

*Readercon 13  
Souvenir Book*

# Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRS	3
MICHAEL SWANWICK: MY FATHER, AND WELCOME TO HIM BY SEAN SWANWICK	4
THE SHORT FICTION OF MICHAEL SWANWICK BY GORDON VAN GELDER	5
WHAT I KNOW ABOUT MICHAEL SWANWICK BY EILEEN GUNN	5
LORD VACANT ON THE BOULEVARD OF NAKED ANGELS; EXTRACTS FROM THE DREAM DIARY OF MICHAEL SWANWICK	6
MICHAEL SWANWICK BIBLIOGRAPHY	14
HARTWELL'S THREE LAWS OF FASHION BY DAVID G. HARTWELL	20
DAVID G. HARTWELL: A SECRET MASTER IN PLAIN VIEW BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER	22
DAVID HARTWELL BY MICHAEL BISHOP	24
A DAVID HARTWELL APPRECIATION FROM A PUNK DYKE ESKIMO POET BY TAMARA VINING	25
DAVID G. HARTWELL BY MICHAEL SWANWICK	26
DAVID HARTWELL BY KATHRYN CRAMER	27
DAVID & CREW BY SARAH SMITH	28
KATHRYN MET DAVID BY GENE WOLFE	28
DAVID G. HARTWELL BIBLIOGRAPHY	30
A CORRESPONDENCE WITH CLIFF SIMAK BY JOHN MORRESSY	46
CLIFFORD SIMAK BY DAVID BRIN	47
ROBERT J. EWALD ON CLIFFORD D. SIMAK	48
CLIFFORD SIMAK BIBLIOGRAPHY	58
THE COMMITTEE	63

# Message from the Chairs

[Note: We tried to come up with a message welcoming you to this year's Readercon that we liked better than the introduction we wrote for the progress reports, but somehow we just couldn't. Seeing as how the original had to be edited for space anyway, we thought you might enjoy reading the full version (with a few improvements) here.]

It is now unquestionably the twenty-first century, if you follow the Gregorian calendar, that century which for most of science fiction's existence has represented "The Future." And while we at Readercon are as excited to be living in the future as the rest of you, we've also brought along a piece of our past for good luck: two former chairs (founder Bob Colby and "Sofa" veteran Meryll Cross) return to conduct the orchestra one more time.

We at Readercon attribute our survival into this century to the fact that we've maintained a unique identity in the sf convention world, one formed just as much by our approach to what we focus on (the written word) as by what we leave out. In short, we treat imaginative literature as a challenging literary art form rather than a lucrative marketing scheme.

It is for this reason that our Guest of Honor selections have always reflected an emphasis on strong personal vision rather than marketplace calculation. We are proud to continue in that tradition. You couldn't ask for better examples than the writing of Michael Swanwick and the heroic editorial efforts of David Hartwell to make a place in the larger market for works whose creative risk-taking might well have limited them to a much smaller audience.

Of course, even the best concept is nothing without people to execute it. Bob and Meryll would like to thank their fellow Readercon committee members and volunteers for their hard work and caring over the years. As experienced con chairs, we know that it's not going to be us who make the Readercon magic happen, but rather those who volunteer and take responsibility. If you also enjoy Readercon and want to help make it happen (either at the con or before it), we encourage you to contact us at either [volunteer@readercon.org](mailto:volunteer@readercon.org) or our mailing address.

Even a great team armed with a great concept can only do so much without an accommodating venue. This will be our second year at the Burlington Marriott, a site we hope you all enjoy as much as we do.

In the final analysis, however, all of those pieces add up to nothing without a supportive community. It is you who have nourished and kept alive this particular alternative to the status quo for all these years. You have a lot to be proud of for doing so, and it is the high point of our year to be amongst you again on Readercon weekend, this year and as far into our mutual futures as we can see.

Bob Colby and Meryll Cross, Co-chairs



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Cover by David G. Shaw. The year 2001 only comes around once—and hey, it did start out life as Arthur C. Clarke's "The Sentinel," right?

Illustration on page 25 by Dan Steffan

*Michael Swanwick:  
My Father, and Welcome to Him  
by Sean Swanwick*



Photo © Allen Batsen

Take my dad—please.

Do any of you know what it's like to have a world famous science fiction writer for a father?

There are, of course, perks, but there are perks to everything. If you've fallen out of an airplane, you get a nice view. If someone's filled you up with heroin, you get a headful of odd impressions before you go. If your dad is Michael Swanwick, you get to be the first person on the planet to read "The Periodic Table of Science Fiction" as each element is written.

Such diversions, however, pale before the awesome terror of having a creative potential figure.

First of all, there's end-of-book syndrome. You see, when he's near the end of a book, the artistic elements in his blood boil, and he becomes quite unreasonable. For instance, he stomps around the house, mutters to himself, and gets angry over the least little thing, like me not doing my homework. I'm a busy kid, and I've got more important things to do than homework, such as playing DeathFist 19, or reading yet another three-thousand-page fantasy trilogy. But when Dad's near the end of a book, he gets angry over anything I do, even getting a grade below a D.

And as Dad tends to write novels slowly, occasionally end-of-book syndrome lasts for months. Imagine! Months on end of living with a demanding taskmaster who believes that just because he's pouring his soul out into a work of beauty I should chew with my mouth shut! He's really quite unreasonable.

Another problem is the fallout. Every now and then, a bookcase undergoes spontaneous decomposition, and a room is filled knee-deep in paperbacks. And they're rare, expensive paperbacks, so we can't just run a chipper through the room and be done with it! No, we have to put them onto yet another bookshelf, which, under the new stresses, gradually weakens, until it in turn breaks, completing a savage circle. My suggestions of

replacing all the books in the house with velvet paintings of Elvis have been met with the most unkind words imaginable.

And we won't even mention the time he ran the cat through the laser printer.

So, to make a long story short, I'm looking for a home for a talented and housebroken science fiction writer. I'm afraid he's just not working out with me. Easy pricing plans—samples of his coffee mugs available for inspection. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery, management is not responsible for any bad art created by the writer. Serious offers only.

~

# The Short Fiction of Michael Swanwick

by Gordon Van Gelder

The manuscripts have certainly *looked nice*. Michael has mastered the fine art of manuscript preparation, including the elusive task of putting periods at the ends of sentences. In fact, I recall one colleague saying that "The Edge of the World" was the first story she read in manuscript that she *knew* would be a contender for awards. It was indeed an exceptionally good-looking manuscript—nice margins, exemplary double-spacing, nary a widowed line.

I've had the great pleasure of publishing several stories of Mr. Swanwick's. Each one has been a thrill.

The last time one of his stories appeared in *F&SF*, Michael said that people told him it was the best thing he'd ever done. This irked him, since the story was a short-short, and while Michael is one of the modern masters of the form, it's difficult to hear that a piece dashed off in a day might possibly rival the accomplishment of tales like "Mother Grasshopper" and "Criffin's Egg," over which Michael sweated his guts.

But there it was. People buzzed about the story. Even good friends like Tom Purdom said it was great and added, "It's so short you can read it in the bookstore and not have to buy the magazine."

Michael told me all this at a party for SciFi.com at which we stood with drinks in hand, feeling old as kids danced to the loud music. "It's not your best story, Michael," I said, feeling that very special thrill of being able to say such a thing and knowing the writer in question *wanted* to hear it. "The leading was a little wonky and the pages were folded to fit into a #10 envelope. But," I added, "when it wins the Nebula, you'd better thank me."

His eyes went wide with shock as Mr. Swanwick realized that he's so good, even his japes are liable to win awards.

## What I Know about Michael Swanwick

by Eileen Gunn

Michael Swanwick is the kind of person who, while all the other science fiction writers are doing their physics homework and making sure they know the historically correct form of military address for WWII Navy nurses, is to be found far away from the classroom, playing with the bare-breasted Amazon pirates.

And when the other writers, exhausted by an effort to understand the nature of standing waves, have become, perhaps, a bit careless, Michael is the one to remind us that life is real, life is earnest, and a decent amount of intellectual rigor is needed for even one's most casual prose. He then manages to give the impression that he knows not only the physical characteristics of a standing wave but their application to cosmological theories of magnetism and gravitation, and that he could, if the occasion arose, address a platform full of Army brass in a way that would arouse no suspicion of his innocence of military service. When Aztec gods speak through him, he seems to understand exactly what they are saying.

You look at his work, and you think, this guy knows everything. He has a command of history and economics. He can turn fantasy into hard science, and technology into poetry. He can write sex, he can write violence, he can write a dissertation on the loss of human warmth that would break your heart. The only hard evidence we have that Michael is fallible is the fact that he uses the tab key to indent paragraphs in WordPerfect.

But this encyclopedic perfection is a ruse. Michael Swanwick is a writer. A professional liar. He rules by distraction and dissembling. He sets himself tasks, then methodically, cold-bloodedly, does exactly what is needed to accomplish them, just like any general winning a war, any salesman cutting a deal. And what he wants is not merely to gain control of some meaningless hamlet or to collect a few signed sales contracts. As far as I can tell, he wants nothing less than the complete subjection of the reader's will. He wants you, the reader, to follow him anywhere, and he knows how to make you, the writer, howl in envy and frustration. He does this the hard way, and has since his very first sale, without sentimentality, without pandering, while going for broke in terms of risk and impact and technical virtue.

He doesn't make the way easy for the reader, and he doesn't make it easy for himself. He simply makes it worth the effort.

# Lord Vacant on the Boulevard of Naked Angels: Extracts from the Dream Diary of Michael Swanwick

Dreams are like weather. They are no more independent of each other than today's sunshine is independent of yesterday's rain. They occur in patterns lasting days, weeks, even months. A season of lively, entertaining dreams will be followed by one in which they are uniformly drab and tedious. Nightmares cluster like storm clouds. Possibly, dreams do not exist in isolation but rather as vivid windows of perception into an oceanic Something in which our waking lives are embedded.

So I conclude, anyway, from the experience of keeping a dream diary:

I began the diary in December 1993. I was curious exactly what was going on while I slept. Earlier, I had recorded and published a series of dream-writings which most people took for accounts of my dreams. They were not—they were exact transcriptions of prose I had written in my dreams. Those writing dreams were rare events, and writing them down more or less cured me of them. But the experience also made me want to examine my more commonplace dreams more closely, particularly on the level of form.

I put a notebook by my bed. Mornings, I jotted down whatever I remembered of my dreams, however fragmentary. For more than two years I recorded without once reading what I'd previously written down. This turned out to be a wise move. Reading the diary, when I finally did, satisfied my curiosity completely. I have made few entries since.

What have I learned?

Other than a few trivial and specific observations, such as the fact that I have a recurrent dream City with a stable geography (and a labyrinthine firetrap of a used book store, which I have visited several times), my chief discovery is that dreams are more akin to the process of writing, and more involved with the deep nature of words, than I would ever have suspected.

We tend to think of dreams, when we think of them at all, as being rather like movies or a perfected virtual reality in which the sleeper wanders through primarily visual landscapes. And so they are—sometimes. But, as I discovered, they can also be experienced in prose or poetry, in abstract thought or synoptic narration, or even as comic strips. In one instance, the dream was in manga format, with animated lap-dissolves between panels.

Dreams employ a full range of techniques, taken from a variety of artistic forms: first- and third-person storylines, distancing, jump-cuts, and slow fades. Sometimes the dream itself was a movie I was watching, other times a work of prose. Once I was a character in a story I was writing. There were dreams within dreams, switches of tense and person, and at least one effect specific to the medium which any writer would sell his soul for—bursts of strong emotion arising from no determinable source. These techniques were employed within a narrative capable of smoothly shifting from one formal mode to another.

In their effect, dreams have the emotive power of art. And I would argue that the art they most closely resemble is literature.

Yet though they resemble literature, dreams never quite achieve that happy state. The sleeping mind provides beauty without context, incidents without meaning, jokes without punchlines. Sometimes a dream can come so close to being a successful story that the waking mind can, with enormous effort, turn it into something publishable. Yet without that conscious intervention, they are nothing more than so many found objects, evocative but ultimately empty. They will never be completely satisfying as art until technology gives us some means of consciously shaping them.

The most fluidly adaptable and least constrained artistic form in existence is the novel. Dreams, however, once tamed, have the potential to render the novel obsolete. The technology required is so simple, in fact, that it's almost possible today to imagine what it would take: a player-recorder, a means of entering into and altering a recorded dream, and a few editing tools. None of which is half so unlikely as television was two hundred years ago.

Almost certainly the needed machinery will come along too late for me to ever get to use it. But how I'd love to get my hands on it! The potential locked within dreams is as great as that of all other media combined. Orson Welles once said that a sound stage was the best train set a boy ever had. The direct conscious manipulation of recorded dreams would be ten times better.

What follows is a series of excerpts from my recorded dreams, chosen chiefly for their entertainment value. They should, as Bret Harte put it, give you some rough idea of what I'm getting at.

12-6-93

(A) A man haunted by model trains—or possibly real trains in HO gauge—running through his house. He sets traps for them, but they are slyer and more evasive than one might expect. He pours himself another drink (in fact, that's the first sentence: [name] poured himself another drink) ... If he weren't drunk, he'd be crazy.

[This was a dream I was consciously shaping into a story, going back and replaying a scene in variant when it wasn't working. Waking, I realized whose stories this reminded me of, and constructed the opening sentence: *Mattheson poured himself another drink.*]

(B) I awoke, heart racing, from a hideous sleep with no memory of what I had dreamed of doing, but only the awful guilt of having done so.

12-7-93

I was in a small play called *How's Your Health?* Two men sitting on chairs on an otherwise empty stage, reading fragments of conversation from bundles of slips of paper. I was the older. We went in turn, trading clichés, each appropriate to our ages. I recall the younger at some point making fun of me by reading off 'bos slang phrases: Out of sight. What a bummer. The pressure's on for another hit. Spare change, man? There was a third character who had to run on stage briefly, and some confusion over who would play the part.

Just before the second performance, I found the play had been rewritten, and the slips of paper randomized, without the color coding to tell who read what. I didn't have even the old version memorized.

Somebody said there was a script on stage. So there I went and there it was. As I picked it up, I saw the auditorium was packed with an audience of hundreds. The stage was thronged with people, stage hands and the like, busy at last-minute chores.

I looked at the audience and grinned around my cigarette. If I had one small talent, it was this: I was perfectly comfortable before an audience. I never got stage fright.

12-20-93

"This is an antique." (s)he said of the dildo. "It has known three Chinese empresses."

1-6-94

(A) (dream fragment, from the conclusion:) "But 'twas a most proper execution. We observed all the ceremonies, and said all the prayers."

(B) the dream bureaucracy

1-9-94

When they opened the spacecraft, it reeked of sperm.

1-10-94

A black locomotive encased in glacial ice.

1-15-94

(A) I had a visit from the Language Angel (bearded, stem, and patriarchal) who gave me a refresher talk on exactly what was bad language. After the obvious, the blackboard filled up with overlapping phrases such as "scumsucking Republican road kill."

(B) I went to the ocean for an author photo: barefooted, wearing a trench coat, striding through the water. Anyone who doesn't understand the appeal of this shot, the photographer said, is totally ignorant of the real and suicidal meaning of pop songs about love and rain.

1-16-94

After a preliminary dream of viewing films of attempted assassinations of one man (in one, a large number of locomotives, both antique and built by

hobbyists, were released in an enormous room, and the man fled while they crashed into one another). I dreamed I was the protagonist of an Ian MacLeod story. I was an airline pilot and was somehow talked into riding the wing (not at all winglike in the dream but sculptural, in ways like a saddle, and could be leaned against and hugged) to an airport at slow speeds to prove it could be done. Unhappily the co-pilot chose the plane's usual destination and since I could not tell him to simply choose the closest airport, the trip took six hours.

On arrival, I saw a wall of rectangular gray stones with words engraved on some, something like the following:

these stones are a memorial to those pilots  
who lost their lives raise  
them

where damnable bloody cheek down  
at the mines, what are you, let me  
speak

The typographical trickery I thought typical of MacLeod [waking, it seems more typical of me], the degeneration of words obviously two conversations overlapping. The airline manager was angry at my stunt and didn't understand why I'd done it.

(undated)

[dreamed I was at a bank of controls. Jack Dann had the twin; and the computer had a limited but balky intelligence that could only be overcome by producing something demonstrably good. I came up with this:]

"Laurie Anderson in Concert"

And Laurie Anderson made a turn

She made a half-turn

She started to turn

And walk away.

And I said—

(hand flung out arm's length,

stuttering turn go

and return)

And I said—

(hand flung out arm's length

stuttering turn go

and return)

[All in the manner of a Laurie Anderson speechsong with appropriate musical accompaniment]

[another fragment from "Laurie Anderson in Concert":]

She was dancing with William S. Burroughs

She was dancing with Elvis C.

She was dancing with Frank Sinatra

She was dancing with Elvis P.

But a little voice said:

She's not gonna dance with you, no, no—

She's not gonna dance with you.

(undated)

She came to him as if they were in a library

two books leaning against each other

their slightly worn bindings

rubbing up each other

in faded places

"Gazillions." Dan Rather said solemnly, citing the number of calls and



overnight letters the network had gotten about a breaking story of an attempt to frame an Olympic athlete, then went on to cite a poem of which the preceding was a fragment (and better phrased at that), and concluded by saying that poetry was the ultimate judge of language and the final word on how good a job he'd done on a new story.

Marianne was so struck by the simile of two books she quoted it twice. Otherwise I'd've never have remembered it on waking.

3-14-94

Followed a wealthy and certain woman along a shopping street. She saw posters offering FAST and INSTANT resolution of psychological problems and at their direction went down a set of stairs to an expensive office—the whole setup was transparently a scam, though she didn't realize it.

A receptionist directed her into the next room, which was filled with famous military and historical figures from throughout history. They were all complaining about how badly they were treated by their wives, subordinates, etc.

The psychiatrist ushered all into the next room. She gave a short speech about how many problems were caused by the mother and the individual clinging to the hurt thus caused. Then she directed everyone to assume the stork stance: arms up and out to the side, like wings, stand on one foot, extend the other leg out and back, and lean the torso forward.

When everyone was in position, she told them to release their hatred. First one, then several, then all the others did. One by one the feet came down. They were cured! Happily, they left.

Only Adolf Hitler stayed, arms out and leg up, for further treatment.

(undated)

I swear to God he said/Every dollar of  
my hatred will be spent on me/And not  
a penny on the kid  
—The Brutal Ballad

(undated)

cayenne: "beautifully encoded with words"

4-17-94

Dreamed in an animation style that had the three-dimensionality and arbitrary movement of claymation but the crisp colors of cartoons: A couple in a shantytown. The woman stuffs newspaper in the top of a pot-bellied stove. The man walks past her on the wall, then back to the ground, both arguing. When she moves away, the newspaper rises out of the stove in the form of a newspaper cow. The man shoves it down and lights it. When the woman wants him to put on the lid, he snaps, "It's not as if the fire were crawling on the floor." Cut to a blue-skinned man in overalls, crawling on the floor. "I'm crawling on the floor," he says. Back to the man, who says to the woman, "Okay, I see it. Now that you've literalized my perfectly harmless metaphor for me—"

(undated)

Lord Vacant in the Library of Extinctions

(undated)

Even the war doesn't entertain us.

(undated)

(A) Steamships slip silently through the streets of the city.

(B) I was returning home to my mother's after some absence. I ran through the snow, barefoot and happy, and came in through the unlocked back

door. As I was locking up, my father heard the noise and came to greet me. "Give me a hug," he said, and I did. I was taller than he and he was alive and himself again, restored to his old state.

6-15-94

I dreamed I set my tie free. It flew, briefly.

7-19-94

The first notes of the saxophone were so natural that it took five blasts before the mind registered them as music. It was the sound of the city, a noise like God's own buses moving through the streets.

—dreamt as sounds and images, then phrased as above in my sleep

9-9-94

Auntie Fern was a wonderful cook, and made us soup even though she had no pots. She cooked it in huge amounts inside a big old cannon she owned, and when it was done, pulled the lanyard. Luckily, we lived across town from her—we'd stand outside in our raincoats, holding up bowls.

9-15-94

(A) My dear young man, one does not/Beg a blurb from Doddsworth-Blair!  
—opening of a limerick spoken extempore by an extravagantly theatrical character

(B) By sheerest chance, I was present at the assassination of Forrest Cump.

10-5-94

Was a hero-and-artist, one of three more-than-normal individuals who were invading Hell (whose caverns were in the moon) in hopes of setting things right. Having been created by the moon goddess, I had a special affinity for her and she found me immediately and had me walk with her. She had the seeming of an old woman and she was totally mad. That was why we were come—to make her and the caverns of Hell sane, if it could be done.

(undated)

One day the pride simply turned on him.

They were in the back room of a fuel-oil supply company, punishing one of the younger wives, when it happened. Perhaps some chance word of his set them off. They were always most sensitive when the blood of one of their own was in the air.

One instant he was lying by the wall, smiling sleepily, and the next he was on the floor with all dozen wives fighting to get at him.

His skin was as tough as old leather. That was what saved him. It bought him time to think while their savage blows showered against him and first one wife and then another tried to tear him open.

As a rule he had only one advantage over them, the power to *chandar*, the ability to tap all his resources at once, to put on a burst of blazing speed. But he would have only five or ten minutes before he would dry himself bloodless, and then he would need to eat again and then he would need to sleep.

While they attacked and he (futilely) resisted, his mind searched out his needs: a human building with mortals within, several of them, which he could reach and enter quickly, within which he could drain the mortals of life, and where their absence would not be noticed for at least ten hours. It had to be one, too, that the pride would not locate, and this was difficult, for they were as intelligent as he, when they chose to be.

He chose his target and triggered *chandar*. With a roar he was out from under his wives, flinging them away, one-armed, smashing down the door, and away: down the street, into Manhattan.



[The above started as a dream of a video game with movie sequences.]

10-7-94

In a future of enormous possibilities the mind and form can be remade as willed. A man and his wife in human form carry their true selves in the form of graphite or ruby marbles. I consult with them and program a colony of ants kept for this purpose—to disassemble the marbles atom by atom and rebuild them. But there are doubts that surface while it is being done whether (a) the mind is perfectly independent or (b) controlling code has been written in by a hostile government. We run experiments to determine the truth which come down on the side of free will—but do they yield the results we see or am I programmed to *misread* the results? The truth cannot be determined.

10-25-94

I discovered that by lying on my stomach and giving a push, I could glide frictionless down the center of city streets as fast as a bicycle. It was great fun. A few kicks provided all the needed power.

The dream went on for hours. I saw no reason for it to change.

(undated)

A complicated dream set in my City, involving being late for work in a new location, a search for extremely expensive cigars and (of course) trying to get a bus to go where I wanted and finding the schedules baffling. At one point, when I went to look at a building, parts of whose facade moved in fascinating ways. I saw Isaac Asimov with a baton, happily leading a small orchestra or large band, obviously a celebrity stand-in. Then he went to join Ellen Kushner and Frank Sinatra at a small table. They were all laughing and gay.

[I wanted to join them, but decided it would be selfish of me to dilute their happy moment. 8/28/00 (remembered)]

11-27-94

I stood by the shores where the great river of Conscience flows into a bight of the Agen Sea, wishing James Joyce could be here to stare into the infinite milky distance, contemplating the Inlet of Agen Bight.

