



And in this area, Simmons does very well, managing to have each story s\_o\_u\_n\_d as if the teller were telling it: the story told by the priest sounds the way a priest would talk, the story told by the soldier sounds the way a soldier would talk, etc. In addition, each story is interesting in itself. Each story is also almost

THE MT VOID

Page 2

novel-length in itself; any one of them, with an ending added on, could have been published as a stand-alone novel.

The basic story begins with seven pilgrims traveling to the "Time Tombs," odd structures on the planet Hyperion which are traveling backwards in time and somehow connected with the Shrike. The Shrike is a monster that appears to be a humanoid made up of a large collection of knives and razor blades, leading a friend of mine to describe H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n as "Freddy Krueger on Mars." (It turns out in T\_h\_e\_F\_a\_l\_l\_o\_f\_H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n that there is a very good reason for the Shrike and its presence, and that this is more than just a desire to put in a slasher monster, but many people may be so turned off by the concept in the first half that they will not read T\_h\_e\_F\_a\_l\_l\_o\_f\_H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n.)

In order to figure out what the Shrike is and the secret of the Time Tombs, the pilgrims tell their stories of how they are connected with Hyperion. This is how we come to get "The Soldier's Story," "The Philosopher's Story," "The Poet's Story," and so on.

Of interest to techies is Simmons's understanding of how electronic bulletin boards work in his description of the All Thing, a communications network joining all of the Hegemony (also page 199 of H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n):

Days and nights would pass with me monitoring the Senate on farcaster cable or tapped into the All Thing. Someone once estimated that the All Thing deals with about a hundred active pieces of Hegemony legislation per day, and during my months spent screwed into the sensorium I missed none of them. My voice and name became well known on the debate channels. No bill was too small, no issue too simple or too complex for my input. The simple act

of voting every few minutes gave me a false sense of having a\_c\_c\_o\_m\_p\_l\_i\_s\_h\_e\_d something. I finally gave up the political obsession only after I realized that accessing the All Thing regularly meant either staying home or turning into a walking zombie. A person constantly busy accessing on his implants makes a pitiful sight in public and it didn't take Helenda's decision to make me realize that if I stayed home I would turn into an All Thing sponge like so many millions of other slugs around the Web.

However, the reader should be warned that H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n is really just the first half of a novel, whose second half is T\_h\_e\_F\_a\_l\_l\_o\_f\_H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n. Issuing this novel as two volumes is doubly annoying because the second half is so long and drawn-out that I found myself saying, "Why didn't Simmons just add another hundred or so pages onto the first half and wrap the story up there?" But he

THE MT VOID

Page 3

didn't, so if you plan on reading H\_y\_p\_e\_r\_i\_o\_n, you are warned.

2. Last issue I was talking about half-hour commercials that try to make you think they are regularly scheduled prime-time shows. They have the prime-time television show camouflage down so well they even have commercials within the commercial. But they are commercials for the same product. Why even bother? In the middle of a commercial it's "Let's take a break for a commercial." And as often as not the inner commercial just repeats scenes from the outer commercial. It's as if you were sitting in the dentist's chair and he stops drilling and says, "I'm sorry--you've got to go to the dentist now."

One of the amazing things about these commercials is the audiences. We are expected to believe this is a live spontaneous audience, but it is the closest thing to a hive mind I have ever seen outside of science fiction. We are to believe that there are fifty people here who share exactly the same set of thoughts. There was at least one show that used the ploy of having the ersatz host bargain down the price from the phony guest. (I call him an ersatz host since you could hardly call him a regular participant in a program that is showing the only episode it will ever have.) The live

audience of fifty people were all dissatisfied with the price as a whole, but when the guest was bargained down to \$29.95 for four containers of car polish and a chamois, all of a sudden the audience was happy, every last person. How dumb do they think the audience is?

Then there are the questions from the audience, people just like you and me except that they have been coached what questions to ask and we haven't. For a few dollars extra, an audience member will ask some question. The guest will then compliment himself for arranging for it to be asked by saying, "That's a very good question" and then the guest will give a two-minute answer clearly prepared ahead of time.

