his assumed impartiality was pathetic and elicited my contempt. It was as though he was talking to Adolph Hitler and saying: 'Now in my essay I prove that you are not really a bad person, but merely a reflection of the trend of your time, manifested more crudely than need be, but not necessarily deserving of the opprobrium which historians will give you, but you are merely a

symbol of what is happening and not the root.' Then, Hitler replying: 'Goebbels will be delighted with your fascinating theory. Did you say your name was Indick? Too bad, just yesterday there was an old woman named Indick who was cremated—possibly a relative of yours—nothing personal you understand, we would send her ashes, but we don't think you'll be needing them, for now that we have you here, we can give you priority in scheduling in appreciation of your kind words.'"

Years afterwards, when we resumed and even strengthened our old friendship, he was too tactful to bring out his objections vocally in as heavily-handedly satiric a manner. Had he done so, however, I believe I would, as I did when I read his letter sixteen years after he wrote it, have laughed at his satire, even while I was preparing my riposte. Ah, I miss my old friend, even if he was a stubborn mule who never really read nor wished to believe what I wrote, was wildly wrong, that old so-and-so!...and left me uselessly with the final word.

REVIEW AND COMMENT-

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However, over a thousand years the elevators are replaced by towers a mile or more wide with millions of floors. Clarke points out that these towers alone could hold several times the population of the future earth, so great parts are empty. They *are* useful for people who are accommodated to low or no gravity, as the natural force felt would vary from zero at the ring to full earth normal at the bottom, and one could start at the appropriate level—Moon, Mars, etc., and work one's way down.

Clarke hypothesized two major breakthroughs, which I found hard to take. One was Doc Smith's old "inertialess drive" which permits great acceleration with no felt reaction. It is this technology which permits travel in a reasonable period of time from one part of the globe—encircling ring and towers to another. The other was the ability to draw on the quantum vacuum energy of empty space, and so to have a nearly infinite source of power. Well, it was Clarke who first said that science sufficiently advanced is indistinguishable from magic. (Robert Forward has written a non-fiction book on this theme, which he titled *Indistinguishable from Magic*, acknowledging Clarke's saying.)

Clarke anticipates a withering of religion. If something as harebrained as Astrology can survive the space age, I expect that many conventional religions will make it too, and will be joined by new ones. Christian Scientists, the Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists started out as nut cults and have become respectable religions, and I would not be surprised to have them joined by the Scientologists, Moonies, and Ghu knows what else. Somewhere between these camps in respectability are the Jehovah's Witnesses and various holy roller and funnymentalist sects.

Clarke speculated that the Catholic Church would dissolve the way the Soviet Empire did. Just as Gorbachev tried to clean up the government by opening up to scrutiny the past sins of madmen like Stalin, which led to the disillusion of the populace, a future Pope would open up the records

of the Inquisition and cause a mass exodus of disillusioned believers. The utter corruption of the Papacy and Curia led to the Reformation (helped by rulers who wanted to seize church power and property), but the church survived and reformed itself. Without calling on any supernatural help, the church would survive any possible future shock. It would be a *different* church, but would have a historical continuity. What I and most Catholics believe today would have been regarded as utter heresy as little as 40 years ago. The church will continue to evolve, incorporating and adjusting to new knowledge. I could *never* accept today what I did accept then, and I anticipate as great a change as this in the next 40 years. The biggest adjustment will have to be made when we *do* finally contact another intelligent species. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam developed in very parochial societies, believing their indigenous cultures were the only ones of any value, and that only the Middle East were of any importance to right-thinking men, and to God. The New World, then the reality of the Solar system, of the Galaxy, and the universe as a whole led to adjustments in world view, but man as the only known sentient creatures still inspires a sort of geo-centrism.

When we do meet others, what beliefs will we find out there. How will this change the belief systems of the existing religions? Which ones will hide their heads in the sand like the funnymentalists? What totally new religions will spring up as a result? The first Christian missionaries in China tried incorporating Chinese culture in the faith they preached, but the Mediterranean-centrist hierarchy of the time balked and suppressed the rite. How would the world differ if they had not been uppressed? Today the Catholic church is far more open to cultural adaptation. But what will happen when confronted with a REALLY alien culture?

I enjoyed both stories and views of the future, though I did prefer Robinson's, but then Robinson had much more space to develop his story and ideas, so it is hard to compare them fairly. I do recommend both.

Our Unsold Anthology

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Fishing:

"A Little Further Up the Fox," by ?

"God's Hooks," by Howard Waldrop

Kayaking:

"Bright River," by Stephen Kraus

Sumo Wrestling:

"Man-Mountain Gentian", by Howard Waldrop

Bingo:

"Mrs. Shummel Exits a Winner," by John Kessel

Scrabble:

"Scrabble with God," by John M. Ford

Mountain Climbing:

"This Mortal Mountain," by Roger Zelazny

"Mother-Goddess of the World," by Kim Stanley Robinson

Racing:

"Sunjammer," by Arthur C. Clarke

Scuba Diving:

"Beyond the Dead Reef," by James Tiptree, Jr.

Waterskiing:

"The Boy Who Waterskiied to Forever," by James Tiptree, Jr.

**The Lineup for this
number:**

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Ben Indick

Fred Lerner

Joe

Christopher

Anne Braude

Patricia Shaw

Mathews

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