11-31-94

Marianne and I had suits or devices that allowed us to breathe underwater. We went to see a museum in the shallows—all the displays were in building-sized glass cases that could be viewed from boats. These were made by the original alien race of this planet and included items as small as needles and as large as battleships. Some cases could be easily entered underwater, including one containing many coral-encrusted artifacts, some of which were displayed with a Viking's red silk shirt. When I mentioned this to Marianne, she joked, "It can't be there, where I can reach the shirt. Otherwise, I'd be *wearing* it!"

Later I broke through the surface of a harbor. It was winter-ice cold. The air was cold and invigorating in my lungs and for a minute I didn't know what I was breathing. I made a long, low bellowing noise then, like some great Arctic mammalian horn.

(undated)

Grand Guignol as a series of compulsive flashes of someone receiving messages from Elsewhere, maybe under alien control: jumbled images, with a moment of sudden clarity when she realizes she is holding a slice of human pie. She is repulsed by the thing, before its very nature forces her to bring it toward her mouth, and then she is lost in fortuitous imagery again.

A toy of the gods committing unspeakable acts to her own horror, never quite coherent enough to get out of it. ("Too strong for me.") Lost in a frequency nobody else gets. Grooving to "Alien Music." Hooked into "Alien Radio."

12-20-94

Of the Boulevard of Naked Angels I know only that it is named after the eponymous statues, that it has seen better days, and that it is now known for its brothels and streetwalkers.

—from a set of notes, most rather dry, on the geography of my City

12-29-94

I was a woman possessed by/become a shamanistic power, the spirit of fire, burning, on a balcony forever. I danced to a group of horrified and understanding women who stood on the other side of a glass window facing upon the balcony, a message of burning, changing, enduring.

1-27-95

In a clean-cut '50s future I found that if I shook hands with a householder on the way out, the house would recognize trace DNA on my hand, and I could then reverse the sidewalk, stroll in, and rob the place.

2-2-95

Friendly aliens who like to have humans living inside them because they're gregarious and enjoy the company.

(undated)

Two boys, adventuring, take a boat far north to a near-deserted island. There they encounter a small movie company. Which includes Frankenstein's monster, of such mad lust that he is kept caged. The director is shooting *The Tempest*, and the monster is to play Caliban. The monster is first seen (the camera angles made clear this dream was a movie) polishing a bit of wire with his fingers, trying to fashion a pick.

2-13-95

Dreamt I woke from Elizabethan dreams and it was night, dark. My wife asked me to turn on the light. I tried but the bulb was apparently burned out. I got up, tried a light switch—nothing.

"The power's out," I said, and went outside to see if it was just the house or the entire grid.

I heard something and flicked on my large flashlight. A barrage of sudden flashing multicolored lights and sirenlike noises drove me inside again.

I turned off all the switches I'd turned on and went to bed. "It's aliens," I said. "We'll go to sleep, be experimented upon, and forget everything in the morning." I was resigned and bitter.

(undated)

"Weasels wease. That's all there is to it."

3-18-95

Went to a small funeral. Prince Charles was there, in town for a theater piece in which he was appearing—a three-man World War Two submarine drama. (I talked with a friend who argued it hardly mattered to anyone how good the other two actors were; his picture was on page one of the Daily News in the honor boxes outside.) I [several words indecipherable] my raincoat, I left. I could have sat with Charles, but chose instead my father's pew. I could see some ladies in it were scandalized by me. Sitting there, I studied my father's face. He was heavier and grimmer than I remembered. I wished Marianne were there so I could show her what I meant when I said that in rest he had a phlegmatic look.

In the dream my mother was dead and Dad was a widower.



3-23-95

"Do? Well, I suppose I'll do something about it. I'm still the finest wizard in Vienna, after all."

—softly spoken last words of a dream about information economics

(undated)

Sub-Surface Orbiting

(in a space capsule carved out of the bedrock)

3-29-95

A British naval captain complaining to his wife of the richness of a dish served to him. "Eight meatballs, covered with sauce! The cook called it Incident in Burundi. Damned tasteless, considering the news last week of what happened to those four missionaries."

His wife does not ask for explanations.

4-7-95

To confirm Elvis's involvement in a project for skeptics I wished to recruit, I had five handwriting experts analyze a page of his script, blind. The first said: "This is godlike handwriting. It might be God. He's definitely an evil genius, whoever he is. May I guess? Could it be... the Wizard of Oz?"

5-8-95

Dreamed I'd killed my mother in an argument and was about to go to jail for three months. I must've had mitigating factors but could not remember them, only remembered remembering them earlier. When I went to turn myself in I had no shoes and it was 9:30 a.m. and I was due in at noon. So I went walking about aimlessly in the city in my stocking feet.

(undated)

I cut off an ear for my art. Almost made it both, but decided I still wanted to be able to hear. Worried what to tell Marianne and looked at the ear. Long hairs were growing from its tip. I almost trimmed them. But I had to accept that I had no authority over the ear any more.

(undated)

Alarmed, distraught, I came into a hospital room. The woman there smiled in a friendly way. I said I didn't know why I'd come and she held up the most recent of a stack of cards she was writing and addressing, one to everybody on Leverington Avenue. It was a standard Hallmark card with a message something like, "Since you left, there's been a gap in my life..." with the word *gap* circled and a note saying, "Is this you?"

"Yes!" I said. "That's it. I'm missing half a day. Where was I? What happened to me?"

6-12-95

1. I accompanied him to Hell every now and then. I don't know how he'd come his status there but they always treated him like a king.

2. I noticed in her story she used the word *redaktylos* to mean a human genetic engineering event. The word was an imitation of R. A. Lafferty's, a play on *rhododaktylos*, and could be translated not literally but by implication as "red-handed," for he thought such incursions a crime against God and humanity.

I could not tell if she were using the word knowingly and ironically, or if she simply thought it was the commonly accepted term.

6-13-95

Dreamed Beetle Bailey spent a hitch in Viet Nam. The government never found his body.

(undated)

Scientists were studying a computer simulation of God, trying to determine whether He was a dangerous threat to humanity who would have to be destroyed or not. The programmer who'd created the simulation kept it under control with an automatic function which, whenever the total amount of skin within simulated humanity which was destroyed by violence exceeded that destroyed by normal chafing and abrasion, diminished the simulation to a fraction of its previous powers.

9-2-95

Largest mall in Europe—huge, a world in itself. One day everyone wakes up to find it is controlled by Chthulian monsters. Elephants with multiple trunks who wear blue business suits and laugh scornfully. The normal is taken away and replaced with the bizarre. It is, everyone agrees, all very well done.

9-10-95

The death of Daffy Duck. A closely detailed documentary look at the cartoon star's last night, his carefully planned, arranged, and executed suicide, and its aftermath the next morning. Along with the script of his last (and serious) movie, in which he starred as a war pilot.

9-19-95

Smashed down from orbit, we were slammed to the floor of David Letterman's stage in mid-show, crisped and flattened. Letterman solicitously helped us up, commenting to one that he looked "distressingly like a severed ear."

(undated)

First I dreamt a long and very strange Worldcon where everyone was very kind to me. ... Then I replayed the dream as a paranoid fantasy set in a similar situation ... in which everyone was to some degree or other in the control, willing or not, of a cultish and vindictive religion. The climax came when the hero was telling someone he doubted L. Ron Hubbard's early stories of having been in so desperate straits somewhere that he'd eaten a fish caught in a sewer "despite its being contaminated with fecal matter." Suddenly, they seized control of his mind. "How can we kill Dr. So-and-so?" He demonstrated on his own body where the leather armor wasn't. (How he'd learned this was a major prior plot point.) "And the girl?"

He leered: "The leather armor doesn't quite come down to her waist. It stops an inch above her panties. You can just take an axe and—"

Cut to a later place; he takes off his shirt in front of an older, heavy black woman. Perhaps she's his doctor. We see—and he doesn't—a freshly tattooed necklace across his chest with the words "VICTIM OF AN INSANE RELIGIOUS CULT."

She sees it and her face changes.

In an earlier dream I was briefly back in college. My old dorm was extraordinarily crowded and co-ed. Some students made a point of not wrapping themselves in towels on their way back from the showers. They stood in the halls, male and female, naked, in whatever conversations they'd been caught in. I was in a long conversation about what things they couldn't eat or ingest—they were a very health-conscious group.

Several times later in the dream I talked about this episode to illustrate how things had changed: "Man, in my day we stood around *fully clothed*, talking about how these cigarettes were going to kill us."

10-23-95

"Just because Jesus pushed Mary around, doesn't make *him* King Frog."

11-9-95

A small group of children living in contemporary Sleeping Beauty country were systematically going around to all the sites associated with her and asking questions about the Prince. In format, it was a standard child-detectives story, with adults indulgently answering the questions, thinking them no more than childish curiosity.

In one typical stop they visit a church which has a rummage shop and Sleeping Beauty shrine. The place of the Sleeping Beauty is taken by a teddy bear. It's elaborate for a church second-hand shop, third-rate as an attraction. An elderly lady sells souvenirs. She's probably a volunteer. Yes, she knew the Prince. There was always something a little off about him, something dark in his past. No, she didn't know what it was.

The children make notes. It's all coming together. They're saving the Castle itself for last.

(At one point they talk to a man who explains that African-Americans aren't into the Sleeping Beauty story: "You won't find many brothers there," he says. "It's a white thing. We just don't get it.")

11-14-95

It was a prison for men. Not many women dared go there in person. But they visited it in virtual, lurking unseen, great numbers of them.

Their unfelt presence was a constant and destabilizing tension.

12-2-95

Long, complicated and fluid dreams with shifting premises. They were all entertaining to be in as they unfolded.

The last of the three was experienced in the first person initially and then shifted to third person; for at least one scene it was experienced simultaneously as both. This was followed by a conversation with another person and his/her dog on choice of colors for the walls I/he was painting. By now, the dream had become a novel which I was reading. In the novel, the sun shone down (probably through a window; the locale was a comfortable den or living room) upon the conversation, a friendly, aloof, listening presence.

The remainder of the chapter was taken up by two stories. One was *thought* but not told by the character who owned the dog. Followed by a story the Sun *would have told* in response. It was a recollected story—all the Sun's stories are old and often-told—and as it unfolded I was filled with admiration for the structure of the novel (I presume I was not the author): So many books attempt this rambling, fluid, shifting style, I thought, and they hardly ever work. Here it works: the central issue/plot of the book (whatever it was) is always present in the reader's mind. One never suspects the narrative has lost its way.

This led me to recompose a note to one to my Clarion students: To tell her the two things she must do are to continue her romance and seduction of the written word and to study simplicity of plot. Then I wrote: "You must put your head down and run fulltilt into that stone cliff. Then you must pick yourself up, shake yourself off, and do it again. I have no way of knowing how long this will take. But you must hope it is not really a cliff but a wall, and that it will crumble before you give up."

12-11-95

Cannibalism, human cheese appreciation classes for schoolchildren, and astronauts-in-training skinny-dipping in liquid oxygen—a night of strong and not always pleasant imagery.

12-14-95

Of the thousand aspects of the short story, the single most important damn thing is this: it must end.

12-15-95

Odd, Laffertyesque dream about a lonely shoe salesman. He has a girlfriend—it doesn't work out. It never works out. That's the nature of a lonely shoe salesman joke.

I take him and several kids (but I've forgotten the kids' subplot) to a parallel world or some other dimension. He's gently dissolved there. I come back and give his pick-up truck to his girlfriend, who's not terribly upset about the whole thing. "There's always something incomplete about my creations," I tell her. I give her the small mold I used to make him as well. "From now on," I say, "I'll only make up traveling salesman and farmer's daughter jokes. You won't be hearing any lonely shoe salesman jokes anymore."

"I'll believe that when I hear it," she says.

But she doesn't.

Same night, different joke:

A stock horror film with media techniques, flashy fast-cuts and so on. About people who have the power to translate themselves into virtual experience. A perverse couple were screwing across multiple realities ... lots of scratchy places, white noise, commercial snippets, when the guy says leeringly, "Violence is cool." ... She's not happy. ... It turns into a rape. ... Her screams overlaid with a graffixed NO! and Noooooooo! ... Intercut into a kind of standard horror movie. A brutalized woman sprouts hunting knives from each finger—close-cut fanning shots—threatens, menaces, plunges a knife to the hilt in the guy's chest. "This is why he was so horrible earlier," I explained to Sean. "So it would justify this long, almost endless bloodbath." But then, realizing that Sean was there, I forced myself to realize it was a dream (which I had not, a moment before) and wake up. To spare him it.

12-20-95

A long segment in an unfamiliar part of my City—its Northwest segment, run-down and crowded with warehouses, but with many hundreds of art studios catering to the tourist trade.

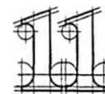
There is a girl who has become nearly immaterial and floats helpless about the city in a kind of dirigible because she has fallen in love with the wind. But because the wind loves her back, she is ultimately saved, gently crashed against a skyscraper, mooning ropes tangling with the flag lines, and able to climb in through a window.

12-31-95

The IURH(D) or Independent Union of Responsible Heroines (working within the medium of Dreams) is not so much a union as an advisory body, working to ensure that the characterization and motivations of dream heroines are accurately researched and clearly established, and that the scenarios in which they are portrayed are consistent with the principles of good dream-fiction.

1-8-96

A fragment: A lion with a grinning, near-human face stalks a woman through an apartment. His body is all muscle and power. Earlier the woman was entirely human, but now she has been transformed into a beast like him. In some way this was his doing.



The lion-woman pads through the cluttered room, terrified, her glasses in her mouth. They are held in her lips by one earpiece. He moves silently after her, mirking, making no menacing moves.

She drops the glasses on the rug and makes several complex attempts to put the glasses on, but since she has no hands, it is extremely difficult. The manicure helps her to a degree, pushing the glasses back toward her with a paw, when she would otherwise lose them. Then, when she has worked the eyepieces completely open, lenses facedown on the rug, and is about to dip her head into them, he moves forward and steps on them. Crushing them.

In a frenzy of terror the woman, squinting, thrusts her face almost into his. "Who are you?" she cries. Then: "Who are you?" she screams.

He has never stopped grinning.

Now his not-human face swells to fill her vision. She can hear his mirking, insinuating grin. "I am the fire elemental..." he begins portentously.

This was not so terrifying as it might have been, for in my dream I was watching it on TV. Other things were going on. I suddenly realized it was after 1:00 p.m. and I should have picked up Sean, who was staying with friends, long ago. It suddenly struck me that in real life, terror was nothing at all like what was portrayed by the movie, but more like what I was experiencing now. I got to my feet. I reached for the phone. I forgot the show.

### (undated)

On my way to a parade I was distracted by a yard sale and conversation with the woman running it. Among other things I bought were several P. G. Wodehouse paperbacks I had never before heard of. One was entitled *Bits and Pieces* and subtitled *Short Fictions and Unfinished Fragments*. The pieces were all extremely short, most between one page and three. I can recall a fragment of prose from one:

"Originally this work was intended to be an expanded version of *War and Peace* and written in perfect Russian. On reflection I decided that a novel-length version of Goethe's *Faust* in exquisite German would suffice. Things so seldom work out, however! Now it is a synopsis of nothing-in-particular, and hardly in English at all."

1-14-96

Two young artists in blue jumpsuits put on an installation in the Carnegie called "The Pomographic Bed." The bed itself was enormous, a four-poster with thick pink hangings. Inside, it was all satin comforters, silk sheets, big fluffy pillows. Outside, it was roped off with velvet museum ropes. Between the ropes and the bed a TV monitor hooked up to a VCR on a low table faced the museum-goers. It showed a live image of the empty inside of the bed—grainy security-camera black-and-white.

The two shared a videocamera. They would approach museum visitors, one filming and the other talking, and ask if they'd like to go into the pomographic bed with either of the two and be videotaped for art. "We're very cooperative," they'd say frankly. "There's not much we're not willing to do."

The patrons were not approached indiscriminately—that wasn't the point—but chosen because they'd make an interesting contribution to the art.

When someone said yes, they'd all three go inside the pomographic bed, turning off the security camera and switching on the VCR as they did so. It played prior tapes made in the bed (bright, lushly-colored) until they emerged again, rumpled and flushed and fully dressed, and switched back to the video camera.

A guard stood nearby at such times to make sure nobody tried to go beyond the rope and peck.

The rejections—"No, no," laughing, "I really couldn't"—which began with the museum director, were spliced together every night into a single tape that ran continuously on a monitor in another part of the museum, not labeled.

"Are you bisexual?" one patron asked, when approached.

"No," they said, "we're artists."

After two or three days, word got out and people began showing up specifically hoping for sex. But the artists—anticipating this—had already concluded the live portion of the installation, and the visitors, waiting patiently or not for them to emerge from the pomographic bed, saw only a continuous series of tapes.

I don't know what played the first time a patron went into the pomographic bed—maybe a tape of the two artists together. But since the piece was so much about knowability, I suspect that unless you were there to see the first patron go in, there was no way to find out.

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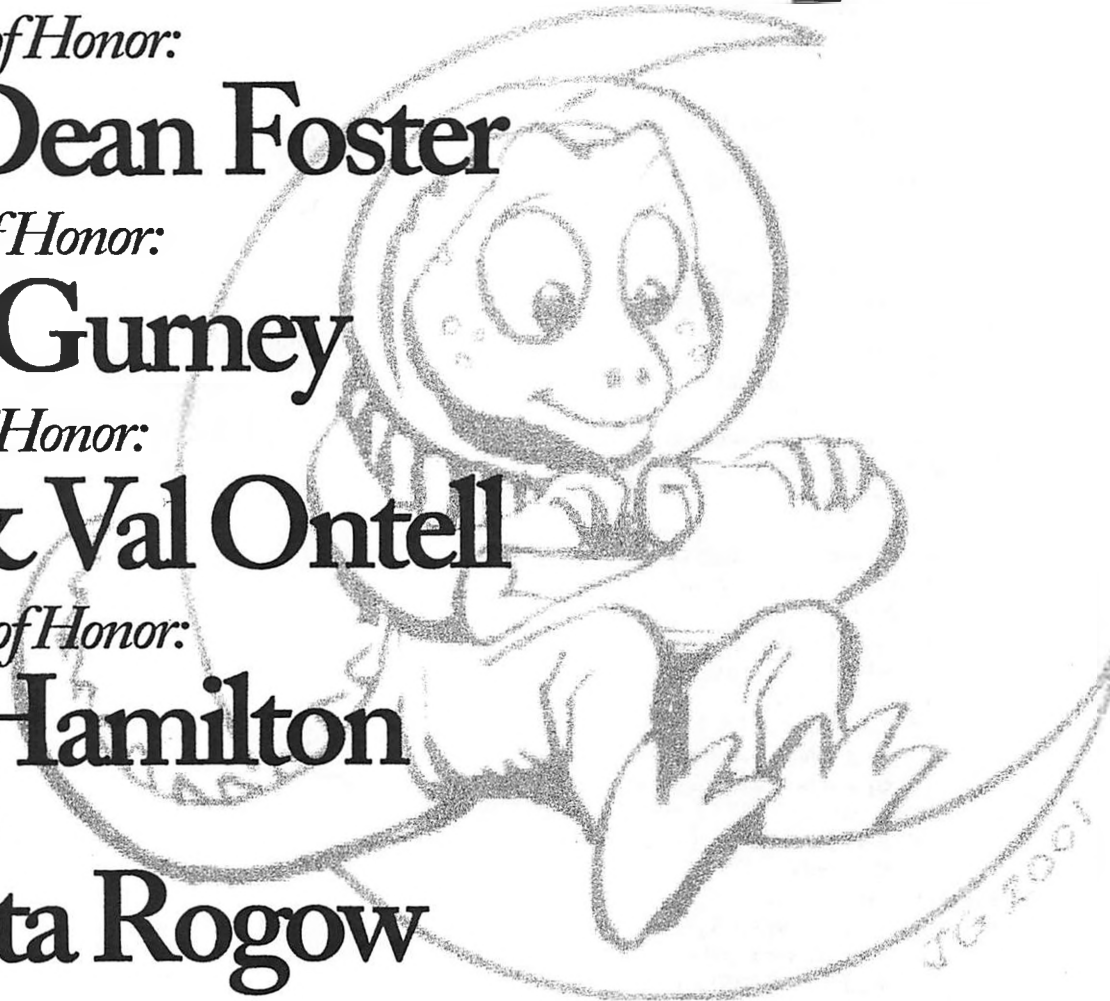
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# Michael Swanwick Bibliography

Editions are listed chronologically, so first editions (and first U.S. or U.K.) should be evident. All editions are hardcover (hc) unless indicated otherwise (tp = trade paperback, pb = mass market paperback). SFBC is the Science Fiction Book Club. \* indicates editions believed to be in print.

## Novels and Other Book-Length Works of Fiction

### *In the Drift*

- Ace Books, 1985 (pb)
- Ace Books, 1987 (pb)
- Legend, 1989 (UK; hc and tp)
- Legend, 1990 (UK; pb)
- Ace Books, 1997 (pb)

### *Vacuum Flowers*

- Arbor House, 1987
- Science Fiction Book Club, 1987
- Ace Books, 1988 (pb)
- Simon & Schuster, 1988 (UK)
- Legend, 1989 (UK; pb)
- Ace Books, 1997 (pb)
- Originally appeared in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, mid-December 1986, January 1987, February 1987

### *Griffin's Egg*

- Legend, 1991 (UK)
- Legend, 1991 (UK; tp)
- St. Martin's, 1991
- Hugo and Nebula nominee (novella)**

### *Stations of the Tide*

- Morrow, 1991
- SFBC, 1991
- Easton Press, 1991 (nominally a 1<sup>st</sup>, but appeared a month later)
- Legend, 1992 (UK; hc and tp)
- AvoNova, 1992 (pb)
- Legend, 1993 (UK; pb)
- Avon Books, 1997 (tp)
- Eos, 2001\* (pb)
- Originally appeared in *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, mid-December 1990 and January 1991
- Excerpts appeared as "Three Scenes from *Stations of the Tide*" in *Nebula Awards 27*, ed. James Morrow, Harcourt Brace, 1993
- Nebula winner; Hugo, Campbell Memorial, and Arthur C. Clarke nominee**

### *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*

- Millennium, 1993 (UK)
- Morrow AvoNova, 1994
- Millennium, 1994 (UK; tp)
- SFBC, 1994
- Easton Press, 1994 (nominally a 1<sup>st</sup>)
- Orion, 1994 (UK; pb)
- AvoNova, 1995 (pb)
- Avon Books, 1997\* (tp)
- World Fantasy and Arthur C. Clarke nominee**

### *Jack Faust*

- Avon Books, 1997
- Orion / Millennium, 1997 (UK; tp)
- SFBC, 1997
- Orion / Millennium, 1998 (UK; pb)
- Avon Books, 1998 (tp)
- Hugo nominee**

## Short Story Collections

### *Gravity's Angels*

- Arkham House, 1991
- Frog, Ltd., 2001\* (pb)

### *A Geography of Unknown Lands*

- Tigereyes Press, 1997 (hc and tp\*)
- World Fantasy nominee (collection)**

### *Puck Aleshire's Abecedary*

- Dragon Press, 2000\* (chapbook)

### *Moon Dogs*

- NESFA Press, 2000 (limited slipcased and hc\*)

### *Tales of Old Earth*

- North Atlantic/Frog/Tachyon Publications, 2000\*

## Short Stories and Novellas

Each story is given with its first publication. Those stories that have been collected are also followed by the name(s) of the collection(s) in which they appear.

