



party and they wanted local psychics to attend. And it gave the time and place. Now my question is, why bother telling the time and place? Won't that just attract people who are not real psychics? If they are genuine psychics, won't they already know the time and place? In fact, why bother to announce the party at

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all? Why not just buy the goodies and set up and wait for the psychics to arrive? Shouldn't the real psychics know about the party without being told?

We went to the Renaissance Faire in Tuxedo, New York, and New Age people were there in force. They had stands selling New Age books, they were selling crystals, they were reading palms and tarot, and in general they were just having a high old time. Literally an old time. So if "New Age" is so new, why does it fit so well with medieval things? Well, because "New Age" is really a return to age-old superstitions. A more accurate name would be "Recycled Age."

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The tendencies of democracies are, in all things,  
to mediocrity, since the tastes, knowledge, and  
principles of the majority form the tribunal of opinion.

-- James Fenimore Cooper



films as well. (By the way, the feeling is that what killed T\_h\_e  
Y\_o\_u\_n\_g\_I\_n\_d\_i\_a\_n\_a\_J\_o\_n\_e\_s\_C\_h\_r\_o\_n\_i\_c\_l\_e\_s was not its "academic" nature, but  
the fact that it never had a consistent time slot or schedule. I  
enjoyed watching it--when I could find the damn thing.)

Even though the panelists liked special effects (and Brenneis,  
at least, is involved in producing them), they agreed that special  
effects are not the meat of films. The analogy I used was that  
special effects are like the rides at an amusement park: there's  
nothing wrong with them, but they shouldn't replace libraries.

Too many films rely entirely on special effects and want to use  
everything available. This gives them a look not unlike the flyers  
and fanzines one sees done on PCs by beginning "publishers" which  
use every font available and look like ransom notes. Now that  
\$10,000 can get someone started in the special effects business with  
the "video toaster" everyone wants more special effects. And with  
outlets such as MTV for special effects people (and others) to  
experiment with different techniques without risking a large-budget  
film, we will start to see more varied effects. (This is not unlike  
what was observed in the "Short Story" panel, where it was pointed  
out that authors can experiment more freely in a short story than a  
novel, because the time investment is less.)

Of course, the computerization of special effects and animation  
has led to an interesting rip-off. Those animation cels that are  
sold in dealers rooms and shops at Disneyworld and other places for  
recent films such as B\_e\_a\_u\_t\_y\_a\_n\_d\_t\_h\_e\_B\_e\_a\_s\_t are produced (according to  
Brenneis) solely for those markets. No one does animation cels for  
the actual production of an animated film anymore.

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And the fact that special effects are taking over (or appear to  
be) is due in large part to the audiences. As big a flop as L\_a\_s\_t  
A\_c\_t\_i\_o\_n\_H\_e\_r\_o was reputed to be and as successful A\_R\_o\_o\_m\_w\_i\_t\_h\_a\_V\_i\_e\_w  
was reported to be, the fact remains that many more people went to  
see L\_a\_s\_t\_A\_c\_t\_i\_o\_n\_H\_e\_r\_o than A\_R\_o\_o\_m\_w\_i\_t\_h\_a\_V\_i\_e\_w.

One audience member felt that people continued to see special  
effects films in theatres because theatres provided the "total movie  
experience." Perhaps, but all too often the "total movie

experience" includes sticky floors and rowdy audiences. One good reason to see films like A\_R\_o\_o\_m\_w\_i\_t\_h\_a\_V\_i\_e\_w is that the etiquette of the audience tends to be much higher than that of the audience at L\_a\_s\_t\_A\_c\_t\_i\_o\_n\_H\_e\_r\_o.

(J. Michael Straczynski had been scheduled for this panel, but he had also been scheduled for a presentation immediately preceding this and got detained there. In general, conventions should not schedule people on back-to-back panels, especially if they are likely to find themselves involved in a lot of questions afterward.)

MMMMaaaassssqqquuuueeeerrrraaaadddeeee  
Saturday, 8:00 PM

As I noted earlier, there was a 2000-person limit on attendees. We waited in line from 7:30 PM to 8:15 PM to get in, and were somewhere around #1500. One good thing was that they were counting the line so that once it reached 2000 people, they could tell late-comers not to waste time standing in line. They also announced how many places/seats a person could save in line, saving embarrassing incidents (although 4 seats per person in line seems a bit high to me). The VIP seating was not announced ahead of time, which probably should be done if there are in fact seats set aside.

