



hackneyed convention coming at you, but every time they arrive, it's with a twist. The book keeps surprising the reader, and pleasantly so.

THE MT VOID

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Goldman claims THE PRINCESS BRIDE was written near the turn of the century by S. Morganstern. This original "novel" is about the political, economic, and social machinations between the European countries of Florin and Guilder, with the story of the Princess Bride as the main thread. Supposedly, when Goldman was a lad, his father read him the story and left a lasting impression of derring-do and romance. Years later, Goldman stumbled across the book and decided to publish an abridged version (I'm being vague so as to minimize spoiling the Introduction). This abridged version, complete with Goldman's comments scattered throughout, is what was published by three different publishers, to abysmal sales, before the movie came out. With the movie came a re-release of the novel, and sales took off. I'm not sure why Harcourt, Ballantine, and Del Rey couldn't sell it in the '70s -- perhaps it was marketed as a mainstream book.

That's irrelevant, though. THE PRINCESS BRIDE is a wonderful heroic fantasy, with something to offer even active despisers of fantasy fiction. If you've seen the movie, I urge you to read the book. The movie captures the flavor of the book, but the story is fleshed out more on paper (for example, Inigo Montoya is even more striking in the novel). Peter Falk's grandfather role does not exist in the book; Goldman himself narrates and interjects commentary.

I am an unabashed fan of THE PRINCESS BRIDE, in both prose and cinematic form. The skillful blend of grit and whimsy, the playful ambiance, the sheer \*fun\* of this book -- I'm grinning from the delicious memories. Enough of this review -- I'm going back to reread it. You should too.

2. There is an old saying in the biology game (and when it comes right down to it, aren't we all in the biology game?). What they say is, "Ontology recapitulates phylogeny." This has two meanings

to the average person. The first is that biologists can't talk like you and I do. They obfuscate! (Well, as my old English teacher used to say, "I know a big word too--delicatessen.")

Anyway, what biologists are really saying is that in the womb the fetus goes through all the stages of evolution up to modern humans. In the earliest stages it is a fish--apparently they can tell this by the smell--then it grows a tail and becomes a rodent where it will stay for life if it is destined in the adult form to be a Congressman or a Mafioso. Later it becomes a primitive human. A recent S c i e n t i f i c A m e r i c a n show sonagrams of a human embryo wearing fur skins and carrying a large club. Apparently the pregnancy first gets painful when the embryo discovers fire. At this point, it can regress to the sub-primitive and start listening to Bruce Springsteen records, or it can evolve into a healthy baby. Anyway, there are zillions of years of evolution going on in the belly of a pregnant woman, which is why the belly gurgles so much and also why

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I am glad that it is unlikely that I will ever be pregnant.

But the biology people just leave "ontology recapitulates phylogeny" there. I think they know deep down that childhood precapitulates adulthood but are keeping it quiet until they find words that are alliterative and that most of us cretins do not know what they mean. But nonetheless the principal applies.

When I was a kid the big thing was to collect baseball cards. As an adult the big thing is to collect stocks. Same thing. Baseball cards precapitulate stocks. With each you hope the company or player has a good season so more people will want it and be willing to give you more for it. But neither has any real connection to the real thing. Stocks are just corporate trading cards. We used to buy baseball cards and they would have pretty pictures of the baseball player. (Okay, you caught me--there is no such thing as a pretty picture of a baseball player. They were mostly ugly men who spit tobacco, but stocks aren't pretty either.) Now, you and I both know this piece of cardboard has nothing to do with the baseball player, just as the stock has nothing to do with the company that issued it. Okay, I hear what you are saying. With the stock you own a piece of the company so if they ever split up

the company among the stockholders, you might get a drill press or something nifty like that. Well, surprise! In the entire history of American finance, no company has ever been divided up among the owners. You stand as much chance of getting your drill press as I stood of getting Mickey Mantle's kidney for my baseball card.

Ah, but the stockholders can vote to change the course of the company. Right. You are given a chance once a year. You get that little book once a year that says, "Stockholder E. Pluribus Summersgill, owner of 18 shares of stock, suggests we put a stronger catch on our glove compartment because it keeps falling open and hitting passengers on the kneecap and we have been sued by limping customers to the tune of twenty-five million dollars."