GA = *Gravity's Angels*

GUL = *A Geography of Unknown Lands*

MD = *Moon Dogs*

ToOE = *Tales of Old Earth*

### The Feast of Saint Janis

- New Dimensions 11*, ed. Robert Silverberg and Marta Randall, Pocket Books, 1980
- GA
- Nebula nominee (novelette)**

### Ginungagap

- TriQuarterly* #49, 1980
- GA
- Nebula nominee (novelette)**

### Mummer Kiss

- Universe 11*, ed. Terry Carr, Doubleday, 1981
- GA
- Nebula nominee (novelette)**

### Touring (with Jack M. Dann and Gardner R. Dozois)

- Penthouse*, April 1981

### 'Til Human Voices Wake Us

- Proteus: Voices for the 80's*, ed. Richard S. McEnroe, Ace Books, 1981

### Walden Three

- New Dimensions 12*, ed. Robert Silverberg and Marta Randall, Timescape, 1981

### Snow Job (with Gardner R. Dozois)

- High Times*, April 1982

### The Man Who Met Picasso

- Omni*, September 1982
- GA
- World Fantasy nominee**

### Ice Age

- Amazing*, January 1984
- ToOE

- Virgin Territory (with Jack M. Dann and Gardner R. Dozois)  
*Penthouse*, March 1984
- Afternoon at Schrafft's (with Jack M. Dann and Gardner R. Dozois)  
*Amazing*, March 1984
- When the Music's Over...  
*Light Years and Dark*, ed. Michael Bishop, Berkley, 1984
- Trojan Horse  
*Omni*, December 1984  
GA  
**Nebula nominee (novelette)**
- Marrow Death  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, mid-December 1984  
**Nebula nominee (novella)**
- The Transmigration of Philip K.  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, February 1985  
GA
- The Blind Minotaur  
*Amazing*, March 1985  
GA
- The Gods of Mars (with Jack M. Dann and Gardner R. Dozois)  
*Omni*, March 1985  
**Nebula nominee (short story)**
- Anyone Here from Utah?  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, May 1985
- Dogfight (with William Gibson)  
*Omni*, July 1985  
**Hugo and Nebula nominee (novelette)**
- Covenant of Souls  
*Omni*, December 1986  
GA
- Foresight  
*Interzone* #20, 1987  
GA
- The Overcoat  
*Omni*, April 1988
- The Dragon Line  
*Terry's Universe*, ed. Beth Meacham, Tor Books, 1988  
GA
- A Midwinter's Tale  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, December 1988  
GA
- Snow Angels  
*Omni*, March 1989  
GA
- The Edge of the World  
*Full Spectrum 2*, ed. Lou Aronica, Shawna McCarthy, Amy Stout, and Patrick LoBrutto, Doubleday Foundation, 1989  
GA, GUL  
**Theodore Sturgeon winner; Hugo (short story) and World Fantasy nominee**
- UFO  
*Aboriginal SF*, September/October 1990
- Fantasies (with Timothy Robert Sullivan)  
*Amazing*, August 1991
- The Wireless Folly  
*Thunder & Shadow Collector's Magazine*, February 1992  
GUL
- In Concert  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, September 1992  
ToOE
- Picasso Deconstructed: Eleven Still Lives  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, May 1993
- Cold Iron  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, November 1993  
**Nebula nominee (novella)**
- The Changeling's Tale  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, January 1994  
GUL, ToOE  
**World Fantasy nominee**
- The Mask  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, April 1994  
ToOE
- Walking Out  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, February 1995  
ToOE  
**Hugo nominee (short story)**
- North of Diddy-Wah-Diddy  
*Killing Me Softly*, ed. Gardner Dozois, HarperPrism, 1995  
GUL, ToOE
- Radio Waves  
*Omni*, Winter 1995  
GUL, ToOE  
**World Fantasy winner (novella); Theodore Sturgeon nominee**
- The City of God (with Gardner R. Dozois)  
*Omni Online*, December 1995  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, October/November 1996  
MD
- The Dead  
*Starlight 1*, ed. Patrick Nielsen Hayden, Tor Books, 1996  
MD, ToOE  
**Hugo and Nebula nominee (short story)**
- Ships (with Jack M. Dann)  
*Lethal Kisses*, ed. Ellen Datlow, Millennium, 1996  
GA, MD
- Mother Grasshopper  
GUL, ToOE
- The Wisdom of Old Earth  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, December 1997  
ToOE
- The Very Pulse of the Machine  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, February 1998  
ToOE  
**Hugo winner (short story)**
- Wild Minds  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, May 1998  
ToOE  
**Hugo (short story) and Theodore Sturgeon nominee**
- Vergil Magus: King without Country (with Avram Davidson)  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, July 1998  
MD
- Ancestral Voices (with Gardner R. Dozois)  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, August 1998  
MD
- Radiant Doors  
*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, September 1998  
ToOE  
**Hugo and Nebula (short story) and Theodore Sturgeon nominee**
- Midnight Express  
*Sirens and Other Daemon Lovers*, ed. Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, HarperPrism, 1998  
ToOE
- Microcosmic Dog  
*Science Fiction Age*, November 1998  
ToOE

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with Sean Swanwick)

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, December 1998

Green Fire (with Andy Duncan, Eileen Gunn, and Pat Murphy)

*Event Horizon Online*, January 1999

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, April 2000  
(revised version)

Ancient Engines

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, February 1999

ToOE

**Hugo and Nebula nominee (short story)**

Scherzo with Tyrannosaur

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, July 1999

ToOE

**Hugo winner; Nebula nominee (short story)**

Riding the Giganotosaur

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*,

October/November 1999

ToOE

The Madness of Gordon Van Gelder

*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, March 2000

Mickelrede, or The Slayer and the Staff: A Ghost Novel

Based on a manuscript by Avram Davidson; edited, with  
interpolations, by Michael Swanwick

MD

Moon Dogs

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, March 2000

MD

**Hugo nominee (short story)**

The Raggle Taggle Gypsy-O

ToOE

Letters to the Editor

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, forthcoming

The Dog Said Bow-Wow

*Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine*, forthcoming

In addition to the individual stories listed above, Swanwick also  
wrote the following series of short stories:

## Writing in My Sleep

The Bulls

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #30, vol. 3, no. 6,  
February 1991

Critics

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #31, vol. 3, no. 7,  
March 1991

Ether; A Bicentennial Minute; Stage Direction

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #32, vol. 3, no. 8,  
April 1991

Books

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #33, vol. 3, no. 9,  
May 1991

Glass Soul; Bastards; Xeroxing

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #34, vol. 3, no.  
10, June 1991

Trolls

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #35, vol. 3, no.  
11, July 1991

God

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #36, vol. 3, no.  
12, August 1991

Rafferty Rafferty and Mr. Bog

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #37, vol. 4, no. 1,  
September 1991

Storyteller Rock

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #38, vol. 4, no. 2,  
October 1991

## Puck Aleshire's Abacedar

A is for Albany

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #111, vol. 10, no.  
3, November 1997

B is for Borges

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #112, vol. 10, no.  
4, December 1997

C is for Cancer

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #113, vol. 10, no.  
5, January 1998

D is for Drink

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #114, vol. 10, no.  
6, February 1998

E is for Elf Sex

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #115, vol. 10, no.  
7, March 1998

F is for Fountain Pen

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #116, vol. 10, no.  
8, April 1998

G is for Golem

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #117, vol. 10, no.  
9, May 1998

H is for Hoppity Hooper

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #118, vol. 10, no.  
10, June 1998

I is for Impermanence

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #119, vol. 10, no.  
11, July 1998

J is for Joe

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #120, vol. 10, no.  
12, August 1998

K is for Kong

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #121, vol. 11, no.  
1, September 1998

L is for Language

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #122, vol. 11, no.  
2, October 1998

Michael Swanwick's Complete "L is for Language"

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #123, vol. 11, no.  
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M is for Mirrorganger

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #123, vol. 11, no.  
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N is for Notary

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #124, vol. 11, no.  
4, December 1998

O is for Opening

*The New York Review of Science Fiction* #125, vol. 11, no.  
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P is for Powers

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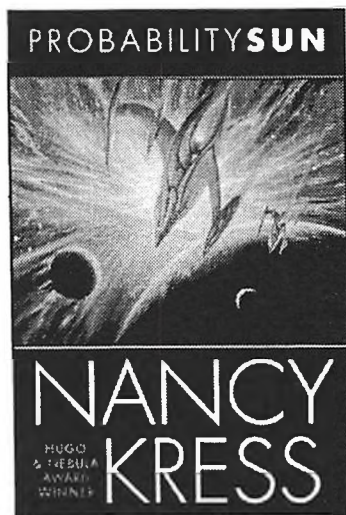
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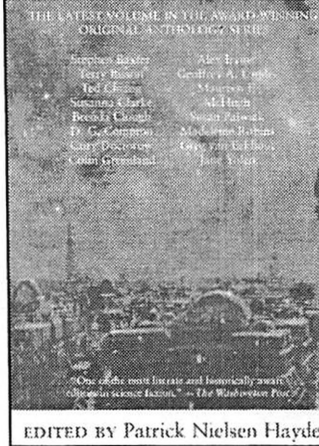
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# Hartwell's Three Laws of Fashion

by David G. Hartwell

1. To Dress in ignorance of Fashion is to Dress badly.
2. To Dress knowingly in Fashion is to become invisible.
3. To Dress knowingly in opposition to Fashion is to have your own style.

## Corollaries:

• One may observe in daily life people dressed out of fashion, who make it intuitively evident that to dress in ignorance of fashion is a serious aesthetic offense, tantamount to singing off-key in public alone. These people are Clunky. This offense is often primarily the result of lack of money, but might just as easily result from an economic choice of another sort, such as putting all your money into extra RAM and living on pizza, coke and twinkies.

I have known Holy Aesthetic Ignorants who put tremendous faith in an inner light, of intelligence, or personality, or virtue, that blinds the enlightened ones to all external manifestation (except for coolth—more about this below). From a distance one of these might well be mistaken for a street person. (I know an editor who was.) Science fiction fandom has a large population of Holy Ignorants, as does physics and engineering, and of course there are Programmers....

Most of them do not believe in the existence of style in art either, just content. The worst offenders don't bathe regularly and sleep in their clothes.

• One may observe in daily life a generous number of people dressed in the fashion of the season. It is intuitively evident that they have spent a certain amount of money to achieve this effect.

The first one to appear in Fashion in a season wins, exciting the admiration and envy of all other fashion watchers. This is a creative challenge, but one best left to the wealthy since first of all it costs a great deal of money, more than the annual salary of the average corporate executive, to do this four seasons a year, year after year.

Of course the other millions of people who spend nearly as much simply lose. They are thought of by their competitors as fashionable and as knowledgeable—though as I said all are losers except the first each time—but they are in fact aesthetically impoverished, their imaginations and creativity brutalized by the compulsion to imitate.

They are like all those writers who aspire to contemporary literary fashion by writing, say, about ordinary people in ordinary circumstances in the first person present tense, as certain contemporary models did. They are not much read. As Samuel R. Delany has observed, it is as if ten thousand of the finest writing talents sat simultaneously at their word processors writing the same story. We are only interested in reading the five or six first and best. It is a costly but an easy competition to lose. The lottery has better odds.

• One may attain the level of Philosopher of Fashion by noting the fashion of the season and then dressing in some other manner calculated by intention. Everyone who does this, to at least a small extent, wins. I include grunge in this category, but it is one of many options, and, since it was elevated for a time to Fashion, has pitfalls—it can be indistinguishable from Clunky.

Photo by Kathryn Cramer

The way of attainment:

A) Consistency is the enemy.

Don't use the same solutions every fall, etc. Keep a couple of those large plastic storage bins for clothes you should put away for a couple of years until they are surprising again. Buy or construct extra closet space. Abundant supply is the foundation upon which a surprising outfit may be regularly built.

B) Become an expert on one accessory and acquire a large supply.

Plan your outfit for the day around that accessory. Be it stockings or neckties, hats or suspenders, make that accessory your fashion trademark. My own choice, of course, has been neckties.

C) Never buy retail (except as in D, below).

Clothing is made to be fashionable in a season. By removing it from its season and all the associations of that moment, it can be recreated and renewed—or boring and homely. Select your clothing cannily in after-season sales, or at best in the finest thrift shops, nearly-new stores, or church sales wherever the wealthy go to church.

Do not entirely scorn the Salvation Army stores and such, but travel on occasion to wealthy suburbs and you will be richly rewarded in fine clothing at reasonable prices. Once last winter Kathryn bought three cashmere sweaters in a weekend for a total price of \$18.00. My last Brooks Brothers jacket cost \$10.00.

I know a man who used to go to England every year and buy a used Rolls Royce for a couple of thousand dollars, then ship it back to the U.S., drive it for a year and then sell it to finance his next trip and buy another. He always had money left over and by the time I met him often bought two or more cars. It worked for years, and so I incorporated his insight into my theory.

D) Remember to have a fashionable outfit.

Pick a public occasion every few months and wear it to separate yourself from the Ignorants, both in their eyes, and in the eyes of the poor Fashionables. And nothing beats a tailored outfit or designer dress on those occasions when you want to look like a million dollars.

E) Always pick another color.

Every season has its colors. Avoid them. You are free to build an outfit from every other color and shade. (Avoid unaccompanied black til the 21st century. It is merely the hip color of invisibility and indistinguishable from Fashion.)

F) Enlightened practitioners use unusual juxtapositions of color.

Never fear to experiment with striking clashes. You will win in the eyes of most Fashionable people (who are insecure because they can never tell whether you are the next wave they might have to imitate) and be accorded the respect of your peers, who appreciate stylistic experimentation. Holy Ignorants may think you are funny, but will take pains to ignore it, or treat you like an equal. You still win.

[Ed.: This essay appears on David Hartwell's website at <http://www.panix.com/~dgh> and is used here with his kind permission.]



# David G. Hartwell: A Secret Master in Plain View by Darrell Schweitzer

This is not intended to make our guest seem an even grayer eminence than he already is (well, turn up the Eminence and never mind the rest), but it slowly dawns on me that David Hartwell has had his finger on the pulse of the sf field—more than that, he has been a guiding influence—for longer than some of today's hotshot writers have been alive.

I've been aware of him at least since he was writing a column about science fiction in *Crawdaddy* magazine—and that was virtually in the Pleistocene. Just before writing this piece, I reread the interview I did with David once, for *Science Fiction Review*, back about then. It was conducted at a Balticon. The manuscript I dug out of my files was a carbon copy produced with a rather jittery manual typewriter (if I may risk confusing the twenty-first-century reader with such paleolithic terminology), and from internal evidence it's clear this interview was done in 1977. I distinctly remember the mastodons grazing on the hotel lawn that weekend.

David was already an established figure back then. He had been a consultant for Signet/NAL in the early '70s. By 1977 he was editor of the science fiction line at Berkley-Putnam and (for just that one year, alas) editor of an excellent, if short-lived, professional sf magazine called *Cosmos*, which perished, not because of anything about the magazine itself, but because of other things that went on at the publishing house, which dragged the whole operation under.

There's some talk of that sort of thing in the interview, of the balancing of art and commerce. Hartwell, then as now, showed a very clear grasp of publishing realities—i.e., that the editor's job is to acquire books that sell—which is necessary for the survival of any editor, particularly one whose actual agenda is more than the mere bottom line.

If you look at some of the books that came out from Berkley-Putnam about the time the interview was done, you get the idea: several volumes by Michael Bishop, including *Transfigurations* and *Catacomb Years*; Katherine MacLean's *Missing Man*; Ursula Le Guin's *The Word for World is Forest*, and two volumes of Alfred Bester's short fiction.

If you trace his career from that point on, you begin to appreciate why David Hartwell is a secret master of science fiction.

As an aside, we note, also from the '70s and early '80s, the Gregg Press series of reprints that David edited. They were superbly made books for libraries, with paper and bindings designed to last for centuries; but more than that, they were new editions of important works of sf, with new introductions and other apparatus. There were a few originals, such as a volume of Fritz Leiber's Change War stories, but most were reprints. Many were first hardcovers. Gregg Press preserved many texts for posterity, including most of Leiber's, most of Philip K. Dick's, rare Heinlein works such as *Double Star*, which were becoming difficult to find in hardcover by that point and therefore were not in libraries, most of Philip Jose Farmer's, and all of Samuel Delany's up to that point, issuing the first hardcover edition of *Dhalgren*. As an act of preservation of texts, and of defining the canon of what's important in science fiction, the Gregg Press series was a major accomplishment.

But there is more, and this is where the pattern becomes apparent. Hartwell went from Berkley-Putnam, which was arguably the chief hardcover publisher in the field at the time, to Timescape Books, a special imprint of Pocket Books and Simon & Schuster, which was undeniably the flagship of the entire sf fleet. It was at Timescape that David gave us Gene Wolfe's *The Book of the New Sun*. Michael Bishop followed David from Berkley-Putnam to Timescape, with *No Enemy but Time*. Then Pocket torpedoed its own flagship, and all of us said, "Pocket Books is going to come out of this as a bunch of toads, but David will land on his feet." And it was so, and the next thing we knew he was editing for Arbor House, where he brought us the early works of Terry Bisson. Bisson and numerous other Hartwell authors made the leap to Tor Books, where they all are today.

If you stop and think about it, if you pay attention to the imprints on the books on your shelves, you will inevitably come to realize that David Hartwell has edited a significant portion, maybe the majority, of all the first-rate science fiction published in the United States in the past twenty-five years. He is, perhaps more quietly, certainly much less flamboyantly, as important an editor for our time as John W. Campbell, Jr. was at mid-century.

That should be enough accomplishments for anyone, but, as the phrase goes, that's not all. For years David edited a literary magazine, *The Little Magazine*, which I remember reading when I was in college. It was certainly the best of its type, and occasionally ran things of sf interest too, by the likes of Ursula Le Guin, Samuel Delany, and Tom Disch. Right now he edits the leading critical journal of our field, *The New York Review of Science Fiction*. Mention should be made of his (indeed, too numerous to list) anthologies (often coedited with Kathryn Cramer), some of which, like *Ascent of Wonder* and *The Dark Descent*, do much to codify their genres (respectively, sf and horror). He presently edits a series of *The Year's Best SF* and *The Year's Best Fantasy*.

Hartwell has also been a guiding light behind the World Fantasy Convention and the World Fantasy Award since their inception. He's had much to do with setting the tone. He has set the tone for a lot of things, and is still doing it. It isn't enough to say, "Pay attention to this guy. He knows all the secret handshakes." He knows more than that. He knows what sf publishing is all about.

An article like this wouldn't be complete without at least one anecdote, so here's one. David and I were standing in the dealers' room at the second World Fantasy Convention, in New York in 1976. The subject of the awards came up. I, in my wretched ignorance and youthful tactlessness, said something to the effect that there were "unknowns" on the ballot, ending with, "Who the hell is this Stephen King person and what is *Salem's Lot*?"

David quietly explained that "*Salem's Lot* is perhaps the best fantasy novel in the past five years" and that Stephen King was going to be really big.

Yes, this was a long time ago. But an editor's job is to be right about that sort of thing.

There's one point in that 1977 interview where both of us seem to be having a security leak from the future. It goes like this:

Schweitzer: Isn't there a danger that as Science Fiction continues to do better [i.e., as well as much mainstream publishing, better than most literary fiction]... Science Fiction will get to be like television because the financial stakes will be high? [Remember that this was in an era in which media tie-ins were only a tiny percentage of our field and nobody had ever heard of a gaming novel, or even sharecropping.]

Hartwell:... if we continue to have enough knowledgeable editorial talent in science fiction publishing, and if enough companies are aware of what they're doing, for the time being at least we'll continue to have the freedom that's making the field very lively right now.

What we seem to be predicting here is Tor Books and the future career of David Hartwell. The freedom of our field is a matter of a small number of the right individuals in the right places. David Hartwell is precisely the person we continue to need, the knowledgeable editor in a key position who continues to make quality sf literature possible.

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# David Hartwell

by Michael Bishop

For many years I considered David Hartwell my editor, by which I meant that if anyone would champion my work, David would. By which I further meant that if anyone could detect the flaws in my work and give me cogent advice about how to correct or at least disguise those flaws, David could. And by which I still further meant that if anyone could rescue a project heading toward calamity and likely incompleteness, David not only could but would. In short, David Hartwell saved Michael Bishop from himself so many times that he, David, probably could have received government money for his comprehensive reclamation efforts—if, that is, anyone had considered me a natural resource, and usually David was the only person not related to me who did.

I could tell a few stories. For one thing, after I turned in the manuscript of *No Enemy but Time*, David saw a jigsaw-puzzle hodgepodge instead of a novel. He had Timescape/Simon & Schuster pay my way up from Georgia so that he and I could go over the entire manuscript at his house, and I can still remember laying out the chapters on his kitchen table—if not the floor as well—and discussing how we could best match them up in the novel's text, not only for the sake of linear narrative but also for that of metaphorical and imagistic resonance. That book won a Nebula Award against some pretty heady competition—Heinlein, Asimov, Wolfe, Aldiss, and Dick, as a matter of fact—and it would never have done so if David had not brought his editorial acumen to bear on an ambitious but run-amok slew of pages. Thanks, David.

On an earlier occasion, when I was struggling to turn the novella "Death and Designation among the Asadi" into a novel called *Transfigurations*, I interrupted David's vacation at nearby Callaway Gardens to ask for his advice. You see, he had recently moved from Berkeley, where he had worked with me on *A Little Knowledge* and *Catacomb Years*, to another house, and his move had come after purchasing the outline for *Transfigurations* but before my completion of the novel. Having him virtually on my back porch was too big a temptation to resist. I pretty much invited myself over to his cabin, burst in upon him at a time when he undoubtedly hoped for a well-earned break from editing, and poured out my doubts about the direction I was going. He would have been completely within his rights to show me the door. He did not. He answered my questions, made some suggestions, and sent me on my way feeling that I knew what I had to do.

On a later occasion, when he was at Arbor House/William Morrow, I nearly abandoned *Unicom Mountain* when a narrative off-trail seduced me and I followed it for about two hundred unnecessary pages, clueless as to how to return to the storyline that had initially engaged me. I wanted to throw out the manuscript and start work on a shorter novel—just to get away from the botch I'd made, the bad vibes emanating from my stepfather's recent death, and the fact that one of my main characters was dying of AIDS. David, when I told him that I wanted to bail, said, Send it to me, Michael, and don't write another word on this book until you've heard from me. As always, I took his advice. And, as always, he got back to me with practical editorial suggestions that allowed me not only to complete the novel but also to feel that I had written something worthy of a reader's time.

Except as an occasional, and very unreliable, contributor to the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, I haven't worked formally with David on a project in quite a long time now, but I still can't help feeling that he is my editor. I have no doubt that he makes almost every writer feel this way. This ability is a measure not only of David's empathy for those who have taken leave of their senses long enough to write a book but also of his uncanny intuition about what each book needs to fulfill its potential as a narrative project—the potential that the writer must have perceived at the moment of the book's original ideation.