There were fifty costumes. The N\_o\_r\_t\_o\_n\_R\_e\_a\_d\_e\_r (the daily newsletter) the next day listed forty-six awards. The costumes were almost uniformly (no pun intended) excellent, but that's far too many awards. With that many, they're more certificates of participation. I would suggest perhaps first and second place in each category (Novice, Journeyman, and Master), first and second place workmanship in each category (Novice, Journeyman, and Master), and Best of Show. Caveat: I am not a costumer. If you are, your mileage may vary.

There were also a few costumes listed as original that I would have described as "re-creations": "The Wedding" (based on the Charles Addams cartoon characters), "Vulcan Barbarian," and "Klingon Ceremonial" (both from S\_t\_a\_r\_T\_r\_e\_k).

It was also unnecessary to have a fifteen-minute intermission (which of course stretched to a half-hour) for only fifty costumes. Having the Moscone Center lights randomly cycle on and off during the second half was interesting, but not actually desirable.

After the first run-through, there was supposed to be a videophone hook-up with Arthur C. Clarke in Sri Lanka, but this was preceded by a couple of short films and a lot of waiting. Eventually we left before it was finished. I heard that the final judging and awards ceremony wasn't done until after 2 AM!

My basic suggestions for the Masquerade would be: big enough room, theater seating, entries limited to around fifty, no intermission during the first run-through, fewer awards, and faster awards.

Panel: NNNNoooorrrrtttthhhheeeerrrrnnnn CCCCaallllliiiiffffooooorrrrrnnnniiiiiaaaa iiiinnnn  
SSSSFFFF///FFFF

Sunday, 10 AM

David Bratman (m), Don Herron, Pat Murphy, Diana L. Paxson

"The where and why of using real world locations in speculative fiction, with examples drawn from the world right outside the convention's doors": I arrived a little late to this, and missed the beginning, but Paxson was comparing using northern California to using Britain as an inspiration. In Britain, she said, there are a lot of structures, ancient and not so ancient, that can be used, and northern California lacks those. But northern California does have legends, and those can take the place of buildings. One of the stories set in the area that she talked about was Ursula K. LeGuin's A\_l\_w\_a\_y\_s\_C\_o\_m\_i\_n\_g\_H\_o\_m\_e, set in the Napa Valley in the far future after an earthquake has changed the contours of the land. To get the geography right, LeGuin had a cartographer friend of hers (George Hirsch) construct a three dimensional map of the area, then tilt the appropriate sections and flood it with water to see what the new shapes of the bodies of land and water would look like.

Many authors have used San Francisco as a setting. But do they really have that "sense of place" that is so important? Philip K. Dick had it in M\_a\_r\_t\_i\_a\_n\_T\_i\_m\_e-S\_l\_i\_p and other stories, according to the panelists, but Dean R. Koontz's S\_h\_a\_t\_t\_e\_r\_e\_d (written under the pen name K. R. Dwyer) made it obvious that Koontz had never been in San Francisco. T\_h\_e\_N\_e\_t by Loren J. MacGregor did a good job of describing the bars south of Market Street. Perhaps the classic use of San Francisco in science fiction/fantasy is Fritz Leiber's O\_u\_r\_L\_a\_d\_y\_o\_f\_D\_a\_r\_k\_n\_e\_s\_s, though Pat Murphy's own T\_h\_e\_C\_i\_t\_y,\_N\_o\_t\_L\_o\_n\_g\_A\_f\_t\_e\_r certainly ranks up there.