Then the Board of Directors has their go. They tell you they have been quality-engineering cars since the Wars of Roses.... And four pages later their statement concludes with, "So the Board of Directors recommends you vote 'No,' but doesn't really care because they own 32 billion shares and if you don't vote it counts as a vote for them anyway." Next year, you see the same thing repeated but it has gone up to being sued to the tune of thirty-six million dollars.

When the fans said "Bunt," often Mickey Mantle would bunt.

No, the only real difference between stocks and baseball cards is that stocks actually pay you money. Once a year you get a letter saying, "You own five hundred shares of stock, so here is your dividend check for eighty-seven cents. Sorry it could not be more,

but people keep suing us over this glove compartment problem." With baseball cards you don't get dividends; you get bubble gum. Up front. And it is always there. You could feel it through the wrapper.

Well, there are all kinds of adult toys recapitulating kids' toys. The shiny new bicycle precapitulates the shiny new car, particularly if it has a glove compartment that keeps popping open. I have a friend who is constantly buying himself slot car racers, remote-control model cars, and any other shiny gimcrack toy that

comes out. Me, I have stopped collecting comics and now collect films on videocassette. I'll trade you three Supermans for a Batman.

3. I have had at least a couple people tell me that they thought my statement at the end of the WHEN HARRY MET SALLY was anti-feminist. All I said is that in spite of the fact that there are attractive women that I deal with, I don't particularly want to have sex with them. So the statement the movie made that men always want sex with any attractive women is false and hence cannot be just friends with them is false. I am pleased to say that I number several attractive women among my friends and I am not anxious to have anything more from them than a friendship. So the myth presented in the movie is actually false. Surely saying that is not an anti-feminist sentiment. It wasn't intended to be. I would hope we would never get to the situation where pointing out when false statements are false is considered anti-feminist action.

Why didn't I just ignore the statement? Because I think we all have a responsibility to fight false myths that could be the basis for hatreds.

Mark Leeper  
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Only a mediocre person is always at his best.  
--W. Somerset Maugham

BROTHER ESAU by Douglas Orgill and John Gribbin

Tor, 1982, 0-812-58680-8, \$3.50.

A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper

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Interestingly enough, this book was labeled by the publisher as "general fiction" rather than "science fiction." But I read another novel, with basically the same premise, last year that was definitely marketed as science fiction. That novel was O\_r\_p\_h\_a\_n\_o\_f\_C\_r\_e\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n by Roger MacBride Allen, and it's difficult to avoid comparing the two.

In B\_r\_o\_t\_h\_e\_r\_E\_s\_a\_u (the earlier of the two by six years), an American paleontologist has a theory about the origins of man in the Himalayas. While digging there, she (or rather her party) find first the bones of what appears to be a H\_o\_m\_o\_e\_r\_e\_c\_t\_u\_s from the mid-1800s, and then a live H\_o\_m\_o\_e\_r\_e\_c\_t\_u\_s. [See note at end for a brief overview of the stages of the evolution of man.] This (he?) is, of course, immediately tagged as the "Missing Link" as well as the Abominable Snowman. In O\_r\_p\_h\_a\_n\_o\_f\_C\_r\_e\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n a black paleontologist reads in her great-great-grandfather's diary of "Beasts" brought in to work the fields alongside the slaves. She digs up the bones of these beasts and discovers that they were A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s\_b\_o\_i\_s\_e\_i brought from Africa in 1851, and furthermore, there are still A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s\_b\_o\_i\_s\_e\_i alive in Africa today. In both cases, the following questions arise: Are they animals? Are they people? Are they something in between? What will this do to the theory of evolution or to creationism? How will it be resolved?

As I said last year, all these are interesting questions and were when Vercors wrote his novel Y\_o\_u\_S\_h\_a\_l\_l\_K\_n\_o\_w\_T\_h\_e\_m in the 1950s, asking the same questions. However, though both B\_r\_o\_t\_h\_e\_r\_E\_s\_a\_u and O\_r\_p\_h\_a\_n\_o\_f\_C\_r\_e\_a\_t\_i\_o\_n show us something of how paleontology works, neither probes the philosophical issues are not probed any deeper than Vercors did. Orgill and Gribbin spend as much time examining the border tensions between India and Pakistan (where their story is set) as it looking at the actual discovery. There is also some mystical mumbo-jumbo with one of the digging party being driven insane by the discovery after having all sorts of premonitions about it. This is unfortunate, because they have a lot of material for a thought-provoking story here, and they chose not to use it. Perhaps creationism was not such a hot topic in 1982 when this book came out as it was in 1988, when MacBride Allen's book was published.