So blessings upon Readercon for honoring David Hartwell as one of its guests, and blessings upon David for shepherding my career as an sf and fantasy writer (now that, according to John Clute, I am "disappearing" from the field), and blessings upon all of you with the great good fortune of attending Readercon and taking part in an event that honors David as he deserves to be honored. And here I would like to note that I have written a complete essay about David without once mentioning either his godawful taste in ties or the pride that he takes in the godawfulness of his taste in ties. Maybe, for the sake of aesthetic unity, I need to drop that last sentence. Hey, David, whaddaya think? I could use your advice...

March 22, 2001  
Pine Mountain, Georgia



# A David Hartwell Appreciation from a Punk Dyke Eskimo Poet by Tamara Yining

Let's see. Lesbian. punk. Inuit (to be politically correct), musician, poet, filmmaker, from the West Coast. Straight, family man, Caucasoid, editor, anthologist, writer, from the East Coast. Separated at birth? What could we two possibly have in common?

On closer examination this relationship goes far beyond what would be considered a normal reader/editor relationship. Nothing kinky now, but could it be, oh, let's see, that we have something in common in the way we dress? What's the word? Flamboyant, yes. Loud, yes. Um, dare we say edgy, risqué? Definitely beyond the norm. Let's not get into arguments of good taste here. You wouldn't want to cross either one of us. Really. Believe me.

I learned to truly appreciate David Hartwell in the early '80s. At that time, as a true punk, I was in the habit of wearing two or three ties at a time, vest only, no shirt, and at least two belts, preferably studded, with as many buttons as I could fit onto the front of my black leather jacket. But it was the ties, really, that first brought us together. I hadn't realized that his ties were already legendary. As well as his suits and singing "Teen Angel" at 3 a.m.

I have a collection of over a hundred ties, of various vintages. People send me ties in the mail. I buy a new one in times of stress to feel better. It was this penchant for ties that caused me to accept David at face value, at who knows what party at a Westercon, Norwescon, or Worldcon in (I forget now) '80 or '81. I recognized a kindred spirit. I wish I could remember what tie he was wearing. It's hard to tell after all these decades, and the amount of partying that goes on at those cons. Or used to. Before he and I started to get a little older, if not wiser.

We have a contest, he and I, and Ed Bryant, too, if we all happen to be at the same Westercon or Worldcon. The tacky tie contest. It's gone on for over ten years now. I think the tenth-year reunion was two or three years ago. Don't ask any one of us to pin it down any closer than that. I only won once in the last ten years. And I didn't even tie a tie. Eileen Gunn drew a fish tie on me in indelible marker, and I wore that and a vest. And beat out David's cheese tie from WisCon in Madison.

His collection of ties is bigger than mine.

He also wears buttons, and though he wears suits and ties, the rule is, the clasher the better. I think we both appreciate the ability to wear things in public that make people sit up and take notice (mild understatement).

I've outgrown most of the punk stuff now, though I still have what is called a cool haircut. It's the reputation that follows you around, though, and people force you to live up to it for decades. I'm sure David can empathize. I'll forever appreciate his intelligence and wit, and things he's written and anthologized in the last two decades. But it's the personal things, the music and flamboyancy and daring to be who he is, that I'll always love. We used to so easily stay up till 4 or 5 a.m., singing those songs around three. He had to slow down a little and, among other things, raise a family. And I actually found I liked to sleep after getting sober ten years ago. But we'll always have a place for each other in our hearts. And we're so much alike.



# David G. Hartwell

by Michael Swanwick

Any person is a mystery. That's one of the first things you learn in the explaining trade. But the hardest to explain are those who are pretty much what they seem to be. No dark secrets. No hidden agendas. Nothing but the man as he presents himself to be.

I've known David Hartwell for twenty-some years now. He noticed my existence and encouraged me when I was still unpublished, which is that time for a writer when such small favors are most fervently needed. He may have bought my first published story. (It was "Cinungagap," for an issue of *Tinquantary*; he guest-edited; but "The Feast of Saint Janis" came out that same year in *New Dimensions*, and for the life of me I can't remember which appeared earlier.) He published my first halfway-decent novel. Once, when I desperately needed to find my next book, he pointed me in the direction of *Stations of the Tide*. I've known him in good times, when he was expansive and generous. I've known him in hard times, when he looked unhappy, hunched his shoulders against the wind and rain, and simply endured.

But I don't think I can explain him to you at all. The best I can do is say, "Yeah, he's pretty much the guy he seems to be."

He'd tell you this himself: That, possibly alone among the editors in our field, he never wanted to be a writer. That one day, when he was twelve, he read a failed work of science fiction and thought to himself, "I could have told the writer how to fix this book." That from that moment on, he knew what he was going to be.

David had other options. He has a Ph.D. in medieval literature. But here he is, working—I almost said tirelessly, but times beyond counting I've seen him dog-tired and still working with no end in sight—on behalf of our genre. Why?

Well, you and I understand why: We share his valuation of the importance of our common enterprise. But I despair of putting into words why it is worthy of the unending labor he's given it. To me, it seems as self-evident as is the man himself.

What should I tell you about? Here's a book David wrote explaining science fiction to people who don't read it. (I gave a copy to my late father-in-law.) Here are his whacking big anthologies (the technical term for them is "bug-crushers") of science fiction, fantasy, horror, and hard sf, which ostensibly exist to gather together a representative selection of the best works of their genres, but which, taken with the introductory essays, constitute summæ and manifestoes of what these genres are and ought to be. Here's the umpteenth issue of *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, put out on schedule for over ten years with enormous effort and God knows how many burnt-out former editors, which exists to promote and promulgate David's core belief that our tangled little knot of genres is important and deserves our respectful attention and thoughtful examination. Here's...

I find myself hesitating. Should I mention his work at Tor? Arbor House? Timescape? Or would it be too personal? This sounds ludicrous, but there it is. Great editors (and those who are personal friends know, I hope, who you are) put a lot of themselves into the line. Courage and hesitations, boldness, shrewdness, wishful thinking—it's all there in the books themselves. If you were to line up in chronological order all the books David edited (it'll never be done, but wouldn't it be great?) and put the man in front of them, it would be like confronting him with a psychic mirror. See how he smiles when he comes to Gene Wolfe's novels! See how he cringes when he comes to... well, not my books, I hope.

There can't be many respectable niches in the field that David hasn't in his time filled. He's been a small press publisher. He's worked for some of the largest houses in the business, and some of the smallest as well. He edits a couple of Year's Best anthologies. He's an archivist and a literary historian. He's a reviewer and a critic. He's published chapbooks and broadsides. He's one of the extremely few ever to have edited a literary magazine and a commercial science fiction magazine both. He's been a consultant, a teacher, a columnist, a huckster, a toastmaster. He's one of those people who make the world turn, working behind the scenes as judge, administrator, panelist for such things as the World Fantasy Convention and the Philip K. Dick Awards. He's a self-described "fashion theorist."

But I've fallen into the trap of cataloguing, and inevitably any such catalog must fall short. Only David and Kathryn know how many projects David has going at any given time. All I can do is tell you that he works for the benefit of our field. That he encourages what's best in our genre. That he does all he can to get people to notice it.

He'd tell you pretty much the same.

David and I have an informal tradition. Every year, those years I can make it here, the two of us sit out the Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition. (David doesn't attend because, he tells me, as an editor he's encountered enough bad prose to last him a lifetime. I don't attend because I know I'll hear my own work being read. [Michael is kidding. —Ed.]) We get together in the lobby or the bar, and for an hour or so, we talk. We talk about what science fiction is, what it should be, what it could be. We talk about the potential of genre fantasy. We talk about this stuff as real literature.

These conversations keep me going. They keep me on track.

David has many solid accomplishments to point to. Presumably somebody's been assigned the task of listing a goodly selection of them in this souvenir book. But let me add one intangible accomplishment to the list: He helps keep a lot of us on track. Set your aspirations high enough, and you occasionally have to wonder if you're simply deluding yourself, if what you're trying to do is even possible. But if a man like David believes in this stuff as strongly as you and I do, then we can't be completely off track.

What kind of man, I hear you ask, is that?

Well... he's pretty much what he seems to be.

# David Hartwell

by Kathryn Cramer

David Hartwell is a soft-spoken but articulate gray-haired editor who will have just turned sixty when Readercon is held. He is known for his editing, for his sense of personal style (see Tami Vining's piece), and for his sociability. He used to be an icon of the late-night convention party scene, but we started going to bed at a decent hour at most conventions a few years before our son, Peter, was born. He is most easily found during the day, often in the dealers' room. Hugo voters, be aware that he has been nominated twenty-four times for the Hugo Award, but has not yet won.

The first time I wrote a convention-book appreciation of David, a few people told me it was depressing because I compared him to Sisyphus, the mythological character who repeatedly rolls the rock uphill. Well, he really is a Sisyphean kind of guy, but he chooses his rocks carefully. *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, our small-press magazine, which publishes reviews and essays about science fiction, for example: 173 consecutive monthly issues. This would make some kind of sense if it were his full-time job, but NYRSF is a weekend-and-evening hobby.

David is a frighteningly prolific editor. A senior editor for Tor Books, he is responsible for 48-60 books per year, and he is also the oldest practicing science fiction editor, a distinction he plans to retain for the next couple of decades. At Tor, he does as many books as Tom Doherty will let him, many by well-known writers—his books are often nominated for major awards—and a fair number of books by up-and-coming writers. He has something of a sideline rehabilitating the commercial reputations of good writers who have had a commercial failure at another publishing house. He believes he should always have a plan for publishing and selling any book he acquires and that the author is best served when the editor and publisher try to make a book succeed commercially. He is a hero of Canadian science fiction because he takes a special interest in publishing Canadian writers. He is both a literary snob and a defender of genre boundaries. He edits a couple of anthologies a year—two annual anthologies, *Year's Best SF* for the past six years and now also *Year's Best Fantasy* (coedited with me), plus whatever else he signs up. He is currently at work on a large historical anthology of fantasy and also (with me) on an anthology of hard sf of the 1990s.

David is also an occasional book dealer. At most conventions to which we can drive we have a dealer's table. (A few decades ago, he was an antiquarian book dealer in partnership with L. W. Currey.) While he knows fine books and we have a fair number of them in the house, his current efforts at convention book dealing focus on selling subscriptions to *NYRSF* and on making review copies and good books cheap and plentiful. He also runs the book room at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts.

David is one of the secret masters behind a couple of awards. He is an administrator of both the World Fantasy Award and the Philip K. Dick Award, both juried awards that he helped originate. He believes that juried awards are necessary to the health of the field and tend, over time, to produce more credible nomination ballots and winners. I think of awards-administration as one of the less-fun things he does. When things are going well, there's very little to do. Only when the judges disappear, inadvertently invent a new award category, want to give prizes to ineligible people or works, or some such does he seem to swing into action. I guess the problem with Sisyphus is that he's always rolling the same rock, whereas David has this great pile of them on top of the plateau, with which to build his Neuschwanstein.

David attends about eighteen conventions and other events a year, most often with me and our son Peter, now three and a half. (David's adult children, Alison and Geoffrey, also occasionally travel with us.) He makes relentless use of a datebook. He frequently schedules things a year or more in advance. We're a seminomadic little band. (But only semi, because true nomads don't have jobs where they have to show up in the Flatiron Building and sprawling suburban homes containing so many books that there are paths as narrow as airplane aisles between drifts of them.) David loves to travel and is very cunning about choosing conventions which can be made into good trips. Peter has been to half of the fifty states and to several Canadian provinces. Readercon is one of David's favorite conventions, and he is delighted to have been chosen as a guest.

David loves what he does and does what he loves. While many people at sixty have their eyes on retirement, David looks for avenues to continue doing what he loves. At age ninety-six, Clifford Fadiman was the in-house editor at the Book-of-the-Month Club for David's *World Treasury of Science Fiction*. He read all the stories and closely edited the story notes and introduction, giving sage advice on anthology editing along the way. David thought that was neat and likes to think of himself following Fadiman's example and continuing to edit for the next thirty-six years. Wish him happy birthday.

~

David E. Crew  
by Sarah Smith

David is one of those persons whom one always thinks of in a group—the staff of *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, fellow editors—always in the center, recounting stories of science fiction. The man with the outrageous tie and jacket, the Panama hat and Bart Simpson haircut, taking photographs. Giving advice to young writers.

I meet David at the Philip K. Dick convention shortly after my first book comes out. I am awed by how much he knows, how many people he knows, how well he can tell stories. Shortly afterward, he begins giving me advice, and I become one of the many writers whose career and taste David influences.

"Every eight years or so, the mass market takes a dive," David counsels: sit tight, it will pass. "Dean Koontz taught himself to write 'badly'" —David talks about how and why. David counsels on the proper timing of books. David pushes books at me, culled from his enormous sf collection, and back issues of *The Little Review*.

Kathryn and I get to know each other because we both write hypertexts. I hang out with her while she's still living in Maggie's basement; later there are visits to Pleasantville, with Geoffrey's band practicing in the basement and Kathryn making quilts and virtual-quilt graphics with scanned fabric. Scanner-less at that point, I stay over a day to scan in postcards of Paris for *The Knowledge of Water*, I sleep on the perfect Hartwell piece of furniture: a bed consisting of a mattress, a cat or so, and a very large stack of books.

And now there's Peter. I envision worrisome, Gorey-like scenarios of small children crushed by book avalanches, babies gnawing on Paris-green book covers. . . . Peter immediately makes a large place for himself, centered on animals. Reportedly, his first word is "quagga." At three, he is already a veteran of conventions and has become the cynosure of his neighborhood after acquiring his own snake.

One night, at our house after dinner, David picks up my guitar and begins to play rock. "I didn't think I'd become a science fiction editor," he confides: "I wanted to have a rock-and-roll band."

David, thanks for doing sf, from a member of your band.

Kathryn Met David  
by Gene Wolfe

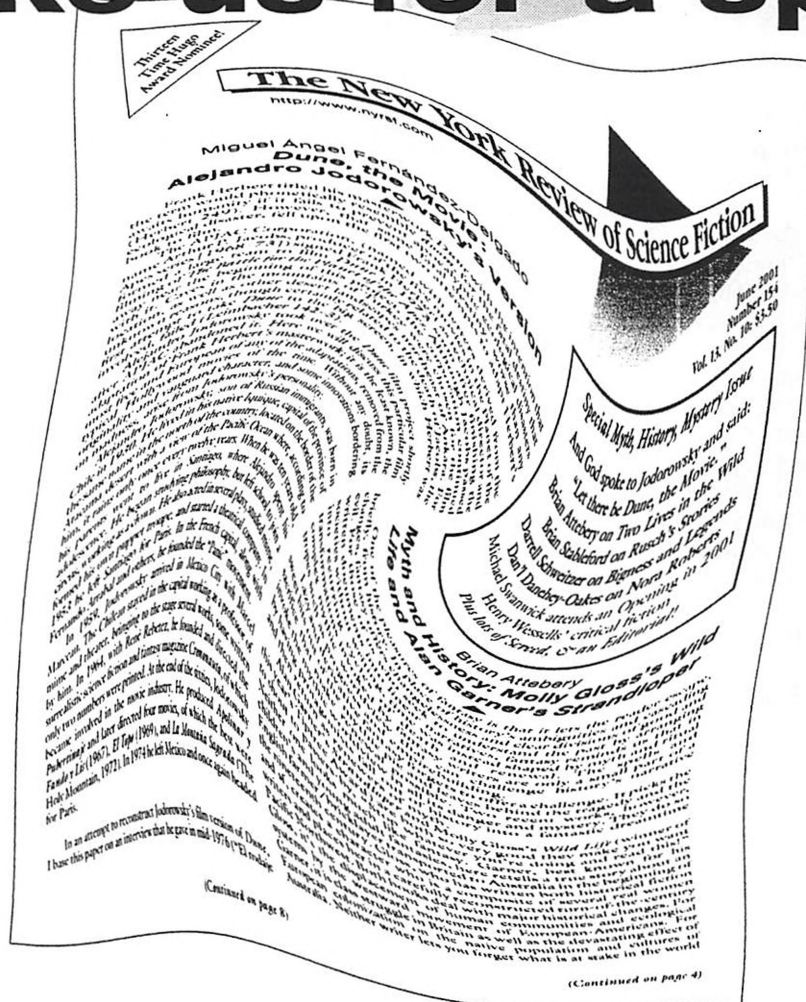
I am in a way responsible for Peter Hartwell; it is an onerous burden, but I try to bear up.

It began when I was a small boy who played with another boy, named John Cramer. My mother made me get rid of a box of *Astoundings*. I gave them to him, and so interested him in sf and less directly in science. Sometime after we lost sight of each other, he became a nuclear physicist—a physicist, that is to say, who read sf. Long after that, I got a letter from him in care of my publisher asking whether I was the Gene Wolfe he had known years and years ago.

Not so long afterward, Rosemary and I went to BayCon and invited John and Pauline to join us at the con hotel for lunch. They did, took a look at the con, and started coming to cons in the Seattle area. At one of those, their daughter encountered my editor, and the rest is—as we say—Peter.

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# David G. Hartwell Bibliography

Editions are listed chronologically, so first editions (and first US or UK) should be evident. All editions are hardcover (hc) unless indicated otherwise (tp = trade paperback, pb = mass market paperback). SFBC is the Science Fiction Book Club. BOMC is the Book of the Month Club. QPBC is the Quality Paperback Book Club. \* indicates editions believed to be in print.

## Edited Collections

### *The Dark Descent*

Tor Books, 1987

QPBC, 1988 (tp)

Tor Books, 1997\* (tp)

Also reissued in three volumes:

#### *The Dark Descent #1: The Color of Evil*

Grafton, 1990 (UK; hc and tp)

Tor Books, 1991 (pb)

Grafton, 1991 (UK; pb)

#### *The Dark Descent #2: The Medusa in the Shield*

Grafton, 1990 (UK; hc and tp)

Tor Books, 1991 (pb)

Grafton, 1991 (UK; pb)

The US edition includes a new introduction, as well as the original introduction to the complete volume

#### *The Dark Descent #3: A Fabulous, Formless Darkness*

HarperCollins UK, 1991 (UK; hc and tp)

Tor Books, 1992 (pb)

Grafton, 1992 (UK; pb)

The US edition includes a new introduction, as well as the original introduction to the complete volume

#### *World Fantasy winner (anthology)*

### *Christmas Ghosts* (with Kathryn Cramer)

Arbor House, 1987

Robinson, 1988 (UK; tp)

Dell, 1988 (pb)

### *Masterpieces of Fantasy and Enchantment* (with the assistance of Kathryn Cramer)

SFBC, 1988

St. Martin's, 1988

SFBC, 1996

### *The World Treasury of Science Fiction*

Little, Brown, 1989

QPBC, 1989 (tp)

### *Masterpieces of Fantasy and Wonder* (with the assistance of Kathryn Cramer)

SFBC, 1989

St. Martin's, 1994

### *Spirits of Christmas* (with Kathryn Cramer)

Wynwood, 1989

Tor Books, 1995 (pb)

Tor Books, 2000\* (pb)

### *Foundations of Fear*

Tor Books, 1992

BOMC, 1992

BOMC/QPBC, 1992 (tp)

Later reissued in three volumes:

*Shadows of Fear: Foundations of Fear, Volume 1* \*

*Worlds of Fear: Foundations of Fear, Volume 2* \*

*Foundations of Fear: Visions of Fear*

All Tor Books, 1994 (pb)

Each volume includes a new introduction, as well as the original introduction to the complete volume

In addition to the awards and nominations for individual works listed below (and as an editor for *The New York Review of Science Fiction*), Hartwell is an eleven-time Hugo nominee for Best Professional Editor (for 1981–3, 1986–9, and 1997–2000), and a four-time World Fantasy nominee (1980–2, 1986) and one-time winner (1987) for Special Award, Professional.

### *Christmas Stars*

Tor Books, 1992\* (pb)

SFBC, 1992

### *Christmas Forever*

Tor Books, 1993

*World Fantasy nominee*

### *The Ascent of Wonder* (with Kathryn Cramer)

Tor Books, 1994

SFBC, 1994

Orbit, 1994 (as *The Ascent of Wonder: The Evolution of Hard SF*) (UK)

Tor/Orb, 1997\* (tp)

### *Northern Stars* (with Glenn Grant)

Tor Books, 1994

Tor Books, 1998\* (tp)

### *Christmas Magic*

Tor Books, 1994 (pb)

### *The Screaming Skull and Other Great American Ghost Stories*

Tor Books, 1995 (pb)

### *Visions of Wonder* (with Milton T. Wolf)

Tor Books, 1996\* (hc and tp)

### *Bodies of the Dead and Other Great American Ghost Stories*

Tor Books, 1997 (pb)

### *The Science Fiction Century*

Tor Books, 1997

BOMC/QPBC, 1998 (tp)

### *Northern Suns* (with Glenn Grant)

Tor Books, 1999

Tor Books, 2000\* (tp)

### *Centaurus: The Best of Australian Science Fiction* (with Damien Broderick)

Tor Books, 1999\*

### *Year's Best Fantasy*

William Morrow, 2001\* (pb)

## Year's Best Science Fiction/Year's Best SF

### *Year's Best Science Fiction*

HarperPrism, 1996\* (pb)

SFBC, 1996

### *Year's Best SF 2*

HarperPrism, 1997\* (pb)

SFBC, 1997

*Year's Best SF 3*

HarperPrism, 1998\* (pb)  
SFBC, 1998

*Year's Best SF 4*

HarperPrism, 1999\* (pb)  
SFBC, 1999

*Year's Best SF 5*

HarperCollins/Eos, 2000\* (pb)  
SFBC, 2000

*Year's Best SF 6*

Eos, 2001\* (pb)

## Other Edited Volumes

L. W. Currey, *Science Fiction and Fantasy Authors: A Bibliography of First Printings of Their Fiction and Selected Nonfiction*

G. K. Hall, 1979

"With the editorial assistance of David G. Hartwell"

Fritz Leiber, *Dealings of Daniel Kesserich: A Study of the Mass-Insanity at Smithville*

Tor Books, 1997

Illustrated by Jason Van Hollander

John Clute and John Grant, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*

St. Martin's, 1997

Consultant editors: David G. Hartwell, Gary Westfahl

## Edited Series

### The Gregg Press Science Fiction Series

This is a series of hardcover volumes issued by the Gregg Press, Boston, between 1975 and 1981, edited by David G. Hartwell and L. W. Currey (associate editor). The volumes were of high quality, suitable for library use, and included reprints of classic science fiction, first US editions, first hardcover editions, and even the occasional first edition. The initial set of twenty volumes was described in a review in *Science Fiction Studies* as "an extraordinarily handsome set of books, a set that you might want to have complete just for the impressive display it would make in your bookcase. It is also a comparatively well-edited series, with each of the volumes having an apparatus of some or great value."

In the listings that follow, the first item indicates the edition on which the Gregg volume is based. This is not necessarily the work's first edition, because part of Hartwell and Currey's editorial approach was to select the best text of a given work. As Hartwell put it in a 1976 letter:

In deciding on an edition or text to use, we simply investigated every available text to compare desirability—in the case of books with only one edition... available, we had no problem and no choice. But often we had both a U.S. and a U.K. edition to choose from and we compared them for mistakes, clarity, attractiveness. If one edition had more material in addition to the text (introduction, press quotes, or some such) we tried to use it or incorporate the additional material. In the case of living authors, the introducers contacted the authors and asked them about texts and editions. The introducers were in fact a vital and active part in the whole planning process.