Regarding her work, Murphy said that her work in the Exploratorium trained her to observe and "see beyond the surface," and that is what lets her see the potentials of settings. Someone

apparently mapped out all the places mentioned in T\_h\_e\_C\_i\_t\_y,\_N\_o\_t\_L\_o\_n\_g

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A\_f\_t\_e\_r, though Murphy says that the map would probably be a disappointment to try to follow; for example, the vacant lot where the refrigerator sculpture is in the book has no such sculpture in real life (yet!). Regarding this, one of the joys I find is walking around a new place and finding the settings that were described in literature or even other travelogues. And I am not alone--when we were on a boat of about ninety passengers in the Galapagos Islands a few years ago, at least five of us were reading G\_a\_l\_a\_p\_a\_g\_o\_s by Kurt Vonnegut. Murphy also warned that she and other authors often change some details (such as house numbers) to protect the people who live in the houses. You can claim that room 1247 of the Marriott is haunted--it's a public building and "fair game." But if you claim that 1726 Fairlawn Drive is haunted, the people who live there may not like the reputation their house gets. (Does the name "Amityville" ring a bell?)

And of course this sort of desire has spawned the "literary tour" movement, which has two subcategories: tours that visit places mentioned in books, and tours that visit places connected with the authors of these books. Some tours combine both, perhaps showing you where Dashiell Hammett lived and also the places he wrote about. The places connected with authors are often a disappointment--someone said that you go to some house where a famous author wrote his first novel, and you discover that it's being inhabited now by a Vietnamese family who can't understand why you are standing on the street taking pictures of their house. (It's sort of like going back to your childhood home years later. People think you're casing the joint.)

Panel: T T T Th h h he e e e

H H H Ho o o ol l l lo o o oc c c ca a a au u u us s s st t t ti i i in n n n  
F F F F & & & S S S SF F F F

Sunday, 11:00 AM

Eve Ackerman (m), Esther M. Friesner, Lisa Goldstein, David M. Honigsberg

"Does SF/F serve as a useful forum to discuss the Holocaust?":  
Well, the first question asked was whether you can write about the

Holocaust in fantasy or science fiction without trivializing it. Elie Wiesel has claimed that any fiction about it will trivialize it, but Friesner said any fiction about it will keep it alive, and that's important. (The actor Robert Clary, a Holocaust survivor, had also said that it is up to people to make sure it is known that it happened.) As for using science fiction or fantasy, others thought that maybe you needed to approach the Holocaust through metaphor (as in M\_a\_u\_s) rather than head-on. (This sounded liked Connie Willis's comment on the "Time Travel" panel about using time travel to look at something with peripheral vision. Similarly, someone said that even though we know what's going on in Bosnia, we can't quite grasp it in the present and will only understand it in retrospect.) Goldstein thought fantasy had a particular virtue to bring to a story about the Holocaust, because "fantasy deals with archetypes and deep emotion and can get to places realistic fiction

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can't." Fiction about the Holocaust tends to be somewhat unpopular, panelists said, because people want to be comforted, not disturbed, but Honigsberg said that "fantasy and science fiction readers have a greater capacity for reading disturbing works."

Ackerman said that in her classes she used T\_h\_e\_D\_e\_v\_i'l's\_A\_r\_i\_t\_h\_m\_e\_t\_i\_c by Jane Yolen to teach teenagers about the Holocaust. She said that it helps American teenagers to connect with that period and those events. The "traditional" book, T\_h\_e\_D\_i\_a\_r\_y\_o\_f\_A\_n\_n\_e\_F\_r\_a\_n\_k, doesn't work as well, because it doesn't have any characters like American teenagers today--American teenagers just don't identify with Anne Frank. Outstanding writers can make events personal to the reader, and that is what is important. Can a writer who has no personal connection write a Holocaust book? Well, at Boskone, Jane Yolen said she would not want to see a situation where only Jews could write about Jews, only blacks could write about blacks, and so on, in part because if that is the case, then you can never have a book that includes people from many groups. What people seem to forget, she continued, was that writers c\_r\_e\_a\_t\_e. That's what writing is about. Writers are s\_u\_p\_p\_o\_s\_e\_d to be able to write characters other than themselves. Shakespeare may or may not have been Francis Bacon, but he was not a Jew a\_n\_d a Moor a\_n\_d a teenage girl a\_n\_d a Danish prince a\_n\_d an aging king .... And here Friesner also pointed out that a writer needs to be able to write



about people other than herself or himself.