A few other works have been written about this idea, making this almost a sub-genre. G\_o\_r\_S\_a\_g\_a by Maureen Duffy (upon which F\_i\_r\_s\_t\_B\_o\_r\_n, a BBC three-hour mini-series recently run on the Arts & Entertainment Network, was based) dealt with the supposed cross-breeding of a gorilla and a human. Another film, S\_k\_u\_l\_l\_d\_u\_g\_g\_e\_r\_y, was loosely based on Y\_o\_u\_S\_h\_a\_l\_l\_K\_n\_o\_w\_T\_h\_e\_m. And then there is H. Beam Piper's L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_F\_u\_z\_z\_y, a more science fictional reworking of the same theme.

While I am not wholly satisfied with B\_r\_o\_t\_h\_e\_r\_E\_s\_a\_u, I can say that if you are interested in this sub-genre it is not a book without merit. It may, however, be hard to find.

[Evolution of man: The earliest form is R\_a\_m\_a\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s dating from 15 8 million years ago. It is not agreed whether this form is Homididae (man) or Pongidae (anthropoid ape). A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s a\_f\_a\_r\_e\_n\_i\_s ("Lucy"), A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s\_a\_f\_r\_i\_c\_a\_n\_u\_s, A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s\_r\_o\_b\_u\_s\_t\_u\_s, and A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s\_b\_o\_i\_s\_e\_i (listed from oldest to most recent) were in eastern Africa during periods ranging from 3.5 to 1.2 million years ago. None of these is not believed to be our ancestor, but rather parallel track(s) that died out, though there is some dispute over A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s\_a\_f\_r\_i\_c\_a\_n\_u\_s. In fact, specimens of A\_u\_s\_t\_r\_a\_l\_o\_p\_i\_t\_h\_e\_c\_u\_s b\_o\_i\_s\_e\_i have been found that are contemporaneous with H\_o\_m\_o\_e\_r\_e\_c\_t\_u\_s, which is supposed to have been an ancestor. H\_o\_m\_o\_h\_a\_b\_i\_l\_i\_s lived about 2 to 1.6 million years ago, and H\_o\_m\_o\_e\_r\_e\_c\_t\_u\_s (Java man) about 1.5 million to 500,000 years ago. H\_o\_m\_o\_e\_r\_e\_c\_t\_u\_s spread from Africa to Europe and Asia and evolved into H\_o\_m\_o\_s\_a\_p\_i\_e\_n\_s over the above mentioned period. Neanderthal man lived about 75,000 to 35,000 years ago, and was therefore contemporaneous with H\_o\_m\_o\_s\_a\_p\_i\_e\_n\_s. Whether Neanderthal man is our direct ancestor through interbreeding with H\_o\_m\_o\_s\_a\_p\_i\_e\_n\_s or is just another dead end is still debated. End of lesson.]

SEVEN NIGHTS by Jorge Luis Borges  
New Directions, 1984, ISBN 0-8112-0905-9, \$6.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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Anyone who knows me knows I'm not going to n o t recommend a Borges book, and there are no surprises from me here. Yes, I heartily recommend this collection of seven lectures given by Borges in the summer of 1977 in Buenos Aires. The lectures cover a wide range of topics, from the literary (T h e D i v i n e C o m e d y and T h e T h o u s a n d a n d O n e N i g h t s) to the religious (Buddhism and the Kabbalah) to nightmares, poetry, and blindness.