### 1975 (series 1)

#1. George Tucker. *A Voyage to the Moon: With Some Account of the Manners and Customs, Science and Philosophy, of the People of Morosofia, and Other Lunarians*, by Joseph Atterley [Narrator]

E. Bliss, New York, 1827.

With a new preface by David G. Hartwell and an 1828 review of the book as an appendix

#2. Mary W. Shelley. *Tales and Stories*

W. Patterson, London, 1891

With an introduction by Richard Garnett, 1891

With a new introduction by Joanna Russ

#3. Richard Adams Locke. *The Moon Hoax; or, A Discovery That the Moon Has a Vast Population of Human Beings*

As a news story in the *New York Sun*, 1835

With an appendix, "The Moon as Known at the Present Time," New York, 1859

With a new introduction by Ormond Seavey and two new appendices: a story from the *New York Herald*, 1835, burlesquing the *Sun* story, and Poe's note to "Hans Pfaall" on Locke's hoax

#4. Mary Griffith. *Three Hundred Years Hence*

Prime Press, Philadelphia, 1950

With an introduction by Nelson F. Adkins, 1950

With a new introduction by David G. Hartwell

#5. Mary E. Bradley Lane. *Mizora: A Prophecy. A Mss. Found among the Private Papers of Princess Vera Zarovitch; Being a True and Faithful Account of her Journey to the Interior of the Earth, with a Careful Description of the Country and Its Inhabitants, Their Customs, Manners, and Government, Written by Herself*

G. W. Dillingham, New York, 1890

With new introductions by Stuart A. Teitler and Kristine Anderson

#6. Chauncey Thomas. *The Crystal Button; or, Adventures of Paul Prognosis in the Forty-Ninth Century*

Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1891

With a new introduction by Ormond Seavey

#7. William N. Harben. *The Land of the Changing Sun*

Merriam, New York, 1894

With a new introduction by L.W. Currey

#8. Jules Verne. *An Antarctic Mystery*

Translated by Mrs. Cashel Hoey (from *Le Sphinx des Glaces*, 1897), Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1899

With a new introduction by David G. Hartwell

#9. Charles Romyn Dake. *A Strange Discovery*

H. I. Kimball, New York, 1899

With new introductions by Thomas D. Clareson and L.W. Currey

#10. Jack London. *The Science Fiction of Jack London: An Anthology*

A composite photographic reprint of pages excerpted from eight of London's books. Macmillan, New York, 1901-1918

Edited with a new introduction by Richard Gid Powers

#11. Van Tassel Sutphen. *The Doomsman*

Harper, New York, 1906

With a new introduction by Thomas D. Clareson

#12. G. McLeod Winsor. *Station X*

H. Jenkins, London, 1919

With a new introduction by Richard Gid Powers

Hartwell  
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- #13. Eugene Zamiatin. *We*  
Translated and with a foreword by Gregory Zilboorg.  
Dutton, New York, 1924  
With an introduction by Peter Rudy and a preface by Marc Slonim. New York, 1959  
With a critical afterword by Vasa D. Mihailovich
- #14. Edmond Hamilton. *The Horror on the Asteroid and Other Stories of Planetary Horror*  
P. Allan, London, 1936  
With a new introduction by Gerry de la Ree
- #15. Thea von Harbou. *Metropolis*  
Translated without attribution (from *Metropolis*, Berlin, 1926), Readers Library, London, 1927  
With a new introduction by Peter Minichiello and seventeen photographs from or concerned with the 1927 film directed by Fritz Lang
- #16. Olaf Stapledon. *To the End of Time*  
Contains *Last and First Men*, London, 1930, abridged; *Odd John*, London, 1935; *Starmaker*, London, 1937; *Sirius*, London, 1944; *The Flames*, London, 1947.  
Selection and introduction by Basil Davenport. Funk & Wagnalls, New York, 1953  
With a new introduction by Curtis C. Smith
- #17. H. G. Wells. *Things to Come*  
Screenplay, Cresset Press, London, 1935  
With new introductions by Allan Asherman and George Zebrowski and sixteen photographs from or concerned with the 1936 film directed by William Cameron Menzies
- #18. Karel Capek. *War with the Newts*  
Translated by M. Weatherall and R. Weatherall (from *Valka s mloky*, Prague, 1936), G. Allen and Unwin, London, 1937  
With a new introduction by Darko Suvin
- #19. Alfred Bester. *The Stars My Destination*  
New American Library, New York, 1957  
With a new introduction by Paul William
- #20. Walter M. Miller, Jr. *A Canticle for Leibowitz*  
Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1959  
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- 1976 (series 2)**
- Erian Aldiss. *Hothouse*  
Faber & Faber, London, 1962  
With a new introduction by Joseph Milicia
- Poul Anderson. *War of the Wing-Men*  
Ace Books, New York, 1958  
With new introductions by Charles N. Brown and Sandra Miesel
- D. G. Compton. *The Steel Crocodile*  
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With a new introduction by David G. Hartwell
- Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer. *The Inheritors*  
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- Charlemagne Ischir Defontenay. *Star: (Psi Cassiopeia)*  
Translated by P. J. Sokolowski (from *Star ou Psi de Cassiopee*), DAW Books, New York, 1975  
With new introductions by Pierre Versins and Marc Angenot
- Samuel R. Delany. *Babel-17*  
Sphere Books, London, 1969  
With a new introduction by Robert Scholes
- Samuel R. Delany. *The Jewels of Apor*  
Sphere Books, London, 1971  
With a new introduction by Don Hausdorff
- Philip K. Dick. *Solar Lottery*  
Ace Books, New York, 1955  
With a new introduction by Thomas M. Disch
- Thomas M. Disch. *334*  
Avon Books, New York, 1974  
With a new introduction by M. John Harrison
- Ellsworth Douglass. *Pharaoh's Broker*  
C. A. Pearson, London, 1899  
With a new introduction by Richard A. Lupoff
- Jack Finney. *The Body Snatchers*  
Dell, New York, 1955  
With a new introduction by Richard Gid Powers
- Daniel F. Galouye. *Dark Universe*  
Bantam Books, New York, 1961  
With a new introduction by Robert Thurston
- David G. Hartwell and L. W. Currey, eds. *The Battle of the Monsters and Other Stories: An Anthology of American Science Fiction*  
Original collection of sf stories reprinted from nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century books  
With an introduction and notes by David G. Hartwell and L. W. Currey
- Fritz Leiber. *The Big Time*  
Ace Books, New York, 1961  
With a new introduction by Robert Thurston
- Man Abroad: A Yarn of Some Other Century*  
G. W. Dillingham, New York, 1887  
With a new introduction by Lyman Tower Sargent
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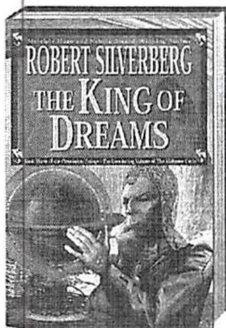
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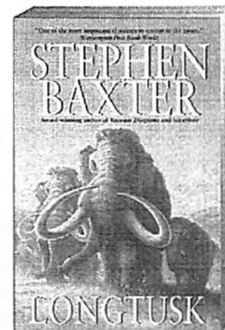
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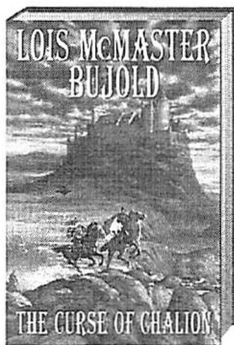
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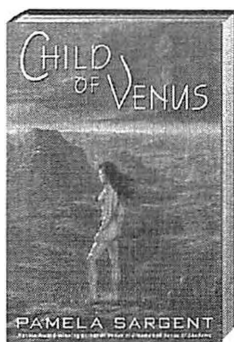
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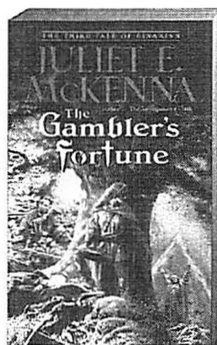
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In addition to the individual pieces listed here, David G. Hartwell, with Paul Williams, wrote a science fiction review column, titled "Thrilling Wonder Stories", that appeared occasionally in *The New York Avatar* in 1968 and 1969. In June 1969 the column moved to *Crawdaddy (the magazine of rock)*, first appearing in issue #23, where it was continued by Hartwell until 1973. (Hartwell had previously written occasional music reviews for *Crawdaddy*, some of which are listed below.) He was also a reviewer for *Locus*, 1971-1973.

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## *New York Review of Science Fiction*

### Editorials

Hartwell was reviews editor for issues 1-68, reviews and acting features editor for issues 70-83, and has been reviews and features editor for issues 69, and 84 to the present. The magazine has been a Hugo nominee as Best Semiprozine all thirteen years of its existence (for 1988-2000).

The following editorials were explicitly signed by Hartwell; most were co-signed "& the editors," as were most of the editorials not signed by him. Hartwell also contributed to recommended reading lists that ran in lieu of editorials in issues 17, 30, 41, 53, 54, 65, 66, and 77.

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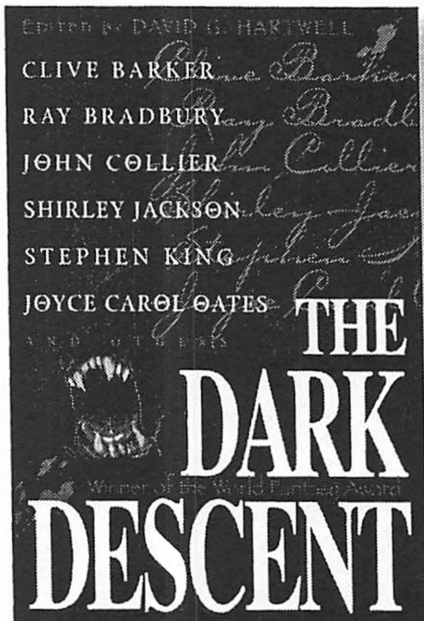
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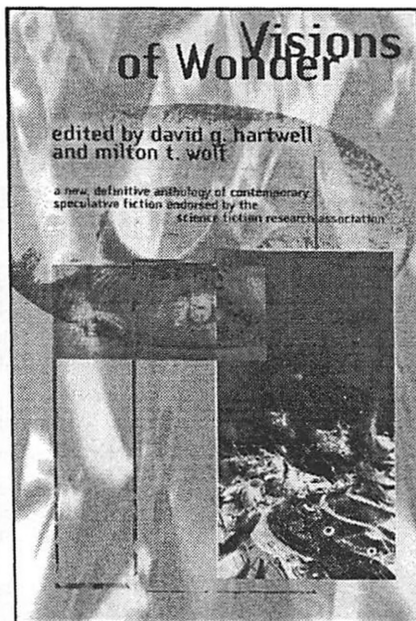
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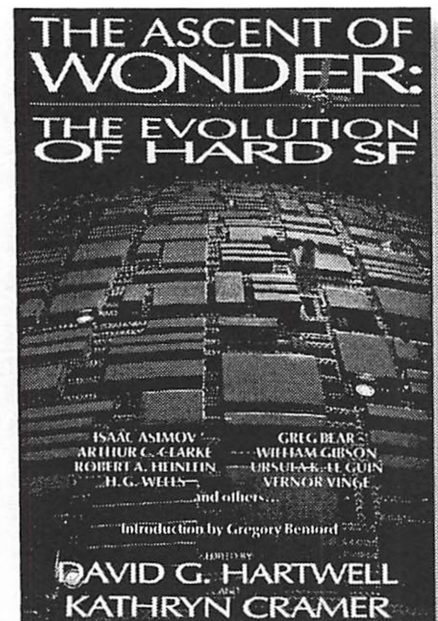
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# A Correspondence with Cliff Simak

by John Morassy

I met Cliff Simak at the 1977 Nebula banquet, the one at which he was made a SFWA Grand Master. It was a happy occasion for both of us. "Desertion" was one of the first sf stories I read. Even at thirteen, I knew that the man who had written this was someone I'd like to know. When I finally met him in person, the real man turned out to be even better than the image I had formed from reading his words. We became friends, and over the next ten years we corresponded.

As soon as I returned home from New York I sent him a couple of my books. In his first letter, he wrote, "It seemed to me, as I read your books, that there is a resemblance in how you and I approach a novel. I guess it all boils down to the fact that both of us are storytellers, while many of our colleagues are not." It was the most encouraging thing anyone could have said about my work.

We didn't write often. This was back in the days when people actually pounded out letters on a typewriter, and sometimes even wrote by hand. But our letters were substantial and covered everything under the sun. We wrote about writing and science fiction and fantasy, of course, but more and more our letters were an ongoing conversation between friends rather than professional exchanges between colleagues. Most of our letters concerned things like gardening, taxes, the crazy weather in Minnesota and New Hampshire, travels, and family matters. And books. We often mentioned books.

Cliff was an omnivorous reader. In one letter he revealed that he was a Proustian. "I have been for years," he wrote. "I read his *Remembrance* years ago—reading it, foolishly, for the story, for I felt that this was how a book should be read. Then I found myself going back time and time again to certain segments of it for the pure enjoyment of the language." His French was good enough to enable him to enjoy the book in its original language.

He wrote of his relationship with John W. Campbell when Campbell edited *Astounding Science Fiction*, and confessed that "when we came together, either personally or by mail, both our hackles rose a bit." With two strong personalities, that was inevitable; but Cliff was quick to praise Campbell for his contributions to science fiction. When he had a new novel accepted by Stanley Schmidt for *Analog* (formerly *Astounding*), he wrote, "I feel good about *Analog* publication—unreasonably good. It's not the extra money so much as the sense of going home again. While Campbell and I were never as buddy-buddy as were he and some of his writers and at times were at sword-point, the old *Astounding* always was sort of first home to me and it feels awful damn good to know I'll be in it again."

We never discussed works in progress except on the most superficial level ("I just finished a new story" or "I'm starting a new novel" was about as much as we ever divulged). In one 1979 letter Cliff wrote that he had finished his first short story in over a year, for the fiftieth anniversary issue of *Analog*. "The idea is not a new one—a Cro-Magnon surviving into the present day—but I think I have a new angle to explain what kind of man it would take to survive through thousands of years," he wrote. The story was "Grotto of the Dancing Deer." It won the 1980 Nebula, and deservedly so; the passage in which the Cro-Magnon explains what it takes to survive the world's perils is powerful and chilling.

Cliff was in his mid-seventies at this time, and while he was a strong man and in good health, he could feel the years pecking away at him. When I mentioned in one letter that I had spent the last few days away from the typewriter while I worked on my winter wood supply, he wrote back, "There was a time when I enjoyed such a chore, but no longer. I'm not up to it. I find these days there are a number of things I'm not up to, but I stay fairly well content. So long as I can cobble together narratives and write them I'll be well satisfied. But there must be, for you, a deal of satisfaction in getting in your own fuel and cutting down heating costs. Our lives these days are too artificial by half. Getting close to our own resources, growing a garden, cutting wood, doing one's own building, finding ways of doing things without reliance on someone else, gives a fuller appreciation of life. A copy of Thoreau's *Walden* has been on my bedside table for years and every once in a while I pick it up and read a few pages before I go to sleep. It is refreshing and relaxing and comfortable and good for the soul."

Cliff was as fond of Thoreau as he was of Proust. I suspect that if he'd been forced to choose, he would have put Thoreau in first place. In 1986, when he received a windfall in the form of an option payment from Warner Brothers for film rights to *Way Station*, he treated himself to a gift: the two-volume edition of Thoreau's notebooks. "They'll be something to read over and over again," he wrote, and went on to talk about Thoreau as if they were old friends; which to his way of thinking they were.

In 1979 he wrote "I'm happier than I have been in years.... These retirement years have, so far, been the best years of my life." But the '80s were difficult. His wife Kay suffered a long illness (and ultimately died), and his own health started to trouble him. He was concerned not for himself but for Kay, who depended on him for so much.

He was a writer and a reader to the end. In 1986, in the last letter I received from him, he wrote, "For what it is worth, I have started writing on a novel. Just a few days ago—a short first chapter finished and a few pages done on the second."

In a letter just a few months earlier, he had written, "I know that my lack of strength will not allow me to write, in this letter, all I want to say," and then gone on to fill four handwritten pages with talk of books, authors, bookstores, and reading, ending, "To me (and you) books are friends. The authors are people we know. A man could be cut off from the world and still not be lonely if he had books. He is rich in friendship. I actually think of authors long dead as personal friends."

So do I, Cliff. And I miss your letters very much.

Clifford Simak  
by David Brin

I often think of Clifford Simak when I hear people discuss their visions of utopia.

Far too often, authors who envision a better tomorrow turn around and hand us a prescription... some pat, structured notion of how they think any proper human society should work. If they think one particular class or group is responsible for much of the world's pain, they show that group getting its just desserts! If they admire navel-contemplating, then the whole world will contemplate navels. Forever.

But Simak didn't prescribe. He didn't push a particular pill, or any other strong medicine. In *City*, he instead presented a smorgasbord—a vision of human destiny that was as wide and deep as it was long. Even Stapledon, in extending our vista across cons, only showed one kind of greatness at a time. To this, Simak said, "How boring!" and proceeded to offer choices, from exploring the stars and parallel worlds to plumbing the abyss of our dreams.

No polemicist—and certainly no pharmacist!—Clifford Simak remains instead an archetype of that marvelously quirky beast... a science fiction author. He never prescribed. He offered us feasts.

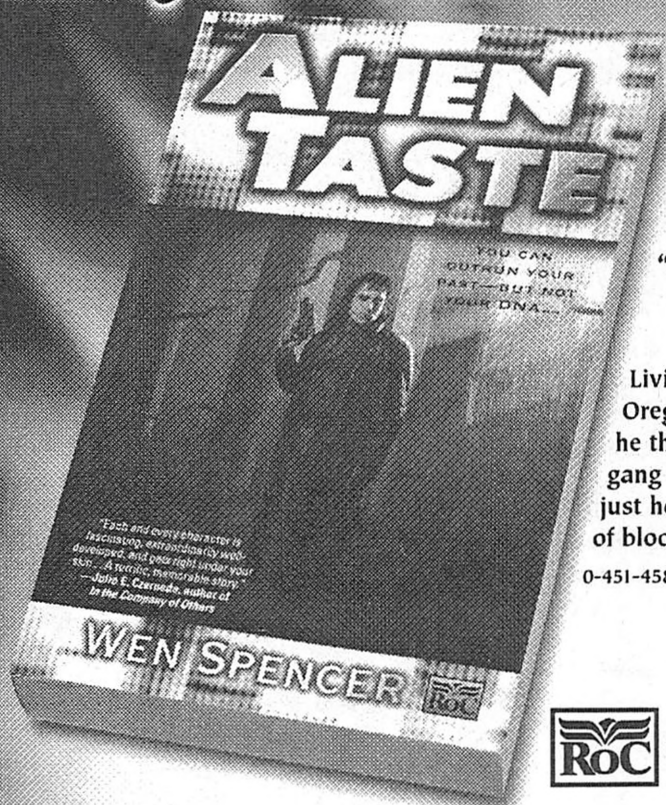


Photo from cover of "Highway of Eternity" 1986

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# Robert J. Ewald on Clifford D. Simak

THE FOLLOWING THREE SECTIONS ARE EXCERPTED FROM ROBERT J. EWALD'S UNPUBLISHED CRITICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE CAREER OF CLIFFORD D. SIMAK, "THE WORLDS OF CLIFFORD SIMAK." THESE SECTIONS SURVEY SIMAK'S LIFE AND CAREER, HIS EARLY SHORT STORIES, AND *CITY*, HIS GREAT, EARLY SUCCESS. THE REMAINDER OF THE WORK, NOT INCLUDED HERE, EXTENDS TO SIMAK'S ENTIRE CAREER, AND SUPPLIES AN ANNOTATED PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BIBLIOGRAPHY.

## *The Worlds of Clifford Simak: Life and Career*

Clifford D. Simak belonged to that very select group of writers over seventy-five whose well of creativity never dried up and who looked like they would continue to write forever. Unlike his fellow Grand Masters Heinlein and Williamson, who had long fallow spells, Simak, until his illness in 1983, had been producing at the rate of at least one novel per year for more than twenty years. Although his short story output was considerably reduced over the last ten years—short stories not paying nearly as much as novels—there seemed to be no decrease in the quality of his award-winning work. As late as 1981, Simak garnered the Hugo for Best Short Story with "Crotto of the Dancing Deer" (*Analog*, April 1980), and his novel *Project Pope* was nominated for the 1982 Hugo.

Over his long career, Simak never had trouble adjusting to the changes in magazine science fiction since he was first published in *Wonder Stories* in 1931. He responded to the demands of every major editor in a wide variety of styles while still retaining his uniqueness. As Frederik Pohl aptly describes his versatility, Simak wrote "Gernsback gadget fiction, *Thrilling Wonder* space opera, Campbell Golden Age thought-variants, *Gold-Galaxy* satire, and *F&SF* New Wave free style," and, late in his career, added neo-Tolkien fantasy to his list of credits. His influence on younger writers was enormous, and all freely acknowledge their debt to him. In the appreciations written for a special commemorative issue of "The Creator" on his fiftieth anniversary as a writer, Isaac Asimov credited Simak for his own "plain" writing style, admitting that Simak was his prose model, while Frederik Pohl eulogized his consistency, and Robert A. Heinlein envied Simak his discipline.

Simak's discipline as a writer was no small accomplishment. Except for the last years after his retirement in 1976, Simak had always been a spare-time writer. For forty-seven of his fifty-seven years as a science-fiction writer, he was a full-time newspaperman and successfully combined fiction writing and journalism, two often diametrically opposed careers. Simak "scribbled" whenever he could find time, even if for only fifteen minutes before dinner, and tried to write every day, a habit formed in early childhood and derived from his compelling desire to be a writer.

To the point of cliché, Simak has been tagged by many critics as the "pastoralist" or "regionalist" of science fiction, probably because of the tremendous popularity of *City* with its emphasis on the flight from the cities to the countryside. But a more likely reason is that Simak set many of his stories in small towns, usually in Millville, the Wisconsin town where he was born. He peopled his tales with small-town characters—handymen, drunken bums, village idiots, farmers, and local newspapermen. Into this quiet, bucolic atmosphere, Simak would thrust an alien visitor or a world catastrophe, or one of his bumpkins would develop a psychic talent. Even if the main portion of the story was set elsewhere, the protagonist often returned to Millville from the far reaches of the galaxy for a final conflict.

Kingsley Amis was the first critic to label Simak the "science fiction poet laureate of the countryside."<sup>1</sup> Simak confessed that he had exaggerated and idealized the region where he was born so much that he virtually exiled himself from his own homeland. In a taped interview with Thomas Clareson, Simak declared, "For many years, I would visit the folks and relatives two or three times a year, but later I would drive around and find I was disappointed in the real country. I'm very careful not to go back... I don't want to spoil the country I've imagined..."

In Simak's fiction, this return to the countryside is almost a moral imperative if humanity is to survive. In story after story, Simak pits plain horse sense and hick-town shrewdness against the greed of urban sophistication. Big business coupled with technology and their stepchild, the over-organized society of the cities, has brought humanity to the brink of self-destruction and created a moral vacuum. Only a revival of those frontier values still present among certain men who have either remained in the country or moved back to the country can save humankind from itself.