Members of the audience noted that there have been other holocausts. (I was surprised no one had mentioned Jane Yolen's other Holocaust book, B\_r\_i\_a\_r\_R\_o\_s\_e, notable for showing other victims of the Nazis besides Jews. One of the main characters, for example, is a gay Holocaust survivor.) In addition to the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis, there have been holocausts in Cambodia and other parts of the world. T\_h\_e\_U\_n\_c\_o\_n\_q\_u\_e\_r\_e\_d\_C\_o\_u\_n\_t\_r\_y by Geoff Ryman is an allegory for the Pol Pot era in Cambodia, but on the whole these have been overlooked by science fiction and fantasy writers. (Someone else mentioned Y\_e\_a\_r\_0 as a good non-fiction book about Cambodia. Though I am reasonably sure that's the correct title, I couldn't find it listed in B\_o\_o\_k\_s\_i\_n\_P\_r\_i\_n\_t.)

Honigsberg decried the trend toward books about "Nazi vampires," feeling that they take the blame off human beings. He felt that one of the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust was "the banality of evil." Perhaps, but the message can also be read that the monsters we invent and the evils we attribute to them are no worse than ourselves and the evils we do. It's all in how it's written, and in whether the reader can make that jump in understanding. The book P\_a\_r\_i\_s\_T\_r\_o\_u\_t by Pete Dexter was given as a work that studied the matter-of-factness of an evil person.

Friesner said that to some extent people had foreseen the possibility of the Holocaust. Jerome K. Jerome at the turn of the

century said that "the German people will follow anything in a uniform," and that this was fine if they had a good leader, but what if they got a bad one? Other people, however, then reminded us that it was important in all this to talk about or show individuals, not "the Nazis" or "the Germans," or we are guilty of the same faults.

People were also looking for something that could explain why or how the Holocaust happened. (This is equally true outside of science fiction and fantasy, of course.) There have been some studies done on this. One was the "Milgram Experiment" in which subjects were asked to inflict an electric shock on a person in an

isolation booth who couldn't see them. (Unknown to the subject, the person in the isolation booth was actually one of the team administering the test, and there was no electricity flowing in the wires, but the "victim" would simulate a reaction when the subject pressed the button.) The subject had a dial that could set the intensity of the shock and was told that a maximum-intensity shock would kill the "victim." Even so, a surprising number of subjects would follow the instructions given them by the tester to increase the intensity, regardless of the screams of the "victim" and regardless of the warnings given them ahead of time, even up to inflicting the maximum intensity. The conclusion of the testers was that people are conditioned from early childhood to follow instructions, particularly instructions given them by someone in authority (including people in white lab coats), and this often over-ride any "common-sense" morality they might feel. There was also an experiment in a high school in which some of the students were formed into an "elite" group and were indoctrinated as to their "superiority" to the other students. This experiment was ended ahead of schedule when it got out of hand, with the elite students beating up some of the other students who didn't show them the "proper respect."

There have also been studies about why some places fought against the Holocaust. The film W\_e\_a\_p\_o\_n\_s\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_S\_p\_i\_r\_i\_t is about the village of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in France, which hid as many as five thousand Jews during the Holocaust (and its population was only about five thousand!). The Italians also were more protective of their Jews than other countries. On the other hand, the United States turned away the ship St. Louis, full of Jewish refugees who could find no country to take them in and which eventually returned to Germany, where most of its passengers perished.

Other books recommended included Janet Gluckman and George Guthridge's C\_h\_i\_l\_d\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_L\_i\_g\_h\_t, Steve Lipman's L\_a\_u\_g\_h\_t\_e\_r\_i\_n\_H\_e\_l\_l:T\_h\_e  
U\_s\_e\_o\_f\_H\_u\_m\_o\_r\_d\_u\_r\_i\_n\_g\_t\_h\_e  
H\_o\_l\_o\_c\_a\_u\_s\_t (about the use of humor during the Holocaust as a means of fighting back) and Thomas Keneally's S\_c\_h\_i\_n\_d\_l\_e\_r'\_s\_L\_i\_s\_t (based on the true story of an industrialist who saved many Jews by concealing them on the employment rolls of his factory).

(In addition to being an interesting panel, this was also when we ran into Chuck Belov, Mark's distant cousin and about the only other member of his family in fandom.)