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Fools must be rejected not by arguments, but by facts.  
-- Flavius Josephus

STEAM BIRD by Hilbert Schenck  
Tor, 1988, ISBN 0-812-55400-0, \$3.50.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
Copyright 1990 Evelyn C. Leeper

First of all, "Steam Bird" is only 148 pages of this book, with "Hurricane Claude" filling in the rest of the 213-page total. Still, that is novel length, so I suppose I can't complain too much about

deceptive packaging. And after all, "Hurricane Claude" is the same whiz-bang-old-technology-brought-up-to-date sort of story, though steam-powered airplanes do not appear.

That out of the way, what about the stories? Well, I haven't decided. (Okay, you're asking, why is she reviewing a book that she hasn't made up her mind on? Well, maybe my comments will help you decide whether you think y\_o\_u' like it.) "Steam Bird" is about a nuclear-powered steam attack bomber. Were I a fan of steam locomotives, I'm sure I would have enjoyed this more. As it is, however, the concept of a steam attack bomber wasn't enough to carry the story for me. In addition, the characters all seemed as if they had been lifted from D\_r. S\_t\_r\_a\_n\_g\_e\_l\_o\_v\_e, complete with National Security Advisor Andrezoti Bzgnartsky (whose dialect Schenck renders impossible to read without reading it aloud) and a general who says things like, "The wing is ready, sir. We will not fail the country, Mr. President. Nor the world of steam!"

"Hurricane Claude" also has "old-fashioned" science, this time an ionized column of air used to break up hurricanes, and the usual plucky people who have a dream of doing this against all that the bureaucrats can throw at them.

One of the strangest things--to me, anyway--about these stories is Schenck's unusual--one might almost say bizarre--way of introducing homosexuality and/or gay characters. In "Steam Bird" there are no gay characters (that I noticed) but there is an emphatically homophobic President; in "Hurricane Claude" there is two gay characters, a plane named "Gay Enola," and a raving homophobe who, it turns out, is really repressing his own homosexual urges and comes around to right-thinking by the end of the story. While this is all very fascinating as something not often seen in science fiction, I'm not sure that it really works in the context of telling a story with real characters. Then again, maybe Schenck isn't trying to do that.

Schenck's characters are so extreme that I can't help but feel he is aiming for something other than realism. I might almost call it a "cult book," much as D\_r. S\_t\_r\_a\_n\_g\_e\_l\_o\_v\_e, R\_o\_c\_k\_y\_H\_o\_r\_r\_o\_r\_P\_i\_c\_t\_u\_r\_e\_S\_h\_o\_w, and R\_e\_p\_o\_M\_a\_n are "cult films." While I'm not sure I enjoy this sort of humor in a literary form as much as in a film, you might want to give it a try. I suppose on the whole this constitutes a recommendation. (And if you're a steam locomotive fan, I suspect you'd appreciate "Steam Bird" considerably more than I did--at least the technical parts.)

A HIDDEN PLACE by Robert Charles Wilson  
Bantam Spectra, 1989 (1986c), ISBN 0-553-26103-7, \$3.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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A hobo camp during the Depression may not seem the most auspicious opening scene for a fantasy novel, but at least one has to agree that it has not been over-used and that, more than likely, the book it begins is not just another Tolkien rip-off. And A\_H\_i\_d\_d\_e\_n\_P\_l\_a\_c\_e is most definitely a different sort of fantasy.

From the very first scene, which introduces Bone, who seems to be a cross between a psychotic and a mental defective, the reader finds herself (or himself, but hey, I'm the reviewer so I should at least get top billing) involved with a most unlikely set of characters. There's Bone, of course, but there's also Travis Fisher, who drifts into town to live with his Puritanical, Bible-Belt-religious relatives after his less-than-Puritanical mother has died. And there's Anna Blaise, a strange young woman who lives in the attic of his relatives' house and affects everyone's lives most unexpectedly.

These characters soon find themselves swept up in the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of the times, or for that matter of any time. To say what develops from this, how the characters interact, and how it is resolved, would of course be giving away too much, and I wouldn't want to do that, because (as you might have guessed) I'm going to recommend that you read this book. It probably isn't a spoiler to say that Anna and Bone are as much symbols for aspects of our own humanity as they are characters, and that this is perhaps paradoxically what makes them in turn the fleshed-out characters they are.