Simak conveyed this moral seriousness in a simple, feeling prose style, lightly laced with ironic humor. Simak's yarns are sprinkled with homely Midwest dialect like "hunker" or "naked as a jaybird." Perhaps it is this quasi-Mark Twain ambience that accounts for Simak's appeal to British critics, for the British seem to have been much quicker to recognize Simak's talent and to write full-length critical appraisals of his works.

This American quality, or more appropriately Midwestern American quality, undoubtedly is a reflection of Simak's early life.<sup>11</sup> Growing up on his Grandfather Wiseman's farm in southwestern Wisconsin, Simak hunted, fished, swam in a creek in the summer, and tobogganed and ice-skated in the winter. The ancestral farm sits on a high bluff overlooking the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, a spot Simak returned to again and again in his fiction. He attended a one-room country school through the eighth grade and rode a horse to Patch Grove High School in the winter. His rural background crops up over and over in his settings, in his sure ear for small-town speech, and in his affectionate but accurate descriptions of natural places and things.

Simak's "Tom Sawyer" existence was leavened by a fascination with words, which also began at an early age. At eight, he was already determined to learn all the words there were and how to spell them. "I had scribbled, off and on, on various subjects from the time I first started grade school..." In her introduction to Simak's bibliography, Muriel Becker wisely notes that Simak's addiction to writing is definitely not part of the image of the "All-American boy,"<sup>12</sup> yet Simak is in good company with Twain, Hemingway, and Fitzgerald, who also had their beginnings in the Midwest.

After a stint teaching school, Simak tried working his way through the University of Wisconsin. When the funds ran out, Simak launched his newspaper career by taking a position on the *Iron River* (Mich.) *Reporter* and in a couple of years became editor. As a full-time newspaperman, he could afford to get married. He wed Agnes Kuchenberg (whom he refers to as Kay) in that same year, 1929. He had scratched the writing itch by becoming a journalist, but news writing did not completely satisfy his urge. He had early admired science fiction from reading Jules Verne, then graduated from Verne to Haggard and Wells, and was ready in both reading habits and inclination to welcome the magazines. To Simak, science fiction was not only a field from which he derived reading pleasure, but also "a medium of ideas."

Although he wrote space opera and other pulp hackwork at first, he always wanted to do something different. He submitted his first short story, "The Cubes of Canymede," to *Amazing Stories* in 1929. The story was accepted, but two years later T. O'Connor Sloane returned the manuscript without publishing it.

Simak did sell his next story, "The World of the Red Sun," to *Wonder Stories*, and it appeared in the December 1931 issue. In 1932, Simak sold three more stories to *Wonder* and one to *Astounding*, and then suddenly left the field. Simak stopped writing science fiction except for a controversial religious fantasy, "The Creator," printed in the semipro magazine *Marvel Tales* (March/April 1935). He took a succession of newspaper jobs throughout the Middle West, and in 1939 settled down on the staff of the *Minneapolis Star* as a copyreader. Within a year, Simak was advanced to chief of the copy desk.

Simak's new duties certainly kept him from writing science fiction during this period of his life, but part of the reason was his own dissatisfaction with what he was doing. He had his own ideas about how science fiction should be written, and in a fanzine article<sup>13</sup> he rejected his own work written in the Gernsbackian mode as "mere journals of pointless adventure... mouthpieces to explain scientific apparatus and scientific theory." He wanted the science-fiction story to stand on its own two feet as a legitimate story "with characterization, human interest, humor, and deeper insight into other fundamentals of humanity and the scientific world."

This desire to write science fiction about real people may have attracted Simak to writing it again, this time for John W. Campbell, Jr., who in 1937 became editor of *Astounding*. Simak responded to Campbell's request for more believable characters with stories about football players, Iowa farmers, and old soldiers. Campbell was much taken with Simak's first novel, *The Cosmic Engineers*. Although this story is space opera in the Smith-Campbell tradition, the protagonists are middle-class citizens of the thirties, not scientists or soldiers of fortune.

From 1940 to 1942, Simak published regularly but not profusely in the magazines, mostly in *Astounding*. He suffered a writer's block and needed money, so wrote some easily forgettable aviation and cowboy stories. As Simak told it, he went out and bought a bunch of Western pulps, spent the weekend reading them, and

started writing to the formula. One editor billed him as "a man who knows the West so well..." Simak recalled, "Hell, I'd never been west of the Missouri River at that time."

The inspiration to write science fiction eventually returned, and Simak never again wrote any other kind of fiction. Nor did a writer's block ever again interrupt the flow of stories. In 1944, he produced eight short stories and novelettes. He wrote for *Astounding* four stories in the popular Webster series (which later became *City*), and sold the humorous adventures of Mr. Meek, a mousy bookkeeper transformed into a heroic rogue, to *Planet Stories*. In the late forties, his output again decreased. Simak's personal life became very busy and probably left little time to write. Son Richard Scott was born in 1947, Simak was promoted to news editor of the *Minneapolis Star* in 1949, and daughter Ellen was born in 1951. Fewer of his stories saw print, but the quality remained high. The three final Webster episodes to appear in *Astounding* were published in 1946 and 1947.

The fifties began another productive period and also brought Simak some well-deserved honors. In 1950, Simak had the lead in the first issue of a new magazine called *Galaxy* with the novel *Time Quarry*; now known as *Time and Again*. In 1952, *City* appeared, a collection of the Webster short stories from *Astounding* woven together on the framework of tales told by dogs long after man has disappeared from the face of the earth. *City* won the 1953 International Fantasy Award for fiction, and in 1958 Simak won the Hugo for his novella "The Big Front Yard."

Simak only wrote one other novel during the fifties, *Ring Around the Sun*, but numerous short stories and novelettes poured from his pen. They have been anthologized again and again and established Simak's reputation as one of the best craftsmen of science fiction in the shorter form. Three hardcover collections of these tales of the fifties have been published: *Strangers in the Universe* (1956), *The Worlds of Clifford Simak* (1960), and *All the Traps of Earth and Other Stories* (1962). A later collection, *Best Science Fiction Stories of Clifford Simak* (1967), was first published in London and contains the best of this output. In addition to *Astounding*, Simak was a regular contributor to *Galaxy* and was also easily accepted by Tony Boucher in *The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction*.

Most of these stories develop themes that had long been Simak's trademarks: his concern with technology and its effects, his nostalgia for small towns and small-town life, his compassion for aliens who are humanity's next-door neighbors, and what Thomas D. Clareson termed the brotherhood of intelligent life in the universe. Clareson defines this xenophilia as "a vision which sees all sentient creatures... as equal parts of a single community..."<sup>14</sup>

In the sixties, when his novels started appearing in hardcover and original paperbacks, rather than first appearing in magazines, Simak began writing more novels and fewer short stories. In fact, after 1961 Simak averaged just one novel per year. He won a second Hugo in 1963 for *Way Station*, and other novels—*All Flesh Is Grass*, *Time Is the Simplest Thing*, and *The Goblin Reservation*—were nominated for either Hugos or Nebulas. In this period, Simak's novels were much more daring and original in concept and perhaps less "folksy," conveying a kind of mysticism and etched on a broader canvas. Also during this period, Simak turned to science writing, and this new interest might have had some influence on his fiction.

In 1959, Simak left the news desk to develop a school-oriented science program, the Science Reading Series, for the *Star's* sister newspaper, the *Minneapolis Tribune*. The program was used in more than 7,500 classrooms in the newspaper's circulation area and won several awards for Simak, including the Westinghouse Award from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1966) and the Minnesota Academy of Science Award (1967).

In addition, Simak wrote a great deal of non-fiction, especially about current advances in science in a time of growing developments in NASA and a national preoccupation with ecology and the environment. Simak got out a weekly newspaper column and wrote four books popularizing space exploration and astronomy, evolution of intelligence, prehistoric man, and cosmology. His paleontological interests surface in several of his later works, definitely in the novella "The Marathon Photograph" (1974) and in the novel *Mastodonia* (1978).

In 1961 Simak dabbled disastrously in the theater. Broadway beckoned in the form of a producer who approached Simak about adopting one of his very funny stories, "How-2," for the stage. The play had its title changed to the more risqué *How to Make a Man*, opened in Detroit, and was promptly panned. Simak did not lose hope—Broadway might be kinder. The Broadway critics were even less sympathetic than the Detroit critics: "a play suitable for people who only read comic books." Again, the Buck Rogers-Flash Gordon science-fiction image had overridden the genuine comedy. An embittered Simak vowed never to allow his work to be dramatized on the stage again. Despite his on-stage embarrassment, some of his short stories were scripted for radio dramas on the NBC show *X Minus One*, and a number of his stories have been under option from time to time for the movies.

Simak became feature writer for the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* in 1969, where he remained until his retirement in August 1976. By the end of the sixties Simak was rated by many critics among the top five science-fiction writers in the country. His books sold well, and he could be depended on for an original, entertaining yarn with characters that readers liked, the rare quality that Algis Budrys in a *Galaxy* review found in all of Simak's successful stories.<sup>vi</sup>

Yet Simak was not content to merely grind out unique variations of the same old themes. In the furor of the New Wave, he turned to blending fantasy elements into his science fiction, writing what Muriel Becker in the introduction to her Simak bibliography calls the "zany" novels of the seventies, stories that belong more than ever to the realm of faery.<sup>vii</sup> *The Werewolf Principle* (1967) and *The Goblin Reservation* (1968) were forerunners of the change. In *Out of Their Minds* (1970), Simak is deliberately trying to be different, to break out of what David Pringle has assessed as the paradoxical reason for his appeal, his consistency.<sup>viii</sup> Simak mingles fantasy figures with real characters, the fantasy characters actually brought to life by the power of "imagination." In an interview with Paul Walker,<sup>ix</sup> Simak defended this breach of genre. To Simak, all imaginative stories are fantasy, and if authors limit themselves, they may "stifle the true development of the imaginative story.... It can be claimed with some logic, I suppose, that ghosts and robots do not mix, but I see no reason why they shouldn't. If a writer wants to interweave the old mythology and the new, there should be nothing to prevent it.... It was with this thought in mind that I wrote *The Goblin Reservation* and then went on to write *Out of Their Minds*." Again, the "old man" was ahead of his time, writing in a genre now officially marketed as "science-fantasy," the best-seller of the eighties. It is hard to find any story published today which doesn't freely mix the genres, and no recent fan ever notices any difference.

Simak took time out to edit *Nebula Award Stories Six* for 1971, the only collection to his editorial credit, but never slowed his steady output of fiction. In 1972, Simak wrote what he calls his personal philosophic "statement of values," the novel *A Choice of Gods*; "before," he noted, "I haven't got enough time left to restate it." With the appearance of *Enchanted Pilgrimage* (1975), Simak began to write a purer form of fantasy set in a medieval alternate world where magic replaces science. Simak, ever conscious of his audience, also wanted to cash in on the booming market for fantasy:

Honors still came to the "old man" in the seventies. His ability to write prize-winning short stories had not deserted him. Three stories—the novella "The Thing in the Stone" (1971), "The Autumn Land" (1972), and "Construction Shack" (1974)—were nominated for either Hugos or Nebulas. His novel *A Heritage of Stars* (1978) received the Jupiter Award from the secondary educators. But the crowning achievement for Simak came from his peers. In 1977, he received the most prestigious honor in science fiction, the Grand Master award for lifetime achievement, at the Nebula Awards banquet, where he was also the keynote speaker. Only two other writers, Robert A. Heinlein and Jack Williamson, had ever received this accolade to that date.

In the eighties, although Simak was well over seventy, his powers had not seriously diminished. Some of his novels did tend to repeat earlier themes, but always developed these motifs in a unique way. *Project Pope* (1981) was nominated for a Hugo, and in 1981, Simak won the Hugo and the Nebula for Best Short Story for

"Grotto of the Dancing Deer." Simak was Guest of Honor at the 1981 Worldcon at Denver, and in his acceptance speech, he paid tribute to that unique tribe "that had given me a place around the tribal campfire."

Simak still continued to take risks at an age when, as Algis Budrys put it, a Grand Master might be "expected to retire to a porch and rock himself to sleep."<sup>x</sup> In 1983, Simak was forced by leukemia and emphysema into a three-year hiatus from writing. Simak's wife, Kay, had suffered from arthritis for many years, and Simak had gradually assumed all the duties of running the house. Her condition worsened and she was put into a nursing home, where she died in 1985.

Simak had always said that he would have no strong reason for living after Kay was gone, but he was back in June of 1986 with a new novel, *Highway of Eternity*. In this amazingly complex novel, Simak maintained the humor, sensitivity, intelligence, and moral purpose that readers had come to expect in his fiction.

With the help of neighbors and friends, Simak continued to live alone and was trying to write a short story when death overtook him. On the morning of April 25, 1988, he received a blood transfusion and returned from the hospital feeling exceptionally good. In the evening, he had difficulty breathing and was taken to Riverside Medical Center in Minneapolis, where he died peacefully in his sleep.

The "old man" of science fiction would write no more. Some critics claimed to perceive despair and pessimism for the human race in Simak's writings, but his later work reflected optimism very much at odds with his feelings at the time he wrote *City* forty years earlier. With the help of other intelligent beings, Simak seemed to be prophesying another "giant step for mankind," a chance to prove that such a precious gift as life cannot have been for nothing.

## NOTES

- i. Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell: A Survey of Science Fiction* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), 74.
- ii. Biographical data on Simak has been gleaned from the chapter on Simak in Sam Moskowitz, *Seekers of Tomorrow: Masters of Modern Science Fiction* (Cleveland: World, 1965); Muriel Becker's superb bibliography; a taped interview with Simak conducted by Thomas D. Clareson; and reluctantly from the author himself. Simak read a draft of this chapter and noted any slight discrepancies reported in other sources.
- iii. Muriel Becker, *Clifford D. Simak: A Primary and Secondary Bibliography* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), xiv.
- iv. "Where's Hawk Carse?" *Ad Astra* July 1979: 2-5.
- v. Thomas D. Clareson, "Clifford D. Simak: The Inhabited Universe," *Voices for the Future: Essays on Major Science Fiction Writers*, ed. Thomas D. Clareson (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1976), 175.
- vi. Algis Budrys, "Galaxy Bookshelf," *Galaxy* July-August 1971: 162.
- vii. Becker, xxiv-xxv.
- viii. David Pringle, "Aliens for Neighbours: A Reassessment of Clifford D. Simak," *Foundation: The Review of Science Fiction* March 1977: 17.
- ix. Paul Walker, *Speaking of Science Fiction* (Oradell, NJ: Luna Publications, 1978), 58.
- x. Algis Budrys, "Books," *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction* September 1982: 26.

# The Worlds of Clifford Simak: The Early Simak

Simak's first published story, in the December 1931 issue of *Wonder Stories*, "The World of the Red Sun," probably did not impress too many readers with the exception of Isaac Asimov. Asimov, in his autobiography and elsewhere, has given this story more notoriety than it perhaps deserves. He was so taken with it that it was the specific story that he vividly recalls retelling to his fellow students sitting at the curb in front of the junior high school.<sup>i</sup>

"The World of the Red Sun" is a time-travel action adventure yarn, very much crafted to the taste of *Wonder Stories* readers. The two scientist-heroes equip their airplane as a time machine. Instead of traveling a few thousand years, a glitch in their instruments sends them five million years into the future to land in the ruins of what was once Denver. They are captured by a horde of primitives who possess "the eyes of furtive beings... of hunted beasts." The travelers soon learn that all men are slaves of Golan-Kirt, a creature of pure evil, "He-Who-Came-out-of-the-Cosmos" to rule by fear. The new arrivals must do trial by combat with Golan-Kirt, but their opponents turn out to be only figments of their own imaginations—a machine gun, marching soldiers, and a lion. Golan-Kirt himself is a fraud, an impostor, and the naked brain of a 1930s mad scientist who has ruled by fear for five million years. The intrepid time-travelers easily dispatch the madman by laughing at him. Despite the protests of the natives, who want them to remain to help restore civilization, they attempt to return to the twentieth century.

And here the epilogue of this first story foreshadows some of that ironic despair for the success of the human race so dependent on its technology that Simak would develop more concretely in *City* twenty years later. The instruments of the time travelers fail again, and they are sent farther into the future, where they find an eroded statue honoring them as saviors of the race. Like the Time Traveler in Wells's *The Time Machine*, the two then realize that they are "alone at the end of the world." Such a downbeat ending was quite unusual for Gernsbackian fiction.

Simak wrote four more "pulpish" stories in 1932 which can easily be forgotten, three for *Wonder Stories* and one for *Astounding*. None of these stories shares the same sense of melancholy and foreboding as "The World of the Red Sun," except possibly "The Voice in the Void" in *Wonder Stories Quarterly* (Spring 1932). The story is standard interplanetary adventure except for the ending. In his curiosity to solve the mysteries of the Martian religion and to wreak vengeance on the Martians for putting his buddy's brain in a cylinder, the hero discovers a terrible secret, that ordinary, money-grubbing Earthmen had visited Mars a million years ago and that the Martian messiah was really a terrestrial.

Surveying stories of religion in American pulp magazines, Sam Moskowitz calls "Voice in the Void" the first of Simak's "sacilegious" science-fiction stories, identifying Simak as one of the first to use this "delicate topic."<sup>ii</sup> Simak did not remember exactly why he used such a theme, but he must have had "first causes" on his mind. Between 1932 and 1938, when Simak stopped writing science fiction, he wrote a remarkable story, "The Creator," printed in the semipro magazine *Marvel Tales* (March/April 1935), published by William Crawford. The theme of this story was so different, questioning the existence and character of God, and its ending so disturbing that no other editor would accept it.<sup>iii</sup>

In "The Creator," two scientist-heroes build a "time-power" machine that takes them to a super-universe where they meet a telepathic being who created Earth and the rest of the universe as a laboratory experiment. When the Creator attempts to destroy the primary universe (and hence all universes), the protagonists, with the aid of other aliens who stumbled into the Creator's lair, destroy the Creator and his laboratory. The hero-narrator is not rewarded for killing "God" and saving the Universe, but returns to Earth millions of years later as the tribal chief and demigod of the last inhabitants of a dying planet.

Even as early in his career as "The Creator," Simak is metaphorically exploring the nature of the universe and how it came into being. Simak himself never accepted what he called the "easy answers" of organized religion as an explanation for the purpose of life, and his efforts to search for this explanation have caused some critics to label some of his later works "mystic." In an interview with Paul Walker, Simak declined the "honor of being a mystic writer." The mysticism that attaches to such questions as the real meaning of intelligence and the inevitability of death lies in the fact that humans do not understand these questions, but as intelligent beings, Simak believed, they must try. Simak did not accept the cold, indifferent First Principle or the Deistic Great Geometer who is only concerned with the precision and orderliness of the universe, but neither could Simak accept the idea of God as a "kindly old gentleman with a long, white, flowing beard." He differed from religious believers by stating "we cannot be so provincial as to insist that God is for man alone and for this planet alone... we have drawn our Deity on too small a scale and in doing so have done Him a grave injustice."<sup>iv</sup>

When Simak started writing again for John Campbell, his stories had a much different look. The characters became more important than plot, and the dialogue, although very much of its time, moved the action and simplified the exposition. Simak's action scenes were as gripping as any other pulpster's (this faculty for writing action-adventure never deserted him), but those characteristics that have become Simak's trademark—compassion, humor, human interest, and gentle irony—distinguished a Simak story from others.

Simak's first story for Campbell, "Rule 18" (*Astounding*, July 1938), though based on a silly plot, introduces his early uneasiness at the blessings of technology. In the year 2479, Mars always wins the annual Earth-Mars football game because Earth players have gone soft due to technology. A newspaper reporter (a frequent pulp hero, and a favorite of Simak's, as a newspaperman himself) uncovers cheating by Earth's coach, who is using a time tunnel to recruit players from Earth's past. At the end of the story, the reporter, stranded 3000 years in the past, is making his way down to Mexico to become the white Aztec god Quetzalcoatl. Simak's time travelers never seem to possess quite enough technology to get home. "Rule 18" is lightweight science fiction, yet contains that light touch of irony that draws more attention to the moral issue than a heavier or more bitter form of satire could do.

"Rule 18" did not make very much impact on the readers, except for its influence on an 18-year-old fan and budding writer named Isaac Asimov. Asimov, in a letter to "Brass Tacks," gave "Rule 18" a very low rating for its "incoherent" style. He received a letter from Simak asking for details so that Simak could profit from Asimov's criticism. Asimov, on a closer rereading, found nothing wrong except for Simak's technique of writing the story in separate scenes without explicit transitional passages. He wrote Simak to explain and apologize, and then adopted the same device in his own stories. He also made use of what he called Simak's "cool, unadorned style" and later credits Simak with being the major influence on his own style.<sup>v</sup>

In most of these early stories, Simak followed a standard science-fiction formula—a problem must be solved, a matter of life and death, in some interplanetary setting. His protagonists, often leaders of expeditions, seldom have any solutions. Other less "heroic" characters, cantankerous eccentrics or acknowledged failures like drunks or derelicts, snap out of their depressions or alcoholic hazes long enough to save the expedition (and occasionally the Solar System).

Frequently, the savior is an old man. David Pringle has accused Simak of dreaming of himself as an old man, arguing that for Simak "the ultimate state of grace is to be as old as the hills."<sup>vi</sup> In "Reunion on Ganymede" (*Astounding*, November 1938), Gramp Parker, old war veteran, saves Ganymede from a pack of robot monsters and captures an escaped prisoner, a dangerous

murderer. In "Rim of the Deep" (*Astounding*, May 1940), the only Simak story ever set on the ocean bottom, old prospector Gus saves the hero from sea-bottom pirates and, for good measure, helps the hero to squelch some Venusian aliens set on sabotaging our undersea colonies. And, in "Clerical Error" (*Astounding*, August 1940), an old drunk gives up his life to save an expedition stranded on Jupiter and doomed to run out of life support.

Simak's characters are "ordinary people," folksy types found in any small town in America, and his use of such characters is partly responsible for his reputation as a "pastoralist" writer. In the 1930s, he would send alien visitors to small Wisconsin towns named Millville and Willow Bend, but even in these early stories, he introduced the small-town people and their values into an interplanetary setting. Simak's second story for Campbell, "Hunger Death" (*Astounding*, October 1938), was the first example of this kind of story. A strange plague that starves people to death is part of a plot by Martian scientists to regain control of the Solar System. Only New Chicago on Venus, a colony of transplanted farmers from Iowa, seems relatively immune from the disease. A newspaper reporter and an alcoholic doctor stumble on the antidote, the polka-dot weed, and announce the news to the Solar System. The depressed Iowa farmers, who had been gulled into coming to Venus by an unscrupulous land company, are now rich beyond their wildest dreams. Despite a raid by a Martian spaceship, thwarted by the old town marshal at the expense of his life, and the machinations of the land company, Iowa horse sense and frontier justice prevail to save New Chicago and the Solar System.

Although he seemed to accept the Wellsian stereotype of the evil Martian in these early stories, Simak was beginning to write about aliens who were friendly, cute, helpful, and certainly less menacing than the bug-eyed monsters on the lurid magazine covers of the period. His earliest story appealing directly to the reader's sympathy for the alien is "Madness from Mars" (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, April 1939). The Mars expedition returns with all of its astronauts dead, apparently caused by madness among the crew members. The only creature left alive on the ship is a cute little Martian fur ball. In the zoo, it drives the other animals berserk. The Martian is homesick and lonely, and in its efforts to communicate, it issues ultrasonic signals that drive Earth life insane. The hero euthanizes the poor creature, whose sounds are "like the whimperings of a lost puppy on a storm-swept street"—a far cry from evil aliens bent on the destruction of mankind!