L L L Le e e ec c c ct t t tu u u ur r r re e e e: : :  
 " " " "M M M My y y yF F F Fe e e el l l ll l l lo o o ow w w w  
 S S S Sa a a av v v va a a ag g g ge e e es s s so o o of f f f  
 t t t th h h he e e eS S S Sa a a an n n nd d d dw w w wi i i ic c c ch h h h  
 I I I Is s s sl l l la a a an n n nd d d ds s s s" " " "

Sunday, 12 noon  
 Mark Twain

"Mark Twain was famous not only for his writing, but for his tour on the lecture circuit. Come see him give his most popular speech 'in the flesh': This was in many ways the easiest for Mr. Twain of all his appearances. All he had to do was prepare a two-hour speech and deliver it. (I missed the second hour, so it's possible he had a question-and-answer period.) Compiled from the best of Twain's speeches and writings, it was enormously entertaining, but I will not attempt to relate large sections of it.

One representative quote I noted down was his observation that "chamomile tea has nothing on the \_ C\_ o\_ n\_ g\_ r\_ e\_ s\_ s\_ i\_ o\_ n\_ a\_ l

\_ R\_ e\_ c\_ o\_ r\_ d for restfulness." For the rest, ... well, go read all the Mark Twain you can lay your hands on. (If someone videotaped this, let me know if there's some way to get a copy.)

H H H Ho o o og g g gu u u u  
 R R R Ra a a an n n nq q q qu u u ue e e et t t t  
 Sunday, 1:00 PM

It's hard to explain the Hogue. Originally the "Hogu Ranquet" was designed by Elliot (Elst) Weinstein as an alternative to the "Hugo Banquet." As conventions got larger, the notion of combining the Hugo Awards ceremony with a banquet lost favor--it was simply impossible to seat anywhere near the number of interested people banquet-style. But the Ranquet continues, held at a McDonald's (or comparable restaurant if a McDonald's is not available). The awards are honestly bought: to get something on the ballot, you send in money with your nomination; to vote for something costs you a dollar a vote. (Most awards, however, were granted by acclamation, with no vote-buying needed.)

Since I was nominated in one category I felt obliged to attend. It was a lot of fun, even though I had to miss the second half of Mark Twain's speech and another panel. Whether I would go every year is not clear; it depends on its competition. It did give me a chance to eat lunch--a rare event for this convention.

And the awards were:

- The DeRoach Award: given for putridity in every day life, inspired by Edward DeLoach, LA City worker who held his testimonial dinner at McDonald's: Barney the Dinosaur
- The Aristotle Award: commemorating the Greek Tycoon, Aristotle O. Nessus, the elusive founder of putridity and the originator of the phrase, "Ook Ook Slobber Drool!" For Grand Master

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- Lifetime Achievement in Putridity: Geraldo Rivera
- Best New Feud: Starting 1992 or later to qualify. Tag Team Action: Carrier vs. Sacks vs. ConFrancisco (write-in)
- Best New Feud: Starting 1992 or later to qualify. Singles Action: Boston in '98 vs. Boston in '01 (write-in)
- Best Traumatic Presentation: Neverending Masquerade Part Deux (write-in)
- Best Religious Hoax: "Pro-Lifers" Who Kill Doctors and the Priests Who Love Them
- Best Hoax Awards: ConFrancisco Hogu Nominations (write-in)
- Best Type Face: ConFrancisco Dingbats
- Best Professional Hoax: Hoaxing as a profession: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms
- Fandom's Biggest Turkey: Chris Carrier (write-in)
- Worst Fanzine Title: No Award
- Best Dead Writer: Must be living to qualify: The Battlecrock Galactica Award: William Shatner
- Best Hoax Convention: I-95 in '95
- Best Pseudonym: Noah Ward
- Devo Award: To who has done the most to HARM science fiction: William Shatner (write-in)
- Best Has-Been: (Deposed Dictator's Award): Chief Daryl Gates
- Best Fan Hoax: Any and all New York Worldcon bids (write-in)
- Cusinart Award: (Worst Editing TV, Movies, Fiction, etc.):  
\_ M \_ y \_ s \_ t \_ e \_ r \_ y \_ S \_ c \_ i \_ e \_ n \_ c \_ e \_ T \_ h \_ e \_ a \_ t \_ e \_ r \_ 3 \_ 0 \_ 0 \_ 0
- Special Grand Bastard Award: Bill Gates (write-in)
- Most Desired Gafiation: Winner to get Mid-Atlantic Fan Fund (MAFF): Chris Carrier
- Free for All: "Impeach Clinton, and Her Husband, Too!"
- Special Bagelbash Award: Poultry Geist
- Best New Disease: Con Chair Sudden Death Syndrome (a.k.a. Bid Death)