This is not to say that sometimes the prose isn't, well, overripe. For example, this sentence (on page 14) made me feel as if I had fallen into the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest: "Haute Montagne ('where the railroad meets the wheatfield') might once have wanted to be a city, but that ambition had died--or at least had been set aside, like the hope chest of a young woman destined for spinsterhood--in the Depression that had come like a bad cold and stayed to become something worse, some lingering if not fatal disease." (For those who don't know, the Bulwer-Lytton Fiction Contest is a contest for the w\_o\_r\_s\_t starting sentence of a novel.) Maybe the fact that I just read the third volume of winners [?] in that contest influenced me here. On the other hand, one wonders if bad writing is not sometimes in the eye of the beholder and if some of the "bad" beginnings were presented as good beginning sentences, we wouldn't believe that as well. But now I'm drifting off into my regular rant against the Kirk Poland Memorial Bad Prose Competition....

But overly florid writing notwithstanding (or perhaps even contributing), A\_H\_i\_d\_d\_e\_n\_P\_l\_a\_c\_e is a book well worth seeking out.

MEMORY WIRE by Robert Charles Wilson  
Bantam Spectra, 1990 (1988c), ISBN 0-553-26853-8, \$3.95.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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Where Wilson's first novel, A H i d d e n P l a c e, is a fantasy, this is science fiction. Yet both cross the boundaries between the two: A H i d d e n P l a c e has elements of science fiction (especially towards the end) and M e m o r y W i r e, for all its high-tech beginning, draws on the idea of dreams and visions as a part of life.

The main character in M e m o r y W i r e, Raymond Keller, has implanted in his head electronics that make him the perfect reporter: they record everything he sees and hears perfectly. He is sent to Brazil, where "they" ("they" being the usual corporate and government baddies) have discovered an alien artifact that may contain the total knowledge of the aliens and hence give the holder of limitless power. The fact that it also can bring out eidetic memories makes it valuable to anyone who wants to remember or relive their past. Most of the novel is spent with characters chasing and being chased, though while this is going on we do get to see Wilson's vision of the 21st Century.

The major weakness of this novel is the ending--all the villains are too easily defeated or give up. And, needless to say, the end is very predictable. The strengths are Wilson's descriptions of 21st Century life and of the dream-like states of his characters. On the whole I found this a disappointment after Wilson's promising beginning with A H i d d e n P l a c e, but not enough so that I would totally give up on him. Rather, I would hope that he would concentrate where his strength is, on fantasy rather than on science fiction.

GYPSIES by Robert Charles Wilson  
Bantam Spectra, 1989, ISBN 0-553-28304-9, \$4.50.  
A book review by Evelyn C. Leeper  
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In G y p s i e s, Wilson's third novel, he returns to the realm of fantasy in our current world without totally abandoning science fiction. Karen discovers at a very young age that she can "sidestep" into other worlds, opening a window or a door into them by force of will. But it's not only she--it's her brothers also who have this talent. Where did it

come from? What does it mean? And what is the meaning of the Gray Man whom she sees in these other worlds?

As in M\_e\_m\_o\_r\_y W\_i\_r\_e, his second novel, Wilson eventually has the military trying to exploit these talents, and this is what Wilson uses to create the major tension at the end of the book, but that is not what I found the most memorable aspect of the novel. (In fact, in many ways the end of the novel was fairly predictable.) Rather it is his description of Karen's gradual discoveries about herself and her talents that make this a worthwhile work. G\_y\_p\_s\_i\_e\_s has the same almost-mystical quality that made his first novel, A\_H\_i\_d\_d\_e\_n P\_l\_a\_c\_e, a memorable debut. The prose style of G\_y\_p\_s\_i\_e\_s is more polished than that of A\_H\_i\_d\_d\_e\_n P\_l\_a\_c\_e, and as I have with Wilson's previous two books, I give this a strong recommendation.

An Annotated Filmography of Ray Harryhausen  
Film comment by Mark R. Leeper  
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From 1958 to 1977 Ray Harryhausen was Hollywood's king of film special effects. For putting fantasy images on film there was nobody else anywhere near his class. He may be the only single technician in cinema history to have had his own large and active fan following. For a while there was even a semi-professional magazine, F\_X\_R\_H, devoted to how he created the effects he did. While he had a wide range of effects, many his own inventions, he is best known for three-dimensional animation, generally called stop-motion animation, though he calls his brand of it "Dynamation" or "Super-Dynamation." As a boy he was fascinated by K\_i\_n\_g K\_o\_n\_g and became a staunch fan of its animator Willis O'Brien, whom he later worked with. He grew up a close friend of Ray Bradbury and each influenced the other.