Simak tried a couple of the "evil alien" plots, but the results were always inferior. In "Shadow of Life" (*Astounding*, March 1943), aliens who believe in the "rightness of evil" recruit Earthmen to preach their doctrine. Eons earlier, the aliens had already scared the old, arrogant Martians into hiding in a subatomic universe. The humans find a weapon to fight the aliens and want the Martians to cooperate, but the Martians refuse. Only humans, the younger race and more adaptable to change, remain to take on the Evil Beings. This is one of the few stories in which the aliens are "truly" evil, but even then, Simak justifies their actions because of their creed of "no room for benevolence in the Universe." In another very mediocre story beautifully illustrated by Virgil Finlay, "The Call from Beyond" (*Super Science Stories*, May 1950), scientists working in a laboratory on Pluto to develop controlled mutations of humans let aliens in from other dimensions; they strongly resemble the scary Cobblies in *City*. The story also implies that someone in Atlantis eons ago had made the same mistake. Aliens explain the presence of supernatural beings like ghosts, goblins, incubi, imps, and other such "things that go bump in the night." Simak would develop this idea with much more humor eighteen years later in *The Goblin Reservation*.

More often than not, the aliens were the victims of Terrestrial greed. In "Masquerade" (*Astounding*, March 1941), Earthlings, using Mercury as a base to beam solar power back to the rest of the Solar System, give little thought to the natives, the Candles, who can mimic any life form, even humans. In their lust for energy, Earthmen turn them into clowns, "a troupe of mimics, absorbing alien ideas, alien ways" (p. 73). One of the Earthmen, in foiling a plot by the Mercurians to take over the power station, realizes that the Candles are not curiosities, but a victimized race of intelligent beings.

In "Tools" (*Astounding*, July 1942), the aliens turn the tables on the greedy Earthmen and try to effect a change in human values. A corporation, which "owns the Solar System, body and soul" by controlling its source of power, is mining Venus for radium ore (curiously, the head of the corporation is R. C. Webster, a name that Simak will use in a much different characterization in the *City* series). Simak describes a much more hostile environment on Venus than in "Hunger Death," much closer to what it actually is, and not the watery jungle beloved of most writers of the period. Archie, a native Venusian, is a blob of disembodied radon gas captured in a lead jar who has learned to communicate with Earthlings. Archie, from a race without tools, has been secretly learning technology from the Earthmen. By driving one of his observers insane enough to smash his jar, Archie gets free and joins other Venusians in a group intelligence, taking over the machinery in the mining camp. The big corporation puts up a fight, which provides the action in the story, but loses its radium monopoly.

Doc, the old psychologist who understands the Venusians, gives his life to protect Archie's secret—the "purely mental" Venusians have emotions and a superior intelligence and have been experimenting with becoming "physical." Now with tools to give them physical being, they plan to build a better civilization for Earthmen. A number of themes that Simak will develop into whole novels are contained in this story: capitalistic exploitation, superior but helpful aliens, and another chance for the human race despite its moral failures. The idea that aliens can put man back on the right track became Simak's concern for the next forty years:

Perhaps Man had gotten off on the wrong foot. Perhaps his philosophy had been all wrong even from the start. Perhaps a bit of alien philosophy, weird as it might seem at first, would be good for him. (130)

In imagining wacky aliens, Simak could compete with the best. In "Hermit of Mars" (*Astounding*, June 1939), which seems influenced by Stanley G. Weinbaum's "A Martian Odyssey," bizarre flora and fauna—traveler plants, silicon eaters, and ghosts—inhabit every canal. A better story is "Ogre" (*Astounding*, January 1944), a very amusing adventure in which intelligent plants contrive to take over Earth by making men forget everything but listening to their music. The planet is a botanical grotesquerie: rifle trees that shoot pellets; vines that release lightning bolts; symbiotic blanket plants that can cuddle around bodies, supply food and medical attention, and even share intelligence and emotions; and the Encyclopedia, an immortal plant that can suck data from minds and from humans the knowledge of technology that intelligent plants are searching for.

Along with his fondness for aliens, Simak likes robots. They are unquestionably "human" and not in the Frankenstein or Rossum tradition—they never turn against their creators. The robots are more often used for comic relief, ancestors of See-Threepio and Aitoo-Dectoo in *Star Wars*. In "Ogre," the traders own a female robot, Nellie, a nagging cost-conscious bookkeeper robot (who speaks very ungrammatical English—would a robot be programmed so poorly?) who, despite being a pain in the neck, always turns up in the nick of time to save the traders' hides.

Simak's robots are more like Asimov's, faithful artifacts who desire nothing but to serve man, like the loyal old retainer Jenkins in *City*. Simak first used the name Jenkins in "Earth for Inspiration" (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, April 1941). A failing science-fiction writer takes the advice of his robot valet, Jenkins, and visits Old Earth for inspiration. Like the Tin Woodman of Oz, the robot Philbert has been rusting for lack of oil on an ocean bottom for ages with only his brain working. The writer finds Philbert, hooks him up to Jenkins's body, and finds in the old robot an inexhaustible supply of plots. Also in this story, Simak introduces the idea of "wild" robots who run away from their human masters and try to build their own civilization, a concept he later used in the conclusion of *City*:

Another type of story from those early days that Simak never stopped writing is the time travel story. He had a favorite time period, the time when the Earth was free of any traces of civilization and only prehistoric man and

animals like the mastodon or the saber-toothed tiger roamed the plains. His first expedition to this era was in "The Loot of Time" (*Thrilling Wonder Stories*, December 1938). A scientist invents a mechanical time brain (time is non-existent but a time-sense exists in the human brain), and he and two others go on a hunting expedition to the interglacial period seventy thousand years back. The scene then shifts to the fifty-sixth century, when time travel is an everyday occurrence. Aliens are using time travel to steal and store their loot in the past, in the same era where our twentieth-century time travelers have located. After the usual battles with wild animals and an encounter with a friendly old Neanderthal, the time travelers from the past and those from the future put a stop to the Centaureans (their appearance in the past also makes them responsible for the myth of the devil), but the story ends with a puzzle—why were they stealing? Perhaps Simak intended a sequel, but never got around to writing it.

In so many of the early stories like "Tools," the villains are large corporations. Greedy capitalists always seem to accompany technological advance as humanity expands its frontier in space. In "Spaceship in a Flask" (*Astounding*, July 1941), a humanitarian group of researchers on Mercury are seeking to find the cure for a sickness afflicting spacemen and accidentally stumble on an elixir of youth found in the sands of Mercury. The leader of the group conceals his discovery, fearing that the news will not be a blessing, but will only cause economic problems, wars, and more greed.

In "Lobby" (*Astounding*, April 1944), cheap atomic power frightens the power companies so much that a power lobby blows up the pilot plant. The World Committee makes a deal with the criminals to let them go unpunished if they will provide the funds to complete the research. "Lobby" is an obvious appeal for international control of atomic power, rather than leaving it in the hands of private enterprise. The behavior of big business continued to worry Simak enough that he would later make it the subject of such full-length novels as *Ring around the Sun*.

Another sociological question that bothered Simak even in these early days was his concern for humanity's future. Given humanity's unsatisfied avarice and its inclination to use its technology to destroy whatever it touches, including itself, where will evolution lead the human race? Will some evolutionary change make people wise up before it is too late? Will they acquire the wisdom as well as the knowledge to be respected members of the community of intelligent species?

Before Simak answered these questions by displacing humans with intelligent dogs in *City*, he wrote two transitional stories expressing these serious concerns. The first was "Hunch" (*Astounding*, July 1943). The Solar System is faced with a terrible brain drain, a disastrous trend projected back in the twentieth century: its best minds are losing their sanity, communications are breaking down, and industrial and economic progress is grinding to a halt. The only hope is Sanctuary, an asteroid sanitarium where everyone now goes to be cured. However, returning patients are no longer interested in their former pursuits and have forgotten their skills and knowledge. An agent sent to Sanctuary to investigate discovers that the Asterites, the race of the fifth planet (now the Asteroid Belt), possess the minds of the Sanctuary patients and grant a mental peace, wiping out "those harsher emotions that have taken man up the ladder." The only solution to combat the creeping contagion of madness is for humans to learn to play their hunches, a new instinct to see into the future, and put those with this psi ability in key positions.

The story presents a moral dilemma: humanity must either continue in competition, violence, and adversity, risking madness for progress, or accept the Sanctuary credo of a "better" life. Simak raises a serious doubt about the role of evolution in the doctrine of Progress:

...if the race were doomed to madness, if evolution had erred in bringing man along the path he had followed, what then? If the human way of life were basically at fault, would it not be better to accept a change before it was too late? (35)

In "Sunspot Purge" (*Astounding*, November 1940), another story which might even be called the "pilot" for *City*, human progress is downward and all efforts seem

to make no difference. The world is going nuts—suicides, murders, a wave of violence is sweeping the world. Two newspaper reporters travel five hundred years into the future and find a dead city. In old newspaper files, they read a story of declining business, increasing unemployment, a fatal economic depression, and a complete slide down the scale into barbarism. The irony of it all is that sunspots, or the lack of sunspots, are the cause.

The reporters go forward, hoping that humanity will make a comeback, but after two thousand years, they find nothing. The city is gone. A heap of earthy mounds remains where mutated animals shuffle and slink, and trees and grasses have taken over.

But man is gone. He rose, and for a little he walked the Earth. But now he's swept away.... Back in 1950, Man thought he was the whole works. But he wasn't so hot after all. The sunspots took him to the cleaners. Maybe it was the sunspots in the first place that enabled him to rise up on his hind legs and rule the roost. (62)

Until 1950, Campbell bought most of Simak's stories, but he also sold to the adventure pulp *Planet Stories*. Simak began a series of amusing stories about Mr. Meek, a mild-mannered bookkeeper who fulfills his dream of thirty years of becoming a spaceman. In the first story, "Mr. Meek—Musketeer" (*Planet Stories*, Summer 1944), Mr. Meek goes on vacation, cruising the Solar System in his own spaceship. He lands on the asteroid Juno, batwings his way into a notorious miner's bar (the story is more horse opera than space opera), and wins a shoot-out over cheating in a poker game. The town wants him to be their new sheriff, but only after being threatened does Meek take the job.

Meek only wants to find the local Loch Ness monster, the Asteroid Prowler, and do some archaeological research. Meek gets his wish—he is kidnapped and dumped on the surface of Juno. Meek even acquires a sidekick, not Smiley Burnette or Gabby Hayes, but an old prospector, Stiffy Grant. The rest of the story is predictable to anyone remembering the old Saturday afternoon matinees—Meek, of course, makes friends with the terrible monster, and he and Stiffy ride the Prowler back to town. They bring to justice the criminals who are trying to steal a lost mine, and in the conclusion, a meteor, loaded with radium ore, strikes Juno, making Stiffy and Meek rich. The story is fun, admirably suited to *Planet's* editorial policy, and readers liked it.

The second story, "Mr. Meek Plays Polo" (*Planet Stories*, Fall 1944), is not copied so directly from the Western formula. Mr. Meek travels to Saturn's rings, gets himself drafted as a coach in a space polo match, bets his spaceship he can win the match (one of those impulsive acts of bravado when Meek gets angered), and then must play polo himself. Aided by some of Simak's whimsical aliens (bugs with advanced math skills), Meek wins. Simak decided he had enough of Mr. Meek after two stories (he had only written them for his own amusement), and turned to more serious science fiction.

During his apprenticeship, as Simak likes to call this early period before the publication of *City*, he wrote only two novels, both space operas, and one not really his own, but in collaboration with John W. Campbell. Collaboration may be too strong an epithet to apply to *Empire*, a story Campbell originally wrote when he was eighteen years old. Campbell was never able to get *Empire* published—and justifiably so. When Campbell published Simak's *Cosmic Engineers* in 1939, he was quite taken with it, calling it "a power novel with sensitivity." Campbell then sent Simak *Empire* and asked him if he would rewrite it. Simak "gagged when he read it" but manfully forged ahead. His effort was somewhat better, but Campbell himself turned the rewrite down. Simak, with a sigh of relief, dutifully put *Empire* on the shelf. However, when Horace Gold was publishing *Galaxy Science Fiction Novels*, he heard from Campbell that Simak had an unpublished story and pleaded for the right to publish it. Thus *Empire* finally saw print but not until 1951, as a *Galaxy* novel paperback.

Simak and Campbell were both accurate in their judgments of *Empire*—it was probably the poorest science-fiction story ever written by two men who had written some pretty good science fiction. Two super-scientists are building a spaceship with the gadgets to destroy the monopoly of a company controlling all power sources by viciously squelching all competition. The story quickly degenerates into a series of spy-counterspy moves and space dogfights, with the heroes and the villains foiling each other's plots to steal their discoveries. In the Doc Smith tradition, the story ends with a spaceship showdown in interstellar space. Despite its incredible comic-book plot, some of Simak's biases are present: capitalists lusting for power, wasted resources on Earth, sending men to the stars to open a new frontier, and the moral imperative of the common people to take over their own destinies.

The novel that had impressed Campbell so much was *The Cosmic Engineers*, serialized in *Astounding* (February-April 1959) and reissued in hardcover by Gnome Press in 1950. Like *Empire*, it is pure, unadulterated Smith-Campbell space opera but cleverly handled on a canvas truly cosmic. On Pluto, mysterious messages are being received from the galaxy. Two newspaper reporters, on their way to Pluto to cover the story, stumble on Caroline Adams, a scientist exiled for a thousand years of self-induced suspended animation. Caroline, a spunky female rare in pulp space opera, was declared a traitor for refusing to turn over a discovery that would have won the current war. During her long sleep, she has developed psi powers that enable her to interpret the messages. The messages are from a billion-year-old race, the Cosmic Engineers, who warn that the universe is in danger of collision with a second universe. The Engineers, in communication with the inhabitants of this second universe, have summoned the best minds from every race in the universe to solve the problem. To complicate matters further, the Engineers are at war with the Hellhounds, another evil race capable of navigating the "interspace" between universes and therefore willing to see the Universe destroyed if they can dominate the next one to form.

With the help of the Engineers, the Earthlings travel to the planet of the Engineers at the edge of the universe, where a conference of aliens (all loathsome to the humans) decides that the humans, because of their courage and imagination, must save both universes. The humans are sent millions of years into the future to get the answers from the last old man on Earth. After a number of hairbreadth escapes (once they are kidnapped by a million-year-old collective mind that has gone insane), they steal energy from the fifth dimension, destroy the Hellhounds, and save both universes.

No one can deny that this story had range and sweep—Simak showed that he could write space opera with the best. There are enough ideas left over in the novel to write several sequels, but the real interest lies in its optimistic treatment of the human race. In later novels, the brotherhood of the galaxy treats humankind as inferior, a kind of black sheep among intelligent races, in need of education in the proper use of its abilities. But in *The Cosmic Engineers*, humans have been selected to save the universe because of their imagination and vision, qualities the mechanistic Engineers, a group of robots created three billion years ago by a race from whom humanity has descended, have never evolved over all these eons. Yet Simak remained uneasy about humanity's readiness to take too many giant steps forward. When the Engineers offer the Earthlings their marvelous city, the humans turn the Engineers down:

...We'd just make a mess of things. We'd have too much power, too much leisure, too many possessions. It would smash our civilization and leave us one in its stead that we could not manage. We haven't put our own civilization upon a basis that could coincide with what is here.

...Sometime in the future. When we have wiped out some of the primal passions. When we have solved the great social and economic problems that plague us now. When we have learned to observe the Golden Rule... when we have lost some of the lustiness of youth. Sometime we will be ready for this city. (chapter 18)

In reading Simak's "apprentice" stories, pulpy and badly written as they may seem compared to Simak's more mature work beginning with the City stories, the seeds of ideas are found that will sprout and grow over and over in many later stories. All the major themes that he will use again and again are contained in embryo in these early stories: the criticism of human society for its failure to use the gifts of technology for its own improvement, the greed of large corporations who use technology to expand their corporate empires into the Solar System and to the stars, the community of intelligent races who sit in judgment on human actions, and the prospects of the evolution of the human race into a worthy member of this galactic brotherhood.

Also, in these early stories, Simak was gently but firmly taking on the responsibility of being the moral conscience of the human race. It was never Simak's way to be a polemicist—he told Thomas Clareson that "anger is useless" and that "he always remained pretty good-natured... attitudes baldly expressed have no place in fiction..." But it was in the City stories, which came shortly after this early period, that Simak found an expression for his doubts about the human race and where it was going.

## NOTES

- i. Isaac Asimov, ed. *Before the Golden Age: A Science Fiction Anthology of the 1930's* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1974), 180.
- ii. Sam Moskowitz, "Religion in Science Fiction: God, Space, and Earth," *Amazing* April 1965: 94-95.
- iii. In 1981 Locus Press reprinted "The Creator" in commemoration of Simak's fiftieth anniversary as a writer.
- iv. Walker, 63.
- v. Isaac Asimov, *In Memory: Yet Green: The Autobiography of Isaac Asimov, 1920-1954* (New York: Avon Books, 1980), 213.
- vi. Pringle, 16.

# The Worlds of Clifford Simak: *City*

Certainly no other work of Simak's has ever been more of a favorite than *City*: *City* has never been completely out of print since it was first published in 1952, except for a brief hiatus in the very late eighties and early nineties. In fact, its overwhelming success sometimes perturbed Simak "because I haven't written anything as popular since." The novel established Simak as a major writer and brought him to the attention of the world, especially of British fandom. *City* won the International Fantasy Award (IFA) in 1953, ranking Simak with such prestigious company as Arthur Clarke and J. R. R. Tolkien. (The Hugos finally supplanted the IFA, but before the Hugos were established, the IFA was the gold medal of the science fiction Olympics.)

No single work of Simak's, with the possible exception of *Way Station*, reflects the theme of the human race's unworthiness to be the dominant species any more clearly than *City*. Thomas Clareson, in one of the first full-length studies of Simak's work, goes so far as to say that no one but Simak in *City* had so thoroughly "condemned man's surrender to that technology which had led him to Hiroshima and the Moon—not even those who howled in guilt in the years immediately following World War Two or those who pictured dystopia as early as the 1950's."<sup>1</sup>

In the author's foreword to the 1976 Ace reprint of *City*, Simak confessed to his own moral and intellectual despair at the carnage of World War II, especially the bombing of Hiroshima, and to his disillusionment with the belief that technology was the key to inevitable progress. (This puts Simak's sociological conscience twenty years ahead of the alienated group of New Wave writers, but then he was always ahead of the pack in providing inspiration to younger writers.) The combination of human "cussedness" with its success at technology led Simak to visualize doomsday in this light:

There is nothing wrong with technology as such; what is wrong is our preoccupation with it. We have made a god out of our machines; in many ways we have sold our souls to them. (2)

Such arch-conservatism makes one wonder how Simak ever got himself published by John W. Campbell, but apparently this anti-technological attitude never bothered Campbell, for seven of the eight tales which later became *City* were published in *Astounding* between 1944 and 1947.

The novel *City* is actually a collection of framed tales, most of which were published in *Astounding* as separate short stories. The eight tales are "City" (1944), "Huddling Place" (1944), "Census" (1944), "Desertion" (1944), "Paradise" (1946), "Hobbies" (1946), "Aesop" (1947), and "The Trouble with Ants" (1951). The first seven appeared in *Astounding*, but Simak was forced to sell the final tale to *Fantastic Adventures*. Campbell did not like the idea of ants inheriting the earth.

Simak tacked these eight tales onto the framework of a legend that Dogs tell, "when the fires burn high and the wind is from the north." The story begins in a future when the world has literally gone to the dogs and "Man" has become a myth. The Dogs dispute among themselves about the existence of such concepts as cities, wars, and mankind itself. Could there have been such a perverse creature as Man? Was it possible that, in some primeval time, Man and Dogs were actually friends? In the "Editor's Preface," the Dog reader is cautioned against taking "these tales too much to heart, for complete confusion, if not madness, lies along this road."

On this heavily ironic note, Simak begins his future human history. To add to the fun of the story, each of the tales is preceded by a headnote providing satirical, scholarly comments by the Dogs. The arguments are delightfully tongue-in-cheek. Here is how the Dogs feel about accepting the idea of a city: most dog authorities "regard such an organization as a city as an impossible structure, not only from the economic standpoint, but from the sociological and physiological as well." The dogs cannot believe that any creature with the nervous system to develop a culture "could

survive within such restricted limits. The result ... would lead to mass neuroticism which in a short time would destroy the very culture which built the city."

Simak was personally never able to abide a city: Although he worked in Minneapolis for more than thirty years, he fled to suburbia as soon as he could. In the 1976 Foreword to *City*, he wamed:

I believed then, and I believe even more strongly now, that the city is an anachronism we'd be better off without.... Today's typical city is a glittering downtown business section surrounded by growing rings of ghettos. At one time... there was reason for the city: Men first huddled in it for safety; later stayed huddled in it to conduct their business. The city no longer is a defensive structure; in fact, in most cases, it is safer outside the city than in it. (3)

The first tale, "City," begins in 1992. Industry has been decentralized by the threat of atomic war. With the promise of cheap land and the convenience of the family airplane, the people have deserted the cities and fled to the country, except for some "squatters" and diehards like John Webster. Webster, too, very much wants to leave, but has remained in the city out of a deep sense of duty. After a final eloquent plea trying to convince the City Council that the cities are indeed dead, Webster resigns as President of the Chamber of Commerce, planning to minister to the technologically unemployed. But when the squatters threaten civil war if the Council burns the houses, Webster tries unsuccessfully to stop the Council. Before any serious bloodshed, the crisis is resolved by one of those ironic twists of fate that Simak sprinkled all through the novel. Adams, a former urban resident, has bought the city for back taxes, planning on turning it into a memorial museum.

The second tale, "Huddling Place," is set in the year 217 A.D., six generations of Websters later. The Websters have lived on the land for two hundred years and never go anywhere. Robots such as the faithful retainer Jenkins attend to their personal needs. As a consequence of this flight from the cities, "the huddling places," Jerome Webster is afflicted with agoraphobia. Another crisis faces the Websters—Jerome is asked to come to Mars, where he had formerly spent five years studying the physiology of the Martian brain, to save the life of his old Martian friend, Juwain the philosopher. Juwain has developed a concept that will advance mankind ten thousand years in the space of two generations. After an agonizing internal struggle, Webster screws up his courage ... but too late; faithful Jenkins has sent the rescue ship away.

In the third tale, "Census," Simak introduces the talking dogs. Sixty-six years after Jerome Webster's failure, Richard Grant, a government agent taking the first census in three hundred years, meets Nathaniel, a talking dog, while he is prowling the Webster estates.<sup>11</sup> To palliate the guilt felt by the Websters over the loss of Juwain, Bruce Webster, Jerome's grandson, has been experimenting with dogs, granting the dogs the gift of speech in the hope that two intelligent but dissimilar races working together might improve the human condition. Jerome's son, Grandfather Thomas, is still alive at eighty-six. He designed the first starship, now on its way to Alpha Centauri with his son Allen aboard. Thomas had help from the mysterious, long-lived mutants, descendants of squatters and farmers, who are hiding out in the hills.