- Most Bizarre Hall Costume: Real or Imagined: Miss Catonic
- Best Alien Music Video: Koresh Family Singers, "We Didn't Start the Fire" (write-in)
- Mixed Media: The Amy Fisher Story--Times 3
- Closest Encounter of the Third Kind: Gay Elves in Bondage
- Space Geek of the Year Award: Evelyn C. Leeper
- Traffic Jams, Jellies, & Preserves Award: Parc 55 Elevators
- Banger Award: (Most Inappropriate Con Guest of Honor): Robert Socks Clinton
- Most Erotic Line from \_ S \_ t \_ a \_ r \_ T \_ r \_ e \_ k : \_ D \_ e \_ e \_ p \_ S \_ i \_ x \_ N \_ i \_ n \_ e :

"The spots

don't go all the way down, Julian."

For "Space Geek of the Year" I beat Dan Quayle, Admiral Stockdale, and Steve Urkel. Part of this was no doubt due to heavy campaigning on the part of Matthew Tepper for me--I wonder why?

Also awarded were the Blackhole Awards:

- Standard Blackhole: Jesse Helms, Rush Limbaugh, Pat Robertson,

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Prince Charles

- Invisibility Award: For conspicuous absence: Mars Observer (write-in)
- Incompetence Award: Political Refuse Award: Janet Reno and ATF
- Publisher's Award: Bridge Publications
- Greed Award: Creation Cons
- Half-Assed Con Officiousness: The "Connie" Award: ConFiasco
- Brown Hole Award for Outstanding Professionalism: Chris Carrier

It was decided to have a filksong category, which would always be awarded "the \_ n \_ e \_ x \_ t year."

"Hogu Nominee" ribbons were given to all the attendees, courtesy of the ConFrancisco committee. It seems someone suggested to the committee that among all the ribbons they print, they should include "Hogu Nominee" ribbons as a joke and sell them for fifty cents each. Whoever heard this didn't realize that there really \_ w \_ a \_ s such a thing as a Hogu (even though Weinstein had received a special Committee Award from Chicon V in 1991 for creating them), and it was

only after Weinstein saw a bunch of people wearing the ribbons that he found out what was going on. At that point he went to the committee to protest and someone who knew what a Hugu was stopped the sales and gave him the entire remaining stock of ribbons.

(Note in passing: I wasn't at the WSFS Business Meeting, but clearly Chris Carrier managed to annoy a \_ l\_ o\_ t of people to get elected in \_ f\_ o\_ u\_ r negative categories.)

Panel: G G G Ge e e et t t tt t t ti i i in n n ng g g g  
A A A Ar r r ro o o ou u u un n n nd d d dt t t th h h he e e e  
S S S So o o ol l l la a a ar r r r S S S Sy y y ys s s st t t te e e em m m m

Sunday, 2:00 PM

Jim Baen, Suzanne Casement, William S. Higgins,  
Gentry Lee, Jonathan V. Post (m)  
[written by Mark R. Leeper]

The panel started with the members introducing themselves. Gentry Lee was director of scientific analysis on the Viking Mission and a co-author with Arthur C. Clarke. Bill Higgins is from Fermi Labs. (Personal note: He also put together the science program at Chicon which in my humble opinion was the best at any Worldcon I have ever attended.) Jon Post works on research into nano-technology, worked on the Magellan space mission and also Voyager 2. Suzanne Casement is a graduate student at UCLA. (In general Lee is more an advocate of unmanned robotic information-gathering missions. Higgins, active in the National Space Society, wants man to become a space-faring race and would much rather see manned missions than mechanical proxies.)