His films are:

- MIGHTY JOE YOUNG (1949)--Apprenticed to Willis O'Brien, Harryhausen helped to animate the title gorilla. The film itself is a rather mundane children's film in the tradition of the Lassie films. It did, however, win an Oscar for its special effects, probably a much-belated tribute to K\_i\_n\_g K\_o\_n\_g.

- BEAST FROM 20,000 FATHOMS (1952)--This was Harryhausen's first solo feature film. It tells the story of a dinosaur released by an atomic blast who makes his way to New York City. He wreaks havoc and is killed at Coney Island. Not badly scripted and it gave Harryhausen a chance to do dinosaurs on film. It also started Harryhausen's long relationship with Columbia Pictures. \_ B\_ e\_ a\_ s\_ t\_ f\_ r\_ o\_ m\_ \_ 2\_ 0\_ ,\_ 0\_ 0\_ 0\_ F\_ a\_ t\_ h\_ o\_ m\_ s spawned many giant monster films in the 1950s and was also the inspiration for the first Godzilla film. \_ B\_ e\_ a\_ s\_ t\_ f\_ r\_ o\_ m\_ \_ 2\_ 0\_ ,\_ 0\_ 0\_ 0\_ F\_ a\_ t\_ h\_ o\_ m\_ s was based, but not very much, on "The Foghorn" by Bradbury.

- IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA (1955)--In spite of the importance of \_ B\_ e\_ a\_ s\_ t\_ f\_ r\_ o\_ m\_ \_ 2\_ 0\_ ,\_ 0\_ 0\_ 0\_ F\_ a\_ t\_ h\_ o\_ m\_ s, it did not convince Columbia that

Harryhausen was an important force. This film had a lower budget and was aimed at a young audience. A giant octopus from the deep sea trenches comes to the surface and menaces San Francisco. Years later Harryhausen revealed that his offer to Columbia was based on the number of tentacles they wanted and they settled on six!

- EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS (1956)--Low-budget again, but you would not know it to look at the film. The saucers were his first attempt at flying effects. The film climaxes with an impressive battle in Washington D.C.

Ray Harryhausen

July 1, 1990

Page 2

- THE ANIMAL WORLD (1956)--Harryhausen was lent to Warner Brothers to do the dinosaur effects for a semi-documentary about the evolution of animal life. He worked with O'Brien. (I do not remember the film well and it has not appeared anywhere in many years.)

- TWENTY MILLION MILES TO EARTH (1957)--Harryhausen's next entry was another film targeted for Saturday matinee crowds. It opens with a spectacular scene of a spaceship crashing nose-first into the coastal waters off Sicily. The centerpiece of this film is a creature hatched from an egg brought from Venus by the spaceship. The Ymir, as Harryhausen called it, looked like a cross between a man and a dinosaur. The birth of the Ymir is a really nice piece of animation. The film could have had a better story but it is still an enjoyable monster film.

- THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1958)--Harryhausen wanted to try doing animation in color and chose to do an Arabian Nights fantasy that would have real monsters. Somewhat to Harryhausen's surprise, the choosy Bernard Herrmann not only agreed to score the film but was really enthusiastic about the project. Harryhausen packed the film with wonders such as cyclopes, a dragon, and a monster two-headed bird. Columbia, who had only meager expectations for the movie, found it to be one of their best-grossing films that year. From this point on Harryhausen would aim at more adult audiences and have bigger budgets to do it with. Harryhausen's fans generally consider this to be his best film.
  
- THE THREE WORLDS OF GULLIVER (1960)--On the face of it one would expect Swift's satiric fantasy to be a perfect project for Harryhausen. Unfortunately, the script was just not very good. It tried too hard to be charming even to the point of throwing in a song or two. Some nice effects work, including a fight with an alligator, but generally this was not much fun.
  
- MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (1961)--Jules Verne's story is pretty much straight adventure until science fiction elements enter toward the end. Not content with that, the producers plastered on a number of monsters to liven things up and Harryhausen created the monsters. Included were giant bees and a giant crab. Good score by Bernard Herrmann.
  
- JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS (1963)--Harryhausen's fans generally consider this a classic second only to   T\_ h\_ e\_ 7\_ t\_ h\_ V\_ o\_ y\_ a\_ g\_ e\_ o\_ f\_ S\_ i\_ n\_ b\_ a\_ d among his films. It is probably the best script for any of his films and while, generally accurate to the myth, it gave Harryhausen lots of room to do the type of effects he does best. There is an army of skeletons (well, perhaps only a platoon), the multi-headed hydra, and flying harpies. But the best effects are a huge Poseidon coming out of the sea and the great bronze giant Talos.