Grant is also searching for the mutants in the hope that they might be able to interpret Juwain's remaining notes—his real mission, not the census. After leaving the Websters, Grant encounters the mutant Joe, who helped Thomas Webster build the starship. With a growing apprehension for the future of humankind, Grant realizes that the mutants have no need of human approval and certainly no desire to preserve the human race. For his own amusement, Joe has hastened the evolution of a colony of ants by enclosing their anthill with a glass dome.



(The ants have already learned how to smelt ore.) Joe looks at Juwain's papers but refuses to share his insights with Grant. When Grant threatens him, Joe knocks Grant out and steals the Juwain notes. In the final scene of the story, Grant charges the dogs to carry on the dream of progress.

In these first three tales, Simak shows how humanity is slowly but steadily losing its grip on its own destiny. Technology has improved—robots that are almost human, interstellar travel, genetic transformation of species—yet humans cannot reverse their downward trend. The next evolutionary step is the mutants, but they reject any human interests, even trying a genetic experiment of their own to undermine the dominance of *Homo sapiens*. The Websters might have given humanity a second chance, but they fumbled it. Aware of the coming disaster, the Websters have taken some steps to prevent it with the talking dogs, but indecision has made them powerless.

Jerome Webster's agoraphobia is a symptom of the

growing unwillingness of men... following the breakup of the cities to move from familiar places, a deepening instinct to stay among the scenes and possessions which in their mind have become associated with the contentment and graciousness of life.

This tendency towards solitary pleasures and withdrawal from the affairs of humankind has now been bred into humans' evolutionary successors, the mutants. The mutants completely lack any altruistic feelings and will do nothing to help the race from which they sprang. In fact, the mutants seem to be actively planning the destruction of humanity. Joe's experiment with the ants could lead to the insects' eventual takeover if not restrained by the dogs.

In the fourth tale, "Desertion," the stage is set for the disappearance of the human race from the Earth. The scenario is moved off Earth to Jupiter. Attempts to colonize Jupiter have failed consistently. To withstand the dangerous climate, explorers have been changed by a matter converter into Lopers, the indigenous Jovian life form. Kent Fowler, head of Dome No. 3, Jovian Survey Commission, has sent five men into the howling maelstrom of the giant planet, but none have returned. To solve the mystery, Fowler, accompanied by his aging dog, Towser, decides to find out for himself.

On the surface of Jupiter, Fowler and Towser discover a whole new world of sensations, a whole new sense of being. Their intelligence has been augmented, and they can now communicate telepathically. The mystery of the missing men has been solved—they have deserted the human race for the good life of a Loper. Fowler and his dog cannot resist the temptation to stay, either.

"They would turn me back into a dog," said Towser.

"And me," said Fowler, "back into a man."

In the fifth tale, "Paradise," Fowler has forsaken the paradise of Jupiter to do his duty and returned to human form, leaving Towser on Jupiter. Fowler is faced with a difficult decision. Should he tell people about this Jovian Eden and risk a mass exodus from Earth? Tyler Webster, Chairman of the World Committee, opposes making the knowledge of Jupiter public, fearing the end of the human race. Fowler, however, angry at the blunders of the Websters and calling them a jinx on humanity, threatens to tell the world.

Things had been looking up for the human race before Fowler returned with his dangerous secret. There have been a thousand years of peace on the Earth, no murders have been committed for 125 years, and with the help of the dogs, the telepathic mutants have been carefully watched. Webster receives a call from Joe (still alive!), who now offers humans the Juwain philosophy. Without revealing to Webster what the mutants want, Joe explains that Juwain's philosophy provides an empathic-telepathic, quasi-mystical capability to sense the viewpoint of another person. "With Juwain's philosophy you have to accept the validity of another man's ideas and knowledge, not just the words he says, but the thought back of the words." One of

the few faults in *City* is this Juwain philosophy, a sentimental ambiguity that contrasts so sharply with the ironic tone of the rest of the story.

After Joe's call, Webster looks through a kaleidoscope he bought for his child and feels a sudden wrench. When Fowler returns to talk, Webster pleads for time, but surprisingly now, he understands Fowler's point of view—he has acquired the Juwain philosophy. Over the city, the mutants have placed a neon sign with flashing colors, the counterpart of the kaleidoscope that gave Webster the Juwain conversion. Now the whole human race has been converted, and Webster perceives the mutants' master plan to end human civilization. With the Juwain philosophy and the news about Jupiter, humankind will most certainly desert the planet. The mutants will be free to develop any kind of society they wish.

As at the beginning of the tale when Fowler was faced with the decision to reveal the Jovian paradise, Webster also must decide whether or not to kill Fowler. But Webster cannot do it—a millennium without violence has made settling an issue by killing impossible.

In these last two tales, the flight of humanity to Jupiter perpetuates the flight from the cities and is another step down in humanity's diminishing dominance as a species. Humankind has completely forsaken its formerly strong sense of destiny; its drive for progress, and has literally escaped into another plane of existence. Those who have labeled Simak a pastoral writer may be seeing pastoralism with a vengeance. The generally accepted view of pastoralism is that pastoralists encourage urban dwellers to abandon the cities for a more "natural" existence in an Edenic countryside where all anyone has to do all day is tend the sheep, dance around the Maypole, and live like Adam and Eve before the temptation. The conversion of humankind into an alien race seems a bitterly ironic reward for such human aspirations. Such irony may have led some critics like Jason Pascoe to label Simak "in general black and pessimistic."<sup>111</sup>

However, for humanity, there are blacker days to come. At the beginning of the sixth tale, "Hobbies," a thousand years have passed. Most of the human race has departed for Jupiter, except for a little colony of five thousand still living in Geneva. All of the old respected institutions have vanished with the humans: government, law, commerce, religion, and even the family. Under the influence of Juwainism, people have lost their sense of purpose, their desire for achievement, and are busy following hobbies instead of work. Jon Webster leads such a useless life, writing the history of Geneva, in despair for the human condition. His former wife, Sara, announces her intention to pursue an alternative to this boring, senseless paradise by taking the Sleep, a state of suspended animation, hoping to awake sometime in a better future. Webster's son, Tom, has returned to the woods and lives off the land.

Webster pays a visit to his ancestral home, where the dogs and Jenkins, now two thousand years old, are delighted to serve a Webster again. Jenkins brings Webster up to date. The dogs have developed psychic powers and are listening for Cobbles, fearful creatures from another dimension. (One of the dogs, Ebenezer, cures Webster's warts.) Wild robots are building machines for some unknown purpose, and the mutants are holed up in their castles. Jenkins confesses that dogs and robots need human leadership once again to build a civilization based on the brotherhood of animals.

Webster, however, no longer considers his species worthy to lead the dogs on their new path: "it must not be tainted by the stale breath of man's thinking." Before he goes into the Sleep himself for eternity, Webster activates the mechanism isolating the remnant of the human race in Geneva, giving the dogs their chance.

"Aesop," the seventh tale, leaps ahead another five thousand years. Jenkins is celebrating his 7,000th birthday, and the dogs have given him the present of a new body. Technology has been left to the wild robots. The animals, with their robot companions, have built a civilized society under the guidance of the dogs. Killing is absolutely forbidden, causing overpopulation. The wild robots are building starships, and the dogs have probed into time travel in an effort to siphon off their growing numbers. A remnant of humanity exists, known under the generic term of "websters," the descendants of Jon's son and some others caught outside when Geneva was cut off.

Jenkins tries to keep the memories of humanity's achievements and the glory of the Websters alive. However, the old human way of thought is threatening to come back. One of the websters, Peter, has killed a robin with his bow and arrow. Jenkins must solve the "bow-and-arrow" problem before killing spreads again. He seeks out the mutants for help but finds they have departed for other worlds.

The dogs are seeking ways to travel to the alternate worlds of the Cobblies to relieve the population pressure. The murderer Peter and the wolf Lupus meet one of the Cobblies. When the Cobbly kills Lupus, Peter's psychic projection of hate frightens the Cobbly back to his own world. Jenkins arrives on the scene in time to read the incantation from the Cobbly's frantic mind. Jenkins now knows what he must do. At the Webster picnic, Jenkins recites the incantation, transporting him and the whole human race into the Cobbly world, finally eradicating the human species from Earth.

The old robot, Jenkins, is the only one left with the knowledge of human values, and he has kept the myth of humanity alive only out of an ingrained sense of duty to his former masters, the Websters. Only when he at last accepts the fact that human nature will never change does he realize that the dogs have built a better society without technology and have developed other powers always latent in intelligent beings. In later stories, Simak postulated other human civilizations founded on some other basis besides technology, and psi powers were often among these possible alternatives.

"Hobbies" poses the issue candidly—is humanity worth saving? And obviously, it is not. Only a remnant of humankind remains, most human institutions are abolished, and those humans left are parasites living in Geneva off the capital of their ancestors (Simak's selection of Geneva is curious, probably because it has always been the center of international peace negotiations), and leading a boring, useless existence. Many of those remaining have already chosen a form of death-in-life, suspended animation, as much of an agent of desertion as their ancestors becoming Jovian Lopers. Jon Webster could be performing the last heroic human act by giving the dogs their chance, or perhaps he is only ending the ennui of his own worthless life and the rest of humanity.

"Aesop" finishes the human race off by sending it to an alternate universe, where, given humanity's predisposition, it could become a "boogie man" to the Cobblies. Peter Webster's rediscovery of the human instinct for killing other species completes the old robot's disillusionment and gives Jenkins an excuse to get rid of the whole cursed species, leaving the world to the nobility of the dogs. Simak imagines such an ironic and appropriate ending for the human race without the bitterness of a Swift or the bleakness of an Orwell.

The eighth and final tale of *City*, "The Simple Way," is set ten thousand years after "Hobbies" (about 13,500 A.D.). The peace of the Brotherhood of Beasts is threatened by Joe's experiment with the ants. The dogs have discovered how to travel to alternate worlds and have set up a lottery to relieve the population pressure. Homer, the leader of the dogs, visits the wild robots and hears from Andrew, a 10,000-year-old robot, the story of man and the dogs and the tale of the mutant Joe and the ants. One day Joe broke the glassite dome that covered the ants and scattered the ants with his foot. The liberated ants have erected a mighty building covering the area of a township and are obviously planning on taking over the Earth. To get help, the ants plant tiny devices resembling fleas on the animals that irresistibly summon the animals' robots to work on the building.

Jenkins returns from the alternate world to help Homer (the humans disappeared four thousand years ago). Should the dogs desert to the Cobbly worlds and leave the Earth to the ants? Jenkins goes to Geneva to seek advice from the last remaining websters. He awakens Jon Webster, but Webster's solution is typically human—poison the ants. But the dogs have no chemistry—and no art of killing for five thousand years, not even a flea.

Once more Jenkins has foolishly asked humankind for advice and the answer is—"Exterminate the brutes!" The human race knows only one solution—kill the other fellow if he stands in your way. The superior species of the Dogs, who believe in

brotherhood and despise hatred and killing, have learned to solve their problems of over population and competition from the ants by the simple non-violent expedient of moving away, also surrendering one of humanity's most cherished and fought-for values, property rights.

In a final *City* story, fittingly entitled "Epilog," written thirty years later for a John W. Campbell memorial edited by Harry Harrison, Simak returns to the Earth and the faithful robot Jenkins, who has now become almost human. When the Dogs left for the Cobbly worlds, Jenkins remained at Webster House with its memories. The ants enclosed the world with their building, but left Webster Hill and its adjoining five acres untouched. Jenkins spies a crack in the ants' building. He investigates and finds the ants have all gone. Nothing is left inside the ants' colossal edifice but monstrous anthills, and on top of each anthill a strange ornamental cast in the form of a kicking foot.

The Earth is lonely and without living things except for Jenkins and some meadow mice. As Jenkins is speculating on the fate of the ants, a starship lands. The old robot Andrew steps out. Andrew invites Jenkins to go with him to the stars, where he can be of service again. Sadly, Jenkins leaves, but he cannot forget nor can he say goodbye. "If he could only weep, he thought, but a robot cannot weep."

Like most of Simak's serious work, *City* is saved from the label of "doomsday" literature by its lighter touch. All turns out right in the end. The human race does not really destroy itself, nor does Simak permit the loss of intelligent life on Earth. Humanity is merely shuffled off to a new world, a new frontier where perhaps human ambition and the inevitable human "cussedness" could begin all over again.

From the time Simak wrote the original stories in the forties and the first publication of *City*, he had time to reflect upon his reasons for writing *City*. He later saw *City* as a fictional "counterbalance to the brutality through which the world was passing," a response to the fear and anxiety generated by the hydrogen bomb, and an expression, in Simak's gentle way, of his disgust at humanity's misuse of its gifts.

But there were other ways of nudging the human conscience, and what better way than by interference from outside? The national UFO craze to see aliens in every meteor shower, and the bad treatment of aliens by the monster movies, excited Simak's compassion for a new underdog, the alien visitor. Who would be better suited to get humankind back on the track than our, unseen neighbors, the aliens among us?

## NOTES

i. Clareson, 75.

ii. The dedication of *City* is to Simak's beloved Scottish terrier, Scootie, who is Nathaniel.

iii. Jason Pascoe, "Clifford Simak: The Compassionate Universe." *Winding Numbers*, No. 2, Summer 1977: 22-23

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 CGOS = *The Civilisation Game and Other Stories*  
 City = *City*  
 COS = *The Creator and Other Stories*  
 IOS = *Immigrant and Other Stories*  
 MPOS = *The Marathon Photograph and Other Stories*  
 OP = *Off-Planet*  
 OtR = *Over the River and through the Woods*  
 OWoCS = *Other Worlds of Clifford Simak*  
 SBtV = *So Bright the Vision*  
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- Physician to the Universe  
*Fantastic Stories*, March 1963
- New Folks' Home  
*Analog*, July 1963  
 BSFS
- Worlds without End  
 WWE
- Over the River and through the Woods  
 also appears in the same issue as a graphic story,  
*Amazing*, May 1965  
 BOS, OtR  
 Also appears as a graphic story, in  
*The Bank Street Book of Science Fiction*, ed.  
 Howard Zimmerman, Seymour Reit & Barbara  
 Brenner, Pocket, 1989; adapted by Byron Gohr,  
 illustrated by Evan Dorkin.  
**Nebula nominee (short story)**
- Small Deer  
*Galaxy*, October 1965  
 IOS
- Buckets of Diamonds  
*Galaxy*, April 1969  
 CGOS
- I Am Crying All Inside  
*Galaxy*, August 1969  
 IOS
- The Thing in the Stone  
*If*, March 1970  
 COS, SK  
**Hugo and Nebula nominee (novella)**
- The Autumn Land  
*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*,  
 October 1971  
 ALOS, SK  
**Hugo nominee (short story)**
- The Observer  
*Analog*, May 1972  
 OP
- To Walk a City's Street  
*Infinity 3*, Robert Hoskins, ed. Lancer, 1972
- Construction Shack  
*Worlds of If*, January/February 1973  
 OP, OtR  
**Hugo nominee (short story)**
- Epilog  
*Astounding Science Fiction*, ed. Harry Harrison, Random,  
 1973  
*City, Ace*, 1981
- The Birch Clump Cylinder  
*Stellar #1*, ed. Judy-Lynn del Rey, Ballantine, 1974  
 MPOS
- The Marathon Photograph  
*Threads of Time*, ed. Robert Silverberg, Nelson, 1974  
 MPOS
- Univac: 2200  
*Frontiers 1: Tomorrow's Alternatives*, Roger Elwood, ed.  
 Collier, 1974
- The Ghost of a Model T  
*Epoch*, ed. Roger Elwood & Robert Silverberg, Berkley,  
 1975  
 IOS, SK
- Senior Citizen  
*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science  
 Fiction*, October 1975

Simak  
 Bibliography

- Unsilent Spring (with Richard S. Simak)  
*Stellar* #2, ed. Judy-Lynn del Rey, Ballantine, 1976
- Auk House  
*Stellar* #3, ed. Judy-Lynn del Rey, Ballantine, 1977  
 BOS
- Brother  
*The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, October 1977  
 BOS
- Party Line  
*Destinies*, November 1978  
 COS
- Grotto of the Dancing Deer  
*Analog*, April 1980  
 MPOS, OtR  
*Hugo, Nebula, and Locus winner (short story)*
- The Whistling Well  
*Dark Forces*, ed. Kirby McCauley, Viking, 1980  
 MPOS
- Byte Your Tongue!  
*Stellar* #6, ed. Judy-Lynn del Rey, Ballantine, 1981  
 IOS
- I Had No Head and My Eyes Were Floating Way up in the Air  
*The Last Dangerous Visions*, Harlan Ellison, ed.  
 Unpublished.

## Book-Length Nonfiction

- The Solar System, Our New Front Yard*  
 St. Martin's Press, 1962
- Trilobite, Dinosaur, and Man: The Earth's Story*  
 St. Martin's Press, 1966
- Wonder and Glory: The Story of the Universe*  
 St. Martin's Press, 1969
- Prehistoric Man*  
 St. Martin's Press, 1971
- Clifford D. Simak, ed. *The March of Science*  
 Harper & Row, 1971  
 Articles by William H. Marshall and others, published between 1965 and 1969 in the *Minneapolis Tribune's* science reading series

## Articles, Essays, and Other Nonfiction

- Introduction  
 Clifford D. Simak, ed. *Nebula Award Stories 6*, Doubleday, 1971

- Foreword  
 Roger Elwood, ed. *Future City*, Trident, 1973
- Introduction  
*The Best of Clifford D. Simak*, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1975
- Foreword  
*Skirmish*, Berkley/Putnam, 1977
- The City Series  
 Frederik Pohl, Martin H. Greenberg & Joseph D. Olander, eds. *The Great Science Fiction Series*, 1980
- Author's Note  
*City, Ace*, 1981
- Memoir  
 Frederik Pohl, Martin H. Greenberg & Joseph D. Olander, eds. *Worlds of If: A Retrospective Anthology*, Bluejay, 1986
- Author's Foreword  
 Ben Bova, Robert Hale, eds. *The Best of the Nebulas*, 1990

## Miscellaneous

- Clifford D. Simak Reads from His City: Aesop*  
 Long-playing record, Caedmon, 1980  
 Notes by Simak on the sleeve
- Clifford D. Simak & Felix Pollak*  
 Cassette tape, New Letters Magazine, 1984  
 The first half of the program consists of an interview with Clifford D. Simak and readings from his science fiction work.  
 In the second half Felix Pollak reads a number of his poems.

## Interviews

- Clifford D. Simak: Interview  
 Paul Walker. *Speaking of Science Fiction: The Paul Walker Interviews*, LUNA Publications, 1978

## Critical Studies

- Muriel R. Becker. *Clifford D. Simak: A Primary and Secondary Bibliography*  
 G. K. Hall, 1980
- Phil Stephensen-Payne. *Clifford D. Simak: A Working Bibliography*  
 Galactic Central Publications, 1991

# The Committee

**Ellen Brody** is the avatar of synchronicity.

**Julianne Chatelain** is regretfully taking a sabbatical from helping with Readercon this year. You can read about it at <http://world.std.com/~jchat/>.

After twenty years of programming, Readercon founder (and co-chair for this year) **Bob Colby** is adjusting to life as an ex-professional. That's theater five, all the way to the rear, enjoy the show!

**Richard Duffy**, though not quite as fossilized as a horned ceratopsid, dates back at least as far as the dawn of the Readercon era. Having been sucked into its committee right after the first convention in 1987, he has only in the last few years been able to attend a decent amount of the program, and finds it so interesting that he's sticking around to stay involved in the process of putting it together. Some people are simply incorrigible.

**George Flynn** proofreads and copyedits for NESFA Press, Haffner Press, and anybody else who asks, fortunately including the Real World. As usual, he is also on too damn many con committees.

While procrastinating about her duties as this year's co-chair, **Merryl Gross** spends time designing software user interfaces and being mean to anyone who doesn't consider usability a high priority in any project. She also spends much too much time playing in various virtual worlds—in books, on computers, and in a room with her friends. Please let her know how you think the con is going, if you get a chance.

Fleeing the country didn't get **Shoshanna Green** out of working on this year's Readercon, but she's not actually too sorry about that.

In the last year, **Bob Ingria** has gone from being a Lexemist to being a LingoMotorist. He has also moved from Cambridge to Somerville. But he still finds himself waiting for the electrician (or someone like him). And he is still looking for the door into summer. Liile ja lailee, allalee ja lailee!

**Diane Kurilecz** likes to feed people but doesn't have room for them all at her house. We let her vent her frustrated culinary tendencies in the Readercon con suite. She has grand plans for her website, and had better get going on it now that she's published the address. She has a house in Cary, North Carolina, and earns the mortgage money working as a migrant programmer.

**B. Diane Martin** still lives with two Shaw men and continues to marvel at the maturity of one and the childishness of the other. However, she has recently been seen cavorting in her son's ball pit—the photos are being held as evidence.

**Mike Matthew** got involved with organized fandom fairly late, and was delighted to learn how much fun it is. He is still convinced that one meets the nicest people at Readercon.



**Lois Powers** is currently raising twenty million dollars so as to become the first female space tourist to the International Space Station. The change jar next to her computer yielded \$9.70; the jar on top of the refrigerator, \$4.35; her jeans pocket, \$11.00; and the windowsill next to the dryer, \$1.07. Might the Russians take plastic?

**David G. Shaw** is catching up on his reading.

**Miles Martin Shaw** probably met you at Readercon 11 or 12. He's so interested in books that even at the tender age of two years he has been seen reading his parents' copy of *NYRSF*.

**Nevenah Smith** has left New York for a life of (mostly) gafia among the magnolias and alligators of New Orleans, where she can be found second-lining at Tipitina's, eating crawfish, and amassing an enormous collection of Mardi Gras beads.

**Eric Van** is working on (in no particular order, and ain't that the truth) a comprehensive theory of the nature of consciousness and free will, several technical analyses for the *Baseball Research Journal* (including a possibly superior metric for measuring offense), a Protocol Harum song cycle for Boston Rock Opera, staying fixed in circadian time, a novel called *Imaginary* and several stories, some wild speculations about hidden variables in quantum theory, an informal daily online record of Jimmy Williams' stupidity, the prerequisites for a Ph.D. in psychology, a sequence for Brian Wilson's *Smile*, articles on Philip K. Dick and Gene Wolfe for *The New York Review of Science Fiction*, a paradigm mapping the chief brain chemicals to fundamental brain parameters and hence to personality traits, a series of articles on great obscure musical acts for *Crawdaddy*, unpacking several thousand books, a secret plan to get Red Sox tickets, and Readercons 13 and 14.

**David Walrath** spends most of his spare time traveling to the eighteenth century, but spends some time working on Readercon, his house, and corrupting children and one small monkey ([www.helpinghandsmonkeys.org](http://www.helpinghandsmonkeys.org)).

By the time you read this, **Amy West** will have finally received her master's in medieval studies from UConn, after a hiatus of seven years. Other than finishing her degree, taking care of **Nicholas** and **Alexander Wurst**, and doing whatever work she can squeeze in on the side, she has done little else this year. Especially for Readercon.

**Nicholas K. Wurst** attended his first Readercon at the tender age of six weeks. His primary committee responsibility is to share his Legos with Eric Van at meetings.

The following committee members are being held at an undisclosed location, awaiting deportation:  
**Adina Adler, Anita Roy Dobbs, Sheila Lightsey, Kathei Logue, Susan Murosako, Karl R. Wurst.**



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