Post suggested that the first half of the discussion concentrate on what is currently being done in space and what will be done for the next thirty to fifty years. Later they would get to longer term. Lee thought that on the short term the emphasis would

be on unmanned missions mostly. Manned missions would be mostly be "Antarctica-type" colonies. With robots we can do a lot more. Decisions have to be made who will pay for space exploration where are we going to go. The Challenger disaster was a real tragedy for the program and now engineering foul-ups, like on the recent Mars

mission are making things worse for funding. The Mars Observer was an important lynch-pin and would lead to a lot of future planning. Losing it will cause a huge problem in deciding on new missions needed. We are now going for smaller craft that will have smaller ranges.

Post asked what major changes did members see coming. Higgins said there will be more of a push from the NSS to make hardware that is small and smart. He suggested that there would also be a look at other methods of propulsion. We still seem to be using the same old chemical propulsion rockets and we are nowhere near trying some other propulsion. He expanded on the National Space Society's position saying that they are working to create a space-faring civilization and that they will really push for anything that will forward that goal. Particularly favored are plans to do prospecting on the moon and asteroids. However, the NSS is not particularly pushing for the missions to map Venus since it seems unlikely that Venus will be a near-term source of resources.

Casement said that in November a wide-field camera will be put in the shuttle for the Hubble telescope. It will be used to look at the planets and design missions. However the problem with the Hubble is that its designs were frozen about ten years ago in order to be able to build it and it would be much more effective with up-to-date technology. From there the discussion moved to Post's work experiences. He talked about his work on the Titan 34D. They worked to improve designs on that. His group made basic improvements to the shuttle like using multicolor displays. They also worked on error detection to predict component failure. Among the things that he worked on were a proposal for advanced launch systems including single-stage to orbit. One scheme he proposed included using a huge ground-based laser to power a craft. However, he feels that even if there is research into other propulsions, it will be a long time before rockets have much competition for sending things into orbit. He did discuss using solar sails once equipment is in space. Also he said he had invented a magnetic sail using magnetic field to push huge loop of wire. One of the long-term proposals was to build a craft out of solid hydrogen, cryogenically frozen, so that when it gets to its destination the entire structure could be used as fuel. If there is ice at Mercury's poles, he suggests that we purify the water and use the poles as a fuel depot near the sun.

Lee considered all the possibilities and said we are in a sort of Burgess Shale point in technology. In the period of the Burgess Shale being formed there were many and very diverse life-forms.

Some seem very strange to modern eyes. Evolution pared them down to a few successful types of life-forms and the rest died out.

Technology is at a similar stage when there are many baroque ideas for how to solve problems of space travel. The vast majority of these will be discarded. With all the different possibilities for powering cars we have basically one kind of car, one powered with the petroleum-fueled internal combustion engine. We have basically one kind of rocket, and we will find which of the current weird ideas for space travel are the best of the lot and the rest will all be discarded. There will be one or two space transportation systems in the future. There will be one or two kinds of propulsion. Lee thinks that in the future we will be seeing primarily robot-control in space in the future. People will fly but not be doing the driving. He sees no compelling reason to put people into space.

Higgins responded with a defense of placing people into space. He said that we are in a time of rapid technological evolution. There will come a time when it will be cheaper and more convenient than today to send people into space. At that point far more people will want to travel in space. Scientists would like to be near what they study. And the biggest product from space will be information. A lot of people on earth will want to learn about new places.

Post asked the panel what is it that calls to us from beyond the solar system and how will we answer that call.

Casement said that people have an interest in finding other solar systems. JPL is already investing in interstellar exploration. But if there is an explorer mission to stars it will take a long time to get data back. Closer to Earth there is Voyager and Pioneer sending data back about more distant destinations and they are still finding interesting things.

Post observed that Gentry Lee sees no compelling reason to send people to the stars, but that does not mean that people will want to go anyway. Post asked what it is that pushes people. Why did people in the United States head west? Most were not looking to get rich, they were fleeing a society they could not stand.

Lee countered that they could breathe in California--they will not be able to do that in space.

Post asked if price came down, would people go? In the days of the Western expansion the cost of a covered wagon and the provisions to go west would be about \$300,000 in modern money. If the cost comes down to \$300,000 to go to Mars, he expects people will go. And everything said in this panel assumes nothing big is going to



happen. If we find proof of alien intelligence, everything changes. If things get so bad on Earth that we will have to escape that will also push us into space.