T h e D i v i n e C o m e d y is another favorite of mine, and so it is perhaps natural than I would enjoy Borges's comments and get some new insights into Dante. (I recently found the cosmology of Dante--or of the Middle Ages in general--reflected in a New Zealand fantasy film, T h e N a v i g a t o r, reinforcing the idea of synchronicity if nothing else.) On the other hand, I have never really read any of T h e T h o u s a n d a n d O n e



N\_ i\_ g\_ h\_ t\_ s, yet I found his lecture entertaining, enlightening, and intriguing enough to make me want to read it. I was particularly taken by a phrase of Juvenal's he quotes: "ultra Auroram et Gangem" ("beyond the dawn and the Ganges"). This phrase, for Borges (and for me as well), somehow encapsulates the mysterious enchantment that the Eastern world has for many of us raised in the Western world.

Borges gives as good a b\_ r\_ i\_ e\_ f summary of Buddhism as I have seen. Certainly other works are better explanations, but they take considerably more than Borges's eighteen pages. (For example, Joseph Campbell discusses Buddhism at length in his latest and last book, \_ M\_ y\_ t\_ h\_ s \_ t\_ o \_ L\_ i\_ v\_ e \_ B\_ y.) Similarly, Borges has studied the Kabbalah and manages to give a basic idea of the philosophy and mysticism behind that work, and that perspective, without taking volumes.

Much of the poetry lecture refers to poems in Spanish, and this may be a problem for readers who don't read Spanish. There is often a translation provided and many of the ideas that Borges discusses are independent of the words, but depend more upon the images that the words draw. Still, poetry is a tricky form to transfer between languages and this may be the least accessible of the lectures.

Borges's blindness came on him gradually, and there is irony to the fact that just about the time he was appointed the head of the Argentine National Library he became too blind to read (could this have been a partial inspiration for Rod Serling's "All the Time in the World"?). But he talks less about this irony than about the doors that his blindness opened for him--the new languages he learned and the "role models" he followed. He doesn't call Milton and Homer role models, of course, but in his words one senses a feeling of the student following the masters.

This is, in short, a marvelous, poetic book. Read it.

THE LILLIPUT LEGION by Simon Hawke  
Ace, 1989, ISBN 0-441-50395-0, \$3.50.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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This is the ninth of a series of time travel adventures entitled,

collectively, "Time Wars." (The first eight are, in order, TheIvanhoe  
Gambit, TheTimekeeper  
Conspiracy, ThePimpernelPlot,  
TheZenda  
Vendetta, TheNautilus  
Sanction, TheKhyber  
Connection, TheArgonaut  
Affair, and TheDraculaCaper.) Throughout the series, the U. S. Army

Temporal Corps is busy trying to prevent people from going back and disturbing history, because to do so might cause a "temporal split" that would destroy the universe. (Actually it would destroy more than just the universe, because we find out in book seven or so that there are parallel universes, the temporal bombs we set off in ours are ricocheting into the others, and the inhabitants there aren't very happy about this.) The basic idea is not very original, but Hawke (a pen name for Nicholas Yermakov, I believe) does add a couple of new twists: the parallel universes and the fact that the history that people go back to centers around fictional characters and events. (If a romanaclef is a novel in which real characters appear, thinly disguised, then what is the term for a novel in which someone else's literary creations appear as real characters? My friendly literary reference person says she knows of no such term, but certainly there have been many such novels; I suspect the most prolific are those involving Sherlock Holmes.) So we have seen characters from Sir Walter Scott, Charles Dickens, Baroness Orczy, Anthony Hope, Jules Verne, Rudyard Kipling, Greek mythology, Bram Stoker, and now Jonathan Swift. In fact, Swift himself is a character in this latest entry in the series.

Hawke has also added a mad scientist and an evil villain (is that redundant?) along the way and this, coupled with the parallel universes, tends to make the story more difficult to follow. Characters seem to pop in and out, and given that characters can travel between universes, even death may not be permanent. The "Time Wars" books certainly aren't great literature, and the parallel universes aspect has been downplayed (at least so far), but they each do provide an enjoyable evening's reading.

HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS  
A film review by Mark R. Leeper  
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Capsule review: Some beautiful sets and some quality stop-motion animation make this film more of a pleasure than it had a right to be. When it tells an adventure story, it is quite good. When it tries to be goofball, it tries too hard. Rating: high +1.