- FIRST MEN IN THE MOON (1964)--Only marginally more faithful to its

source than was M\_y\_s\_t\_e\_r\_i\_o\_u\_s\_I\_s\_l\_a\_n\_d. The screenplay is by the excellent Nigel Kneale, though it is not one of his best efforts.

Kneale's best touch in the film is in the first few minutes.

Harryhausen's effects too start out good but become humdrum once the explorers set off for the moon. The effect of the sphere breaking loose of its greenhouse and flying skyward makes one wish Wells were around to see it. What we see of the lunar world is adequate but not really imaginative.

- ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. (1966)--On this go-around Harryhausen was working for Hammer films. It was about as good as you could make a film about dinosaurs and prehistoric people living together.

Harryhausen's dinosaurs were done as well as he ever had done them, but they could not overcome the premise. More attention was given to Raquel Welch in his first sexy role. Somebody decided to use a photographically enlarged lizard as a dinosaur in one scene, but it is hard to believe it would have been Harryhausen.

- THE VALLEY OF GWANGI (1969)--Willis O'Brien always wanted to do a film with cowboys against dinosaurs. O'Brien wanted to call the

film G\_w\_a\_n\_g\_i. He wrote the story for B\_e\_a\_s\_t\_o\_f

H\_o\_l\_l\_o\_w\_M\_o\_u\_n\_t\_a\_i\_n but

it fell short of his vision. After his death Harryhausen decided to make the film and he put in his best dinosaur animation ever.

The story takes place in Mexico in cowboy times but the story is still strongly reminiscent of K\_i\_n\_g\_K\_o\_n\_g. As a Western it is not very good but the dinosaurs are great. There are convincing scenes of live-action cowboys roping stop-motion dinosaurs. I have never figured out how he integrated the two and had the ropes connect them.

- THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (1974)--After a hiatus Harryhausen returned to the screen with the second of his Sinbad films. It includes fantastic creatures from many mythologies but its high point is a six-armed Kali with all six arms moving at once. For the first time in a while the story was decent (with a notable exception in how the villain--played by Tom Baker--was finally dispatched). Harryhausen unfortunately put too many of his effects in scenes too dark to make out detail. Good score by Miklos Rosza.

- SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER (1977)--The most recent of Harryhausen's Sinbad films was released the same weekend as S\_t\_a\_r  
W\_a\_r\_s. It had some nice creations, such as an intelligent baboon and a troglodyte, but there was also some sloppiness with overly obvious matte lines. But its worst feature was a script in which both the good guys and the bad guys kept making unrealistically stupid blunders. ("Is this the map you are looking for? How did you know it exists?") Harryhausen did try something rather ambitious by making some of the major characters animations. But still this film is the weakest of the three Sinbads. (Sinbad always gets the girl at the end and is unattached at the beginning

of the next film. It is unclear what he is doing with those women.)

- CLASH OF THE TITANS (1981)--Harryhausen's most recent film was for MGM rather than his usual Columbia. This was to be everything J\_a\_s\_o\_n\_a\_n\_d\_t\_h\_e\_A\_r\_g\_o\_n\_a\_u\_t\_s was, plus having big-budget actors such as Burgess Meredith, Laurence Olivier, Maggie Smith, Clair Bloom, and Ursula Andress. It was popular with audiences for a summer but it lacked finesse. Harryhausen did some amazing animation, including an excellent flying horse and a spectacular scene of a city engulfed by water, but some of the ideas (such as having a cute mechanical owl) were simply misfires. Harry Hamlin was just not a very engaging actor as Perseus. The film ended up ponderous and dull.

Harryhausen has not made a film since 1981. Stop-motion effects are now very common in films and their novelty has worn off. Harryhausen mastered them just early enough that he could build a career on them and become known. His apprentices, people such as Jim Danforth and Dave Allen, will probably never be as well-known as their mentor was. These days stop-motion effects compete with computerized visual effects, often gory make-up/prosthetic effects, and rubberized monsters. There are more special effects but less sense of wonder. But there are a lot of fans grateful to Harryhausen for showing Hollywood what could be done in putting fantasy on film.