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Lee did not envision a massive move into space. He polled the audience as to how many people they thought would be living off Earth in 500 years. Most said they expected the number to be more than a million.

Panel: T T T Th h h he e e e P P P Pa a a as s s st t t t  
S S S Se e e ee e e en n n n T T T Th h h hr r r ro o o ou u u ug g g gh h h h  
F F F Fi i i ic c c ct t t ti i i io o o on n n na a a al l l l  
E E E Ey y y ye e e es s s s

Sunday, 3:00 PM

Stu Shiffman, Susan Shwartz (m), S. M. Stirling,  
Harry Turtledove, William F. Wu

"How historical fictions (including alternate history ones) really reflect present day concerns": The panel did not really address the specific topic, though the first observation here was that xenophobia is the most universal human value, and that's what we see the most of. We have a tendency to see most victories in the past of one group over another as good, and the losers as wrong in their beliefs or attitudes, but that is because the victors write the history books, and as L. Sprague deCamp said, they write it with "satanic gusto." Perhaps we realize this, because Stirling claims that "there's a tendency these days to go overboard on the cultural relativism thing" in compensation. For five hundred years, Columbus was great and the native Americans were savages; now the native Americans are great in spite of their many flaws (such as human sacrifice) because "that was right for their society." Oddly enough, the cultural relativists aren't so forgiving of the Europeans and their cultural quirks, such as imperialism. Then again, someone pointed out that it's easy for the victors to flagellate themselves symbolically and say how guilty they feel. After all, it costs them nothing once they've won to say how sorry they are.

Regarding the whole issue of non-interference in other people's

customs, Stirling cited Napier's comment when he tried to ban suttee in India and was told that suttee was the custom there and he shouldn't interfere. Napier said that it was an Indian custom to burn widows, and it was a British custom to hang people who burned widows. They could carry out their custom and he would carry out his. (In science fiction, Sheri Tepper's S i d e s h o w is set on a planet where cultural relativism and non-interference are carried to an extreme, and should give cultural relativists some pause.)

But in spite of this theoretical trend toward cultural relativism, it is still very difficult to make a culture with very different values sympathetic to the reader. Stirling can certainly relate to that; in attempting to portray his Draka fairly, he's managed to convince a large number of people that he is a fascist, when he's trying to say the Draka are the b a d guys.

The panel warned against imposing our values on other cultures. By this they were not suggesting cultural relativism, but rather saying that when we study a period or a people we should understand

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that those people had different beliefs than we did. For example, during the Inquisition, people thought that torturing people to get them to accept the Church was reasonable, because that would save their souls from eternal torment, and what was a short period of pain on earth compared to what they would suffer if they didn't accept the Church? We may not agree with this, but we need to realize that the people of that time frequently were acting out of what they saw as love, and not from an innate cruelty. This doesn't make them right, but it does affect how we view them.

The panelists also warned against historical revisionism. They were not talking about the obvious things (like those who claim the Holocaust never happened, though these are the first people that come to mind when the term "historical revisionism" is mentioned), but also such books as Jean Auel's C l a n o f t h e C a v e B e a r, in which a single character discovers just about everything of value to civilization. Or as Stirling expressed it, "A rock. A rock. If I put them together--a porch!" (Turtledove is guilty of this in his "Agent of Byzantium" series, where in each story the main character

discovers or adopts from barbarians some amazing new invention: the telescope, inoculations, etc. He at least has the defense that this is an a l t e r n a t e history, but I find it stretches the bounds of probability.) People agreed that it was okay to change some details (especially in an alternate history, as I noted), but (as Stirling put it), "you have to know when you're not being true."

Someone asked what historical periods we were especially interested in. Turtledove said that World War II and the Civil War seemed to be the most popular; Shiffman added the period of our expansion westward across the continent, and Shwartz added the Vietnam War era. As for who or what would be remembered from our time two thousand years from now, the only person the panelists could agree on was Adolf Hitler.

For a good book that talks about how to look at history, I would recommend Josephine Tey's D a u g h t e r o f T i m e.

(End of Part 4)

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