Of course, one of the staples of the fantasy film has always been monsters. Big creatures lumbering around have a certain fascination. And one variant on the monster concept is to shrink the main character so it is the whole world that is monstrous. D\_e\_v\_i\_l\_D\_o\_l was probably not the first film about shrinking humans, but it is the earliest so well-known. For the most part, it did not show us the world from the small human's point of view. It was, however, followed by more notable films which used the horror of being small: D\_r\_C\_y\_c\_l\_o\_p\_s, T\_h\_e

I\_n\_c\_r\_e\_d\_i\_b\_l\_e

S\_h\_r\_i\_n\_k\_i\_n\_g\_M\_a\_n, A\_t\_t\_a\_c\_k\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e

P\_u\_p\_p\_e\_t\_P\_e\_o\_p\_l\_e, the television show "World

of Giants" (not to be confused with "Land of the Giants," which was more in the Gulliver tradition than really being about shrunken people),

F\_a\_n\_t\_a\_s\_t\_i\_c\_V\_o\_y\_a\_g\_e (which introduced micro-miniaturization), T\_h\_e

I\_n\_c\_r\_e\_d\_i\_b\_l\_e\_S\_h\_r\_i\_n\_k\_i\_n\_g\_W\_o\_m\_a\_n,

I\_n\_n\_e\_r\_S\_p\_a\_c\_e, and this year's entry, H\_o\_n\_e\_y, I

S\_h\_r\_u\_n\_k\_t\_h\_e\_K\_i\_d\_s.

Like T\_h\_e\_I\_n\_c\_r\_e\_d\_i\_b\_l\_e\_S\_h\_r\_i\_n\_k\_i\_n\_g  
W\_o\_m\_a\_n and I\_n\_n\_e\_r\_S\_p\_a\_c\_e, H\_o\_n\_e\_y is

basically a comedy, though perhaps better because it was not so ambitious. Rick Moranis plays Wayne Szalinski, who works in a research lab in his attic for a major corporation. He is working on making a laser beam squeeze most of the space out of atoms so that matter shrinks down. Through carelessness and accident the beam is accidentally turned on his two children and the two children of his neighbor Russ Thompson (played by Matt Frewer, formerly Max Headroom). They are swept up with the trash and put down on the far end of the backyard. From there the story proceeds on two levels: what is happening in the parents' world and the adventures of the four victims as they try to return home.

Director Joe Johnston's story is much better told and ironically is even more believable when it is about the miniaturization victims. On one

hand you have a slapstick goofball comedy of the parents looking for their children; on the other, you have a nice little adventure film of four people trying to survive and make their way through the grass jungle of a backyard.

What is particularly nice about the film is the detail of the giant backyard. The scale is roughly 1:240 and by gosh, everything seems very accurate to that scale. Stop-motion insects were animated by a team including David Allen, a disciple of Ray Harryhausen, and they look very good. A great deal of attention to detail was used in the big sets. What is needed to do the sets correctly is a great deal of craft labor,

Honey, I Shrunk Kids

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so filming in Mexico City's Churubusco Studios where labor is plentiful was a very intelligent decision. The sets are surprisingly moody and artistically done. In some scenes the presence of water betrayed the actual size of the sets, but generally this film's miniature world seemed as believable or more so than in just about any other

miniaturization film. As a result, H\_o\_n\_e\_y, I\_S\_h\_r\_u\_n\_k\_t\_h\_e  
K\_i\_d\_s is much

better than it seems it has a right to be. I would give it a high +1 on the -4 to +4 scale.

I suppose something should be said about "Tummy Trouble," the Roger Rabbit cartoon accompanying H\_o\_n\_e\_y. The most common complaint I hear is that it may well frighten children. Perhaps, and perhaps not. The simple fact is that the cartoon is not very well constructed. One thing rarely noted about a Bugs Bunny cartoon, but nonetheless true, is that it tells its story well. Even if the story is just a rack on which to hang jokes, it should be a well-constructed rack. "Tummy Trouble" is kind of a cheesy cartoon with a lot of forced humor and a basic story that does not make a lot of sense. Bugs had a well-defined, likeable character; Roger is basically just obnoxious. Sure, people laughed at it, but it is a lower form of humor than the classic Warner Brothers' cartoons, just as the Three Stooges were funny but not of the quality of Laurel and Hardy.

